Undulating Estate Farmlands

**Key Characteristics**

- Undulating arable landscape
- Large villages on the edges of the area, but within it only scattered hamlets and occasional farmsteads
- Important stock of medieval moated sites, and of medieval and Tudor timber-framed and brick buildings
- Large fields, often with insubstantial hedges, resulting from 19th-century enclosure of extensive common. Especially in the western half
- Field pattern elsewhere rationalised by estate ownership
- Oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees
- Plantation woods in the areas of late enclosure, but some significant ancient woods in the northern parts.

**Location**

This landscape type occurs in the upper Stour valley on the undulating higher land between the valleys (i.e. the ‘interfluves’). It is found in these 4 relatively small areas:

- between the valleys of the Chilton Stream and Stour (Clare to Wixoe and north to the Bradleys)
- between the Stour and the Stour Brook (on the north side of Haverhill and north to the Bradleys)
- between the Stour Brook and the Bumpstead Brook (south-east of Haverhill)
- between the Bumpstead Brook and some of its tributaries (west of Steeple Bumpstead)

**LDUs:** 303-127E (Stoke by Clare), 303-127W (Stoke by Clare), 304-69 (Steeple Bumpstead), and 304-88 (Steeple Bumpstead).

**Geology, soils and landform**

The chalky boulder clay or till deposited by the great Anglian Glaciation forms the foundation of this area, but it is dissected, relatively deeply, by streams and rivers. The result is a landscape that undulates, sometimes strongly, in contrast to the landscape of the north Suffolk claylands, which have very little relative relief. The soils are...
predominately Hanslope clays that are relatively free draining because of the slopes that they lie on and their composition.

Archaeology

The cropmark of a Neolithic causewayed enclosure on a promontory in a bend of the Stour at Kedington suggests that this area had sufficient agricultural communities by 3000 BC to undertake the building of monuments of a ritual nature. Cropmarks of ring-ditches (indicating flattened Bronze Age burial mounds) at Great Bradley and Withersfield show a continuing human presence in the 2nd millennium BC. A Late Iron Age wine amphora found at Kedington in the 19th century probably came from the burial of a local chieftain. A later, Roman, amphora was found at Great Wratting.

On the western outskirts of Haverhill there are the enigmatic earthworks called Haverhill Castle. A manor called le Castell or Castell-hall was held in the late 14th and early 15th centuries by the earls of Stafford, as co-heirs of the great feudal Honor of Clare. In 1302/3 this had been held by a Roger de Nevyle, as a tenant of Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester. A document of 1338 refers to le Castlegate and Castelfeld and a fee called Nevilesse, once held by a Gilbert de Nevilla. A Gilbert de Nivella or de Neiella is named, c.1152-73, as one of the ‘barons and other faithful men’ of the de Clares who had made a donation to their new priory at Stoke-by-Clare – in Gilbert’s case he had given the tithes of his land at Haverhill. The earthworks look more like a moated site than a castle, but may be the remains of a small, non-standard, defensive site belonging to the civil war period in the reign of King Stephen.

A number of other, more standard, medieval moated sites also occur across this landscape – see below in the Settlement section.

Settlement

The town of Haverhill and a number of substantial villages, such as Kedington, Steeple Bumpstead, Clare, and Stoke-by-Clare, lie on the edges of this landscape type, but within it, settlement occurs mainly in widely spaced small greens or small linear hamlets (often called ‘ends’ or ‘streets’), with a scattering of dispersed farmsteads, sometimes moated. This settlement pattern is a reflection of the farming history of this area, with a higher incidence of common fields resulting in a tendency for nucleated settlements. As already noted, these nucleated settlements lie of the edges of this landscape type. The component parts of the Undulating Estate Farmlands are mainly made up of the ‘upland’ parts of the territories of those settlements. The hamlets variously named ‘greens’, ‘ends’ and ‘streets’ mostly represent small daughter settlements in that upland.

Haverhill had a market by 1086 (a third of this belonged to Tihel of Helléan, a Breton lord who is commemorated in the name Helions Bumpstead), but the ownership of the remainder is not recorded in Domesday Book, but it must have been the de Clare family). Its Domesday-period church has disappeared, but lay on the higher ground on the edge outskirts of the later town and from this was known as the Overchurche or Bovetownечurch, sometimes abbreviated to Botton church, a name now surviving as Burton End. By the 12th century the market was in its present position nearer the river and
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had acquired a chapel of St Mary (the earlier church was also dedicated to St Mary, but because of the *Botton* name, was later misidentified as being dedicated to St Botolph). This became the *Netherchurch* and finally, from the late 16th century, the only church. There was some textile manufacturing in the town in the Middle Ages but its textile industries grew greatly from the late 18th century. The firm of D. Gurteen and Sons was founded in 1784 and their large Chauntry Mill works have dominated the centre of the town since they were built in 1856. Initially making drabett (a coarse linen and cotton cloth) and smocks, they later expanded to other textiles including horsehair-weaving and coco-matting. Silk works were brought to the town in 1828 by Stephen Walters of Spitalfields in London. In 1828 Stephen Walters of Spitalfields in London brought silk works to a town that was then essentially one long street that ran parallel to the Stour Brook. Enlargement came when the railway reached the town from two directions – in 1863 from the Colne Valley and Halstead line to Haverhill South, and in 1865 from the Great Eastern line to Haverhill North. From 1955 onwards further enlargement came as part of the London ‘overspill’ plan.

Kedington has also grown since 1960 as a dormitory settlement to Haverhill. Up until the end of the 18th century the village was dominated by its moated Hall, but both are now gone. Here was the ‘Godly household’ of the Puritan Barnardiston family, leaders of the Parliamentarians in Suffolk in the English Civil War, and the home to the young Sir Samuel Barnardiston, who, with his neatly cut hair, was the original ‘roundhead’. The adjacent church, however, still has an impressive series of Barnardiston monuments – so much so that is has been dubbed the Westminster Abbey of Suffolk. An earlier history for the settlement is hinted at by the Late Saxon stone cross with a crucified Christ in the chancel window and the Roman bricks built into the church’s walls. The Risbridge Union Workhouse was built here in 1856 and later transformed into the Risbridge Hospital, and since the 1990s, into a housing development.

More characteristic of the landscape type are the small greens such as East Green and Ever Green in Great Bradley, Calford Green and Woodland Green in Kedington, Sowley Green in Great Thurlow, Little Thurlow Green, and Burton Green in Withersfield. In a few cases, there are hints that some of these settlements have Late Saxon origins – Brockley Green in Hundon, for instance, stems from the Domesday-period settlement of *Brochola*. The ‘ends’ – Dash End in Kedington, Kedington End on the Kedington/Sturmer boundary, Boyton End in Stoke-by-Clare and Temple End in Little Thurlow – have a similar distribution to the greens, but lack the their characteristic open spaces, being essentially roadside hamlets. Temple End commemorates a land grant there, before the 1270s, by Roger and William le Bretun to the Knights Templars. Boyton End lies near to the former *Boyton Green* and to the existing Boyton Hall Farm, all descended from the Domesday settlement of *Boituna*. Domesday Book also refers two *Boitunas* (one distinguished from the other by the term *alia* ‘other’), the second being Boyton Hall on the Little Wratting/Haverhill boundary. Both Boytons are near parish boundaries (as are many of the other Boytons) and the first element may be Old English *boia* ‘a boy, a servant’ – perhaps in the sense of the Boytons’ relationship to their ‘parent’ settlements.

In addition to the greens and ends, a sprinkling of moated sites indicates that there were also a number of substantial dispersed farmsteads of medieval date, eg Norley Moat
House in Little Bradley, the Old Rectory at Barnardiston, Pinhoe Hall in Hundon, Chantry Farm in Withersfield and Great Wilsey Farm in Little Wratting. The settlement at Norley Moat was also called Overhall and was in existence by the 1190s. A number of these moated sites were still occupied farmsteads in the 19th century, but are now deserted, eg Glebe Farm in Great Thurlow and Ganwick on the Great Wratting/ Barnardiston boundary. Another now empty moated site at Little Thurlow, called The Island, is shown as being a lodge within the deer park attached to Little Thurlow Hall on a map of 1735.

Chapel Farm on the Haverhill/Little Wratting is the site of the medieval chapel of Our Lady in the lost settlement of Alverton or Alderton, recorded in the 15th century. A more recent loss is the hamlet of Hogstreet in Kedington, which has gone since the 19th century, as has the nearby farmstead of Little Wilsey in Little Wratting. Sotterley Green and Granger’s Green in Great Wratting have also gone. Further to the east, the medieval settlement of Fornham in Stoke-by-Clar has also disappeared (together with its 13th-century oratory) – its final manifestation was as Farnham Wood in the 19th century.

This tendency for the desertion of small settlements on the one hand, and the growth of the larger villages on the other, has accentuated the nucleated settlement pattern and the emptiness of the surrounding farmland.

Landholding and enclosure pattern

Common or open fields form a strong part of the agricultural history of this area, particularly of the lands to the west of the Stour. 18th and 19th-century maps of Haverhill show extensive common fields around the town – Chimswell Common, Wallstreet Common, Broad Croft Common, Little Mill Field, Rookwood Common, Small Hill Field, Hales Common, Chapel Common, Mill Hill Field, West Field, Building Common, France Building Common and Mill Field Common. Similar areas are recorded at Great Wratting (Snite Field, White Croft Field, Wratting Mill Field Common, Red Field, Mayners Common Great Galley Field and Great Rowleys Common) and Kedington (Dane Common, Blackmoor Common, Sturmere Common, Mere Common and Foxearth Common). The use of the term ‘common’ in these names to mean ‘common fields’ rather than ‘common pastures’ is more typical of counties to the west, such as Hertfordshire.

There was 19th-century parliamentary enclosure that included common-field arable at Great Bradley (1815), Great Wratting (1817), Great Thurlow (1825), Haverhill (1853 and 1857), Kedington (18530, Little Wratting (1853), Sturmer (1853), and Witherfield (1854). As a result, the area has greater similarities to adjacent areas of Cambridgeshire than to most of the rest of the Stour valley. The late enclosure of these common fields has given a landscape with many straight field boundaries and a scattering of straight-sided plantations.

Estates were frequently the movers behind the parliamentary enclosure in the 19th century and there is a strong estate character throughout much of this landscape.
Trees and woodland cover

The woodland cover is strongest in the northern part of this area, in the Wrattings, Thurlows and Bradleys. Significant ancient woods include Trundley Wood in Great Thurlow, Abbacy Wood (Ashburnhay Coppice 1543-4 – ‘the hay [wood] by the stream called the Ashburn’) in Great Wratting, and Littley Wood and North Wood in Withersfield. Trundley Wood has maintained its size, but Abbacy Wood is much reduced from its 18th-century size. Park Tuft in Little Thurlow is a wooded-up part of the deer park recorded there in 1735 (the nearby Park Grove lay outside the park and appears as a partial plantation in 1735). The largest ancient wood in the southern part was Lord’s Wood in Stoke-by-Clare, but this too is now reduced in size. This is recorded as the wood of the ‘lord prior’ of Stoke-by-Clare Priory in the 13th century, when it was called Stokeho. It was a coppice wood when it was given to the priory in 1124, indicating a long history as a managed woodland.

The other woods are mainly small broadleaved plantations, which though ubiquitous, do not have the interlocking pattern that is found further north.

Visual experience

The views in this landscape are often of open, undulating, farmland, reflecting its former common field origins. Scattered woodland cover (or non at all) and a sparse hedge network mean the large scale and shape of the landform is the key visual characteristic.

In the east here are very long views, including over the river valley, which in the south is very shallow and tends to lack riparian vegetation. To the north there is more vegetation and views are of riparian trees rather than the (small) river itself. Field boundaries tend to the minimal, with gappy tree rows, sometimes silhouetted against the skyline, but are quite variable.

To the west the gently undulating arable farmland is often open and occasionally bleak, but occasionally with views framed by woods. There are ditches to the roadsides with unmanaged shrubby vegetation and some hedges with hedgerow trees, mainly young.

To the south, there are again arable fields on undulating terrain. Long views are available, filtered by tree rows along some field boundaries, which are generally in poor condition with few hedges. These fields are of medium size, sub-regular to irregular in form. Parts are very bleak with few hedgerows or trees, just the occasional distant tree line and a few field boundary oaks. There are also a few small woods and their spare distribution and the open terrain increases their prominence.

Condition

In much of this landscape the pressure of industrial farming on the management of land and the larger field size has modified this landscape removing much of the detail of the field pattern.
Land management issues and options

Geology, soils, landform and drainage

Archaeology

- Conservation of upstanding heritage assets
  The medieval moated sites are important visible archaeological features of this landscape and they need to be safeguarded and supported with appropriate grant aid and management advice, especially relating to the control of scrub and trees, as this has the potential to cause considerable damage to these sites.

- Identify priority sites for arable reversion to protect buried heritage assets

Settlement and the built environment

- Maintain and enhance the landscape setting through sensitive and appropriate development control

Landholding and enclosure pattern

- Maintain the historic pattern of field boundaries and ditches
  There is some potential for restoration and replanting of hedges in this landscape. However the form and species should be selected with care as the areas of late enclosure in the west of the area will require a different form and species mix from the those towards the eastern side.

The undulating nature of this landscape means that carefully located woodland and hedge planting could have a significant landscape impact over a wide area.

- Support the continued sensitive management of existing grass land, especially parkland

Trees and woodland cover

- Maintain the balance of tree cover
  There are opportunities to support the management of woodlands and to restore the former size of some of the woodland blocks in this landscape