

## Fields in landscapes

### 1 Enclosure as a process

Among the earliest records of land use in Suffolk are the descriptions of the estate of Sibton Abbey recorded in its Extents. These are lists of the land it owned between 1325 and 1525. They are presented as descriptions because this period predates the age of accurate map making, which only began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The following descriptions describe three pieces of land listed sequentially at North Grange.

*1 piece of land- le Longelond- under the wood of Portar- 5 acres, 1 rod, 1 perch.*

*1 piece of land- le Schortelond- at the north end of the last one- 3 and a half acres, 30 perches.*

*Le tilehouscroft- 20 acres, 4 perches= 'strong' land (fortis) but 'communis pro omnibus bladis'*

The Extents describe a variety of territorial divisions, some enclosed and some unenclosed. An enclosed piece of land would be the equivalent of a modern field under cultivation for a particular crop and owned or rented by a particular individual. An unenclosed area would be a piece of land owned or rented by a particular individual amongst the lands of others in an 'open field'. The abbey text would suggest that the terms, 'culture', 'enclosure', 'croft' and 'pittell' are all enclosed, whilst pieces not so described are strips in open fields. 'Cultures' are almost always described as lying in 'crofts'; there may be one, two or three of them, but together they form single units. Enclosures frequently bear names with the suffix 'croft', and 'pittells' are described by the author of English Place Name Elements as small enclosures. These four names therefore hold together as a distinct category. Both 'feld' and 'lond' imply strip cultivation. (A. H. Smith, English Place Name Elements, 2 vols 1956).

Names ending in 'hagh' or 'hawe' are difficult to place in either category of enclosed or unenclosed; the suffix means a hedge, but this does not necessarily mean that the piece was enclosed all round by hedges, it may well have been the strip in an open field lying next to the hedge.

The following table lists five of the abbey's outlying farms, known as granges, with the areas in acres rods and perches of enclosed lands (first group) and unenclosed lands (second group), selected as such from their names. The table was compiled by A H Denney from an Extent drawn up under Sibton's Abbot Eustace in 1325. Assuming that only the above four names imply enclosure the following table shows the proportions of enclosed to unenclosed arable in the chief units of arable land of the extents:

	a.	r.	p.	a.	r.	p.
Jurdyz	67	2	5	83	3	4
Falsham	41	$\frac{1}{2}$	31	$56\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	14
Cookley	$114\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	21	97	1	22
North Grange	311	1	$6\frac{1}{2}$	$218\frac{1}{2}$	2	6
South Grange	$131\frac{1}{2}$	1	26	$641\frac{1}{2}$	$3\frac{1}{2}$	18

It indicates that the early part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century represents a midway stage in the enclosure of open fields, which then varied from one sixth of the total arable land at South Grange to over a half at North Grange. These two granges

were closest to the abbey. The high proportion of unenclosed land at South Grange is hard to account for since it had been demesne land of the abbey since its foundation in 1150; but since it was further from the abbey itself than North Grange it may well have been the chief area of habitation in Sibton Manor and so have been broken up by the tenants' holdings.

According to Denney, such a table, based upon field names, may well be inaccurate, but the enclosed land will certainly not be less than the figures given.

The next markers of progress in the enclosure of the Suffolk rural landscape appeared 500 years later in the form of the tithe maps, which for the Blything parishes were mostly made in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from relatively small areas of open common land, by this time all of the open arable fields had been enclosed. The density of hedgerows had reached a peak and the character of the countryside remained dominated by these tree-lined divisions until the 1960s, when fields began to be enlarged to take advantage of the profitability of large-scale drainage and mechanisation.

## 2 Linstead a landscape model

### 2.1 The landscape 1971

In 1971 Norman Scarfe wrote the following description of Linstead for his book on the Suffolk landscape in the 'Making of the English Landscape' series.

*Linstead Magna and Linstead Parva are broad clay farmlands with low slopes above two of the headwaters of the Blyth. They lie between the unswerving Roman road at Cratfield and the Romano-British settlement-site at Chediston—a parish of notably rectilinear boundaries, a mile or two west of Halesworth. Sibton Abbey had a grange in Linstead Parva, and a survey of its seventy-four acres in 1325 shows an enclosed arable landscape closely identifiable with that of Abbey Farm today. "Thirty perches lying detached beside le Grenemere" in 1325 probably referred to what is nowadays still called in Suffolk a 'Grimmer', a very murky green pond. (It might also be an early reference to a Green, for the pond just north of Abbey Farm does lie beside Morrell Haugh Green.) The two other Greens in Linstead Parva are of the fairly numerous, but easily overlooked, roadside-verge type, such as Hightown Green at Rattlesden. These two at Linstead Parva, Blacksmith's Green and Collipy's, lie along the fairly busy valley road, with its natural water supply. This little valley road explains why Linstead Parva, with the smaller acreage, has had the larger population at least since the Census began in 1801.*

*Linstead's nineteenth-century population rose and declined less than most of the rural parishes of the central clays. In Magna, the numbers varied between ninety and 120, reaching a peak of 134 in 1811. It has now settled down at about fifty. Parva, along the valley road, climbed to 227 in 1861, but has dwindled to a hundred or so in 1971. White's 1855 Directory shows something of the anatomy of this community in its Victorian heyday. Felix Godfrey, in Linstead Parva, appeared proudly as 'threshing-machine owner'. Little Linstead may be remote, but its farming industry is well abreast of the times. The other villagers then included the victualler of the Greyhound, the blacksmith, the tailor, the boot-and-shoe maker, and a cooper, as well as seven farmers: a community as self-contained as that very early one at West Stow (and early Anglo Saxon settlement), and with of course a great deal more craftsmanship and skill in working the land.*

Since then, the decline in numbers may have been accompanied by a decline in sense of community. The Greyhound has lately reverted, through lack of business, to a private dwelling; but motor-cars and bikes had already rendered redundant the two old footpaths that converged on the Greyhound across the fields from far-off easterly and westerly farmsteads and hamlets. The small wooden Village Hall, close by, can hardly be reckoned a substitute. Nor is the garage, now occupying (as in so many villages) the site of the blacksmith's shop, a full replacement for the smithy of those days when the routine of the farm, and the management of the fields, were so largely centred on the horses. Tailoring and shoemaking are supplanted by the impersonal reach-me-down of the towns, and coopering has withdrawn to the big breweries. But Linstead Parva's gardens and farms are as trim and well-cared-for as ever they can have been, and Mr Keeble's tall roof of dark blue glazed pantiles at Poplar Farm reflects the gleam of the sky in an unmistakable North Suffolk way. And the little medieval church at the crossroads, tucked otherwise so inconveniently into the far eastern corner of the parish, is lovingly kept even if it fills with parishioners and their friends only for the harvest festival, the one really holy time left in the Suffolk year.

The last remains of Linstead Magna's church in the fields were removed in the 1960s, and the people of both parishes speak just of 'Linstead' now, as they did in the early Middle Ages before the two parishes were created. Such regular churchgoers as there are in 'Magna' tend to go to Cratfield church, which is nearer. Otherwise Linstead holds its own. The Hall of Linstead Magna, its structure basically sixteenth-century, stands near the very large moat of the earlier house, and above an enormous pond, almost a lake. One of Dr St Joseph's photographs of the site shows earlier rectangular field-ditches around the Hall, that probably betray only medieval stockyard arrangements. There is no proper sense in which the site should be listed, as it is in Beresford and Hurst's book (p. 203), 'a deserted medieval village'.

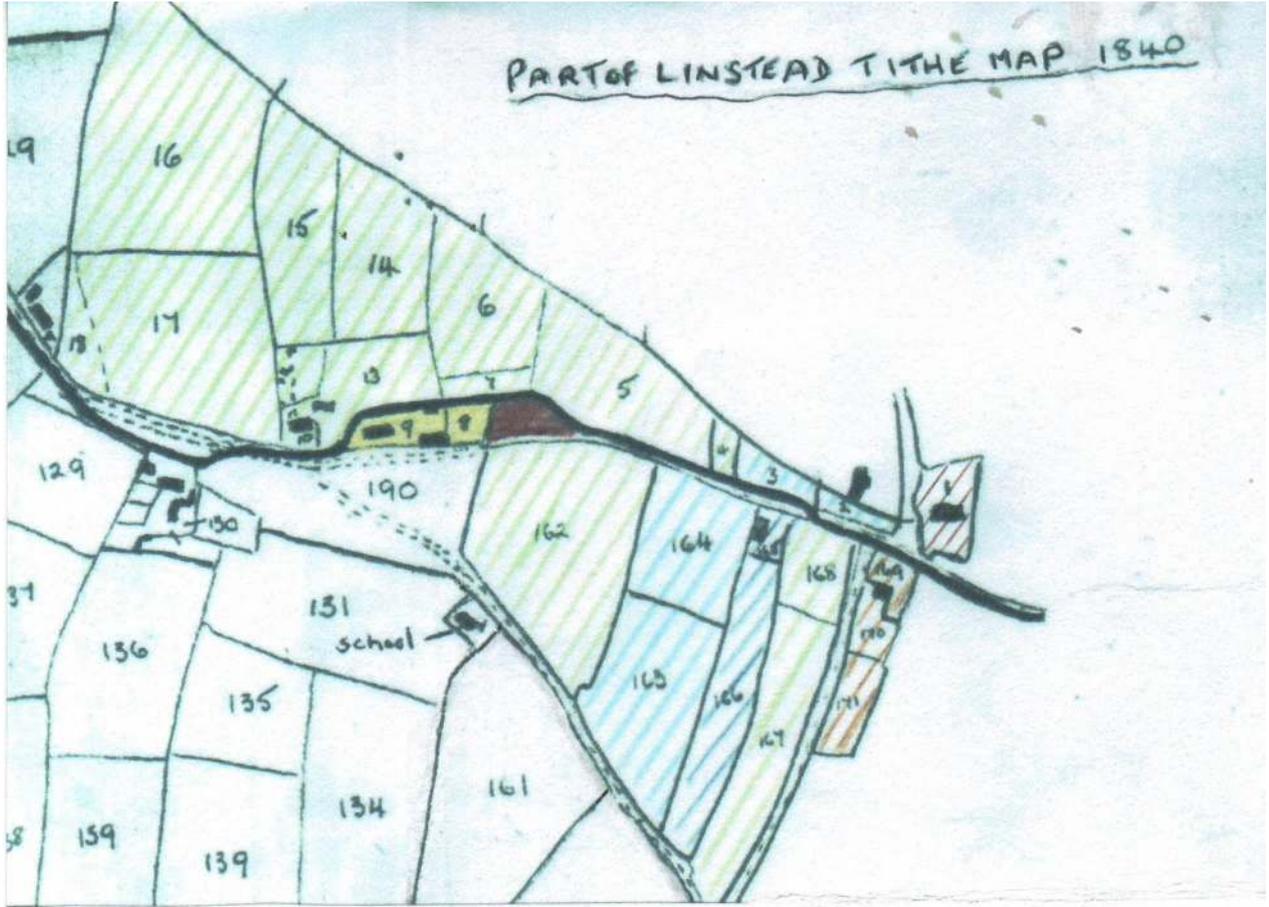
The large clay fields, deep-ditched and drained, are now farmed as part of a neighbouring estate. Linstead Magna Hall is occupied by two parents, and a son, and his grandmother. Father and son motor in to work in the new factory at Halesworth. Granny looks after a very pretty old-fashioned front garden. The countryside has changed. Even at Linstead, whose name implies that flax was grown here by its first cultivators before the coming of the Normans, and whose heavy fields would anyway turn over only for a very tough plough-team (however mechanised), the land is still fully productive.

*Scarfe, Norman, . The Suffolk Landscape pp 238-40 Hodder & Staughton, London*

Scarfe's view can be augmented by the social history entries for the two Linsteads in this wiki. As far as the field patterns are concerned the following account indicates how the landscape character has changed over the centuries.

This analysis begins in the north east corner of the parish of Linstead Parva as it was in a small section of the Tithe Map of 1840. Here there were 26 compartments that were in the ownership of 7 individuals and tenanted by 8 people. A particularly interesting feature is that the enclosure labelled (1) is the site of Linstead Parva's parish church and churchyard which are actually in Chediston, the next parish to the East.

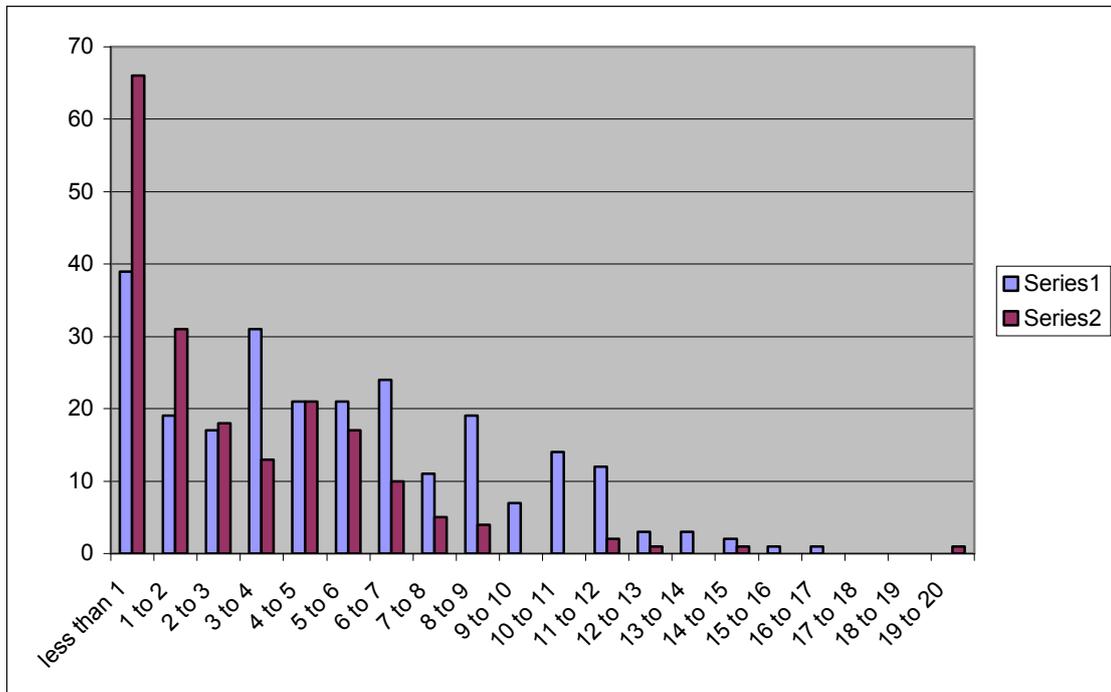
PART OF LINSTED TITHE MAP 1840



Owner	Tenant
 Withersdale Parish	
 Thomas Bryant	Himself
 Betsey Tallent	Charles Ingate
 George Parkyns	Charles Ingate
 Rev. Blois Turner	John Chipperfield
 Linstead Parish	John Chipperfield
 Lord Huntingfield	William Hart Felix Godfrey William Cutts William Potter

Another unusual element is the small parcel of land that belonged to Withersdale parish. This is considered in the [Linstead Parva section](#) of the Blything wiki.

Overall, it is the variation in sizes and shapes of the compartments in this small piece of Linstead Parva that stands as a model for comparing the entire landscape character of both Linsteads. This is expressed in the following histogram which compares the number of compartments for Linstead Magna (series 1) with those for Linstead Parva (series 2), in 1 acre categories.



The main difference between the villages is that in the 1840s the latter parish was characterised by having a large proportion of smaller compartments, particularly those under 2 acres. The smaller fields probably reflect its historically larger population of small holders, who on the basis of their small share of the open fields were allocated small fields on enclosure of the (e.g. the long narrow fields numbered 166 & 167 in the above map).