

Carisbrooke: A Study in Settlement Morphology

JOHN MARGHAM

Introduction

Reliable maps of a relatively early date are an invaluable resource for the landscape historian. The Isle of Wight is fortunate in having a comprehensive survey available from the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The first edition of the Ordnance Survey one-inch map was published in 1810. This was based upon the six-inch scale working drawings produced by the survey of Colonel Mudge which commenced in 1793. These drawings have provided the basis for two previous papers in which the settlement morphology (shape) of hamlets and villages on the Isle of Wight was classified and mapped.¹ Several different types of settlement plan were identified – these ranged from irregular scatters of buildings to regular grid plans. The most frequently occurring type of plan was the irregular two-row street, with ten examples, out of a total of thirty-nine villages and hamlets *c.* 1800. The present paper is concerned with another distinctive type of plan, the regular two-row street, without a green. Five such plans were identified – Brading, Carisbrooke, Newchurch, Upper Ryde and Whitwell.

Regular settlement plans imply a degree of settlement planning. The regular grid plans of Newport, Newtown and Yarmouth are examples of the setting out of new towns (or the drastic replanning of older settlement) by a landowner for financial gain – Yarmouth *c.* 1170, Newport 1177 × 1184 and Newtown 1255–56.² Regular two-row plans, although often smaller in scale than a grid plan, can also be examined for evidence of planning.

Settlement plans classified and mapped for *c.* 1800 may represent only the situation in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The dynamic nature of settlement patterns has been demonstrated in many parts of England. The Isle of Wight is no exception to this, a total of thirty-two 'deserted medieval villages' have been listed for the Island.³ The planning of settlements is part of this dynamic picture, but is also a stabilizing influence on settlement forms; although much decayed, the grid pattern of thirteenth-century Newtown is still recognisable in the modern landscape.

The process of nucleation of settlement would be accelerated by successful settlement planning. An examination of the Domesday population statistics suggests the existence of some degree of settlement nucleation on the Isle of Wight by the later eleventh century, with some late Saxon church sites acting as foci.⁴ This raises the possibility of the planning of regular settlement forms before the development of grid plans in the twelfth century. Of the regular two-row plans *c.* 1800, the one settlement which can be identified as a nucleation in 1086 is Carisbrooke. The settlement site and form of Carisbrooke village invites closer inspection especially with its historic function as an administrative and ecclesiastical centre associated with the castle near the geographical centre of the Island.

Domesday Carisbrooke

The text of Domesday Book indicates only one settlement on the Isle of Wight with any substance. The entry for Bowcombe reads:

The king holds BOUCOMBE in demesne. It belonged to King Edward's 'farm' (*de firma*). It was then assessed at 4 hides, now at nothing. There is land for 13 ploughs. In(the) demesne are 3 ploughs and (there are) 25 villeins and 15 bordars with 15 ploughs. There are 10 serfs and 8 acres of meadow, and a mill worth 40 pence. There is a toll which produces 30 shillings, and a saltpan which returns nothing (*sine censu*). There is wood(land)worth 5 swine.

Of the land of this manor William the son of Stur holds half a virgate. There is 1 plough with 1 villein. It is worth 10 shillings.

(And) Gozelin and William his brother hold 1 virgate, which used to pay *gafol* (*gablum*) before they had it in possession, but these (men) pay none.

The monks of Lire 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, who pay 5 shillings, and William, the son of Azor has 2½ acres on which he has 4 houses. They hold (this) without the consent of the priest. There belong (adjacent) to this church 20 messuages, inhabited by bordars, who pay 14 shillings. There is a mill worth 6 shillings, and all the tithes of Bouecombe [Bowcombe] belong to the same church. The whole was worth, T.R.E. and afterwards, as now 20 pounds. What the abb[ey] has is worth 4 pounds.⁵

This substantial settlement with its church and twenty houses adjacent and at least another four nearby can be identified with Carisbrooke village. The site would have been a focus of settlement for the manor of Bowcombe, which covered an extensive area. The present day Bowcombe Farm and hamlet of Bowcombe located 2.2km (1.4 miles) further upstream from Carisbrooke retains the name of this area but there is no evidence on the ground here for the existence of a formerly much

more extensive settlement site. The monks of Lyre in Normandy held the church of Bowcombe in 1086; in about 1147 the abbey recognised Carisbrooke as the centre of its interests on the Island with the settling of a small colony of monks.⁶ The earliest reference to Carisbrooke, however, predates this foundation; *ecclesiam sancte Marie de Caresbroc* features prominently in an agreement dated 1114.⁷ The main centre of population in the later eleventh century for the manor of Bowcombe was thus known as Caresbroc from the next century onwards. As Rigold has pointed out, it is a suitable name for the valley site of the priory, the second element of the name relating to Lukely Brook. The place name would have been transferred to the castle overlooking the priory and settlement site, the place name Caresbroc not being recorded for the castle until 1179.⁸ The castle itself, although in close association with the settlement in the valley was constructed within the king's manor of Alvington, necessitating a reduction of half a hide from 1066 to 1086 'because a castle stands on one virgate'.⁹

Bowcombe/Carisbrooke was a site of more than local significance by the later eleventh century, both as an ecclesiastical and administrative centre. The church which was to become a priory of Lyre in the middle of the following century was certainly in existence by 1071; it is listed along with its dependent chapels and the churches of Arreton, Freshwater, Godshill, Newchurch, Niton and Whippingham in the charter confirming the possessions of the Abbey of Lyre, c. 1206.¹⁰ Domesday Book records that Lyre held six churches on the Island. These are not named in all instances, but the entry for Bowcombe states that 'the monks of Lyre hold the church of this manor'. A charter of Henry II states that William Fitz Osbern gave the churches to Lyre and lists seven churches including Carisbrooke.¹¹

William Fitz Osbern was killed in battle in 1071,¹² so the seven (or six?) churches must have been given to Lyre by this date. On this evidence alone it is highly probable that all of the Lyre churches existed in the mid-eleventh century, not new foundations after 1066. In addition to this, Carisbrooke church in the later eleventh century was situated near the centre of an extensive *parochia* (mother parish) which can be reconstructed. Links between Carisbrooke and the later daughter churches of Chale, Northwood and Shorwell are well documented, and the nineteenth century tithe apportionment maps indicate the former sharing of the same common fields between Gatcombe and Carisbrooke.¹³ This former *parochia* would have been served by the *minster* church at Carisbrooke; *minster* status implies an origin several centuries before the Norman conquest. The present dedication of the church to St. Mary is very probably a rededication of the immediate post conquest period. Carisbrooke certainly had a dedication to St. Mary in 1114. This was also the dedication

of William Fitz Osbern's abbey church at Lyre and is consistent with those of other churches associated with Fitz Osbern elsewhere.

Carisbrooke church was one of several pre-conquest church sites on the Isle of Wight situated near the centre of parochiae. Regarding its status amongst this group of churches, it is probably significant that in the papal taxation of 1291 Carisbrooke was the most valuable of all the Island churches.¹⁴ This reflects its status before the foundation of the priory in the mid-twelfth century, an act which served to reinforce St. Mary's importance through providing a local administrative centre for Lyre's interests on the Island. At the time of the foundation of Chale church and parish in 1114, a certain Almetus was priest of Carisbrooke and also held the post of Dean of the Isle. The latter was considered to be of significance beyond the confines of the Island for Almetus, in his capacity as Dean of the Isle, was involved with the boundaries of Christchurch parochia, and the foundation of Milford church, both of which are in Hampshire.¹⁵ Carisbrooke was pre-eminent amongst Island churches even before the foundation of the priory.

Bowcombe/Carisbrooke was also the administrative centre of the Isle of Wight at the time of Domesday Book. The division into the hundreds of East and West Medine was a twelfth-century reorganisation, the first mention of the new hundred names being in the Pipe Roll of 1181. In 1086 the Island was divided into the hundreds of Bovecome, Hemreswel and Cavborne, the latter forming part of Bowcombe hundred: 'In Calbourne Hundred which lies in Bowcombe Hundred'.¹⁶ Most Domesday villas are listed as being in Bowcombe hundred. Hemreswel hundred consisted of only three villas, Yarmouth, Shate and Ningwood, out of a total of 124 entries in Domesday Book that can be located in the landscape with reasonable confidence.

By the later eleventh century, Bowcombe/Carisbrooke was an ecclesiastical and administrative centre with both of these functions dating from before the Norman conquest. In addition, the site described in the Domesday folios was a nucleated settlement in close association with a castle constructed by the new political masters. Domesday also records that Bowcombe had a 'toll which produces 30 shillings', a further indication of the relative status of Bowcombe/Carisbrooke. The right to charge a toll does not necessarily imply the presence of a market, but Domesday Book did not record explicitly all markets that existed.¹⁷ There are a total of three entries in Hampshire Domesday Book mentioning markets: Basingstoke and Neatham (Alton) were both on royal manors, and Titchfield was a berewick (outlying portion) of the royal manor of Meonstoke. Three tolls are also listed in the Hampshire folios, one being the market of Titchfield. A toll worth 15 shillings was recorded for the royal manor of Clere (Kingsclere), which was also a hundredal centre.

The third was Bowcombe, which was a hundredal centre and a royal manor,¹⁸ so it is almost certain that a market was in existence, represented by the Domesday toll. Bowcombe/Carisbrooke can therefore be seen as a 'central place' for the Isle of Wight in 1086.

Carisbrooke before Domesday

The changes associated with the Norman conquest accentuated the importance of Bowcombe/Carisbrooke as an administrative, ecclesiastical and market centre for the Isle of Wight, but these origins are found long before 1066. The function of the Carisbrooke area as a 'central place' can be tentatively traced to the pre-Roman Iron Age. The deep ditch cutting off the promontory of the site of Carisbrooke Castle from Mount Joy to the east may represent a fortification of this period, though no evidence of Iron Age occupation has been found during excavations within the castle. The only definite hillfort site on the Island is the unfinished promontory fort on Chillerton Down, known as Five Barrows, situated 4km (2.5 miles) to the south of Carisbrooke, and probably intended as a refuge for the inhabitants of the central part of the Island (Fig. 1).

In the Romano-British period there is a distinct concentration of evidence for settlement in the area; 'late Iron Age material from Shide, Newport, the location of a villa at Shide, and the concentration of three villas in the Lukely Valley around Carisbrooke, suggests that the Newport/Carisbrooke area may have been a focus of settlement'.¹⁹ There would appear to be later Roman development of 'high status' settlement sites in the area, but no evidence for occupation on the site of Carisbrooke villa before the third century.²⁰ Clatterford villa, 1km (0.5 miles) from the Carisbrooke site is unexcavated and undated, but a kilometre beyond is the Bowcombe Farm Romano-British settlement or villa; much of the pottery dates from the third century or later.²¹

The excavation of the villa site in the grounds of Carisbrooke vicarage uncovered an aisled building. The north-south orientation and two short lengths of precinct wall suggest the existence of a complex structure akin to Brading.²² The site of the villa is 150 metres from St. Mary's church, — a uniquely close spatial relationship between villa and church on the Isle of Wight. The average distance between each of the twenty-nine medieval churches and parochial chapels, and the eight Romano-British villas and probable villa sites is 5km (3 miles), the only other church within one kilometre of a villa being St. Nicholas in Carisbrooke Castle, a late eleventh-century foundation. This close relationship raises the question of 'continuity' of the use and function of the villa site and any associated settlement from the later Roman period through to the estab-

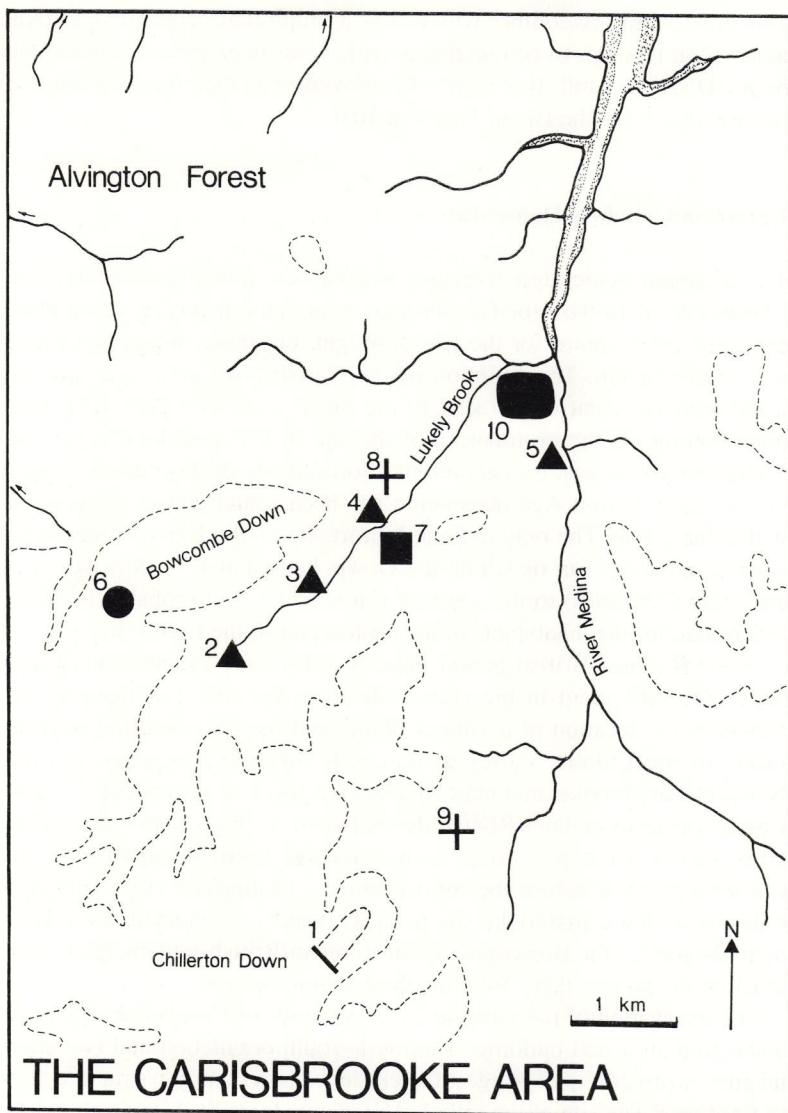


Fig 1. The Topography of the Carisbrooke Area.

1. Five Barrows promontory fort, 2. Bowcombe Romano-British settlement site/villa(?), 3. Clatterford Roman villa, 4. Carisbrooke Roman villa, 5. Shide Roman villa, 6. Bowcombe Down Anglo-Saxon cemetery, 7. Carisbrooke Castle, 8. St. Mary's church, Carisbrooke, 9. St. Olave's church, Gatcombe, 10. Newport. Contour line 250ft/76 metres.

lishment of a minster church in the mid-Saxon period. The mechanisms by which a church site may have evolved from a nearby villa site have been outlined by Morris and Roxan.²³ These various possibilities all involve the continuing use of a 'high status' site without a significant break in occupation. However, another possibility is the re-use of an earlier site 'by a social elite to legitimise their position through reference to the past.'²⁴ The relationship between Carisbrooke villa and church is a tantalizing one especially as Carisbrooke was an administrative as well as an ecclesiastical centre by the later Saxon period.

Another thread that can be identified is the development of the strategic importance of the castle site, culminating in the construction of the castle soon after 1066. There is no definite evidence for the military use of the site before this date, but the identification of the *lower enclosure* underlying the medieval curtain walls and associated earthworks, has produced various interpretations. This sub-rectangular walled enclosure has an internal area of 2.1 hectares (5.2 acres). It has been claimed as a Saxon Shore Fort but unlike the other forts of the Saxon Shore lies inland away from the Roman coastline. If of Roman origin, it is better seen as a refuge for the local population rather than a fort.²⁵

The presence of a possible late Roman enclosure raises the problem of the identification of Wihtgarasburh which is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the years 530, 534 and 544. It is unlikely that the place name Carisbrooke is a derivative of Wihtgarasburh but this 'need certainly not exclude their topographical identity. Wihtgasra(s)burh may well have occupied the site of Carisbrooke Castle, even though the old name did not survive'.²⁶

Archaeological evidence from the sites excavated within the castle between 1976 and 1981 suggests that there was no significant occupation until the sixth century,²⁷ although early Saxon pottery from previous excavations, has been dated as late fifth century.²⁸ The site excavated near the centre of the medieval castle produced three inhumations, two cremation pots and associated grave goods, all probably of the sixth century. This is broadly contemporary with the Bowcombe Down cemetery site,²⁹ and four post holes and a gully were of the same period. This evidence does not confirm the presence of a burh used at this date.

The third possibility for the origin, or re-use of, the *lower enclosure* is as a later Saxon burh. The 1976–81 excavations identified a later Saxon phase of occupation. The site near the centre of the castle provided evidence of two substantial eleventh-century timber buildings, which predated the construction of the castle soon after 1066.³⁰ These buildings may have been related to a later Saxon fortification, but there is no direct evidence. An attractive interpretation of this evidence for occupation pre-dating the castle, is the extension of the system of later Saxon burhs in

the early eleventh century, as exemplified by the temporary reoccupation of the Iron Age hillfort of South Cadbury, Somerset, from 1009 to 1019 during the reign of Aethelred.³¹ The Isle of Wight does not have an Alfredian burh listed in the Burghal Hidage document of 914 × 919;³² the creation of a burh to serve the strategically important Isle of Wight in the following century would have rectified this anomaly. This hypothesis does not rule out the re-use of a defensive structure. It is likely that the early Norman castle occupied a site which had been of strategic importance for some time.

No Anglo-Saxon land charters survive for the Bowcombe/Carisbrooke area. In the later years of Anglo-Saxon England Bowcombe was part of King Edward's manor of Amesbury. The Wiltshire Domesday folios record that:

In this manor are included the land of three thegns, which they held in the time of King Edward. These lands in AMBLESBERIE (Amesbury) Earl William gave in exchange for Bouecome.³³

This implies that Bowcombe had been a royal vill, though without land charters the date of such status is unrecoverable, though long before 1066 given the presence of a minster church, the hundredal centre, the probable burh, and the possible relationship between villa and church.³⁴

Willim Fitz Osbern and Carisbrooke

The twelfth-century chronicler, Odericus Vitalis records that:

The two great Earls of the Mercians having been got rid of, Edwin by death, and Morcar by strict confinement, King William distributed their vast domains in the richest districts of England among his adherents, raising the lowest of his Norman followers to wealth and power. He granted the Isle of Wight to William Fitz Osbern, high steward of Normandy, giving him the charge, in conjunction with Walter de Lacy and other tired soldiers, of defending the frontier against the Welsh, who were breathing defiance.³⁵

The Isle of Wight was given to William Fitz Osbern by the Conqueror probably in the year 1067. He held it until his death in 1071 when his son, Roger of Hereford, inherited all his father's possession. Fitz Osbern was given Lordship of the Island with 'palatine' authority.

The essence of a palatine earldom was that in the county concerned the earl wielded all the king's powers as his deputy, not only administratively, but even to the extent of holding all the royal demesne land that in any other county would have been managed for the king by the sheriff.³⁶

In addition, the earl also controlled the main town of the Lordship or County. These three tests to prove the existence of a palatine earldom are based on what is known of the earldom of Roger of Montgomery in Shropshire, who also had control of the Sussex rapes of Chichester and Arundel.

Cahill has examined Fitz Osbern's position on the Isle of Wight against these three criteria:

1. Fitz Osbern exercised control beyond the jurisdiction of the royal sheriff of Hampshire. This is illustrated by the Domesday entry for Sandford, which had undergone a change of hidage from the 1066 figure when the royal sheriff received it after Roger of Hereford's forfeiture of his possessions in 1075/6.
2. Fitz Osbern was in control of the crown's demesne lands (see Domesday Bowcombe and Amesbury, above).
3. Fitz Osbern had control of the Island's principal settlement – Bowcombe/Carisbrooke and the manorial organisation was altered so that a castle could be built.³⁷

Palatine earldoms were established in areas of great strategic importance after the Conquest. On the south coast, the earldom of Sussex dates from 1070–1073, and the Isle of Wight, *c.* 1067. In the Welsh marches, the Earldom of Hereford is dated 1067, Shrewsbury 1071, Chester 1070, and Gloucester, *c.* 1067, and palatine powers were also given to the bishop of Durham.³⁸ These complemented other important areas controlled directly by the king. The cores of these areas are sometimes referred to in Domesday Book as *castellaria*. A castlery was an area of settlements around a castle, a district within which the distribution of land has been planned for its maintenance. Although several areas in the Welsh marches are mentioned, the Domesday record is far from complete.³⁹ There is no direct evidence for the existence of a castlery on the Isle of Wight but the circumstantial evidence has been assessed by Cahill. The presence of a castle is attested at Carisbrooke in 1086, not evidence of a castlery, but the most important element. The pattern of landholding indicates wide-scale manorial reorganisation of the Island, which had a much higher proportion than Hampshire.⁴⁰ Most manorial reorganisation on the Island would seem to be to facilitate improved efficiency in administration and revenue production, and this process can be seen to be largely associated with the power of Fitz Osbern and the creation of the honour and castlery of Carisbrooke.⁴¹ This castlery's extent two centuries later is illustrated by the distribution of fees and parts of fees 'pertaining to the castle' and due to Isabella de Fortibus in 1289–90 totalling nearly thirty-eight, distributed throughout the Island, and presumably representative of Fitz Osbern's reorganisation. Rigold observes that

Such a compact lordship as that of Wight is most exceptional in England and the 'castlery', the land held for the express maintenance of the head-castle is here unusually large and more nearly coextensive with the whole dominion than in any analogous instance.⁴²

William Fitz Osbern, the steward of the Conqueror's household, was one of the most powerful men in England after 1066. From late March until early December 1067 he acted with Odo of Bayeux as military regent of the area of England which had been subdued.⁴³ The castle at Carisbrooke was almost certainly built by him. The evidence from the 1976 to 1981 excavation indicates two early phases of castle construction; a relatively shallow ditch and rampart cutting off one quarter of the lower enclosure, was followed by a more substantial structure enclosing a slightly smaller area. An eleventh-century date is suggested for these two phases, with the construction of the present motte-and-bailey early in the twelfth century.⁴⁴ It is the first phase of the castle that can be linked with Fitz Osbern, a temporary defensive structure erected to secure control of the Island granted as a palatine earldom *c.* 1067.

The castle was established within a pre-existing fortification at the administrative and ecclesiastical centre of the Island. The castle site is in close association with Carisbrooke village. The shape of the settlement suggests a degree of planning in influencing its layout. The Ordnance Survey six-inch map of 1862–3 and the Tithe Apportionment map of 1846 (Fig. 2) show Carisbrooke as having a two-row regular plan, as does the survey of *c.* 1800,⁴⁵ but without the early nineteenth-century villas to the east and south-west. Between the Domesday entry for Bowcombe and the map of *c.* 1800 there are taxation documents that can suggest continuity or change in the settlement morphology. There were twenty-six taxpayers in Carisbrooke tithing in 1377–8, compared with twenty-one households in the hearth-tax returns of 1665. However, in 1522/3 there were only twelve taxpayers.⁴⁶ This figure does not disprove the hypothesis that the nineteenth-century morphology of Carisbrooke reflects much earlier settlement planning. At another site associated with Fitz Osbern, Monnow Street in Monmouth (below) was laid out before 1100, but there is archaeological and documentary evidence for the abandonment of burgages in the later middle ages which were afterwards reoccupied. Carisbrooke's fiscal record accords with the Island's depopulation in the later medieval period.⁴⁷

The nucleated settlement site described in the Bowcombe Domesday entry can be related to the nineteenth-century village plan. Twenty mesuages are mentioned adjacent to the church, which were inhabited by bordars. These were located east of the churchyard, where regular property divisions are shown on nineteenth-century maps. The south-eastern quarter of Carisbrooke has curving property boundaries suggestive of the

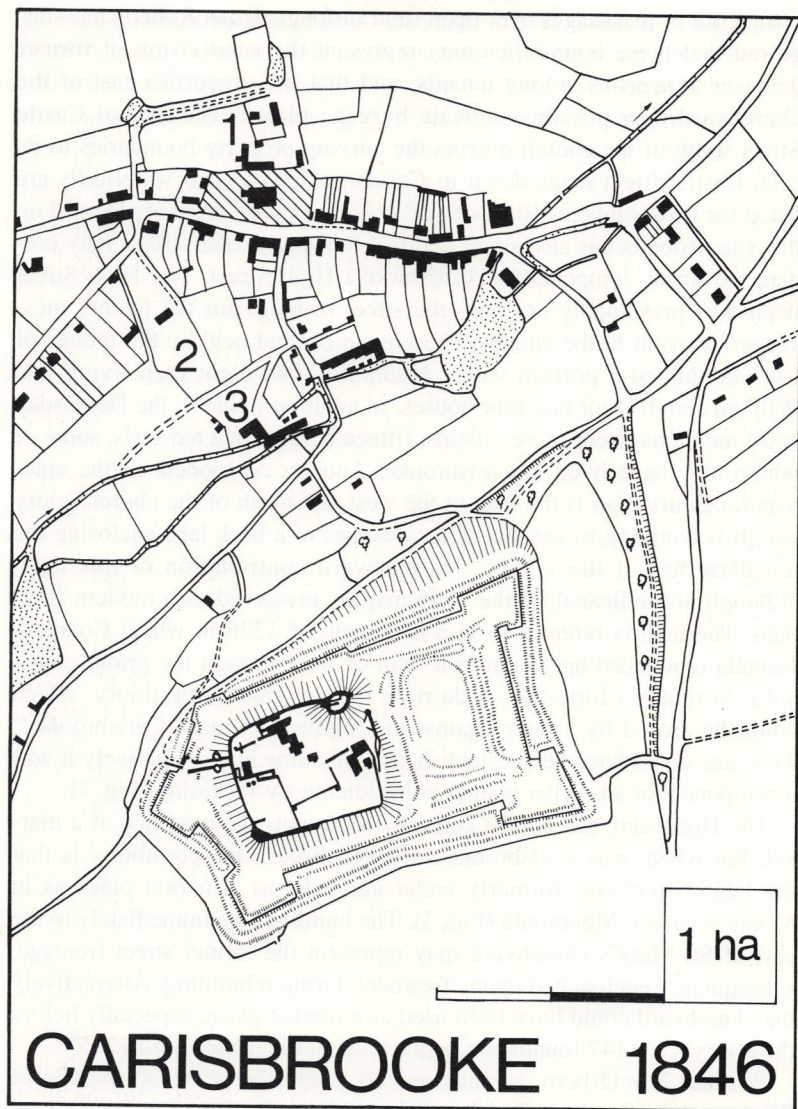


Fig 2. Carisbrooke in 1846, compiled from Tithe Apportionment map I.W.C.R.O. JER/T/78 and Ordnance Survey twenty-five inch map, 1898.

1. Priory Farm, 2. Site of Roman villa, 3. Carisbrooke mill.

setting out of messuages over open field furlongs. Brian Roberts has suggested that these boundaries may represent the subdivision of former demesne properties among tenants, and that the properties east of the churchyard may possibly indicate burgage plots.⁴⁸ The line of Castle Street south of the church mirrors the curving property boundaries to its east. Castle Street leads down to Carisbrooke mill; two watermills are listed for Bowcombe in 1086, one of which was very probably located on this site. Roberts has also suggested that this area of the village may pre-date the linear component of Carisbrooke High Street. The High Street itself was presumably not only the street frontage for the twenty messuages adjacent to the church. The virgate of land held by the monks of Lyre contained a portion where Humphrey had eight men living and William son of Azor had four houses; in addition to these, the Domesday entry mentions twenty-five villeins, fifteen bordars and ten serfs, some of whom may have lived in Carisbrooke. Another component of the nineteenth-century plan is the lane to the west and north of the church/priory site. It is tempting to see this as the vestiges of a back lane enclosing the northern half of the village. An eastward continuation of this lane, although not indicated on the 1846 map, is preserved as a modern footpath. The lane is referred to in a document of 1270 in which Countess Isabella renounced her claim to a right of way through the priory courtyard; in return a forty-foot wide right of way around the priory, which could be closed by a door against the highway through Carisbrooke.⁴⁹ This lane could have been established at this time but alternatively it was a component of an earlier plan as at Middleton-by-Pickering (Fig. 4).

The Domesday toll almost certainly represents the presence of a market, but where was Carisbrooke's market place? One possibility is that the High Street was formerly wider and used as a market place as in Monnow Street, Monmouth (Fig. 3). The building line immediately to the east of St. Mary's churchyard may represent the former street frontage, subsequently encroached upon elsewhere during rebuilding. Alternatively the churchyard could have been used as a market place, especially before the priory's *c.* 1147 foundation, a practice not illegalised until 1285.⁵⁰

William Fitz Osbern, as palatine earl, exercised power in the Isle of Wight and the Southern Welsh marches akin to the monarch. This power was exercised in the Carisbrooke area with the establishment of the castle which involved manorial reorganisation between Alvington and Bowcombe and the creation of a castlery. Fitz Osbern's control of the Island provides an appropriate context for settlement replanning within Bowcombe manor in association with the construction of the castle. The regular two-row plan of Carisbrooke could very probably date from this immediate post-conquest period, and would seem to have been in existence by 1086. Fitz Osbern was granted the Island *c.* 1067 and on 20

February 1071 was killed at the battle of Cassell. This provides a very limited date range, but it is possible that the settlement replanning occurred during the earldom of his son, whose estates and authority were forfeited to the Crown in 1076 as a consequence of his rebellion in the previous year.⁵¹ This hypothesis of settlement replanning at this date can be proven only by excavation. However, a comparison with other settlement sites developed or reorganised in the later eleventh century, especially those associated with William Fitz Osbern can strengthen the case for the planning of Carisbrooke during the time of the palatine earldom of Fitz Osbern and his son in Wight, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, which lasted less than a decade.

Fitz Osbern and the Welsh March

The centre of William Fitz Osbern's earldom in the Welsh marches was Hereford itself. By the eleventh century Hereford was a well-established town with a defensive perimeter dating from the early tenth century which supplemented a defensive enclosure of the ninth or even the eighth century.⁵² Discussing the archaeological evidence from the later Saxon period, Biddle states that:

The siting, size, internal layout and the inclusion of the cathedral all show that Hereford was a town, the rectangular outline of its defences and regularity of its street plan suggest that it was a deliberately planned foundation.⁵³

Fitz Osbern introduced laws and franchises based on the laws of his town of Breteuil in Normandy, and the great market place was resited to the north of Hereford shortly after the Conquest.⁵⁴ Hereford already had a castle in 1066; the palatine earldom of Hereford was a development of the defensive policy of Edward the Confessor, who had put Herefordshire under the control of his nephew Ralf in 1053. Ralf had attempted to organise the county as a frontier province, building Hereford Castle and encouraging the construction of further castles by other Norman French to discourage raids from Wales.⁵⁵

Although William Fitz Osbern would appear to have had an effect on the morphology of Hereford in planning the new market, it was an established town well before the eleventh century. In seeking parallels for the development of Carisbrooke, it is to the margins of the palatine earldom that we must first look, where there is evidence for the planning of small urban sites associated with the building or refortification of castles. At Ewyas Harold at the southern end of Golden Valley (Fig. 3) Domesday records that Earl William had refortified the castle, probably Pentecost's Castle referred to in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 1052. The site was

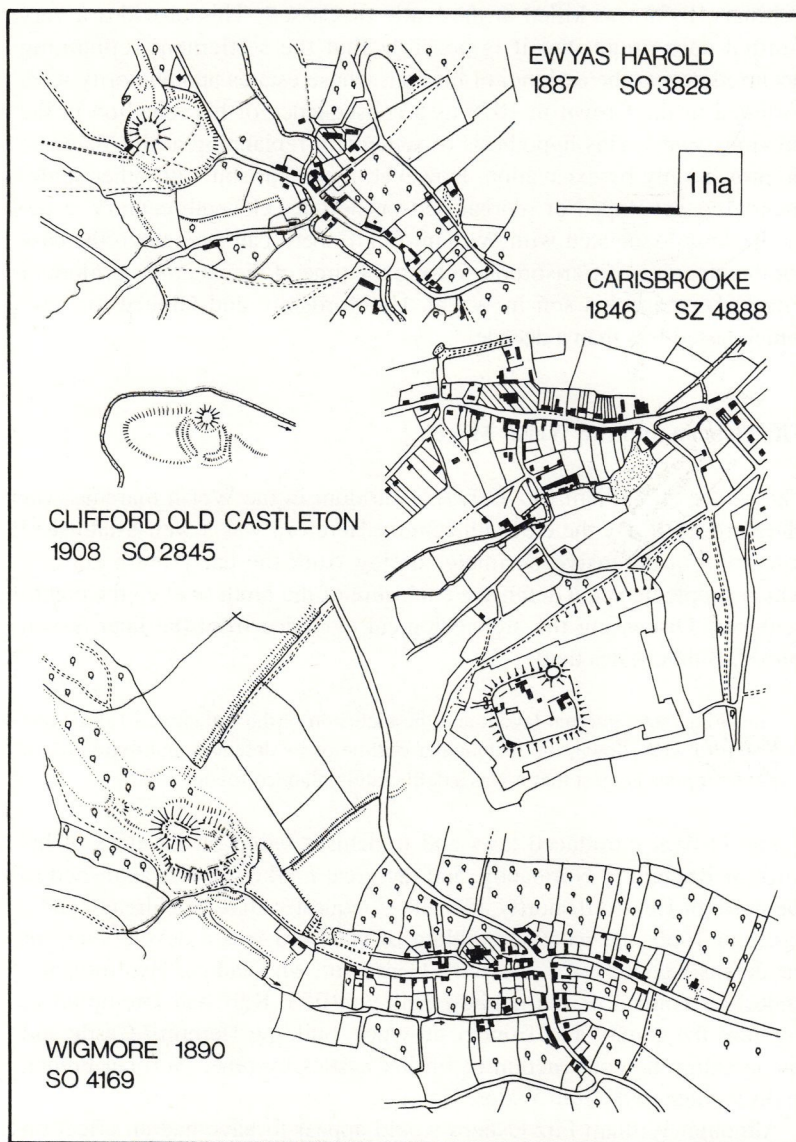
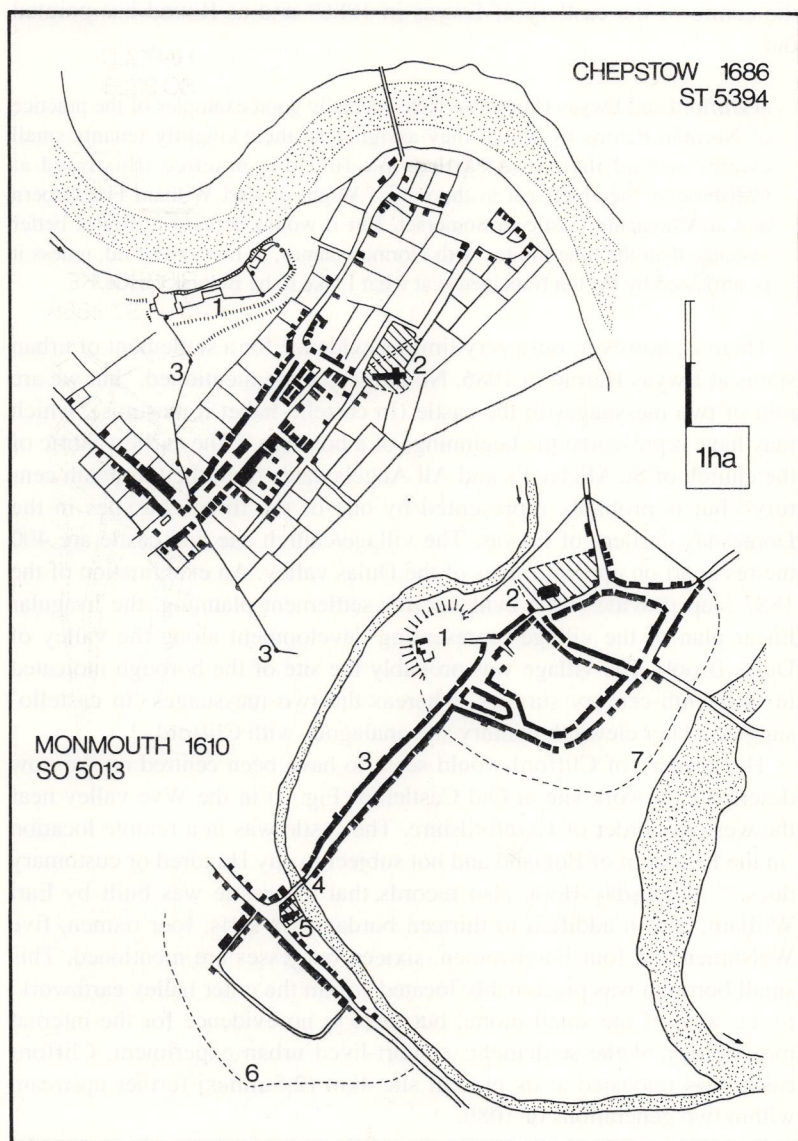


Fig 3a and b. Settlement Sites associated with William Fitz Osbern.



the centre of the castlery of Ewyas in 1086⁵⁶ and as Round has pointed out,

at Clifford and Ewyas Harold 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 Fitz Osbern and at Montacute Castle in Somerset. But it would be hard to find a better instance than the nine milites with Norman names, at Ewyas Harold, unless it is surpassed by the ten francigenae at what I take to be Belvoir Castle.⁵⁷

There is, however, only very limited evidence for a settlement of urban status at Ewyas Harold in 1086. No burgesses are mentioned, 'but we are told of two messuages in the castle (*In castello habet ii masuras*)' which may have represented the beginnings of a borough.⁵⁸ The earliest fabric of the church of St. Michael's and All Angels dates from the thirteenth century⁵⁹ but is probably represented by one of the three churches in the Domesday castlery of Ewyas. The village/church site and castle are 400 metres apart on opposite sides of the Dulas valley. An examination of the 1887 map provides little evidence for settlement planning, the irregular linear plan of the village representing development along the valley of Dulas Brook. The village was probably the site of the borough indicated in thirteenth-century surveys, whereas the two messuages '*in castello*' suggest a later eleventh-century site analagous with Clifford.

The castlery of Clifford would seem to have been centred on the now deserted earthwork site at Old Castleton (Fig. 3) in the Wye valley near the western border of Herefordshire. The castle was in a remote location 'in the Kingdom of England and not subject to any Hundred or customary dues.'⁶⁰ Domesday Book also records that the castle was built by Earl William, and in addition to thirteen bordars, six serfs, four oxmen, five Welshmen and four bondwomen, sixteen burgesses are mentioned. This small borough was presumably located within the outer bailey earthwork, to the west of the small motte, but there is no evidence for the internal morphology of the settlement; a short-lived urban experiment, Clifford castle was relocated at its present site 4km (2.5 miles) further upstream within two generations of 1086.

Earl William also built the Castle at Wigmore⁶¹ in the north-west of the county. The area had been of strategic importance well before the Conquest; the site of a Roman fort lies to the east of Bury Farm. It has been suggested that Wigmore was the site of the burh of Wigingamere, established by King Edward in 921.⁶³ One of the Domesday Book entries for Wigmore records that 'The Borough (Burgus) which is there pays £7', but gives no further details.⁶⁴ Renn suggests that the two parallel banks running north-eastwards from the castle site may have been

intended for a settlement enclosure, and another possible location for the borough is within the rectilinear earthwork on the ridge to the south-east of the castle site. Rowley,⁶⁵ however, claims that the later eleventh-century motte-and-bailey was in a different location just to the west of the church, but observations made during a field visit do not support this. The church of St. James does, however, contain a substantial amount of herringbone fabric in the north wall of the nave indicating a date of construction in the later eleventh century.⁶⁶ This, and an examination of the map of 1890 (Fig. 3) implies that the borough recorded in 1086 was located here, and not nearer the castle. The plan of Wigmore shows parallel property boundaries in the area to the south of the church running from the road down to a back lane. These can be interpreted as burgage plots, part of a small urban settlement, and many have involved the reorganization of an existing settlement.⁶⁷ Wigmore became the administrative centre for north-western Herefordshire at the time of Fitz Osbern and retained its urban status for nearly 800 years; the market hall stood at the head of the market place until the mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁸

William Fitz Osbern is also directly associated with other urban sites in the Welsh borderland. Wightman has shown that Fitz Osbern also had palatinate authority in Gloucestershire.⁶⁹ The immediate post-conquest period saw expansion from the southern Welsh march into Gwent, with newly-acquired possessions listed in the Gloucestershire Domesday folios. Chepstow, at the south of the river Wye was recorded in 1086 under the name of ESTRIGHOIEL, where Earl William had built the castle. Fitz Osbern's hall-keep survives as the core of the medieval castle and became the centre of the Lordship of Strigoil. Domesday Book goes on to say that 'in the time of his son, Earl Roger, this town paid £16'.⁷⁰ Roger of Hereford forfeited his possessions in 1076, providing a *terminus ante quem* for the foundation of the town. The establishment of a town may have involved the remodelling of an existing settlement for the present church of St. Mary was founded by 1077, and a bull of Pope Honorius states that the original church for Chepstow was at Llangynfarch. St. Mary's was formerly a Benedictine priory, a daughter house of Cormeilles, one of Fitz Osbern's two foundations in Normandy.⁷¹ The Port Wall enclosing the town was built at the end of the thirteenth century.⁷² The plan of the urban area within the walls presumably predates this and may represent the planning of a regular two-row settlement in association with the building of the priory and castle by William Fitz Osbern (Fig. 3).

Monmouth, further up the Wye valley, also had a castle by 1086, which was 'built in the time of Count William'.⁷³ The castle is at the highest point in the medieval town, overlooking the confluence of the Wye and Monnow valleys. The Normans were not the first to realize the

strategic importance of the area, nor the first to establish a settlement on this site. The Roman military site of *Blestium* was probably at or near Monmouth and evidence for occupation from the late first/early second century to the late fourth century has been found during recent excavations.⁷⁴ Property at 'Aber Myngui' during the eighth century is referred to in the *Book of Llandaf*, and there was a church dedicated to St. Cadoc, referred to in the foundation charter of Monmouth priory,⁷⁵ almost certainly of pre-conquest Celtic origin. Medieval Monmouth was thus on a pre-existing settlement site but attained urban status in the post-conquest era. There is no direct evidence for the presence of a town in association with the castle in the folios of *Domesday Book* and the earliest charter was a grant of privileges in 1256.⁷⁶

The morphology of Monmouth consists of three elements (Fig. 3):⁷⁷

First, the area within the line of the walls (constructed *c.* 1300 replacing earlier defences) contains the tightly-packed streets on the hilltop, the parish church of St. Mary, and Agincourt Square, known as the Market Place until 1830. St. Mary's was originally a Benedictine priory church of St. Florent, Saumur, which was dedicated in 1011–2, having been founded by Wihenoc, Fitz Osbern's successor from 1075 to 1082.⁷⁸

Secondly, the suburb of Overmonnow has a parish church dedicated to the twelfth-century martyr St. Thomas, despite which also claims documentary evidence for its existence in 1080. Overmonnow was enclosed on its landward side by a rampart and ditch known as the *Clawd Du* (black dike), the earliest phase of which would seem to post-date the twelfth century. Overmonnow is linked to the lower end of Monnow Street by the Monnow bridge of *c.* 1300.⁷⁹

Thirdly, Monnow Street runs north-eastwards from the bridge up to Agincourt Square. It has a distinctive boat shaped plan of a street laid out to accommodate a market. In the absence of evidence from excavation it would be assumed that this was a later addition to the hill-top town.

Recent development in Monnow Street has facilitated extensive excavation by the Monmouth Archaeological Society. This evidence questions the planning of the street as a secondary development to the hill-top town. The pottery is not incompatible with an origin in the later eleventh century.⁸⁰ Excavations at 69/71 Monnow Street, half-way along the street's northern side, have produced well-stratified eleventh- and twelfth-century coins, and an archeomagnetic dating from a hearth at number 69 falling in the range of 1070 $\times$ 1130 AD.⁸¹ As Beresford pointed out long before these excavations, Monmouth Castle was built *c.* 1070 by William Fitz Osbern at the same time as Wigmore, Clifford, Ewyas Harold and Chepstow. 'At Wigmore and Clifford the castles sheltered a chartered borough so that it would not be impossible for the towns of Chepstow and Monmouth to date from the same period'.⁸²

Two other settlement sites in the area of the Welsh Marches controlled by William Fitz Osbern invite comparison with Carisbrooke. There is no firm evidence for either site being urban settlements by 1086 but both Richard's Castle and Kilpeck were regular two-row settlements in close association with motte-and-bailey castles. They are both located within the palatine earldom of Hereford, but neither were under the direct control of Earl William from the evidence of Domesday Book.

Richard's Castle is located in the north of Herefordshire overlooking the valley of the River Teme. The pre-conquest castle was known as AVRETUNE in 1086 and was the centre of a castlery.⁸³ The morphology of the now almost deserted site consists of the following elements (Fig. 4); the castle and a large enclosure contains the Norman church of St. Bartholomew, and earthworks, indicating a regular two-row settlement in association with a possible market place. The earthworks enclosing the town contained eleventh- or twelfth-century pottery suggesting that the charter granted by King John in 1216 for a fair and market, recognised an existing situation rather than achievement of urban status.⁸⁴ Possibly, at least some of the relatively high population recorded in 1086 lived within a recently-planned settlement at the centre of the castlery.⁸⁵

The motte-and-bailey castle and shrunken village of Kilpeck is located in the Archenfield area of the county, south-west of Hereford. No mention was made of the castle in 1086 but 'in view of the important earthworks still extant at Kilpeck and of the position occupied by its lord and his descendants it is probable that in spite of Domesday's silence the castle was already in existence'.⁸⁶ In close association with the castle and church are the earthworks of the settlement, two regular toft compartments either side of the road enclosed by a bank (Fig. 4). Kilpeck is usually considered as the site of a village, but it has recently been pointed out that the size of the settlement site suggests that the planner of Kilpeck had ambitions that it should become a town.⁸⁸ It is not known who planned this regular two-row settlement but a possible candidate is William Fitz Norman, the most significant landholder in Archenfield in 1086, where 'King Gruffydd and Bleddyn laid this land waste before 1066.'⁸⁹

Other Marcher Areas

So far this survey has examined possible parallels for the planning of Carisbrooke in the area controlled by William Fitz Osbern in the Welsh Marches. In a wider context of other marcher areas further examples of regular, linear planned towns in association with early castles can be cited.

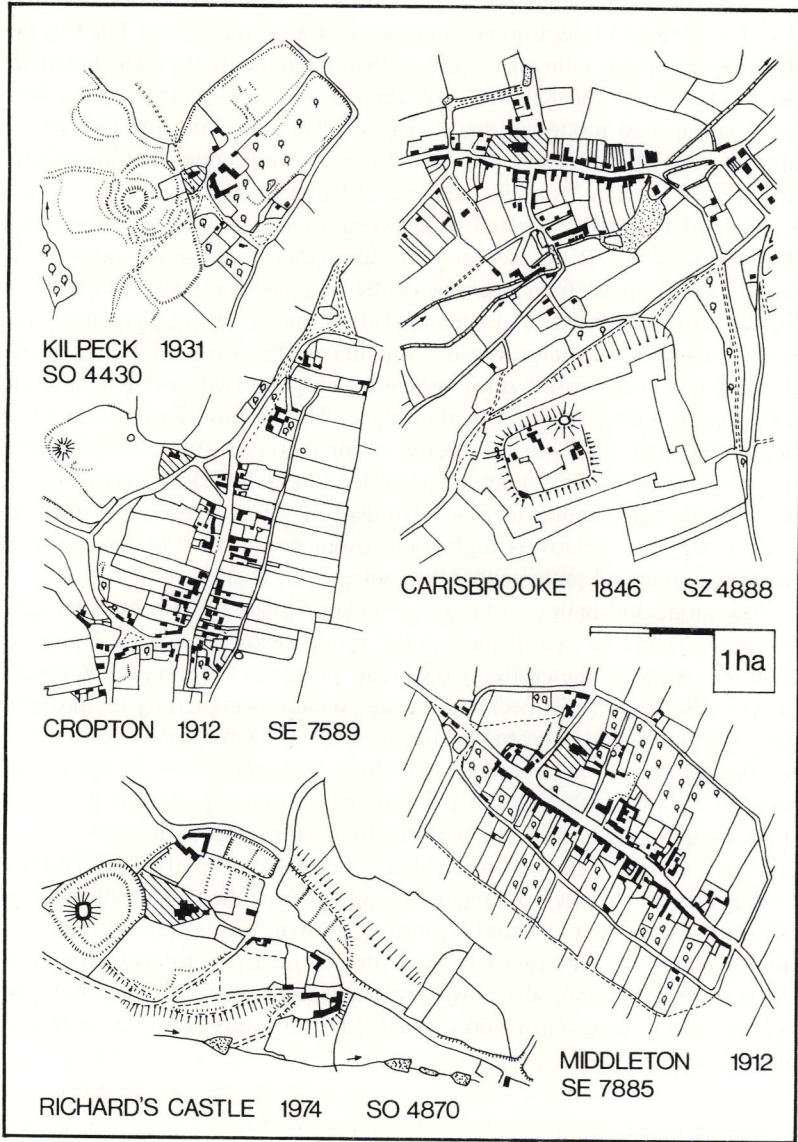


Fig 4. Carisbrooke and other comparative sites.

Roger of Montgomery was granted the Sussex Rapes of Arundel and Chichester in 1067–8 and the Earldom of Shrewsbury in 1071.⁹⁰ At Arundel, both castle and borough were recorded in 1086. The Norman town seems to have been a double-row linear settlement, splaying out into a (now encroached upon) triangular area, the probable market place.⁹¹ Within the palatine earldom of Shrewsbury, Roger de Lacy began to build the castle of Ludlow in 1086. The earliest element in the extensive planned town of Ludlow was Dilham, to the south of the castle, where the two north–south lanes pre-date 1130.⁹² Robert, Count of Eu received the castlery of Hastings of 1070. Like Dilham (Ludlow) the Norman town consisted of two parallel streets. High Street and All Saints Street terminated in a market place at the northern end of the town of c. 1069, replacing an earlier port submerged by the sea.⁹³ These examples of planned, linear early Norman towns in marcher areas could possibly be supplemented by an example from the Earldom of Chester. Rhuddlan was a small borough in 1086 with eighteen burgesses which had been founded c. 1073 by Robert, the cousin of Hugh of Avranches, Earl of Chester. However, very little is known about the morphology of Norman Rhuddlan as it was superseded by the town established by Edward I.⁹⁴

The urban plantations of the marcher areas in the first phase after the Conquest can be shown to have linear groundplans, where the settlement form can be discerned. The predominant plan was the regular two-row, either side of a single street. Plans based on two parallel streets (Ludlow? and Hastings) represent an elaboration of this simple linear plan.

Two-Row Villages

All of the above examples which can be dated were settlement sites planned as small towns in close association with castles in the immediate post-conquest era. The phenomenon of settlement reorganisation during this time can also be seen in other areas resulting in the creation of regular two-row villages. The predominant settlement form in the Solway Plain and Eden Valley areas of Cumbria, and in north-eastern England is the regular two-row plan, either with or without greens.⁹⁵ These settlements in northern England, although geographically distant from the castle-boroughs of the marcher areas of the south and the Welsh borderland, provide comparative material for the planning of two-row settlements in the early Norman period.

A study of village plans in a small part of north-eastern England, in Pickering district of the North Riding of Yorkshire, identified eighteen villages which were planned from a total of twenty-nine. This was based on map work. A re-evaluation of these sites on the ground has led to the

identification of a further five which were planned and another two possibilities. 'Thus, twenty-three, or perhaps twenty-five, out of twenty-nine adjacent villages in a small area of North Yorkshire seem to have been planned from the outset.'⁹⁶ These planned villages in the Pickering district can be illustrated by two examples. (Fig. 4)

Middleton-by-Pickering is a regular two-row village with its back lanes separating toft compartments from the former open field strips enclosed in 1765.⁹⁷ The plan of the village was formerly more symmetrical, the line of an older back lane on the southern side of the village being preserved by a footpath. Middleton is unique amongst these villages in Pickering district in having a pre-conquest church site within the planned area.⁹⁸ Cropton is slightly less regular in layout and has only one back lane, the lack of which on the western side is explained by the local topography: Church Lane to the south-east of the motte-and-bailey castle, follows a shallow valley. St. Gregory's church is on the margins of the village, outside the planned area.

'A pattern of almost total disengagement between planned settlements and primary parochial centres' in the Pickering district, implies that the planning of villages was secondary to the establishment of older church sites.⁹⁹ Documentary evidence suggests that these planned villages existed by the later thirteenth century, and the presence of ridge and furrow within the tofts on the northern side of Middleton implies the planning of the village over open fields.¹⁰⁰ The most likely context for settlement planning in Pickering district, and generally in north-eastern England, is the new political masters' actions in developing their estates after 'the Harrying of the North' by William I in 1069/70. 'Over one-half of the villis of the North Riding and over one-third of those of the East and West Ridings were wholly or partially waste' as a result of this deliberate destruction. Kapelle has shown that these conclusions from the Yorkshire Domesday folios do not portray the full extent of the Harrying and has argued that in the 1070s the Norman barons used their power to change the manorial structure of many northern communities, capitalising on the desperate conditions which they had created.¹⁰¹ The physical replanning of rural settlements is not examined by Kapelle but is compatible with his argument:

Only during the 1070s and early 1080s did conditions make possible the impositions of new burdens on the peasants of Yorkshire. Once these years of starvation had passed, the Norman lords no longer held the upper hand. If they were to develop their remaining waste estates, they had to attract peasants by offering them easy terms.¹⁰²

There is a possibility of two phases of village planning in Yorkshire, namely the restoration of lowland estates during the 1070s, perhaps involving the relocation of survivors of the Harrying from remoter areas,

and the attraction of tenants from elsewhere through offers of favourable terms. The main phase of the latter would have been after 1086, possibly mainly during the succeeding half century.¹⁰³ Considering the anomalous position of the church at Middleton within the planned villages of Pickering district, it is perhaps not without coincidence that the tower of St. Mary's church was rebuilt in the later eleventh century.¹⁰⁴

The planning of regular, linear rural settlements can be seen in other areas subject to Norman militant colonialism, as a consequence of the conquest of the Upper Eden Valley of Cumbria by William Rufus in 1092, and the creation of 'Little England beyond Wales' in southern Pembrokeshire by Norman knights in the twelfth century.¹⁰⁵ However, not all regular two-row plans originate in this period. This type of plan can be identified from now deserted Romano-British sites, for example Chisenbury Warren, Wiltshire, and Fotheringay, Northamptonshire.¹⁰⁶ The plan of Lyng, Somerset, probably originated as a small later ninth-century burh, and the plan of Heytesbury, Wiltshire, represents a small thirteenth-century town added to an existing village.¹⁰⁷ Of the other regular two-row plans identified on the Isle of Wight, *c.* 1800, a study of documentary sources suggests infilling of irregular linear plans at Brading in the later fourteenth century, and Newchurch in the sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. Upper Ryde's morphology was the result of the development of an agricultural village as a watering place in the later eighteenth century.

Conclusions

Many regular double-row settlement plans originate in the later eleventh century and the study of settlements in other marcher areas and in areas replanned after 'the Harrying of the North' provide comparative material. The hypothesis of settlement planning of Carisbrooke by William Fitz Osbern or possibly his son, Roger of Hereford, between 1067 and 1076 can only be proven conclusively by excavation. However, comparison with the sites reviewed above suggest that a regular linear settlement, especially one associated with an administrative centre and early castle site controlled by a marcher lord, would have been planned in the later eleventh century.

A model of the development of the Bowcombe/Carisbrooke area can be put forward, derived from previous research and the above hypothesis.

1. The function of the area as a 'central place' for the Isle of Wight can be identified tentatively for the Iron Age. This function was accentuated during the Romano-British period indicated by the establishment

of villas in the Lukely Valley. The presence of a later Roman fort on the castle site remains a possibility. Its existence has not been entirely disproved by excavation.

2. The probable use or re-use of the castle site as a fortification in the sixth century, the establishment of the Bowcombe Down pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery site overlooking the Lukely Valley, and the evolution from Carisbrooke Romano-British villa to the nearby minster church site emphasizes 'a landscape of continuity.'¹⁰⁸
3. By the later Anglo-Saxon period the area had re-emerged as a 'central place' for the Island. Bowcombe was a hundredal centre for practically the whole of the Isle of Wight, its primary ecclesiastical centre and a royal vill overlooked by a burh. The settlement pattern over the Island remained dispersed although there were small agglomerations around some pre-conquest church sites.
4. The building of a castle and creation of a castlery was associated with the planning of a linear settlement by 1086, and probably by 1076. This produced the first substantial nucleated settlement on the Isle of Wight, a settlement which can be regarded as a small town.¹⁰⁹ Like Middleton-by-Pickering and Monmouth, Carisbrooke was planned along a pre-existing routeway and incorporated a much older church site.
5. The establishment of Newport by Baldwin de Redvers II between 1177 and 1184 with its rectilinear street plan and market place, involved the transfer of Carisbrooke's market function to the new town at the head of the Medina estuary. Carisbrooke remained the ecclesiastical, administrative and defensive centre of the Island.

The later eleventh century saw the creation of many simple linear settlement plans in several parts of England. Two distinctive categories of these plans can be identified. Carisbrooke can be seen as an example of a planned small town alongside an early castle site created by a marcher lord. Such towns represented a localized reorganisation of the populations and have a similarity of form, but not function, to the much more widespread planning of villages in northern England. The creation of both, however, represent the subjugation and redevelopment of the peripheral areas of early Norman England.

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- ⁷⁴ I. Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* (Chichester, 1983), p. 181; Clarke, *Archaeology in Wales* 27, p. 30.
- ⁷⁵ Soulsby, *Towns of Medieval Wales*, p. 181; Beresford, *New Towns*, p. 560.
- ⁷⁶ Soulsby, *Towns of Medieval Wales*, p. 183.
- ⁷⁷ The plan of Monmouth is a transcription of John Speed's map of 1610. Speed's map is impressionistic so is not accurate, but is useful in that it shows Monmouth before nineteenth century changes.
- ⁷⁸ Soulsby, *Towns of Medieval Wales*, p. 183; K. Kissack, *The Building of Monmouth* (Monmouth, 1989); D.M.C. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses* (London, 2nd ed. 1971), p. 7.
- ⁷⁹ Church guide, no reference given; S. Clarke, 'Clawdd Du. Monmouth', *Archaeology, in Wales*, 6 (1966); Clarke, *Archaeology in Wales* 27, p. 30.
- ⁸⁰ Clarke, *ibid.*
- ⁸¹ Monmouth Archaeological Society, *Discoveries in Monnow Street, Monmouth* (Monmouth, 2nd ed. 1990).
- ⁸² Beresford, *New Towns*, p. 560.
- ⁸³ Thorne and Thorne, *Herefordshire Domesday*, p. 185b.
- ⁸⁴ M. Salter, *The Castles of Herefordshire and Worcestershire* (Wolverhampton, 1989), p. 40; D.M. Wilson and D.G. Hurst, 'Richard's Castle', *Medieval Archaeology*, ix (1965), p. 190.
- ⁸⁵ Thorne and Thorne, *Herefordshire Domesday*, 185b, 186d.

⁸⁶ V.C.H. Hereford, p. 273.

⁸⁷ Taylor and Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, p. 350.

⁸⁸ R. Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (London, 1989), pp. 461–2.

⁸⁹ Thorne and Thorne, *Herefordshire Domesday*, 181a.

⁹⁰ Mason, *Sussex Archaeological Collection*, CII, pp. 76–7; Darby, *Domesday England*, p. 328.

⁹¹ Renn, *Norman Castles*, p. 94; Beresford, *New Towns*, p. 492.

⁹² Hindle, *Study of Medieval Towns*, p. 27.

⁹³ Mason, *Sussex Archaeological Collection*, CII, p. 75; Beresford, *New Towns*, p. 494.

⁹⁴ Soulsby, *Towns of Medieval Wales*, p. 228.

⁹⁵ B.K. Roberts, 'Rural settlement and regional contrasts; questions of continuity and colonisation', *Rural History* 1, (1990), p. 51–71.

⁹⁶ P. Allerston, 'English village development – findings from the Pickering district of North Yorkshire', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, LI, (1970), pp. 95–109; C. Taylor, *Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement in England* (London 1983), p. 138.

⁹⁷ J. McDonnell, 'After the Middle Ages: agriculture and settlement' in *The North York Moors Landscape Heritage*, eds. D.A. Spratt and B.J.D. Harrison (Newton Abbot, 1989), pp. 113–40.

⁹⁸ Morris, *Churches in the Landscape*, p. 246.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Allerston, *T.I.B.G.* LI, p. 102; field visit, May 1990.

¹⁰¹ H.C. Darby and I.S. Maxwell, *The Domesday Geography of Northern England* (Cambridge, 1962), p. 445; W.E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: The Region and its Transformation* (London, 1979), pp. 161–3.

¹⁰² Kapelle, *Norman Conquest of the North*, p. 181.

¹⁰³ J.A. Sheppard, 'Medieval village planning in Northern England: some evidence from Yorkshire', *Journal of Historical Geography*, II, (1, 1976), pp. 3–20.

¹⁰⁴ Morris, *Churches in the Landscape*, p. 246.

¹⁰⁵ Roberts, *The Making of the English Village*, pp. 176–7, 199.

¹⁰⁶ Taylor, *Village and Farmstead*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁷ D. Hill, 'The Burghal Hidage-Lyng', *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, CXL (1967), pp. 64–6; J. Haslam, *Wiltshire Towns – The Archaeological Potential* (Devizes, 1976), p. 25.

¹⁰⁸ A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester 1986), pp. 341–3.

¹⁰⁹ Late eleventh-century Carisbrooke would appear to be a recently planned settlement at about the urban threshold. Of the twelve criteria listed by Heighway for defining an urban settlement, Bowcombe-Carisbrooke can be seen to have had a market, a role as a central place, and plots and houses of 'urban' type, and although not having a planned street-system, had planned settlement components; C.M. Heighway, ed., *The Erosion of History – Archaeology and Planning in Towns* (London, 1972), p. 3.8–10; Biddle, *Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 100; B.P. Hindle, *Medieval Town Plans* (Princes Risborough, 1990), p. 10.