‘John O’Gaunt’s House’, Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire: a fifteenth-century landscape

Susan Oosthuizen and Christopher Taylor

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a remarkable archaeological site at Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire. It is interpreted as the remains of a late medieval house and elaborate garden of a type hitherto unknown in Britain. The documented history suggests that it was created by John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, between 1461 and 1470. It may partly have been based on the then new gardens of the Renaissance that Tiptoft had seen during a visit to Italy in the late 1450s.

INTRODUCTION

The contribution of analytical field archaeology to the history of post-medieval gardens is now well known (Taylor 1983; 1997). More recently further fieldwork has led to the discovery of remains of medieval ornamental landscapes and gardens (Everson 1998; Taylor 2000a). One of the difficulties in fully understanding these medieval gardens and landscapes is the paradox of the lack of written evidence for well-preserved archaeological sites and the absence of surviving remains at sites that are well documented. The authors of this paper believe that they have recognised a late medieval garden and landscape that is both reasonably well documented and relatively well preserved. Nothing similar seems to have been recorded anywhere else in Britain and it is hoped that this paper will encourage other workers to suggest parallels.

The present appearance of the so-called John O’Gaunt’s House as a ploughed-down rectangular ditched enclosure, the results of fieldwork in the 1940s by a renowned field archaeologist, and the published documentary history, all suggest that it is a late twelfth-century moated site, once the location of the house at the centre of a minor subinfeudated manor (VCH Cambridgeshire II 1948, pp. 15-16; VIII 1982, pp. 14-16). This interpretation has been adopted by most writers (Ellison 1982; Taylor 1997, p. 20). Only unpublished aerial photographs, taken over many years by the late Professor J. K. S. St Joseph and by Mr D. R. Wilson (C.U.C.A.P.), indicate that the site might be more complex.

In 1997 one of these aerial photographs was published in a book on the landscape of Cambridgeshire (Oosthuizen 1996, p. 53). Although the author there followed the accepted interpretation of the site, she also pointed out that the photograph actually showed the outlines of an ornate house and garden. This identification was accepted by the authors of two unpublished evaluation notes (Banham 1997, p. 3; Way 1997, p. 6). One of these also suggested that it was possibly late medieval in date (Banham 1997, p. 3). The second of the present writers has known the site through seeing the steady accretion of aerial photographs in the University Collection for almost thirty years. He has always had doubts about the suggested date and function but has never had the time nor the inclination fully to explore the problem.

LOCATION AND CONDITION (Figs 1-3)

John O’Gaunt’s House lies immediately north of the village of Bassingbourn, 1 kilometre north-north-west of the church and adjacent to the small, formerly separate settlement focus of North End (TL 326450). It stands at about 25 metres above O.D. on chalk marl, and is set on an almost imperceptible north to south ridge between two parallel north-flowing streams some 600 metres to 700 metres apart. Both streams have been much altered in the past and are now largely artificial drainage channels (Fig. 2).

Bassingbourn parish lies on the south side of the Ashwell branch of the River Cam, here flowing east, on the north side of a broad valley over 10 kilometres wide (Fig. 3). This gently undulating valley, between 20 metres and 50 metres above O.D. is floored with chalk, chalk marl and gault clay. It is bounded on the south by the main north-facing middle chalk scarp of south Cambridgeshire, which rises to 125 metres above O.D. 4.5 kilometres to the south of the village. Some 6 kilometres to the north the valley is edged by the lower south-facing scarp of the lower chalk, here around 80 metres above O.D. As a result both scarps are clearly visible from the site, with the southernmost one in particular being a well-marked ridge on the horizon. The
overall impression is of a broad flat plain, set between ranges of distant hills. The possible significance of this will become apparent.

More locally, the underlying geology has affected the detailed interpretation of the site. The chalk marl is here a relatively thin deposit and some 500 metres to the north the underlying gault clay is exposed (Geol. Survey 1949). It is in the uppermost layers of the gault that phosphatic nodules, erroneously called coprolites, occur. During the 1880s large areas in the north of Bassingbourn parish were worked for coprolites by the usual 'hill and dale' method (Penning & Jukes-Brown 1881, pp. 126-9; Fisher 1872; O'Connor 1999). As a result, it has been claimed that much of John O'Gaunt's House was destroyed by these workings. However it is clear from aerial photographs that, although the quarrying reached the northern and north-eastern edges of the site, it did not seriously damage it (VCH Cambridgeshire II 1948, p. 15; VIII 1982, p. 16) (Pl. II). On the other hand, local tradition has it that stonework was removed from the site during the period of coprolite working for use as ballast for the temporary mineral lines (inf. P. Sell). If this is so, it would explain the absence of building stone there although, as will be discussed later, there may be alternative reasons for this. The present condition of the site, as slight and very degraded earthworks in permanent arable, appears to be largely the...
result of agricultural activities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and more particularly the deliberate levelling of the banks and ditches in the 1950s.

DESCRIPTION (Figs 4 and 5)

The following account is based on various forms of evidence including ground survey, fieldwalking (Kemp 1993), old photographs (Cambridgeshire Collection 1925); Ordnance Survey maps (O.S. 1884; Fig. 5), the Enclosure Map (C.R.O. 1806; Fig. 4); an estate map (C.R.O. 1818); accounts of the site in 1887 and 1948 (VCH Cambridgeshire II 1948, p. 15) and, in particular, aerial photographs (C.U.C.A.P.; R.A.F. 1946) (Pls I-III). The core of the site is a rectangular moat, originally some 20 metres across but now up to 30 metres wide and 1 metre deep, with a central island 60 metres by 45 metres. The moat, and indeed all of the ditches of the surrounding compartments or enclosures, produce crop-marks visible on aerial photographs of a very unusual form. They almost all have remarkably crisp straight edges with exceptionally well-marked, sharp, right-angled corners. In addition, many of the ditches have two narrow, parallel, light-coloured lines within them. These features indicate that the ditches were cut very precisely and that they may originally have been revetted in stone which, where not removed, has fallen forward into the ditch. Only excavation could prove whether this interpretation is correct although there are broken pieces of clunch or Tottenhoe Stone over the central part of the site. The nearest outcrop of Tottenhoe Stone is 1 kilometre to the south-east, the nearest extant quarry is 2 kilometres to the south (Geol. Survey 1949). The southern side of the moat is also curious. In contrast to the ditches on the other sides the aerial photographs show it with markedly uneven edges and with an outward-facing curve. The 1884 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan depicts the inner south-eastern corner as being cut away, a feature also noted in 1948 (Fig. 5). The meaning of this is not entirely clear, although it may be the result of an original medieval moat being altered and the work being interrupted before completion.

That the moated site, in its final form, was not of usual medieval type is confirmed by the central island. For despite being ploughed down there is no doubt that there was once a high, probably rectangular, platform, presumably the site of a building, occupying the centre and northern part of the interior. This platform or

Pl. II. John O'Gaunt's House, Bassingbourn. Aerial photograph looking north, taken 06.02.1973. The parallel lines or ditches to the north and north-east of the site are the remains of the late nineteenth-century coprolite workings. Cambridge Univ. Coll Aerial Photographs, copyright reserved.
mound is now about 40 metres by 25 metres and can hardly ever have been much more extensive. Its original height is a matter of some dispute. In its present condition it stands about 1 metre above the ditch and even in 1948, when it was already being ploughed, C. W. Philips estimated that it was about the same height (VCH Cambridgeshire II 1948, p. 15). On the other hand, it is said to have been between 10 ft and 12 ft (3 metres to 4 metres) high before 1887, a figure which Philips said was ‘improbable’. While accepting that most estimates of height are exaggerated, and that 4 metres seems unlikely, it may well be that the mound originally was of considerable height, perhaps with near-vertical sides. The implications of this will be considered later.

The surface of this mound and the surrounding area is covered with quantities of roof tile which could date from any time between the late medieval period and the eighteenth century. The other only finds from the mowed island are a handful of sherds of late St Neots Ware, found by the authors and probably of twelfth-century date, and fragments of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century unglazed wares (Kemp 1993). The 1887 report noted the existence of abutments of a bridge on the south side of the moat which presumably allowed access to the interior.

As the mound, whatever its original form, occupied only the centre and northern part of the moated island there was, and still is, a berm between it and the moat ditch. This berm appears on all of the aerial photographs as markedly lighter in colour not only than the surrounding ditches but also than the surrounding area. The reason for this, and for similar light-coloured spreads within and just beyond the surrounding compartments, is that all are covered by a fine gravel with even-sized grains no more than 1 cm across. This gravel presumably covered paths and terraces.

This main moat is surrounded by a number of similar ditched or moated compartments. These compartments can be considered as subdivisions of a single large outer enclosure in which the main moat sits asymmetrically. This enclosure is roughly rectangular and is bounded by the same type of straight and sharply-defined ditches as the moat. It also has traces of the same double lines within the ditches. These ditches are still visible on the ground, 25 metres to 30 metres across but little more than 0.25 metres to 0.5 metres deep. The principal entrance to the site was in the centre of the south side of the enclosure. This was approached by a ditched causeway (see below). The enclosure ditches butted against those of the causeway which continued on into the enclosure, indicating that there was no bridge here. On both sides of this entrance the enclosure ditches projected forward as perfect semicircular bastion-like features. Beyond are traces of former outer banks, one of
which, on the western bastion, survived as a mound in 1948.

The east side of the main enclosure is the most complex. A little to the north of the south-east corner the aerial photographs show two parallel ditches running east across the adjacent arable field. The 1884 Ordnance Survey plan shows the southernmost of these as a ditch 3 metres to 4 metres wide extending east for some 200 metres. This feature still survived in 1948. Immediately north of these ditches, the main enclosure ditch projects forward as another, smaller, semicircular bastion. Beyond, on the ditch again turns sharply outwards to form a long narrow extension to the enclosure, near the centre of which is a further semicircular bastion. This side of the extension then turns west where another north-facing bastion is positioned and then meets an exactly straight ditch which runs north from near the north-east corner of the main moat. This latter ditch forms the northern end of the east side of the main enclosure. The north-east corner and the north side of this enclosure have been damaged or obscured by the 1880s coprolite workings. However, on the Enclosure Map of 1806 they are shown, together with the rest of the outer enclosure boundary, as a broad water-filled ditch (Fig. 4). The western side of the main enclosure is visible on the aerial photographs as a sharply defined ditch with a slight outer bowing towards its southern end, a form confirmed on the ground now. It is also shown as a tree-lined boundary on the 1884 Ordnance Survey plan (Fig. 5). Just outside it and parallel to it is a slightly sinuous narrow ditch. Its northern end is lost in the former coprolite workings while its southern end can be traced to the present road as a crop-mark. This ditch is also roughly parallel to the existing north-flowing stream or drainage ditch, on its west, and is likely to be an earlier but equally artificial course. Indeed it was probably the source of the water which originally supplied all of the ditches on the site.

Immediately north of the south-west corner of the main enclosure a complex of ditches, the details of which are not clear, may be part of the water intake system. However, both the main enclosure ditch and the former stream intersect with two parallel ditches which extend west to the modern stream and east into the interior of the main enclosure where they meet the end of the western ditch of the approach causeway. These parallel ditches are on the same alignment as the parallel ditches to the east and all may be part of a single feature and, in origin, pre-date the rest of the site.

These, and other ditches that link the central moat and the causeway ditches to the outer enclosure ditch, form a series of small compartments. The exact number and form of these compartments is not certain but the principal ones are as follows. In the extreme south-west corner is a small rectangular one, bounded on the south by the western bastion, on the east by the extended approach causeway ditch, on the north by the southernmost of the two parallel ditches and on the west by the western side of the main enclosure. It has a clear entrance in its north-western corner. To its north is a rectangular compartment bounded on the north by the western half of the south side of the central moat and by a wide ditch which links this to the ditch of the outer enclosure. The northern end of the entrance causeway runs into this compartment near its south-east corner and thus this compartment may have been a courtyard in front of the central moat.

To the north again is a long narrow compartment which extends to the north-west corner of the main outer enclosure. Its northern half has traces of what appears to have been a long rectangular pond and there are extensive spreads of gravel in its southern half. It may have been two compartments for there are faint traces of two narrow ditches extending east across its centre from an apparent entrance into the southern end of the adjacent enclosure. To its east, and north of the central moat, is a large rectangular compartment separated from the previous one by another straight ditch. Immediately north of the central moat this compartment is surfaced with fine gravel which extends along its eastern side and may originally have covered broad pathways. A long rectangular crop-mark, caused by damp conditions north of the southern pathway, may be the site of another former pond or other water feature. The area between the central moat and the eastern projection of the main enclosure forms another long narrow compartment. This again is covered with gravel and at its northern end is the remains of an elongated mound now only 0.26 metres high. This is probably the remains of a platform overlooking the adjacent bastion to the north. Near the southern end of this compartment another rectangular crop-mark, adjacent to the east-facing bastion, may be the site of a small pond. Within the curve of the bastion is a very narrow circular ditch, possibly a beddying trench. Occupying the south-eastern corner of the main enclosure is a further compartment with bastions on its southern and eastern sides. The interior details of this compartment are not clear but it certainly had a gravel pathway along its southern edge and contained a rectangular pond.

The approach causeway, some 200 metres long, extended northwards from the modern road to the south and entered the main enclosure in the centre of its southern side. The alignment of this causeway is of some interest. It is not set at right angles to the main enclosure, as might be expected, but is aligned at a slight angle so that when its line is projected it would have met the exact centre of the asymmetrically
set principal moated site where presumably the bridge stood. This may confirm the earlier suggestion that the moated site itself was not part of the layout of the outer enclosure and its compartments, and that it already existed when the latter were arranged around it. On the other hand, the alignment may have been to ensure that the highest point of Therfield Heath, 4.5 kilometres to the south, was visible along the axis of the causeway. This possibility is discussed later.

The causeway itself is hardly visible on the ground today except as a slight linear rise. However, its position and alignment are shown on both the Enclosure Map of 1806 and the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan of 1884 (Figs 4 and 5). It consisted of a broad flat raised roadway some 5.5 metres across flanked by deep ditches and outer banks. Until the early 1950s the banks were surmounted by trees (R.A.F. 1946). These trees are clear on a photograph taken in 1925 (Cambridgeshire Collection 1925) and were identified before their removal by Dr P. Sell. On the western side of the causeway was a row of pollarded White Willows (Salix alba var. alba) which also extended along the western edge of the main site. These willows were set at regular intervals and had, presumably, been planted deliberately. On the eastern bank of the causeway were two types of coppiced hazel (Corylus avellana forma schizochlamys and Corylus maxima), again set at regular intervals. Neither of these hazels is native to Britain although both were grown in medieval times. It is doubtful that the willows date from the medieval occupation of the site. Although of considerable age, with hollowed trunks, they are unlikely to have been more than 200 years old. However local practice has been to replace willows that have fallen by a straight quick-rooting pole from others. The hazels were much older. Their stools were between 3 metres and 4 metres in diameter, which indicates that they could have dated from the fifteenth century (infra. P. Sell and O. Rackham; Sell 1980, p. 53). A local tradition that the causeway once ran on further south can be discounted. No trace of it is visible on aerial photographs and the land that it is alleged to have crossed remained open fields until 1806. However the general, although not exact, line of the causeway is continued across the land to the south by a broad ridge which extends from the end of the causeway to the north end of Church Street. This ridge is a former headland within the open fields of Bassingbourn but it may also once have been the main route north to Shingay village, as well as giving access to the site under discussion.

The above description covers all of the principal archaeological features of the site. However, the fact that there are projecting bastions on the north, south, east suggests that these were intended to overlook the immediately adjacent land in those directions and perhaps more distant landscapes. Although all of the hedges between the site and the adjacent fields have now been removed, the 1806 Enclosure Map shows that it lay towards the western side of a large rectangular area, then divided into a number of fields and with two cottages at its south-eastern corner (Fig. 4). This rectangular area may have been part of the original design. As has already been noted, double linear ditches, perhaps pre-dating the main enclosure, extend across this area and one of them was a hedge line in 1806. The aerial photographs show other linear marks in this area. Most of these are former hedge lines, probably of no great antiquity. It may be that this area was, or was intended to be, some form of open parkland to be viewed from the bastions and terraces.

HISTORY

The history of the ownership of John O'Gaunt's House appears to be simple (Rumble 1981, 14.27; VCH Cambridgeshire VIII 1982, pp. 15-16). In the 1170s the Castle Manor was subinfeudated from the principal manor of Bassingbourn, held by Count Alan Lord of Richmond in 1086, to Warin de Bassinbourn, steward of the honor of Richmond. The de Bassingbourns continued to hold the manor until 1420 and it was Warin's great grandson, another Warin de Bassingbourn, who was granted a licence to crenellate his manor there in 1266. By 1428 the manor belonged to John Lord Tiptoft (d. 1443). Given that Tiptoft's father Sir Payne Tiptoft (d. 1427) spent much of his time enlarging the family estates in the early fifteenth century, including the purchase of the nearby manor of Great Eversden and land in Little Eversden, it seems likely that the Castle Manor was also purchased by him in 1420 when the last de Bassingbourn died (VCH Cambridgeshire VII 1973, pp. 61-2). On John Tiptoft's death in 1443 the Castle Manor, along with the rest of the Tiptoft estates, passed to his son John, later Earl of Worcester, who held it until his execution in 1470.

His son died without issue in 1485 and the Tiptoft lands were divided between the earl's two surviving sisters. One half of the Castle Manor was acquired in 1487 by Richard Lynne, the son of a London merchant. The other half was purchased by John Warde, another London merchant. The latter's half was bought by Lynne's grandson Philip Lynne in 1556 and the Lynne's held the manor until 1621 when it was sold, first to Sir Giles Alington of Great Wymondley, Hertfordshire, and then in 1635 to Sir Thomas Hatton of Longstanton, Cambridgeshire. Hatton later purchased most of the rest of the parish and it all remained with the Hattons until 1921.
This summary of the descent of the Castle Manor does not throw much light on the site, the
history of which needs to be examined separately. There can be little doubt that John
O'Gaunt's House was in origin the site of the medieval manor-house of Castle Manor. The
village of Bassingbourn has a complex plan which includes a central nucleus and at least three other separate foci (Fig. 2). These foci can be correlated with the four documented medieval manors there, indicating that the
tenurial and physical structures of the village were related (Oosthuizen & Taylor forthcoming; Taylor 1977). It is therefore likely that the
subinfeudation of the Castle Manor in the 1170s was either the formalisation of what already existed or the creation of a new manor-house and settlement. The discovery of the late twelfth-century pottery from the site but of nothing earlier suggests that the whole arrangement was indeed new at that time.

Whether this manor-house had a moat around it from its inception, or whether it acquired it as part of the 1266 licence to
crenellate is unknown. Moats around the houses of subinfeudated manors are common in Cambridgeshire and some do indeed seem to date from the time of the creation of these manors (Taylor 1972). Certainly the moat at Bassingbourn is well within the size-range of others in Cambridgeshire (RCHME 1968, pp. lxi-lxvi) and its relationship to the rest of the site indicates that it may be the oldest element.

That the de Bassingbourn family lived in the manor-house here until the early fifteenth century is suggested by the continued use of their original surname, by the fact that Bassingbourn was their principal holding, by the licence to crenellate and by the evidence of the late twelfth- to fourteenth-century pottery but by nothing of later date. This archaeological evidence, and the purchase in 1420 of the manor by the Tiptofts, indicates that the end of the de Bassingbourn line marked the disappearance of resident lords at the Castle Manor. Certainly the Tiptofts had no need to live there permanently and Richard Lynne, who acquired half of the manor in 1487, actually built a new house and garden in the main part of the village (VCH Cambridgeshire VIII 1982, p. 15; Oosthuizen & Taylor 2000b). Nor did John Warde, the purchaser of the other half of the manor, live there. Although he came from nearby Hinxworth, Hertfordshire, and indeed bought other land in Cambridgeshire at this time, he remained a London merchant and alderman and seems never to have left the City (VCH Cambridgeshire V 1973, p. 163; VI 1978, pp. 116 and 267; VIII 1982, p. 15; Thrupp 1948, pp. 372-3). Some of the Lynnes lived at Bassingbourn in the sixteenth century but they occupied their own house and after 1621 there was never a resident lord in the village. It is unlikely on

stylistic grounds that the site dates from after 1621 and the fact that no antiquarian writer, either national or local, refers to it suggest that all knowledge of it beyond the existence of its ditches had been lost by the seventeenth century. Already by 1563 field-names indicate that its recent history was unknown (C.R.O. P11/28/1) and certainly by 1806 the name Rabbit Close implies that previously it had been used as a congar (C.R.O. 1806).

What conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing description and history? A quite remarkable garden and perhaps associated ornamental landscape seem to have been created in Bassingbourn between 1420 and 1488, the period when the land was held by the Tiptoft family. However unlikely this may seem, one of the Tiptofts must have been involved in its construction. Thus it is the history of this family that must examined.

THE TIPTOFT FAMILY

The Tiptofts were a typical medieval family who by administrative ability, loyalty to the crown, judicious marriages and military service, rose from lowly beginnings to become powerful magnates (Mitchell 1938, pp. 3-20; D.N.B.; Cockayne 1959, p. 842; McFarlane 1944; Roskell et al. 1992, pp. 620-8). They appear to have originated in Lincolnshire where they are first recorded as small landholders in 1216. Five generations later when Sir John Tiptoft (1375-1443), a member of a cadet branch of the family, was born his father, Sir Payne Tiptoft, held nothing but the manors of Burwell and Harston in Cambridgeshire. Sir Payne purchased other land in Cambridgeshire, including the manor of Great Eversden in 1409, but the family's estates remained very limited. However, Sir John Tiptoft's government work brought rewards. He was granted custody of lands in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire in about 1400 and in Leicestershire and Buckinghamshire soon after. He also gained the stewardship of two other Cambridgeshire manors in 1404-5. His first marriage in 1407 brought him further land in Somerset, Dorset, Kent, Berkshire and Wales, as well as estates in Aquitaine. In 1413 he inherited the lands of a cousin, Elisabeth Wroth, which included manors in Middlesex, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Essex. Further Wroth estates, until then subject to dower rights, came to him in 1422. Through his second marriage to the heiress of the Earl of March in 1425 he obtained extensive land in Wales and the Marches, as well as the title of Baron of Powys.

However, long before that Sir John Tiptoft had made a fortune from loyal service to the crown, through grants of land for life, gifts, loans and remunerative positions (e.g. Cal. Pat. Rolls 1901, pp. 111, 271, 526; 1905, pp. 170, 329; 1907,
JOHN O'GAUNT'S HOUSE, BASSINGBOURN, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

pp. 120, 348; 1908, pp. 145, 324; VCH Cambridgeshire VIII 1982, p. 14). As early as 1397 he was in the service of the Earl of Derby, later Henry IV, and remained loyal to him and to Henry V and Henry VI. He was M.P. for Huntingdon in the 1403-4 and 1404-6 parliaments and was Speaker in the latter. He became Keeper of the Wardrobe and Treasurer of the Household in 1406 and Treasurer of England in 1408. Sir John was M.P. for Somerset in 1414 and was a member of the Privy Council from 1422. In this last position he played an important role in the affairs of the Council. In 1425 he became Chief Steward of the Castles in Wales. His later career involved diplomatic missions, military commands and legal work among much else. By his second wife he had three daughters, and one son who became Earl of Worcester. He died in 1443 and was buried in Ely Cathedral (VCH Cambridgeshire II 1948, p. 252).

Sir John Tiptoft was the type of man who might well have wished to make his mark by the construction of an elaborate house and landscape and he certainly held the Castle Manor at Bassingbourn from 1428. Yet this hypothesis seems unlikely. The style of John O'Gaunt's House would suggest a slightly later date and a continental influence on this Sir John, for which there is no evidence. It is therefore more likely that it was his son, who inherited the Tiptoft lands in 1443, who was involved at Bassingbourn.

SIR JOHN TIPTOFT, EARL OF WORCESTER:
THE 'BUTCHER'

Sir John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester (1427-70) was a somewhat unusual product of later medieval times (Mitchell 1936; Emden 1959, pp. 1877-9; D.N.B.; Cockayne 1959, pp. 842-6; Green 1955, pp. 381-2; McFarlane 1973, pp. 46, 233). His title was a new creation and although he inherited most of his father's lands, these did not comprise a very extensive holding when compared to those of some of his contemporaries. Like his father, he enhanced his estates by obtaining short-term grants of land which had reverted to the crown on death (Cal. Pat. Rolls 1910, p. 461). Tiptoft was a skilled and efficient administrator and a competent soldier. He devoted himself to furthering his own and his family's interests by the amassing of crown posts and by suitable marriages. He remained a staunch Yorkist despite the contradictions and conflicts of loyalty of the period. He was also ruthless and cruel even by the standards of his time and his callous barbarity earned him the execration of his contemporaries to whom he was known as 'the Butcher'.

John Tiptoft was born at Great Eversden in Cambridgeshire, perhaps significantly only 10 kilometres from Bassingbourn. Although the manor-house there has been rebuilt it is surrounded by a moat which, while undated, is of a form that suggests that it was constructed at least partly as a decorative feature. That is, it is a moated garden of a type relatively common in Cambridgeshire and elsewhere, and entirely medieval in concept (RCHME 1968, pp. lxi-lxv, Great Eversden (11) and (21); Blood & Taylor 1992). This may have some bearing on the origins of John O'Gaunt's House. Tiptoft studied at University College, Oxford, between 1440 and 1443 but he probably left without a degree on his father's death. He was created Earl of Worcester in 1449 and in the same year married Cecily Neville, widow of Henry de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. She died within the year. In 1452 Tiptoft was appointed Treasurer of the Exchequer and Privy Councillor and in 1456-7 he was Deputy of Ireland.

From 1458 to 1461 Tiptoft was in Italy (see below), a visit that also involved government business. On his return, with the accession of Edward IV, his rise to power accelerated. Among the many posts he acquired were those of Custodian of Porchester Castle and Chief Justice of North Wales. In 1462 he was made Lord High Constable of England and it was this position that ultimately led to his downfall. As Constable he was commissioned to summarily try all cases of treason without a jury (Bellamy 1973, pp. 160-2). On his appointment he immediately condemned to death John, Earl of Oxford, his son Aubrey de Vere and other rebels. This, together with other executions combined with impealments carried out in 1464 after the Yorkist victory at the Battle of Hexham, and in 1470 in Lincolnshire, led to his acquiring his reputation as a butcher. In his defence, however, it has been said that Tiptoft was 'perhaps unfortunate in having so many Lancastrians to liquidate' (Jacob 1961, p. 563). Later in 1462 Tiptoft was probably in Scotland on diplomatic work. He was made a Knight of the Garter and appointed Lord Treasurer in the same year. He then travelled with Edward IV to the north of England and was present at the sieges of Dunstanburgh and Bamburgh. In 1463 he became Keeper of the Seas and travelled to France. He arranged at least two tournaments in 1466 and also attended the siege of Harlech Castle. In 1467 he resigned all of his offices and went to Ireland as Deputy Lieutenant until 1469. While there he oversaw further treason trials. He returned to England early in 1470, was reappointed Lord Treasurer, and was soon in Lincolnshire and then in Southampton suppressing a revolt against the King and carrying out further summary trials and executions. After Edward IV fled to France, Tiptoft was captured by the rebels and taken to London. On 15 October he was tried in his own court by John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, whose father and brother he had sentenced to death.
and who had been appointed Constable especially for the trial. Tiptoft was executed on 18 October 1470 and was succeeded by his son Edward, then only a year old. Edward Tiptoft died in 1485 at the age of fifteen and the Tiptoft lands were divided between John Tiptoft's sisters.

There is little in this biography of Tiptoft to indicate why he might have created the house, garden and landscape at Bassingbourn. They could hardly have been laid out by his son or his sisters and therefore must be his work, most likely between 1443 and 1470. Yet both closer dating and a motive can be arrived at by examining another facet of Tiptoft's life.

JOHN TIPTOFT, EARL OF WORCESTER: THE HUMANIST

Tiptoft was renowned for his scholarship. He knew both Latin and Greek, was an expert on Roman law, was a collector of books, a translator of texts, a patron of the arts, benefactor to universities, an eager student, friend of scholars and a traveller of cultivated taste. Little of this comes across from Tiptoft's documented life in England. But an examination of his visit to Italy between 1458 and 1461, when put into the context of contemporary learning and developments in art, architecture and especially garden design, reveals a different side to the man.

By the mid-fifteenth century the Renaissance was under way in Italy and Florence in particular was the centre of the humanist movement (Brucker 1983). As a result a steadily increasing number of Englishmen went to Italy to study (Mitchell 1936; Weiss 1941; Martines 1963). Tiptoft was one such visitor (Mitchell 1926; 1938, pp. 78-90; Emden 1959, p. 1878; McFarlane 1973, p. 243; D.N.B.). He travelled to Italy with 'a large company of attendants', possibly including his tutor at Oxford, John Hurley (Emden 1958, p. 958), probably early in 1458. He stopped briefly in Venice and then in May went on to a pilgrimage in the Holy Land. He returned to Venice in September and, in the company of one Gabriele Capodilista whom he had met on the journey, travelled on to Padua. Tiptoft probably stayed with Capodilista at his villa near Padua and certainly met, and was perhaps taught by, Capodilista's brother Francesco, who was a lecturer at Padua University. He also began purchasing books, or rather manuscripts, for what was eventually to be an impressive library.

While at Padua, Tiptoft met other English scholars including John Free or Phreas (d. 1465), a Balliol man and a priest who was in Italy at the expense of his patron William Gray, Bishop of Ely (1454-78), an old friend of Tiptoft. Free, who has been described as 'the most eminent of the Englishmen who went to study in Italy in the fifteenth century' (Emden 1958, pp. 724-5; D.N.B.), was dazzled by Tiptoft, joined his household and later in 1459 moved to Ferrara with him. There they both studied under the elderly Guarino da Verona (d. 1460), a great teacher and first professor of rhetoric at Ferrara. Tiptoft is said to have been one of Guarino's most distinguished pupils.

As an earl and a confidant of the English crown Tiptoft also moved in non-academic circles. In May 1459 he attended the Congress of Mantua as English ambassador to the Pope. Pius II subsequently travelled on to Ferrara where he stayed with the d'Este family. Whether Tiptoft also went there is not known but as the d'Estes were patrons of his teacher Guarino da Verona it seems likely that he must at least have been acquainted with them.

By December 1460 Tiptoft was back in Padua and he remained there until early in 1461. While there he commissioned and bought numerous manuscripts. He also provided a list, now lost, of books to be sent to Oxford in order to improve that university's latinity (Hellinga & Trapp 1999, p. 297-8). At this time he was corresponding with Giovanni di Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464), the Florentine humanist, financier, statesman, builder, philanthropist and, after 1431, effective ruler of Florence (Clarke 1991). It has been suggested that Cosimo may have invited Tiptoft to stay in Florence with either himself or his sons (Mitchell 1938, p. 82). Certainly Tiptoft was in Florence later in 1461 for he purchased more books there. Indeed he bought so many on his Italian visit that the bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci, Tiptoft's principal source of manuscripts, said that he had 'spoiled the libraries of Italy to enrich England' (George & Waters 1963, p. 336). He is recorded as being so anxious to see the city of Florence that he walked around it unattended. He also went to lectures given by John Argyropoulos, who was teaching Greek there at that time. In the early summer of 1461 Tiptoft returned to Rome as an ambassador and seems to have impressed the Pope with his eloquence. He certainly became friends with a number of cardinals and prelates. In August he left Italy for England and never returned.

This simplified account of John Tiptoft's Italian visit helps to explain his scholarly and humanist leanings. But to appreciate his possible interest in gardens and architecture which may have led him to Bassingbourn it is necessary to look at contemporary gardens and garden design in Italy. For crucial developments were taking place, particularly in Tuscany, of which Tiptoft could hardly have been unaware. His visit coincided with both the appearance of the most influential treatise of the period on gardens by Alberti and with the enormous patronage of the Medici family which produced many new gardens in the Florentine region. Together they were largely responsible for the early
development of Renaissance gardens in Italy.

Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72) was an architect, humanist and scholar and a native of Florence (Tavernor 1998). His book De re Aedificatoria (Alberti 1755), although not printed until 1485, was completed in 1452 and was immediately studied by leading members of Italian society, including the Medici family. It was largely based on the ideas of Classical writers such as Pliny the Younger and Vitruvius and, as a result, is much concerned with the use of topiary and herbs. There are no details of either structures or layouts of gardens. Inevitably, perhaps, it seems to recommend what is in effect the medieval tradition of enclosed garden compartments which itself derived from classical prototypes. But where it appears to be radically new is in its advocacy of hillside sites in order to achieve long views across the adjacent landscape. Such a recommendation naturally leads to the creation of terraces to provide such views (Thacker 1979, pp. 95-111; Jellicoe et al. 1986, p. 5; Comito 1991; Strong 1979, pp. 14-17).

Alberti may have designed a garden of this type at the Villa Quaracchi outside Florence and its owner, Giovanni Rucellai, described it in 1459 (Jellicoe et al. 1986, p. 463; Masson 1961, pp. 58-9). Its main features were still medieval, with pergolas, a mount and an enclosed rose garden. But what was apparently new was the position of the house, on a small eminence and surrounded by a balustraded terrace overlooking a decorative moat and associated ponds. The main axis of the garden was projected outwards by an avenue leading down to the River Arno. Although neither villa nor garden survive, this description could, at least in part, apply to Bassingbourn.

More pertinent, perhaps, in that Tiptoft almost certainly saw them, were the new villas and gardens being created at the time of his visit around Florence by the Medici family. Again none of them survive except as fragments, and only contemporary descriptions and late sixteenth-century paintings in lunettes of some of them, now in the Museo Topografico, Florence, allow their layout to be ascertained. Nevertheless there is some evidence to show what Tiptoft may have seen as a result of Alberti’s ideas being taken up by his patrons and fellow humanists. Three examples illustrate this. The first is the Medici hunting lodge, Il Trebbio at Caflaggiolo, north-west of Florence. This was a medieval building converted into a villa for Cosimo de Medici in about 1451 by his architect Michelozzo. The walled garden, laid out at the same time, was still entirely medieval in form (Masson 1961, p. 74, pls 33 and 34; Jellicoe et al. 1986, p. 284).

The second example is the villa and garden at Carreggi. The old fortified manor house there was also transformed into a villa for Cosimo de Medici, again by Michelozzo, in 1457. The villa had a broad loggia which overlooked an enclosed garden. But although the latter was medieval in concept its hillside position perhaps demonstrated the beginning of the acceptance of the new ideas. Whether Tiptoft saw this garden is not known but Carreggi was where Cosimo de Medici gathered his friends and philosophers, scholars, artists and architects which made it ‘the most famous intellectual centre of the world and the cradle of the humanist movement’ (Masson 1961, p. 56; Jellicoe et al. 1986, p. 362).

The last example is the villa and garden at Fiesole, north-west of Florence, which Tiptoft may well have visited during its construction in 1458-61. It was again designed by Michelozzo for Cosimo de Medici and has been described as the first true Renaissance villa (Jellicoe et al. 1986, p. 362). It was surrounded by a broad terrace which provided views of the surrounding landscape, including of Florence itself. This terrace, which was approached by an avenue of trees, was an extension of the house and seems to have been intended as both a salon and as a perambulation area. At the side of the house was a giardino segreto, partly enclosed, with seating along the house wall but with views over a low stone parapet (Masson 1961, p. 75, pl. 32; 1965, p. 318; Pizzoni 1999, p. 28). Below the main terrace was another terraced garden while a cypress walk and a bowling alley on the hillside above may also have been part of the original arrangement. This then is the background to Tiptoft’s visit to Italy and the influences that may have led him to create his own garden and landscape on his return to England.

Paintings are another form of contemporary evidence that, although not directly associated with Tiptoft himself, are of value in understanding what he may have been attempting to create at Bassingbourn. These, in their depiction of ornamental landscapes, seem in some respects to have been ahead of actual garden design. Many Renaissance paintings show enclosed gardens of generally medieval form even as late as the seventeenth century. But others by the later fifteenth century depict high-status gardens with loggias set on balustraded terraces, often bounded by moats or ponds and overlooking wide landscapes, both natural and man-made. Care must be taken when using the evidence of these paintings. Except on rare occasions the landscapes depicted seem to have been symbolic and idealised and were often recycled (Campbell 1998, p. 27). Yet, as with the architecture, dress and indeed plants shown in fifteenth-century paintings they must have had a basis in reality. And particularly now, when the physical remains of and appreciation of landscapes, both artificial and natural, cannot be demonstrated in late medieval times, the evidence from paintings must not be discounted (Harvey 1981, pp. 10-17; Taylor 2000a). Many examples could be cited but three must suffice.
One is *The Annunciation* of c. 1480-5 by Lorenzo de Credì (Uffizi, Florence), the background of which has a loggia overlooking an avenue and parkland. Another *Virgin and Child*, also by Lorenzo de Credì, of c. 1480-1500 (National Gallery, London) has a loggia, a low walled garden, a surrounding moat and an avenue leading towards a landscape with trees and a castle. The third is Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Annunciation* of the late 1470s (Uffizi, Florence) which again has a background of a low walled garden overlooking a mountainous landscape. These and many more Italian, Spanish and Netherlandish paintings of the period illustrate the type of gardens and landscapes that seem to lie, perhaps dimly, behind that at Bassingbourn.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The archaeological and historical examination of John O’Gaunt’s House at Bassingbourn, the details of the people who may have been involved in its creation, and an understanding of contemporary Renaissance scholarship and garden design, all seem at first sight to lead to one conclusion. That it is the remains of a house, garden and ornamental landscape probably laid out in the 1460s to a design perhaps inspired by the ideas of the Florentine Renaissance, on an older moated manorial site that his grandfather had purchased, by John Tiptoft Earl of Worcester. But such a conclusion only poses further questions.

The first is whether it is certain that it was Tiptoft’s work. The answer is, of course, no. The evidence is only circumstantial, although it is difficult to see who else in the fifteenth century could have created it. There is no proof that Tiptoft, despite his broad humanist background, had a particular interest in either gardens or architecture. None of the manuscripts in his library, so far as they are known, were concerned with either subject, despite ranging over science, religion, history and literature (Mitchell 1937-8; Weiss 1936). The only possible, if tenuous, clue is in the illustrations on the borders and on the capital letters of some of Tiptoft’s collection of manuscripts. For he seems to have employed a single artist with a distinctive style to carry out most of the work, presumably to his own instructions. The ornamentation on five of Tiptoft’s Italian ones is somewhat architectural in detail with cornices, bases and altars but one, a commentary on Juvenal by Ognibene da Lonigo, is illustrated at the foot of the third folio with satyrs in a simple landscape with grass and flowers (Mitchell 1937-8, pp. 72-5). Whether this throws any light on Tiptoft’s architectural and horticultural interests is debatable.

Another question is whether the garden and its associated building was ever completed. Again there can be no certainty in the matter. As has already been noted, the irregular form of the south side of the principal moat might be the result of unfinished building work, while the lack of building material except for tile within the moat where a structure was surely intended, may indicate that it was never erected. Certainly the absence of pottery of the later medieval period suggests that there was no permanent occupation there. On the other hand the lack of building material could be the result of its removal in the late nineteenth century by the coprolite diggers, or even earlier, by stone-getters in the sixteenth century (C.R.O. P11/5/2/41). It may be that the structure on the mound within the moat was timber-framed. Such a building would hardly have appeared Italianate unless it was plastered to look like stone or perhaps covered with painted canvas as at the palace on the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, or at the Banqueting House, Whitehall, in 1591 (*Cal. State Pap. Ven*. 1869, no. 50, p. 20). The dearth of occupation debris could be the result of the building being used only intermittently, perhaps as a form of garden lodge, rather than as a permanent dwelling, although this in turn raises other problems. On the whole the evidence suggests that the site was probably never completed, perhaps because of Tiptoft’s death. This might also partly explain the lack of interest there by the succeeding owners, the Lynne family.

Completed or not, the next questions are what was the site intended to look like and how was it meant to function? It appears that the ditches of the earlier moated site were re-cut and straightened. A building, perhaps a house but possibly only a set of garden rooms with a loggia, was erected on a high central mound. Such a position would have gone some way to securing views across both the adjacent gardens and the wider landscape in the contemporary Florentine fashion. A similar arrangement, albeit of a somewhat later date, exists elsewhere in Cambridgeshire. At Kirtling Towers, built by Lord North in about 1540, the house was set on a platform over 6 metres high, surrounded by berms or terraces and overlooking its garden, the encircling moat and the landscape beyond (N.M.R. TL 65 NE 3).

The building at Bassingbourn, to judge from its potential floor area apparently not a principal dwelling of a mighty lord, may have been more akin to, or even a precursor of, the garden lodges of the sixteenth century in Britain. Buildings such as Lyveden New Bield, Northamptonshire, of 1596, or the earlier banqueting house at Nonsuch Palace, Surrey, of 1538-46, are examples (Brown & Taylor 1973; Biddle 1961, pp. 11-13). And these are themselves merely part of a longer tradition of detached lodges and gardens which begin before the thirteenth century as both permanent.
or temporary standings or lodges in deer parks (Roberts 1995; Myers 1969, p. 1158; Thibaux 1967) and continue into the early seventeenth century at Wothorpe, Cambridgeshire, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, and perhaps even the Little Castle at Bolsover, Derbyshire (Girouard 1978, pp. 106-9; Summerson 1966, pl. 84; Taylor 1996). Later buildings in the same tradition include Ashdown, Berkshire; Lodge Park, Swangrove Lodge and Worcester Lodge, all in Gloucestershire; Fox Hall in Sussex; and Ebberston Hall in Yorkshire (Hussey 1967, pp. 65-9; Pevsner & Nairn 1965, p. 127; Pevsner & Verey 1970, pp. 257-8, 396-7; Taylor 2000b, pp. 92-3). The term often used for these buildings, *maisons de plaisance*, perhaps also conveys the spirit and function of Bassingbourn. From such a building, whatever its exact form, the adjacent water-edged garden compartments, the approach avenue and causeway, the outer landscape and, presumably, the distant hills of the chalk escarpments to the north and south were all visible (Fig. 3). It is not without interest that, at the time of writing, there is an 8-metre-high artificial ski-slope in the field immediately east of John O'Gaunt's House, covered in a light-coloured plastic material. From its summit a gently undulating landscape, some 240 sq. km in extent, between the northern and southern escarpments, is visible. Likewise, this ski-slope can be clearly seen from the same scarp edges. While the analogy should not be taken too far, the view from the site, although very different in scale, is not unlike that of the plain of the River Arno and the surrounding mountains at Florence.

Below the presumed building, a gravel path extended around the moat, perhaps with a balustrade. The outer moated enclosure also seems to have had paths around its edges, again possibly with walls or balustrading and with curved bastions providing additional sitting-out places with lateral views. Of the various water-edged compartments, some had water features within them and most had gravel paths. Beyond the formal moated garden lay various outer enclosures and a, presumably, tree-lined approach causeway. Apart from the latter, the planting schemes of this garden cannot be ascertained, although if Tiptoft was attempting to emulate the Florentine gardens that he had seen then topiary and herbs would have predominated.

The long, ditched approach causeway with its outer banks was probably edged by trees, although not perhaps by the hazels and willows that remained there until the 1950s. This causeway may have been intended as much as an avenue in the Florentine style as an access way. It may not be fortuitous that the view from the building on the moated mound along the axis of the causeway would have terminated 4.5 kilometres away on the highest point of Therfield Heath, on the chalk escarpment immediately west of Royston. The fact that the actual termination is the Neolithic long barrow there is, perhaps, less likely to be deliberate. The nearest English parallel for the causeway, at least in terms of its detailed form, is the somewhat later one leading to the early seventeenth-century detached garden at Tackley, Oxfordshire (Whittle & Taylor 1994).

The existence of such a remarkable garden raises a further question. Why was it on an obscure Cambridgeshire manor which had only been acquired by the Tiptoft family in the 1420s? No entirely convincing answer is forthcoming, but there are some possible indications. In general terms, despite holding land in many places and having their main residence in Enfield, Middlesex (VCH Middlesex V 1976, p. 227), the Tiptofts' principal lands were in Cambridgeshire and most of the family had lived there since the thirteenth century (VCH Cambridgeshire V 1973, pp. 61-2; IV 1953, pp. 31-3, 53, 116, 142; VIII 1982, p. 180). John Tiptoft himself was apparently born at nearby Great Eversden and so was perhaps familiar with the locality, while the Castle Manor at Bassingbourn had been bought, perhaps in 1420, by his grandfather. His father also held two-thirds of the Richmond Manor there between 1437 and 1443 (VCH Cambridgeshire VIII 1982, p. 14).

Among other more tenuous Cambridgeshire links is the fact that Tiptoft clearly wished to be buried in the county. Although after his execution he was actually buried at the Blackfriars church in London his tomb lies in Ely Cathedral where his father and mother were interred. The tomb, with effigies of Tiptoft and his first two wives, lies alongside the high altar on the south side of the feretory, in a position of importance, and is the only lay burial there. However it may not be in its original position. As it does not include an effigy of his third wife whom he married in September 1467, it was presumably made before then. The fact that its canopy is almost identical to that over the tomb of Bishop Luxemburg (1438-43) a few metres away may suggest that it was made at a similar date although after the death of his second wife in 1451 (VCH Cambridgeshire II 1948, p. 252; IV 1953, p. 70; Linnell 1953, pp. 7, 18-19; Esdaile 1973, p. 5).

A further link with Ely was his friendship with Bishop William Gray (1454-78). Gray was the patron of both John Free and another of Tiptoft's fellow scholars in Italy, John Gunthorpe (D.N.B.). More interestingly, Gray, another humanist, had also made the journey to Italy. He was there in 1444-5, read theology at Padua, like Tiptoft was taught by Guarino da Verona at Ferrara and even purchased manuscripts from Vespasiano da Bisticci in Florence (Hellinga & Trapp 1999, pp. 256-7; Emden 1958, pp. 809-14; Weiss 1941, pp. 87-9). Another Ely link is the fact
that in 1449 Tiptoft was responsible for the absorption into the priory at Ely of the tiny and failing Augustinian house at Wicken, Cambridgeshire (VCH Cambridgeshire II 1948, pp. 251-4). Whether these ties were strong enough for Tiptoft to have created a garden in Cambridgeshire is uncertain. Its actual position at Bassingbourn could have been the result of a combination of ownership and of its topographical situation providing the desired views of the distant chalk hills. Bassingbourn was the only Tiptoft holding in Cambridgeshire to afford such a panorama.

The final question about John O'Gaunt's House is what happened to it after Tiptoft's death. This is easier to answer: no one wanted it. Perhaps incomplete and certainly unused, it stood on land that passed to Tiptoft's sisters in 1485 and was later divided and sold. The site itself was acquired by Richard Lynne in 1487 but although he wanted a new house and a garden at Bassingbourn he actually built his house in the centre of the village and laid out a conventional garden around that (VCH Cambridgeshire VIII 1982, p. 15; P.R.O. C1/657/56). Tiptoft's moated garden with its elaborate bastions was perhaps too exotic for Richard Lynne who seems to have preferred something more traditional (Oosthuizen & Taylor 2000b). So it was abandoned, its past glories were forgotten and by the nineteenth century its fame had come to rest on a spurious association with John of Gaunt.

The authors of this paper have so far stressed the remarkable nature of the Bassingbourn garden, based seemingly on contemporary Italian models. This might well be the view of many garden historians, some of whom regard the mid-fifteenth century in Florence as a defining moment for garden design. But how far was Tiptoft's garden or even the gardens he saw really new in concept. Certainly in structural and architectural terms the balustraded terraces and loggias were novel. But semicircular bastions were not a feature of Florentine gardens nor indeed of any gardens of this period. They seem to derive from military prototypes, and were perhaps either French in origin (Thompson 1987, pp. 38-42) or possibly imitations of, for example, the semicircular bastions of the outer court at Caister Castle, Norfolk, of about 1432, itself set in an ornamental landscape (Barnes & Simpson 1952; Liddiard 2000, pp. 356-7, 374-7). Nor was the idea of arranging gardens and garden structures to achieve views of wider landscapes, both natural and artificial, novel in Italy, Britain or elsewhere. There is much evidence, both archaeological and documentary, for the existence of ornamental landscapes created, at least in part for the pleasure of being viewed from gardens and garden buildings, long before Alberti wrote his treatise or Tiptoft created his garden (Harvey 1981, pp. 10-17; Taylor 2000a). Artists were depicting gardens with long vistas over landscapes before the 1450s even if many of these landscapes were purely symbolic or 'recycled' views (Campbell 1998, p. 27). The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin (1436-41) by Jan van Eyck (The Louvre, Paris), painted not in Italy but in Bruges, with a great city spread below the balustraded terrace, shows this well.

That artists, at least, had a real interest in landscapes at this date may be seen in the illustration of the City of Babylon in a book of French romances given to Queen Margaret of Anjou by the Earl of Shrewsbury in 1445. There a detached formal garden with its lodge or gloriette, set in parkland, is visible. The garden is terraced with a circular corner tower and adjacent water features. The whole seems very similar to Bassingbourn yet is in an entirely Gothic style (Harvey 1981, pl. 34). An actual example is the detached moated garden, with stone buildings of some kind within it, at Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire, created for Henry v in 1414-17 (Taylor 1997, pp. 22-3). Here again, while the overall arrangement is similar to Bassingbourn, the detailed execution in the form of a traditional medieval moat is far from the Italian Renaissance. And, of course, the concept of a detached lodging and garden set in a wider ornamental landscape is very much older. For example, one certainly existed at Woodstock Park, Oxfordshire, as early as 1165-6 when Henry II created Everswell for his mistress, Rosamund Clifford (Harvey 1981, pp. 11, 50, 80; Bond & Tiller 1987, pp. 23-8; Taylor 2000a).

Perhaps then, neither Tiptoft's Bassingbourn garden, nor its Italian contemporaries were as innovative as historians might suggest. John O'Gaunt's House emerges as merely one stage in the evolution of ornamental landscapes in Britain, rooted in much older pan-European traditions as well as depicted in paintings and exemplified in architecture nearer to home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The authors would like to thank Miss A. Ault, Mr D. Dymond, Dr T. Malin, Dr O. Rackham, Dr P. Sell and Mr D. R. Wilson for their help in providing information for this paper. The line-drawings are the work of Mr P. Judge.
FOOTNOTES

1. The C.U.C.A.P. (Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography) Collection contains some seventy-five aerial photographs of John O'Gaunt's House taken since 1971. Not all were taken in ideal conditions and some are of limited value. The most useful are as follows: BFD 51-3, BLQ 7-8, 10-13; BLS 52-5, BSI 81-5, CLN 52-7; CLO 17-24; CNY 34-9.

2. Cambridgeshire Collection, 1925. Central Library Cambridge, photographic negative FN2, print VII.8.


6. Both Lin nell (1953) and Esdaile (1973) suggest that the tomb may be that of Tipitof's father, despite the fact that the male effigy is wearing what appears to be a, now mutilated, earl's coronet. However, it is not known at exactly what date this particular form of coronet became recognised as part of the apparel of an earl and it may not have been until the sixteenth century. Nevertheless it seems most likely that the Ely tomb is indeed that of the Earl of Worcester.

ADDITIONAL ABBREVIATIONS

N.M.R. National Monuments Record, Swindon.  
P.R.O. Public Record Office, London.  
S.M. R. Sites and Monuments Record (by county).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Banham, D., 1997. 'Early records of Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire,' unpubl evaluation and assessment, Cambridgeshire S.M.R.  


Translation of Vespasiano da Bisticci, 1480, Vite di nomini illustri del secolo xv.  
Kemp, S., 1993. 'English Heritage field walking programme by Cambridgeshire Archaeology', unpubl draft rep, Cambridgeshire S.M.R.


Mitchell, R. J., 1926. 'The translations of John Tipitoff', Mod Lang Notes, 61, pp. 15-25.  


Oosthuizen, S., 1996. Cambridgeshire from the Air (Stroud).
Weiss, R., 1936. 'The library of John Tiptoft', *Bodleian Q Rec*, 8 no. 89, pp. 150-63.