

**THE ISLE OF WIGHT IN THE ENGLISH LANDSCAPE:**

**MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL RURAL  
SETTLEMENT AND LAND USE ON THE ISLE OF  
WIGHT**

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**A study in two volumes  
Volume 1: Text and References**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of Bournemouth University for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**January 2013**



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**Helen Victoria Basford**

**The Isle of Wight in the English Landscape:  
Medieval and Post-Medieval Rural Settlement and Land Use**

**Abstract**

The thesis is a local-scale study which aims to place the Isle of Wight in the English landscape. It examines the much discussed but problematic concept of 'islandness', identifying distinctive insular characteristics and determining their significance but also investigating internal landscape diversity. This is the first detailed academic study of Isle of Wight land use and settlement from the early medieval period to the nineteenth century and is fully referenced to national frameworks. The thesis utilises documentary, cartographic and archaeological evidence. It employs the techniques of historic landscape characterisation (HLC), using synoptic maps created by the author and others as tools of graphic analysis. An analysis of the Isle of Wight's physical character and cultural roots is followed by an investigation of problems and questions associated with models of settlement and land use at various scales. Specifically, national-scale models by Oliver Rackham and by Brian Roberts and Stuart Wrathmell are critically assessed for their value as frameworks within which Isle of Wight data may be examined, as is the local-scale Isle of Wight HLC model. Historic Ordnance Survey maps, royal surveys, manorial surveys and other sources are used to define the Isle of Wight's territorial units and patterns of land use, enclosure and settlement; to create a new model of *1790s HLC Areas*; and to construct a database listing all settlements by size and form. Nucleation and dispersion densities are calculated from this database, compared with Isle of Wight densities mapped by Roberts & Wrathmell and discussed in relation to densities elsewhere in England. Regional-scale patterns of settlement and land-use within central southern England are considered and the relevance of national-scale models of settlement and land use to this region is discussed. The origins and evolution of Isle of Wight settlements are then explored, using evidence from early sources including place-names, Domesday Book, tax lists and surveys. Subsequent analysis defines discrete cultural zones within the Isle of Wight, confirming the diversity and ancient origins of its cultural landscapes. The

final chapter provides a synoptic assessment of models, emphasising the value of the local-scale *1790s HLC Areas* model and recognising the compatibility of Roberts & Wrathmell's national-scale settlement model with detailed local data for the Isle of Wight. It is found that Rackham's model of *Ancient Countryside* conforms partially with local attributes but that this model may now need some revision. The paradoxical status of the Solent as both a gateway and a cultural boundary is proposed, as is the Island's affinity with other 'peripheral' areas of England.

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C	Notes on the Isle of Wight Ordnance Survey Drawings and the 'Old Series' One-Inch Map	Printed/CD	689
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## Acknowledgements

My interest in the Isle of Wight's historic landscape dates from my arrival in 1976. I was introduced to the Island's archaeology by Dr David Tomalin, then Assistant Curator at Carisbrooke Castle Museum and later County Archaeologist. David also contributed greatly to my general archaeological education and has inspired me with his historical imagination.

With regard to the present research, my biggest debt has been to John Margham, a pioneering figure in Isle of Wight historic landscape research. John has published many articles on the Island's Anglo-Saxon and later landscape and his work has provided an essential foundation for investigating the origins and evolution of local medieval settlement and land use. He has generously allowed me access to unpublished material relating to parochial organisation and settlement morphology and has read drafts of some chapters in this thesis.

I also owe a large debt to other past and present researchers into Isle of Wight history, notably the late Dr Jack Jones whose thesis *The Isle of Wight 1558-1642* has underpinned parts of Chapters 2 and 7. A thesis by Johanna Jones on *The Administration of the Poor in the Isle of Wight 1771-1836* proved to be a valuable source of information on contemporary land use. Johanna's research and published articles on Swainston Manor have also been extremely useful. Three recent academic studies have contributed to my knowledge and understanding of the Island's archaeology and history. These are Dr Philippa Walton's *Rethinking Roman Britain: An Applied Numismatic Analysis of the Roman Coin Data Recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme*, Rachel Salter's *The Isle of Wight during the Anglo-Saxon Period: The Nineteenth Century Antiquarian Legacy and New Finds from the Portable Antiquities Scheme* and Sheila Caws' *Continuity or Change? The Isle of Wight and the Agricultural Revolution 1750-1850*. I am grateful to these researchers for discussing their work with me.

During the writing of this thesis I have been most grateful for the support and encouragement of my Tutors, Professor Timothy Darvill and Iain Hewitt. They have provided stimulating tutorials, drawing attention to relevant material for my research and allowing me ample opportunity to discuss my ideas. Tutorials have invariably helped to rekindle my enthusiasm and energy during inevitable low points in the preparation of the thesis.

Dr Ruth Waller of the Isle of Wight Council Archaeology and Historic Environment Service has kindly allowed me access to books and journals at the Archaeological Centre and has given permission for the use of Isle of Wight Council material including Isle of Wight HLC data. Dr Colin Pope, Senior Ecology Officer of the Isle of Wight Council has discussed the ecology of the Island's various HLC Areas with me, enhancing my knowledge of semi-natural features within these areas. He provided specific comments on HLC Areas for an early draft of this thesis.

I have had help from a number of people in writing particular chapters. David Tomalin discussed with me the development of the Solent and the separation of the Isle of Wight from the mainland. Emma Rouse, formerly Project Officer of Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB, provided information on the HLC methodology of the AONB and this was supplemented by material on the AONB website. Greg Phillips of Nene Regional Park supplied information on the methodology of the Northamptonshire HLC. Dr Mark Page kindly read my notes on Isle of Wight tithings in an early draft of the thesis and provided me with an extract from his forthcoming publication (with P Mitchell-Fox), 'The Hampshire Tax List of 1327'. Professor David Hinton of the University of Southampton supplied me with a pre-publication draft of his chapter on 'Central Southern England: Chalk and Cheese' in the Medieval Settlement Research Group's 2012 volume *Medieval Rural Settlement Britain and Ireland, AD 800-1600*.

Dr Rebecca Loader, Historic Environment Record Officer of the Isle of Wight Council Archaeology and Historic Environment Service has been of great help in answering many queries. Her help was especially valuable during the writing of Chapter 9. She read and commented on this chapter and supplied data from the HER.

My husband Frank Basford FSA, Isle of Wight Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme, supplied information on the PAS for Chapter 9. I also owe Frank an enormous debt of gratitude for his practical support, without which I could not have completed this thesis.

## Author's Declaration

Volume 1 draws upon the Isle of Wight HLC Final Report, prepared by the author for the Isle of Wight Council and English Heritage. Small portions of text from the report have been reproduced where they demonstrate points necessary to the development of the thesis.

Volume 2 includes figures reproduced and adapted from various sources cited fully in the References or in credits for individual figures. Reproduced material also appears in the tables and appendices. These sources are listed below in the order in which they are first utilised.

Look and Learn

SCOPAC

*Isle of Wight HLC Final Report* (V Basford 2008)

*The History of the Countryside* (O Rackham 1986)

*Region and Place* (B K Roberts & S Wrathmell 2002)

*An Atlas of Rural Settlement in England* (B K Roberts & S Wrathmell 2000)

*Landscapes of Settlement* (B K Roberts 1996)

*Historic Landscape Analysis* (S Rippon 2004)

'The place-names and settlement history of Binstead and Wootton parishes'  
J Margham 2012 (*in* Tomalin, D J, Loader, R D & Scaife R G, *Coastal Archaeology in a Dynamic Environment: a Solent case study*)

1981 *Hearth Tax Returns for the Isle of Wight 1664 to 1674* (P D D Russell ed)

Northamptonshire Record Office

British Library Ordnance Survey Drawings (BL OSD 67-74) surveyed 1793-4

'Thorley – a parish survey' (J Margham 1990)

*The Atlas of Rural Settlement in England GIS* (A Lowerre *et al* 2011)

'The Atlas of Rural Settlement in England GIS' (A G Lowerre 2010).  
*Landscapes*, 21-44.

*Patterning within the Historic Landscape and its Possible Causes: a study of the incidence and origins of regional variation in southern England* (A Lambourne 2010)

*The Place-Names of the Isle of Wight* (H Kökeritz 1940)

'Hampshire' R Welldon Finn, R 1962 (*in* Darby, H C & Campbell, E M J eds  
*The Domesday Geography of South East England*)

'The Domesday Population of the Isle of Wight' (John Margham 1988)

*Shaping Medieval Landscapes* (T Williamson 2003)

*Deserted Medieval Villages* (M W Beresford & J G Hurst 1989)

'Carisbrooke: a study in settlement morphology' (J Margham 1992). *Southern History*. 14

*The Vectis Report* (H V Basford 1980)

'Comparison of Werrar, Isle of Wight and Lydlinch, Dorset'. Plan drawn by F Basford c. 1989

*Landscapes Documents and Maps: Villages in Northern England and Beyond AD 900-1250*. (B K Roberts 2008)

*Insula Vecta* (F Hockey 1982)

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## Abbreviations in Text and References

### Upper Case Abbreviations

AONB: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
AHRC: Arts and Humanities Research Council  
CBA: Council for British Archaeology  
DoE: Department of the Environment  
DNH: Department of National Heritage  
HER: Historic Environment Record  
HMSO: Her Majesty's Stationery Office  
HWTMA: Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology  
IWC: Isle of Wight Council  
IWCC: Isle of Wight County Council  
IWCRO: Isle of Wight County Record Office  
IWFWI: Isle of Wight Federation of Women's Institutes  
ONS: Office for National Statistics  
PAS: Portable Antiquities Scheme  
PIWNHAS: *The Proceedings of the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society*  
RCHME: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, England  
SCOPAC: Standing Conference on Problems Associated with the Coastline  
UNESCO: United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization

### Lower Case Abbreviations

nd: not dated

## Chapter 1

### Introduction: Studying an Island Landscape

In *Britannia*, William Camden wrote of the Isle of Wight:

*Through the mids thereof runs a long tract or chaine of hills, yeelding plentie of pasture and forage for sheepe. The wooll of which, next unto that of Lemster and Cotteswold, is esteemed best and in speciall request with clothiers, whereby there groweth unto the inhabitants much gaine and profit. The North part is all over greene with meddows, pastures and woods; the South side lieth wholly in maner, bedecked with corne fields enclosed, where at each end the sea on the North side doth so inbosome, encroatch within it self, that it make the almost two llands, and verily so the llanders call them, namely Fresh-water Isle, which looketh West, and Binbridge Isle, Eastward (Camden 1610, Isle of Wight Section: Paragraph 2).<sup>1</sup>*

This concise, pithy, description epitomises the varied cultural landscapes of the Isle of Wight as observed by Camden in the late sixteenth century and mapped by John Speed in 1611 (Figure 1.1). Modern geological literature emphasises the diversity of physical formations on the Island.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the Geologists' Association Guide to the Isle of Wight states:

*No other area of comparable size in England has such a variety of formations ... Within its small area, the island provides a near-complete early Cretaceous to mid-Palaeogene succession, unrivalled elsewhere in western Europe' Insole et al. (1998, ii).*

Certain modern studies of past or present landscape character have addressed the internal variety within the Isle of Wight. Welldon Finn (1962, figures 92 and 94) recognised a simple division between the north and south parts of the Island in respect of Domesday plough-teams and population. The

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<sup>1</sup> The first edition of 1586 was in Latin.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Island' is used throughout as a synonym for Isle of Wight as explained below under 'Terminology and Definitions'.

Countryside Commission (1994, figure 4) identified twelve different 'landscape types' based on current land use whilst two more recent studies have investigated Anglo-Saxon landscape regions (Margham 2003) and present-day historic landscape character areas (Basford 2008, 65-106). All suggest that the landscape contrasts originally defined by Camden are real and worth exploring in more detail, as are their relationships to landscape patterns found on the English mainland to the north. Does this island fragment merely echo local regional contrasts on the adjacent mainland or do the varied landscapes found here represent a unique combination and raise important research questions for the study of all English historic landscapes? Could Isle of Wight distinctiveness conceivably be linked to its identity as a separate territory in the early Anglo- Saxon period or to its subsequent incorporation within Wessex after AD 686? Might the Solent sea channel, in many ways a gateway rather than a barrier, have nevertheless acted as a cultural boundary? These questions may be relevant to longstanding enquiries into the reasons for regional variation in historic landscape character throughout England which occurs independently from differences in terrain (Rackham 1986, 1). This variation has been attributed to several causes including demographic growth, the extent of woodland cover in Anglo-Saxon times, the varying powers of local landowners, different soil types and the emulation of patterns adopted in one region by other areas (Roberts and Wrathmell 2002<sup>3</sup>, 77-80, Fig. 3.12; Williamson 2007a).

### **Aims, Research Questions and Thesis Structure**

The issues raised above are fundamentally linked with the overarching aim of this thesis to identify the Isle of Wight's historic landscape character and to place it in the English landscape. They can be restructured as three sets of questions which are germane to this aim. *Firstly*, do the historical sources with a bearing upon cultural landscapes support Camden's assessment, and do they suggest that these landscapes endured over a significant period of time? What further local regional divisions may be present but necessarily

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter Roberts & Wrathmell. Other joint authors are cited similarly in the text.

subsumed beneath Camden's generalisation. If attested in documentary materials, notably post-medieval maps, can these local regional divisions be envisaged on the basis of more intractable sources, taxation records and even Domesday Book and place-name records, and are hints of any long temporal duration also detectable in essentially pre-medieval archaeological materials? Can the technique of Historic Landscape Characterisation<sup>4</sup> (otherwise known as HLC) help in the identification of local Isle of Wight regions and how do these regions, as defined by examination of primary historical sources, compare with the *HLC Areas* originally delineated in the *Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation* (Basford 2008, 69-106, 115-130 and figure 8)? *Secondly*, do the cultural landscapes of the Isle of Wight, involving contrasts in settlement, economy and perhaps even society, possess idiosyncratic features deriving from their 'islandness'? *Thirdly*, what parallels exist between the Isle of Wight and other divisions that have been identified on the mainland? In this matter comparisons can be made with the post-medieval farming regions identified by Thirsk (1967, figure 1)<sup>5</sup> the land utilisation maps prepared by Stamp (1937- 44), the zones of English Countryside defined by Rackham (1986, figure 1.3) and the settlement provinces defined by Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, figures 1.4 and 1.14). The questions set out above are addressed within a framework comprising three main sections and a concluding chapter. The first section provides a context for the detailed investigations of later chapters. It depicts the Island's physiological and historical characteristics as known from existing syntheses and examines national, regional and local models of historic landscape character that encompass the Island, particularly those of Rackham and of Roberts & Wrathmell. There is a discussion concerning hierarchies of scale and the importance of recognising these in studying cultural landscapes. Problems and issues relating to the technique of Historic Landscape Characterisation are also discussed. The second and third sections

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<sup>4</sup> Capitalised throughout when referring to the scheme pioneered by English Heritage (see below under 'Terminology and Definitions').

<sup>5</sup> Thirsk's map is redrawn in Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, figure 3.1).

interrogate new ‘evidences’<sup>6</sup> hitherto underused in exploring the Island’s landscape history, notably royal and manorial surveys of the Island, Ordnance Survey drawings dating from the 1790s and the 1810 ‘Old Series’ Ordnance Survey map. In the second section, historic land use on the Island is examined commencing with a brief investigation of documentary sources. The evidence of the 1810 Ordnance Survey map is then analysed and the Island’s enclosure history is examined in a national and regional context. Territorial and cultural divisions within the Island landscape are investigated and this section concludes by creating and discussing a new model of post-medieval cultural landscapes using information from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings. The third section examines the Island’s settlements, creating a map based on evidence from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings in order to classify settlements and to compare local patterns with patterns observed at national and regional levels. The roots of the Island’s settlement patterns are then discussed and the landscape model derived from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings is utilised to examine different cultural zones within the Isle of Wight. A concluding chapter provides a synoptic appraisal of national, regional and local models relating to the Isle of Wight and assesses the Island’s place in the English landscape.

## **Issues and Approaches**

The research set out in this thesis has been informed by certain key issues debated in medieval and post-medieval landscape studies over the last few decades and itself contributes to this debate. One of the fundamental features of the English landscape is the existence of distinctive zones of landscape character. These have been seen in terms of varied settlement patterns in the work of Roberts & Wrathmell (2000; 2002) and their model-making approach has been a powerful influence on this study. However, Rackham (1986), following Maitland in 1897 (Essay I, Chapter 1) had previously used historical ecology to define three countryside zones not dissimilar from the settlement provinces of Roberts & Wrathmell. Rackham

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<sup>6</sup> The plural here is a seventeenth century form.

taught landscape historians and archaeologists to view trees, woodland, hedgerows, heathland, moorland, grassland and marshes as historical 'evidences' of equal validity to those provided by settlement patterns or buildings. The historic landscape can also be viewed as an archaeological artefact where process is understood from form and the landscape is studied as a series of generic types (Rippon 2004, 4). This approach is used both in the Historic Landscape Characterisation programme developed by English Heritage for rapid county-wide assessments of character (Clark *et al.* 2004, 5-10) and in the technique of 'historic landscape analysis' as defined by Rippon (2004, 31-5, 86-98), which can be used as a framework for archaeological fieldwork at landscape scale. Rackham (1986, xiii) explicitly rejects the view that sees the landscape purely as 'artefact', pointing out that 'the countryside records human default as well as design, and much of it has a life of its own independent of human activity'. Roberts & Wrathmell's approach differs from that of Historic Landscape Characterisation and historic landscape analysis by taking a top-down rather than a bottom-up approach. Their provincial, regional and local models of settlement landscapes are built from diverse data sources that can be mapped at a national level rather than from the mapping of generic types at a very local scale.

The historic landscape can be viewed from a humanistic perspective as constituting various distinctive *pays* or cultural landscapes, both shaped by and shaping human responses (Everitt 1985, 13-20; Braudel 1989, 37, 41-57; Phythian-Adams 1993, 1-23). Sherratt (1996) has identified contrasting 'Enlightenment' and 'Romantic' approaches to the past, seeing value in both traditions. He describes the Romantic archaeologist 'as one who will examine his (*sic*) own backyard and trace its genealogy as a place' whereas the Enlightenment archaeologist will require 'a more strategically conceived methodology' that 'can reveal significant regularities or wider structures'. The Enlightenment archaeologist, in search of 'settlement patterns' is contrasted with the Romantic Archaeologist who can be seen as pursuing 'landscape studies' (Sherratt 1996, 143-144). The concept of *pays* can accommodate both approaches. It belongs, perhaps, to the Romantic school of landscape

studies in concentrating on particular distinctive regions and emphasising a sense of place. On the other hand, Everitt anticipated the work of Roberts & Wrathmell in stating:

*What we really need... is a systematic map indicating the general framework or pattern of pays in the country as a whole* (Everitt 1985, 15).

Johnson (2005; 2007) has adopted a militant position in the debate between 'Romantic' and 'Enlightenment' archaeology, attacking the way in which Romanticism has provided the intellectual underpinning for landscape history and archaeology since the publication in 1955 of W G Hoskin's seminal work, *The Making of the English Landscape*. He argues that landscape archaeologists have failed to embrace the methodology of processual archaeology which has informed other branches of archaeology since the 1960s (Binford 1964, 426; Clarke 1968, Renfrew & Bahn 2000, 38-40)). He cites the work of Roberts & Wrathmell (2000; 2002) but suggests that rather than constructing a sound framework for explaining the processes underlying regional diversity they have related them to contingent historical events (Johnson 2007, 126). In fact, Roberts & Wrathmell do provide an explanation of these processes, most explicitly in relation to particular regions in the West Midlands (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, ix).

Historic landscape studies usually focus on the relationship between settlements, their agricultural lands and the social or religious territories within which they exist (e.g. Taylor 2004, 49-78). The Isle of Wight provides a particularly interesting study area in this respect. Work has been done on the large Anglo-Saxon territorial units underlying its medieval parishes (Hockey 1982, 1-13; Margham 2000; Margham 2005; Margham 2007) and the approximate boundaries of post-medieval tithing units are also known (Russell 1981). However, little is known about the organisation of agricultural communities and how arable land was shared out between these communities. It will not be possible to carry out detailed studies of individual settlements and their lands within the context of the present thesis but an

attempt will be made to map settlements in relation to land use and to administrative boundaries. Maps prepared by Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 39-57) provide generalised models of the relationships between settlements and their agricultural lands in different sub-provinces of England and these models will inform the maps and generalisations constructed in this thesis. The origins of Isle of Wight settlements are discussed within the thesis and link this local study to mainland research. Here, debates on the origins of settlements and the relationship between settlement forms and farming systems have been constant themes in medieval landscape studies (e.g. Lewis *et al.* 2001; Williamson 2003). Taylor (1992, 9) has expressed pessimism about finding a clear explanation for the mechanisms by which changes to landscapes and settlements were effected in the later Anglo-Saxon period and does not appear to share the confidence of Johnson (2007, 126-127) in the efficacy of processual methodology as a way of finding answers. There is also debate about the nature of field systems and enclosure in different parts of the country. The origins and forms of medieval field systems were discussed at some length in early works (e.g. Gray 1915; Orwin & Orwin 1938). However, for a time the topic of enclosure appears to have been mainly the province of economic historians (e.g. Tate 1947; Chambers & Mingay 1966; Chapman & Seeliger 2001) who focused on the relationship between enclosure and the 'agricultural revolution' of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In recent years the detailed study of field systems has been an integral part of medieval landscape research (e.g. Roberts & Wrathmell 2002) and enclosure has also been studied in terms of its effects on the landscape (e.g. Williamson 2002; Wade Martins 2004; Turner 2007).

Any serious study of medieval and post-medieval rural settlement and landscape must engage with all the issues and authors discussed above. 'Historic landscape studies' are interdisciplinary (Rippon 2004, 3) and despite Sherratt's use of the term 'landscape studies' to describe a specifically Romantic archaeological approach, such studies actually embrace very different attitudes to the past, drawing upon ideas which have been

developed in diverse disciplines such as archaeology, history, geography, anthropology and ecology. Proof of this can be seen in the varied backgrounds of authors cited earlier in this chapter (e.g. Hoskins 1955; Binford 1964; Everitt 1985; Rackham 1986; Roberts & Wrathmell 2002; Rippon 2004; Johnson 2007). Johnson (2007, 190) has called for an 'anthropological otherness' in the approach of archaeologists to the past and the early-twentieth century field archaeologist O G S Crawford appears to have been a pioneer of this position, at least in his private writings (Hauser 2008). Phenomenological readings of the landscape (e.g. Tilley 1994) employ a different kind of anthropological approach, seeking not scientific detachment but insights into how early people understood the landscape. Whatever perspective is employed, historic landscape studies do appear to focus on the human role in the evolution of landscapes. The journals *Landscapes* and *Landscape History* document this historic interaction between people and the landscape in England and contribute significantly to advancing understanding of the subject. As such, they have helped to shape the ideas that lie behind this thesis. For instance, in an editorial on Historic Landscape Characterisation (Austin & Stamper 2006) followed by a complete issue devoted to this topic (Austin *et al.* 2007) *Landscapes* has debated the value of HLC (as promoted by English Heritage) and its relationship with the more complex and even theorised narratives represented by the topographical tradition of British landscape writing.

### **Conceptual Framework and Methodology**

The concept of 'cultural patterning' explicated in the work of Rackham (1986) and of Roberts & Wrathmell (2000; 2002) informs the aims of this thesis and the questions asked. The thesis describes the Isle of Wight's cultural landscapes and attempts to interpret their significance within the context of landscape patterns observable on the mainland at national, regional and local scales. It also aims to explain the origins of the Island's cultural landscapes, despite the difficulties in finding such explanations. New work within the thesis derives from the critical analysis and use of existing

literature and primary sources. A series of maps are presented, designed to create an understanding of the Island's historical geography; from these maps generalizing models have been constructed, allowing the identification and exploration of local regions on the island and enabling conditions and developments within these local regions to be compared and contrasted with those on the mainland. These map-based models are not merely illustrative but are 'real tools of graphic analysis' (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 29). They can be compared with existing models of other local areas and regions in order to bring out similarities and differences. Models relating to the Isle of Wight's cultural landscapes have previously been attempted by Margham (2003) who has used topographical and place-name evidence to identify Anglo-Saxon landscape regions and by Basford (2008) who has defined 'Historic Landscape Character Areas' within the present-day landscape, based on the morphology of past and present historic landscape types such as field patterns, settlement woodland etc. However, the creation of generalising models for the medieval and post-medieval periods based on the detailed study of primary historical sources is something that has not previously been undertaken on the Isle of Wight. The new models have utilised the concept of 'tegulation' employed by Roberts (2008; *in press*) but also use techniques applied in Historic Landscape Characterisation. Use of HLC for past-oriented research is not entirely novel (e.g. Turner 2007). Indeed, similar techniques have been advocated and practised by Rippon (2004; 3-5, 115-131) but they have not yet been widely adopted in local-scale studies. Roberts & Wrathmell have stressed the contribution that can be made by individual studies of small areas to their provincial model and have stated that:

*Each and every piece of work conducted at the local scale will have implications for assessing and perhaps modifying the national picture. The fundamental advantage of this approach is that it is now possible to manipulate local data within a clear national framework...* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 36).

This thesis may therefore contribute to the wider national understanding of England's historic landscape character.

The most significant source for creating the generalising models discussed above have been unpublished Ordnance Survey drawings dating from the 1790s, although the published Ordnance Survey 'Old Series' map of 1810 based on these drawings (reproduced in Appendix A) provides a useful intermediary tool. Supporting evidence comes from a number of sources, the most significant being royal surveys of the Isle of Wight dating from the mid-sixteenth century and early seventeenth century, supplemented by manorial surveys ranging in date from the medieval period to the nineteenth century. Evidence from Domesday Book and from Old English place-names is also utilised. Nevertheless, the most important 'evidence' for the map-models is of late eighteenth century date, raising methodological concerns linked with the title of this thesis which refers to *medieval* as well as *post-medieval* rural settlement and land use. Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 14) emphasize that the maps in their *Atlas of Rural Settlement* 'are maps of nineteenth-century conditions: they are not maps of medieval settlement' Nevertheless, the authors argue that the maps:

*... do provide... a solid ... foundation for retrogressive analysis, for comparison with other, earlier distributions which may, and in fact do, allow the varied chronological components compressed into the flat plane of any distribution map to be assessed and in some measure dissected into the component chronological layers.*

This statement reinforces their position as set out in earlier chapters:

*The Atlas is constructed around a set of maps which chronicle in close detail the patterns of rural settlement present in nineteenth-century England. ... We will argue that these represent deep structures which are directly linked to the distribution of cleared lands and wooded lands over a thousand years earlier (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 1).*

*We believe that within our primary settlement maps, i.e. those derived from a close analysis of nineteenth-century sources, are latent images of far earlier patterns (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 7).*

In their later work *Region and Place*, however, the authors add a strong caveat:

*Paradoxically, we neither assume nor argue that the landscapes we now see within each province need possess any great antiquity. There are dangers in the uncritical projection of the visible elements into earlier, more remote, centuries – in effect making assumptions about continuity and stability which may in fact be wholly unwarranted (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, 4).*

Nevertheless, *Region and Place* still argues that:

*The three [national] provinces originally identified by Rackham but redefined and refined by our present work, are cultural phenomena deeply embedded within the development of English local landscapes (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, 4).*

In similar fashion the maps of Isle of Wight cultural landscapes developed in this study, whilst derived principally from a late eighteenth-century source, may reveal important clues concerning landscape patterns originating, in some cases, before the Norman Conquest and possibly of much greater antiquity. This thesis will not necessarily trace landscape patterns back to their ultimate origin but some comments will be made upon the earliest detectable landscapes of the Island, even where these have left only archaeological traces, as this will help in understanding those which developed subsequently. Use of archaeological evidence necessarily raises problems and issues concerning the distribution of sites and finds plotted from the Isle of Wight Historic Environment Record and the significance of data collected in the last few years through the Portable Antiquities Scheme. These problems and issues are very real yet the landscape patterning suggested by Anglo-Saxon, Romano-British and even prehistoric sites and

finds may have a bearing on later cultural patterning. By pulling together information from various datasets over a long period of time this thesis may, in a small way, complement the major *English Landscapes and Identities* research project being coordinated by the Institute of Archaeology at Oxford University which aims to assess landscape patterning over the period from 1500 BC to AD 1086 (Gosden & Ten Harkel 2011).

## **Terminology and Definitions**

Terminology within the relatively young discipline of landscape studies is by no means entirely standard so it will be helpful to define the terms and conventions used throughout this thesis. Reference will be made to the terms 'cultural landscape', 'settlement landscape' and 'historic landscape character'. Rippon (2004, 18) suggests that the term 'cultural landscape' can be used in two ways, either to describe *generic* types of landscape characterised by particular activities or features (e.g. slate mining, open-fields, assarts) or to describe specific *locations* with a unique identity (e.g. industrial districts like the Black Country or farming regions such as Felden and Arden in Warwickshire). He contrasts these cultural landscapes with *topographically* defined generic landscape types such as 'downlands' and 'heathlands' or specific locations with a unique identity formed by the topography (e.g. Breckland or the Yorkshire Dales). Cultural landscapes can, perhaps, be equated with *pays*, a French term for areas that possess their own innate identity (Everitt 1979; Everitt 1985, 13-20; Everitt 1986, 5-6, 43-68; Braudel 1989, 37, 41-57). The concept of *pays* acknowledges the strong influence of environmental and geographical factors on landscape but also stresses the contribution of different social structures in shaping landscape character. In all this, there are problems; the terms cultural landscape and physical landscape are deeply embedded in the literature of geography where they may have different connotations than when used in historic landscape studies. Archaeologists and historians working in this field need to take into account the work of writers such as Sauer (Leighley 1963), Baker (1972, chapters 1 and 5) and Winchester *et al.* (2003, chapters 1 and 2). At

an international level, cultural landscapes have been defined by the World Heritage Committee as distinct geographical areas or properties uniquely ‘...represent[ing] the combined work of nature and of man...’ (Unesco 2005, 83).

Roberts & Wrathmell have employed the term ‘settlement landscape’ in their work to denote a distinctive pattern of settlements and their associated landscape elements. They define the ingredients of medieval settlement landscapes as:

*Nucleated villages, dispersed farmsteads and industrial hamlets, moated sites and upland shielings, together with constituents of land-usage such as the arable strips of the townfields, the common pastures and marshlands and the woodlands. (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 1).*

This list might be expanded – as their models of local regions show - to include not just ‘arable strips’ but all other types of field patterns and other typical historic landscape types commonly defined in Historic Landscape Characterisation and historic landscape analysis. These include enclosed arable fields and pastures, valley floor meadows, coastal lands, industrial landscapes, military landscapes, parkland, landscapes of recreation, and trackways (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 39-57; Rippon 2004, 21-22; Basford 2008, figure 14). Trackways are of particular significance since:

*Farmsteads were positioned in the landscape with reference to the layout of [the community’s] resources, and to the trackways which gave access between them. Indeed, it is the trackways not the farmsteads which often seem to represent constants in the landscape, especially in areas of dispersed settlement. (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, 192).*

*Nucleated settlements* and *dispersed settlements* are referred to throughout this thesis and the differential distribution of these two settlement types forms the basis used by Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, figure 1) to define their three coarse- grained English provinces. The two terms will be discussed at

greater length in Chapter 6 but here English Heritage's 'Monument Class Description' for medieval villages may be noted:

*The threshold for distinguishing a village from a hamlet (i.e. a nucleated settlement from part of a dispersed settlement pattern) is conventionally put at six or more homesteads clustered together* (English Heritage 1993a, 2).

The term 'historic landscape character' is a term that was first used in the field of planning policy, for instance *Planning and the Historic Environment* (DoE and DNH 1994, Paragraph 6.40). It was then adopted by English Heritage and applied specifically to their programme of 'Historic Landscape Characterisation' (Fairclough 2001), which attempts to record the historic dimensions of present landscapes for the purposes of planning and landscape management. In this thesis, 'historic landscape character' is used as a general term where the very specific meanings of the terms 'cultural landscape' or 'settlement landscape' are not considered to be appropriate. Historic Landscape Characterisation is always capitalised when referring to the English Heritage programme and is abbreviated to HLC where appropriate.

This thesis deals primarily with medieval and post-medieval rural landscapes. 'Medieval' is here defined as covering the period AD 1066 to AD1499, while 'Post-Medieval' is defined as covering the period AD 1500 to AD 1899. The thesis will also consider aspects of the Isle of Wight landscape in the period before the Norman Conquest of 1066. Here the term 'Anglo-Saxon' has been preferred over 'Early Medieval' as use of the latter term necessitates calling everything after 1066 'Late Medieval'. 'Anglo-Saxon' is an appropriate term to use on the Isle of Wight as the various Viking raids on the north coast of the Island did not lead to permanent settlement (Garmonsway 1972, 90, 131, 132, 136, 139, 166; Young & Mephram 2000, 191). In future chapters the Isle of Wight will often be referred to as 'the Island', the initial capital letter being commonly used locally and useful in indicating particularity. This does not imply that the Isle of Wight is the only significant island off the British coast,

which is far from the case, although it is England's largest offshore island. However, the title can be justified on the grounds that it is the main island under discussion in this thesis. 'Wight' as a synonym for 'Isle of Wight' is a form that appears not to have been commonly employed as a stand-alone name since the medieval period (Kökeritz 1940, 1-2)<sup>7</sup> but is used occasionally in the text where variation is necessary, as will be the case particularly in those parts of the thesis which focus almost exclusively on the Island itself as does the next chapter. This provides an overview of the Island's physical background and underlying character then discusses how insularity and a maritime location have shaped that character over time.

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<sup>7</sup> John Speed's map of 1611 refers to 'Wight Island'. The usage of 'Wight' by itself appears to be more common in literature from the late twentieth century onwards.

## Chapter 2

### The Isle of Wight: Physical Character and Cultural Roots

*She thinks of nothing but the Isle of Wight, and she calls it the  
Island, as if there were no other island in the world*

Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*

#### Location, Terrain, Physical Regions and Settlements

The cultural roots of the Isle of Wight are firmly grounded in its geography, geology, terrain, and varied soils, for it is with these that generations of farmers have had to negotiate. The Island lies off the southern coast of England in the English Channel, a sea-route allowing contact with the Atlantic coast of Europe, Scandinavia and countries bordering the North Sea (Figure 2.1). Climatically, the Island's southern location ensures sunshine and winter warmth. Surrounding seas also have a modifying effect on the climate but certain areas, especially the south-west coast, are exposed to severe winds (Willatts & Stamp 1940, 394-395). The Island is separated from mainland Hampshire by the Solent which is 5-8 km wide,<sup>8</sup> has an area of 380 square kilometres (ONS 2011)<sup>9</sup> and is diamond-shaped, extending 37 km from west to east and 21 km from north to south. The chief settlements and roads are shown in Figure 2.2. This small domain has a remarkably varied geology described by Insole *et al.* (1998). The solid deposits (Figure 2.3) comprise sedimentary rocks ranging from Wealden beds of the Cretaceous Period, about 127 million years old,<sup>10</sup> to Hamstead and Cranmore beds of the Palaeogene Period, about 30 million years old (Isle of Wight AONB Project 1998, 5). There are also numerous superficial deposits dating from the Pliocene to the Holocene epochs (Figure 2.4). Geology is a key factor in

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<sup>8</sup> Except at the mouth of the western Solent where a two-kilometre shingle spit bearing Hurst Castle reaches towards the northern shore of the Isle of Wight. Here, the Island is just 1 km from the Hampshire coast.

<sup>9</sup> Area measurement of land area only to Mean High Water Mark and excluding inland water features larger than 1 km<sup>2</sup> (Office for National Statistics 2011).

<sup>10</sup> These Wealden deposits on the south-west coast contain an abundance of dinosaur fossils (Isle of Wight County Council 1990a).

determining the Island's physiographic regions but relief, slope and drainage, shown in Figure 2.5, are also important factors. Physiographic regions have been well-described by Willatts & Stamp (1940; 399-401, figure 4) and by Margham (2003; 17-31, figure 1) and are shown in Figure 2.6. The *Central Chalk and Greensand* region (1) comprises a ridge of Chalk downland and intermittently a subsidiary Greensand ridge extending across the Island from west to east, nearly always rising above the 75 metre contour except in the major gaps and valleys and reaching 214 metres on Brighstone Down. This Chalk ridge is punctuated by major gaps where the Island's three main rivers, the western Yar, the Medina and the eastern Yar, cut through the Chalk, flowing in a northerly or north-easterly direction into the Solent (see Figure 2.5). Other gaps in the Chalk do not contain watercourses but carry routeways that connect the north and south regions of the Island. The band of Chalk is much wider in the area to the west of the Medina gap, forming a dissected plateau and including the lower land of the Bowcombe Valley. To the east of the Medina gap, between Newport and Downend (near Arreton), the chalk does not form a very distinct ridge. Here, the upland ridge is formed from sand and gravel terraces of the Pleistocene Epoch. The Chalk ridge generally has very light calcareous soils except where it is overlain by clay-with-flints of the Neogene Period which produce a locally acidic soil. Some old Chalk grassland remains, particularly in the West Wight, although elsewhere the downland has been ploughed. The subsidiary Greensand ridge has infertile acidic soils which are generally unploughed because of the steep slopes which they occupy. The *Southern Chalk & Greensand* region (2) occurs in the south-east, rising to 241 metres at St Boniface Down, the Island's highest point. The highest summits are capped with superficial deposits of clay-with flints. Springs rising in this region flow northward into the River Medina and eastern Yar. The northern edge of this downland block is fringed with unstable deposits of Gault Clay dating from the Cretaceous Period but the solid geology on these steep slopes is often obscured by areas of landslip. Much of the downland in this region has been ploughed but old Chalk grassland and unimproved acid grassland survives on St Catherine's Down and between Ventnor and Shanklin.

The *Greensand Vale* (3) between the *Central Chalk and Greensand* region and the *Southern Chalk & Greensand* region is dominated by Lower Greensand deposits producing coarse loam soils. This region is drained mainly by the Medina, the eastern Yar and their tributary streams, flowing northward. Relief in this region is varied but the area is predominantly low-lying, being mostly below the 75 metre contour although locally prominent hills and ridges are present, for instance on the superficial gravel deposits of Bleak Down. Superficial gravel terraces in the Arreton Valley have produced an area of well-drained and productive soils (see Figure 2.4). The main river valleys have deposits of brickearth and alluvium with some peat. Most of the Greensand Vale is easily worked arable land with little woodland but there are some valley-floor pastures and small areas of grazing marsh. Within the *South-West Wealden and Atherfield Clay* region (4) and the *Sandown, Wealden & Atherfield Clay* region (5) Greensand deposits have been eroded to expose a narrow belt of Atherfield Clay and Wealden Beds of clays and sands. The *South-West Wealden and Atherfield Clay* region is overlain in part by superficial deposits of gravel, brickearth and alluvium. It is mainly in arable cultivation but with some grass and is drained by streams flowing southward and westward into chines at the cliff edges. Chines are a distinctive geomorphological feature of the south-west coast although they also occur elsewhere on the Island, between Colwell Bay and Alum Bay on the north-west coast and between Luccombe and Shanklin on the east coast. These steep-sided, narrow gullies are generally thought to have been formed when sea levels rose after the end of the last Ice Age, causing the coastline to erode so that streams (mainly flowing south from the chalk downs) travelled a shorter distance to the sea and therefore cut down rapidly into the soft rock of the cliffs (Isle of Wight AONB Project 1998, 3-4; Darby & Leyland 2009). An alternative possibility is that chines are peri-glacial in origin, caused by slumping plus local drainage. Chines occur elsewhere in southern England in East Devon, Dorset and Hampshire (Wikipedia 2012a). Along the Island's south and south-east coast lies the *Undercliff* region (6), sandwiched between the *Southern Chalk & Greensand* and the English Channel. The *Undercliff* is a remarkable and distinctive zone of recent geological date forming a landslip area less than one kilometre wide that stretches from

Blackgang Chine to Bonchurch and beyond, bounded to the north by an inland cliff. A landslide topography probably formed here under Pleistocene periglacial conditions during the Devensian period of the Ice Age but further instability within the last 8,000 years has created the present landscape (Insole et al. 1998, 68-80). The soils of the Undercliff are similar to those of the landslip areas on the northern flanks of the southern downland block, being moderately easy to cultivate but with impeded drainage (Jarvis *et al.* 1984). However, the agricultural potential of the Undercliff has always been restricted by the broken nature of the ground.

The region of *Northern Clays, Sands and Gravels* (7) beyond the central Chalk ridge is generally of fairly low altitude and moderate relief, rarely reaching the 75 metre or 80 metre contour except on a few locally prominent hills. This northern region is fairly well-wooded with a mixture of pasture and arable fields. Oligocene deposits provide clayey, seasonally waterlogged soils but soils overlying the Eocene beds are more easily worked (Jarvis *et al.* 1984). These better soils lie immediately to the north of the Chalk ridge. Here, 'there is a very fertile belt where the downwash from the Chalk ridge has mixed with soils derived from...sands and clays, especially the Bagshot Beds<sup>11</sup> (Willatts & Stamp, 399). The small *Bembridge Limestone* region (7), surrounded by the *Northern Clays, Sands and Gravels*, comprises a gently-sloping area of easily worked soils, mostly in arable use. Bembridge Limestone also outcrops along the Solent foreshore and produces a significant building stone virtually absent from the mainland (Tomalin 2007a, 7). Superficial gravel terraces cap hilltops fringing the north coast (Figure 2.4). The land to the north of the Chalk ridge is drained by rivers and streams flowing northward into the Solent (Figure 2.5). The estuary of the western Yar separates 'Freshwater Isle' from the main body of the Island and until 1880 the former tidal inlet of Brading Haven isolated 'Bembridge Isle' at the eastern end of the Island. Between the western Yar and the eastern Yar lies the River Medina. This flows through the centre of the Island and is estuarine

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<sup>11</sup> Now referred to as the Bracklesham Group and Barton Group

from Newport to the Solent coastline. There are other tidal inlets along the north coast, most notably at Newtown and at Wootton Creek. These estuaries and tidal inlets are drowned valleys or rias produced by localized post-glacial downwarping of the coast and a consequent increase in effective sea-level, generally following the course of Flandrian sea-level rise (Tomalin 2007, 7). Along the northern coastline there are some tidal salt-marshes and a few areas of grazing marsh on land reclaimed from the sea, notably at Newtown and within the former Brading Haven.

The Island's physical characteristics have clearly determined the locations of its towns to a large extent (Figure 2.2). Newport was founded in the medieval period on the western bank of the River Medina at the navigable limit and lowest bridging point of the estuary, some 7km from its mouth. Yarmouth, Newtown and Brading were also medieval foundations, Yarmouth being located at the mouth of the eastern Yar, Newtown at the mouth of the tidal Newtown River and Brading beside Brading Haven (Isle of Wight Council 2008a, 11-13). Thus, all had access to the sea and were able to trade with the mainland. A coastal position was also crucial to the development of Cowes and East Cowes as small trading ports in the seventeenth century. The development of Ryde in the late eighteenth century and of Ventnor, Sandown and Shanklin in the nineteenth century likewise depended on coastal locations, not for trading advantage but to attract seasonal residents and holiday-makers (Isle of Wight Council 2008a 16-18). Today, Newport is the administrative centre of the Island (22,957 residents in 2001) and Ryde is the next largest town (22,806 residents in 2001). The 2001 Census gave the combined population of Sandown and Shanklin as 19,716, of Cowes and East Cowes as 19,110, and of Ventnor as 6,257. Brading and Yarmouth now have populations of less than 2,000 yet still retain some urban characteristics (Isle of Wight Council 2008a, table 3). The present-day rural settlement pattern is mixed, including some nucleated villages, hamlets and dispersed farmsteads but historic village cores are generally small. For much of the twentieth century the Island's economy was based on tourism, manufacturing and farming but today farming employs only a tiny percentage of the

population although it is still a major land use. Manufacturing is now less important than a variety of service industries but tourism still plays a significant role in the economy (Isle of Wight Council 2006). Since 1995 the Isle of Wight has been a Unitary Authority. The mid-2008 population estimate was 140,235.

### **Insularity and 'Island Archaeology'**

Insularity has played a significant role in determining the character of the Isle of Wight, particularly in the past. Today, separation from the mainland is regarded either as a minor inconvenience contributing to an increased cost of living or as a positive benefit contributing to local identity. The reality is that travel to the mainland can take as little as twenty minutes and that nearly all items consumed on the Island are imported. However, there is still a feeling of local distinctiveness on the Isle of Wight despite the fact that most present-day residents are not of Island origin. Economically, the 'island factor' is almost certainly a disadvantage in the modern economy. The Isle of Wight has generally lagged behind the rest of the South East in terms of growth and personal wealth and is closer to South-West England than to the South-East in terms of its economic profile. In the past, insularity would have had a far greater impact on life yet the Isle of Wight has not been insular for the whole of its human history. Indeed, final physical separation from the mainland has taken place only very recently in geological terms. During the Pleistocene all of the modern rivers discharging into the Solent, Christchurch Bay and Poole Bay were tributary to the ancestral Solent River which drained a large catchment (Figure 2.7). The Isle of Wight was joined to the Dorset coast at Purbeck, this link being a continuation of the Whitecliff Bay/Needles Chalk ridge (Dix 2001, 10). At some point, the Upper Solent River was diverted to a south-eastward course via one or more breaches through the Wight-Purbeck Chalk ridge, possibly during the last Devensian glacial stage of low sea-level or earlier (Figure 2.8). The Lower Solent River continued to flow eastward from the present site of Christchurch Bay along the main axes of the West and East Solent (SCOPAC 2012). During the Devensian glaciations the

south-east of Britain, including the Isle of Wight, was joined to continental Europe but the post-glacial Holocene epoch was one of rising sea-levels in which Britain became separated from the Continent. The final severance of the Isle of Wight from mainland Britain took place at some point in the Holocene when the valley of the Western Solent was engulfed by a marine breakthrough (Tomalin *et al* 2012, 487). This severance event post-dated the mid-seventh millennium BC when a deciduous forest was still flourishing at Bouldnor on the north-west coast of the Island at a depth of 11 metres below Ordnance Datum. It has now been proposed that the final severance occurred in the earlier part of the fourth millennium BC (Bingham *et al* 2011, 59; Momber *et al* 2011, 135; Tomalin *et al* 2012, 488) although a somewhat earlier date appears to be suggested by SCOPAC (2012).

The Isle of Wight's geological separation from the mainland, yet close physical association with it, provides an analogy for the Island's cultural relationship with mainland England. Thus the Isle of Wight's character must be considered in relation both to its insularity and to its position very close to the English south coast. 'Island Archaeology' has been fashionable since the 1970s when islands were seen as 'laboratories for the study of culture process' (Evans 1973). Later workers have stressed the importance of networks of islands (Broodbank 2002), and the relationship between an island and its mainland (Cherry 2004). In recent years the concept of island archaeology as a field of study with distinctive attributes not applicable to continental archaeology has been challenged, for instance by Rainbird (2007). Evans' proposition about the value of islands for archaeological research seems to be incompatible with his argument that islands are predominantly bounded and closed systems. Broodbank (2002, 26-27) has pointed out that cultural processes in the tiny handful of islands that have come close to total closure at some point in their history are unlikely to exemplify wider social processes. The notion of islands as microcosms of larger units has remained popular amongst some archaeologists. However, if insularity is a modifier of expected cultural patterns, then island society cannot be used to provide a sample area or microcosm of conditions in an

adjacent mainland area. Topics explored in studies of island archaeology include the effect of insularity on migration, cultural and environmental change, inter-regional interaction, social and tenurial organisation, and farming practices. Rainbird (200, 18) has summarised the perceived attributes of insularity as shyness, unwillingness to communicate and a culture that is inward-looking, conservative and traditional. However, he rejects the concept of specific insular attributes and argues, instead, for an archaeology of the seas that focuses on the opportunities that coastal communities have for contact with a wider world.

### **Trade and Production in an Island Setting**

The Solent and the English Channel do appear to have been communication routes rather than barriers in prehistoric and later times. Imported Neolithic axes made of stone from Cornwall, the Lake District, North Wales, Northern Ireland and even from the Continent speak of long-distance seafaring, as does a cremation vessel originating in Brittany found in an Isle of Wight Bronze Age burial mound on Gallibury Down (Tomalin 2001, 25-28). There is growing evidence that the Island benefited significantly from trade or exchange with Gaul and the Mediterranean world from the Late Iron Age onwards as did mainland Channel ports. Isle of Wight maritime trade is discussed within the context of Iron Age ports and harbours on the English Channel coast by Wilkes (2004), drawing on the detailed study by Trott and Tomalin (2003). Discarded amphorae of Dressel 1 type from the promontory fort at Hengistbury Head in Christchurch Harbour attest to the consumption of Italian wine in Britain during the first century BC and Trott and Tomalin (2003, 168) note that thirty-two sites on the Isle of Wight have produced sherds of Dressel 1 *amphorae*, likewise indicating the consumption of Italian wine and olive oil. Particular concentrations of material recovered from the sea at Yarmouth Roads and from Fishbourne Beach have been interpreted as evidence of potential anchorages or *emporía* of Roman date (Tomalin 2001, 29; Trott and Tomalin 2003, 167). Indeed, Trott and Tomalin (*ibid*) suggest that the eastern Solent may be equated with the *Magnus Portus* mentioned

by Ptolemy, a geographer of the second century AD. Various exotic finds attest to a network of maritime links with both local and continental markets in Roman times (Walton 2011, 211) including rare Alexandrian glass from Bowcombe villa (Tomalin 1987, 42), single finds of Alexandrian *billon* coins from Newport and Fishbourne (Sydenham 1943, 388) and coinage with Eastern mintmarks in late Roman coin hoards (Lyne 2007). At least eight Roman 'villas' are known on the Island from structural remains (Basford 1980, 123) although Scott (1993) suggests the possible existence of thirteen, based on recorded building debris as well as structural remains, and Tomalin (*in press*) claims that debris and structural remains indicate 33 'Romanised' dwellings. A recent study of Roman coins (Walton 2011, 242) has identified 38 'sites' consisting of five or more coins which are assumed to be settlement locations. One 'villa' at Gurnard recorded in the nineteenth century (Motkin 1990) had a coastal location west of the Medina estuary and may have been involved in the quarrying of local Bembridge Limestone. A quernstone in this material from South Hampshire shows that Bembridge Limestone was already being traded in the Iron Age. After the Roman Conquest, Bembridge Limestone was used in the building of Fishbourne Palace, near Chichester, around AD 70 and in the construction of the Roman fort at Portchester during the late third century AD, as well as at other mainland coastal sites. It was also made into roof slabs for Island villas (Tomalin 1987, 97; Isle of Wight County Council 1992, 27). No traces of metalled Roman roads or of a town have been recorded on the Isle of Wight. However, Walton (2011, 260) asserts that coins were being supplied, used or lost in a different manner than on the mainland and that 'the island can no longer be characterised simply as a rural, villa dominated zone' Instead, 'its potential role within long distance networks of trade and exchange must be explored and its relationship with both Gaul and the province of *Britannia* reassessed'.

Bede tells us that the Isle of Wight was 'last of all the provinces of Britain' to accept Christianity at the time of Caedwalla's conquest in AD 686 (Sherley-Price 1955, 228). This statement, if correct, could perhaps be an indication of the social conservatism sometimes considered typical of islands but

archaeological evidence does not suggest that the Isle of Wight was cut off from contacts with the wider world in the early Anglo-Saxon period. Pagan grave goods of the late-fifth century and early-sixth century recorded by Arnold (1982) and more recently by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (Salter 2010)<sup>12</sup> indicate the importation of luxury goods and export of locally manufactured products, with the Isle of Wight having close links, not only with Kent, but also with the Continent (Ulmschneider 1999, 25). Metal-detector finds from a number of sites in the Isle of Wight also now attest to the continued wealth and economic importance of the island after its conquest by Caedwalla in AD 686. This is particularly revealed in two 'productive sites' identified near Carisbrooke and Shalfleet, the Carisbrooke site being the largest productive site on the south coast and the Shalfleet site apparently being the second largest such site in the southern region (Ulmschneider 2010, 98; Ulmschneider and Metcalf forthcoming). The area around Carisbrooke appears to have served as a central place throughout the Anglo-Saxon period and functioned as a 'productive site' and market in Middle Saxon times, having particular trading links with Hamwic (the predecessor of Southampton) but also trading independently and further afield (Ulmschneider, 1999; Ulmschneider 2002, 337; Ulmschneider 2003). Hamwic has long been identified as an international trading *emporium* but the outstanding economic activity of the Solent area is revealed by the dense number of local trading posts including the Carisbrooke and Shalfleet sites which have now been identified as being among thirty-two inter-regional market places of Middle Saxon date known in England (Ulmschneider 2005, 518-519; Ulmschneider and Metcalf forthcoming). Building stone was a significant export from the Isle of Wight in the later Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. 'Quarr Stone', a particular variety of Bembridge Limestone, was used by the Saxons and Normans in Hampshire and Sussex churches, in the Norman cathedral at Winchester and in the abbey church at Romsey, Hampshire. It was extracted mainly from the coastal area to the west of Ryde around Binstead. In 1079 Bishop Walkelin of Winchester obtained land at

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<sup>12</sup> PAS finds can be viewed online at <http://www.finds.org.uk>

Binstead specifically for the extraction of stone for his new cathedral.<sup>13</sup> Quarr Stone was probably largely exhausted by the beginning of the thirteenth century but a coarser type of Bembridge Limestone was used in the thirteenth century-fifteenth century town walls and gateways in Southampton and in some Hampshire churches and continued to be used for Island buildings in the post-medieval period. Sandstone from the Upper Greensand bed was widely used on the mainland in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, for instance in the cathedrals at Chichester and Winchester. It was quarried from the narrow band south of the central chalk range, on the fringes of the southern downland block and in the Undercliff particularly around Bonchurch and Ventnor, this last location being the most important source (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 7-9).

Potential profits from trade were the reason that so many new towns were created by territorial lords in the Middle Ages from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries (Beresford & St Joseph 1979, 214-215). On the Isle of Wight, the boroughs of Newport and Yarmouth were founded by the de Redvers family, lords of the Island, in the late twelfth century (Edwards 1999a, 2-3; Edwards 1999b, 2-3). Newtown was a borough foundation created by a bishop elect of Winchester within his manor of Swainston in 1256 (Edwards 1999c, 2-3). Brading never received a charter of incorporation but may possibly be the Island's oldest town. Webster (1994) asserts that it was founded by a local lord in the late eleventh century although it was previously thought to have been established by Edward I in 1285 (Page 1912, 158; Edwards 1999d, 3). The Island's medieval towns were all small trading ports situated on tidal inlets. Their commercial activity was very modest compared with that of Southampton, which was one of the country's leading ports in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Hughes 1994, 195). All goods and services coming into the Isle of Wight from abroad had to pass through the custom-port of Southampton in the sixteenth century (Jones

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<sup>13</sup> Nearby Quarr Abbey, founded in the twelfth century, was named after the quarries in the area.

1978, 156). In the reign of Edward III it was declared that there should be only three ports in the Island, namely Ryde, Shamblers<sup>14</sup> and Yarmouth (Page 1912, 197; Edwards 1999g, 2). This indicates that Ryde and Cowes/East Cowes were significant for trade and transport in the Middle Ages even though they were then only small hamlets. Ryde does not provide a natural harbour and it is possible that the medieval port was actually at Barnsley Harbour to the west of Seaview since in the first half of the seventeenth century Sir John Oglander reported that St Helens and Barnsley had a fleet of fifty sail and was the home of '20 good shipmasters' (Page 1912, 190). It has been suggested that in the Middle Ages St Helens served as port for the town of Brading which lay on the western edge of Brading Haven (Page 1912, 189). St Helens was certainly ordered to find a ship for Edward I's expedition against the Scots in 1302. It is possible that only smaller vessels could reach Brading, with larger ships unloading at St Helens (Edwards 1999f 5, 7). An inability to accommodate deep-draft merchant vessels may conceivably also be the reason why Newport was not one of the three 'accredited' ports in the time of Edward III even though the Lay Subsidy of 1334 raised £7.5.0 from the town compared to the 19s raised from Yarmouth (Edwards 1999a, 3). Newport was probably the Island's largest town by the fourteenth century although Yarmouth had a comparable or slightly larger number of burgage plots in 1300 (Edwards 1999b 2). Beresford (1988, 450) has suggested that after 1293 there was a deliberate lack of interest in the fortunes of Yarmouth by the king in order to reduce competition with his borough of Newtown. However, even though Newtown possessed one of the safest havens in the Island (Edwards 1999c, 2-3) it failed as a town in the later Middle Ages, perhaps partly because of competition with the Solent ports of Southampton, Lymington and Portsmouth as well as with Yarmouth (Beresford 1959, 205; Beresford and St Joseph 1979, 242). French raids took place in 1377 at Newtown, Newport and Yarmouth (Page 1912, 266; Edwards 1999a, 3; Edwards 1999b, 3; Edwards 1999c, 3). They

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<sup>14</sup> Either the estate of Shamlord in the East Cowes area, owned by Beaulieu Abbey in the Middle Ages, or the other side of the estuary in the West Cowes area where today there is a Shamblers Copse.

severely affected Newport and Yarmouth but do not seem to have been the reason for Newtown's failure.

There is some evidence of Island participation in foreign trade during medieval times. Substantial imports of wine came into England from Gascony between the twelfth century and the fifteenth century and the largest wine fleets gathered off the Isle of Wight in the Solent. Quarr Abbey, a Cistercian house on the Solent shore to the west of Ryde, leased its ships to local importers and may even have participated to a modest extent in the wine transport trade (Hockey 1970, 131-132). Quarr, along with other Cistercian houses, also sold wool from their Island granges to Italian wool merchants and these transactions are recorded in 1297 and 1420 (Hockey 1970; 57, 194, 197). Medieval export of grain from the Isle of Wight is mentioned by Hockey (1982, 105-108) only in connection with the Scottish wars of Edward I when the king commanded royal manors on the Island to ship corn to Berwick-on-Tweed. Royal surveys of the Island made in 1559 and 1560 mention corn, kerseys and fish as exports (Jones 1978; 30, 162-4) but trade in corn was quite strictly controlled until 1560 when there was a partial relaxation of controls. Jones (*ibid*) points out that corn exports have left no documentary trace in the Southampton Port Books but in view of the considerable arable acreage indicated by the various Island surveys of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries he suggests that it must have been a staple export at this time. The focus of foreign trade from the Island in the mid-sixteenth century was northern France in general and Normandy in particular and there was also a coastal trade with mainland southern England. However, Jones (1978, 28) regarded this period as one of commercial stagnation. Only nine Newport merchants, one merchant from Brading and one from elsewhere were recorded as trading beyond the Island in the Port Books of the 1560s (Jones 1978, 164). Much of the Island's wool went in its raw state to the West Country and Kent at this time. In the seventeenth century there was a widening of commercial activity, weighted towards the Biscay coast and with persistent Island imports of bay salt from La Rochelle, as evidence of the local commitment to the fishing industry

(Jones 1978, 161). At this time, a significant part of the Island's external trade took the form of victualling passing ships, and this trade is reflected in the noticeable growth of Cowes from a few scattered houses at the beginning of the seventeenth century to a cohesive town by the middle of the century (Jones 1978, 175). Cowes was also heavily involved in trade with the American colonies from the early seventeenth century, firstly in tobacco and later in rice (Edwards 1999g, 3; Martin 2004a). The chief settlement was at West Cowes although the merchants' warehouses were mainly at East Cowes. Rainbird (2007, 51) has pointed out that 'port towns are distinctive, they face the ocean and are likely to be multi-cultural'. This ties in with the comment that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Cowes 'was mainly populated by people from the mainland' (Harding 1978). Ship-building did not really start until the end of the seventeenth century but by the nineteenth century both Cowes and East Cowes were miniature industrial towns (Isle of Wight Council 2008 a, 16-17). Warships were built from the nineteenth century until the 1960s (Williams 1993) and in the twentieth century both aircraft and hovercraft were produced, with a brief involvement in rocket technology (Tagg & Wheeler 1989).

### **Life on the Edge: Opportunities and Dangers**

The local conditions experienced by mariners around the Isle of Wight have obviously had an effect on patterns of settlement and trade. One such effect is the 'Double High Water' experienced in the Solent and Southampton area. This is not caused by the existence of two entrances to the Solent as is popularly supposed but by complex patterns of tidal flow in the English Channel. However, the two entrances to the Solent do cause other tidal effects, namely, the 'Young Flood Stand' and the short duration of the ebb tide.<sup>15</sup> The net result is an unusually prolonged period of high water in the

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<sup>15</sup> The 'Young Flood Stand' is particularly noticeable over the period of the twice-monthly spring tides when the tide's range is at its maximum. Following Low Water there is a pronounced rise in the tide but two hours after Low Water, the rising tide slackens off quite considerably for a further two hours before the final accelerated rise to High Water, which takes a further three hours. A full tidal cycle lasts approximately twelve and a half hours and

Solent which is a valuable asset to the mariner. The short duration of the ebb tide creates a greater velocity of flow and this is an uncommon feature compared with other areas of Britain. In addition, the times of High Water and Low Water at the western and eastern ends of the Solent differ by approximately one hour (Southampton Weather 2012). The phenomenon of 'Double High Water' is particularly useful in entering Solent creeks and although the strength of the tides in the Solent can cause problems for small boats they can also be turned to the mariner's advantage (Tripp 1973, 31-41). However, although local tidal effects can be beneficial to sailors, the seas surrounding the Isle of Wight have always been hazardous particularly along the southern coast which is directly exposed to the English Channel and offers few safe anchorages. The 'Back of the Wight' is the most treacherous stretch of the Island's shore, running from the chalk rocks of the Needles off the Island's most westerly point to St Catherine's Point at the Island's southerly tip. Along this coastline there are chalk and sandstone cliffs, of considerable height in some places, and only a few points of easy access from the cliffs to the sea close to settlements, for instance at Freshwater Bay, Brook Chine and Grange Chine. The Brook, Brighstone and Atherfield ledges along this coast have claimed many ships and lives, as has Chale Bay. At the southern end of Chale Bay lies Rocken End where the cliffs reach 500 feet and the shore is boulder-strewn. Beyond lies the dangerous current known as St Catherine's Race. The south-east coast of the Island has no shelter, Ventnor being subject to storms which prevented the construction of a harbour in the past. Sandown Bay on the east coast is more sheltered but to the north of Sandown Bay and the high chalk rocks of Culver Cliff lie the Long Ledge (a broad rock shelf) and Bembridge Ledge, a submerged reef that has claimed many ships. Historically, all the Island's ports and anchorages were situated on its northern coast, facing onto the Solent. The eastern side of the north coast, known as the Spithead, is the safest part of the Island coastline for mariners. Spithead is sheltered from most winds, and is the traditional anchorage of the Royal Navy, convenient

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since the flood and the Double High Water period in the Solent lasts nine hours the ebb tide runs for only three and a half hours.

for the naval base at Portsmouth.<sup>16</sup> On the west side of the Solent, ships are endangered by the fast tidal current as the Solent's unique double tide leaves through the narrow, western end which is only a mile wide near Hurst Spit. The current achieves a speed of up to 5 knots as it flows through a series of races out to the sea and beyond the hazard of the Needles rocks lies the hidden danger of the Shingles, a three mile long shoal of pebbles just beneath the waves that periodically shifts its position and shape and where many ships have been lost.<sup>17</sup>

Rainbird (2207, 5) has pointed out that Britain's Atlantic coasts abound in small medieval chapels in exposed positions where a light could be burnt to aid mariners. On the Isle of Wight an oratory was built in 1313 on St Catherine's Hill, close to the southern tip of the Island and on the site of an earlier chapel. A lighthouse built beside the oratory (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 118) may be slightly later, possibly dating from the fifteenth or sixteenth century (Tomalin 2007b, 51). Hockey (1982, 109 -116) has written about the shipwreck that led to the building of St Catherine's Oratory and about other medieval shipwrecks around the Isle of Wight. The medieval lighthouse on St Catherine's Hill proved to be ineffective as the hill is frequently shrouded in cloud. Another lighthouse was started nearby in 1785 but never completed. It took the appalling shipwreck of the *Clarendon* in 1836, with the loss of practically all her passengers and crew, to prompt the building of a new St Catherine's Lighthouse on the coast. At the Island's western tip, the first lighthouse was constructed on High Down in 1786 and the present iconic Needles lighthouse was built in 1859 (Medland 1995, 37). An evocative account of nineteenth century and early twentieth century shipwrecks, fishing

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<sup>16</sup> English fleets were accustomed to lie off St Helens in the Spithead Channel in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century since this Isle of Wight village possessed a spring of water famous for its keeping qualities and greatly in request for outgoing ships (Page 1912, 189). There is also a legend that 'holystones' from the ruinous church of St Helens were the best that could be obtained for scouring decks (IWFI 1974, 53).

<sup>17</sup> This paragraph includes information from a webpage on Isle of Wight shipwrecks (h2g2 2012).

and smuggling is contained in *Back of the Wight* (Mew, 1977) and there are also more recent works on Isle of Wight shipwrecks (Medland 1986; Phillips 1988; Phillips 1995). The southern coastline of the Island, being rougher than the Solent coast, does not lend itself to the underwater preservation of shipwreck sites but several such sites lie off the Solent coast from The Needles to Spithead, the earliest being of sixteenth century date (Gale 2000, 14-17; HWTMA 2012). The Victorian response to shipwreck was to build lifeboat stations, the earliest one on the Island being the Brook and Brighstone Station, opened in 1860 (Jones and Jones 1987, 108). Tales of heroism by local men serving in the lifeboats now form a cherished part of Island history.

Islands are places 'on the edge' and this liminality can be moral as well as geographical. Hockey (1982, 117-123) has catalogued acts of piracy that occurred off the Isle of Wight in medieval times. Most of these acts were not committed by Isle of Wight mariners but sea-robbers frequently used the Island to conceal or dispose of their booty. In the reign of Elizabeth I the Isle of Wight acquired 'a particularly sinister reputation for interference with shipping' (Jones 1978, 180). Stolen goods found a ready market on the Isle of Wight and many of the goods coming into Newport town quay were of dubious origin. Both shipboard and shore-based trading took place at Mead Hole, an anchorage between East Cowes and Wootton Creek, and this place was a byword for felony as demonstrated by the Southampton fishmonger who in 1577 protested that his barrel of eels was 'no Mead Holle goods nor thief-stolen' (Crawford 1951). The reputation of the Isle of Wight was further damaged by the involvement of two Island Captains, Edward Horsey and Sir George Carey, with the flourishing piracy around the Island. Jones (1978, 202) has concluded that this age of piracy 'was a demonstration of the effective concentration of power in the Captaincy or Governorship in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century'. One of its effects was to 'bring an infusion of wealth into the Island economy', reflected in the expansion of Newport and in a general growth of population. By the end of Elizabeth's reign the age of piracy had

passed as far as the Isle of Wight was concerned but illegal activities flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the form of smuggling. The Island's location made it particularly suitable for smuggling activity but few Islanders had the necessary capital to amass the fortunes of smugglers elsewhere (Jones and Jones 1987, 97). Nevertheless, local smuggling was a serious issue. William Arnold, father of the nineteenth century educationalist Thomas Arnold and Collector of Customs for the Isle of Wight from 1777 to 1801, was based at East Cowes. His war against the smugglers has been described by Arnold-Foster (1936) and it appears that Customs officials struggled to contain the highly profitable activities of the smugglers who had better, faster boats. The Coastguard Service was set up in 1822 to crack down on smuggling but it took several decades for its impact to be felt. Coastguard stations were gradually set up around the Isle of Wight, particularly along 'The Back of the Wight', the Island's long southern coast, hitherto more remote from official interference than the rest of the Wight and an area where smuggling lingered on well into the nineteenth century. By the end of that century tales of smuggling had entered local folk lore and were retold in later accounts (e.g. Noyes 1951, 52-53). The liminality and perceived 'otherness' of the Isle of Wight was one of its attractions for the very earliest tourists in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century (Abbott 2006, 30-70; Bek 2010, 102-192). These were wealthy visitors in search of the 'Picturesque'. The charms of the Island and its coastline were recorded for and by them in numerous guidebooks and landscape paintings (Parker 1975, 28-43; McInnes 1990; McInnes 1993; McInnes 2001). Visitors were particularly captivated by the rugged, wild landscape of the Undercliff (Basford 1989, 49-52) and by the Island's distinctive and unusual chimes. Paradoxically, as more tourists were drawn to the Isle of Wight by its promise of 'otherness', the Island's distinctive identity was gradually subsumed within a more standardised Victorian culture, reinforced by the ever-increasing number of visitors from the outside world, by the development of seaside resorts and by the building of railway lines from c.1860. The association of the Island with yachting began with the foundation of the 'Yacht Club' (later the Royal Yacht Squadron) in 1815. This proved a focal point for yachtsmen already sailing in the Solent and by the

later nineteenth century 'Cowes Week' was an important event in the social calendar of the nation, patronised by the Royal Family residing at Osborne and by members of European royal households (Jones & Jones 1987, 146-149; McInnes 1990, 18-19).

The Island's coastal scenery was itself an economic resource in the age of tourism but from early in human history the coast has been a valuable source of food. There is archaeological evidence for the exploitation of coastal resources from prehistory onwards. In the Undercliff coastal occupation sites of Neolithic and Bronze Age date have been discovered as well as cliff-edge middens of Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval date (Isle of Wight Council 2008b 8-10). Buried Mesolithic/Neolithic sites have been recorded from the Medina Estuary and from Newtown Creek (Isle of Wight Council 2008c, 6). On the north-east coast, the Wootton-Quarr Project has recovered evidence of trackways, fish-traps, other structures and artefacts of prehistoric, Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon and medieval date from the inter-tidal zone (Loader *et al* 2002, Tomalin *et al* 2012). Salterns, sea ponds, fish houses and oyster ponds of medieval and post-medieval date have been recorded on the Solent's coastal estuaries and inlets both in southern Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight (Basford 1980, 52, 149, 152-153; Currie 2000a).<sup>18</sup> In the post-medieval period the Isle of Wight was not renowned for major fishing fleets<sup>19</sup> although fishing always formed part of the local economy. Larger-scale commercial fishing was limited to the Solent coast but smaller-scale fishing was part of rural life along the Island's southern coast. Evidence for this can be seen in the withy beds marked on various editions of the six inch Ordnance Survey maps from 1862, willow being grown and coppiced in the withy beds to make lobster pots. Fishing may have been a major occupation in a few communities, for instance at Brook Green on the south-west coast. The small community around Shanklin Chine certainly

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<sup>18</sup> The earliest reference to a saltern on the Isle of Wight is recorded in Domesday Book under the manor of Bowcombe (Munby 1982, 52b).

<sup>19</sup> Hinton (2012, 118) has pointed out that fishing did not play a significant economic role in Hampshire or Dorset.

engaged in fishing (and smuggling) as well as agriculture before the advent of tourism in the early nineteenth century. Ventnor, before it became a fashionable resort from the 1830s, offered a relatively sheltered base for fishing activity, depicted in the 1831 engraving *Fishermen's Huts, Ventnor Cove* by Edward Cooke (McInnes 1990, 102-103). Mackerel fishing was a particularly important activity in the south of the Island in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century (Mew 1977, 3-6). Fox (2001) has described fishing villages on the South Devon coast, distinctive landless communities whose dwellings were squeezed between the agricultural land of the manor and the high tide mark. These were truly marginal dwellings, on the edge both literally and culturally. Only a few communities on the Island could really be described as 'fishing villages', including Steephill Cove, Luccombe Beach, and Sandown Beach. Early photographs of the Luccombe and Sandown communities can be seen in Hutchings (1975). These fishing villages appear to have been relatively late creations of nineteenth century date but such insubstantial settlements may not have been marked on early maps. The ephemeral dwellings of the fishing village on the beach at Luccombe, painted by William Gray c1855, (McInnes 1990, 78-79) were destroyed by the sea in the early twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> Cottages and stone boat 'pounds' below the cliff still survive at Steephill Cove and the settlement has been re-invented as a tourist attraction with fishing as a subsidiary activity. There were several families of longshoremen along the Island's southern coast including the Wheelers of Chale and Wheelers Bay, Ventnor (Hutchings 1975). Traditionally, longshoremen engaged in a variety of occupations including fishing, lobster-pot making, smuggling and beachcombing. As tourism became important in the nineteenth century, other lucrative activities were generated such as hiring out rowing boats, bathing huts and deck chairs. Specific coastal resources were exploited in 'Freshwater Isle', a part of the Island practically cut off by the western Yar. These included seabirds taken from Freshwater Cliff (Worsley 1781, 273), the possible production of alum at Alum Bay in the sixteenth century (Hewitt

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<sup>20</sup> Apart from the settlement's tin chapel which was rebuilt on the top of the cliff within the grounds of the property known as Rosecliff.

1999) and the eighteenth century export of sand from Alum Bay for glass and pottery manufacture (Margham 1992a, 118).

### **Early Cultural and Political Identity**

The preceding paragraphs have shown how the Isle of Wight's cultural character has been affected by its physiography, insularity, and location on the south coast of England at the gateway to the English Channel. Politically, the Isle of Wight has not enjoyed the same degree of independence as the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands for much of its recorded history. Neolithic and Bronze Age earthworks on the Isle of Wight suggest a culture similar to that of mainland southern England (Tomalin 1980, 15-27; Basford 2006a, 11-12; Tomalin 2007a, 10-12). It is usually not possible to interpret prehistoric political allegiances from the archaeological record but late Iron Age coin finds from the Isle of Wight suggest strong links with the *Durotriges* tribe based in Dorset (Basford 2007, 203; Tomalin 2012) whilst the incidence of Atrebatian currency from the Hampshire region is much lower. It is possible that the Durotriges were dominant in the west of the Island and the Atrebates in the east or that the Island was under the influence of an intermediate Hampshire tribal group (Wellington 2001). Tomalin (2012) has hinted at the possibility of a short-lived independent polity on the Island in the early first century AD. Elsewhere, he has suggested that the name 'Occes' given to the Isle of Wight in the 1482 Ulm edition of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia* (Open Library 2011) - based on the Greek text of the second century AD - may have been the title of an independent tribe (Tomalin 1975, 7-8) although this name could be a scribal error.

The Isle of Wight first enters the historical record as *Vectis* in the work of Suetonius who recorded its conquest by Vespasian in AD 43 (Graves 1957, 275). This name may relate to the Latin word 'to lever' or 'to raise up'. It could be connected to the Old English name *Wight* which is thought to be of British descent, possibly having the meaning of 'what has been raised above the

sea' i.e. an island (Kökeritz 1940, 2). An alternative theory is that both the Latin and the British names may have the meaning of a fork in the road or a watershed, a sense that would suit the situation of the Isle of Wight (Kökeritz 1940, 281). Mills (1996, 109) states that the name *Wight* is 'certainly Celtic' but Durham (2011, 95) has challenged this supposition, suggesting that the name may be of ancient Germanic origin with the meaning of 'a little companion or daughter island'.<sup>21</sup> Implicit in Durham's article is the suggestion that the pre-Roman inhabitants of the Isle of Wight may have spoken some sort of distant precursor of the English Language. This argument ties in with a fascinating but controversial argument by Oppenheimer (2006), based on genetic data, that the ancient border between Celtic and Germanic languages lay down the middle of Britain and may have originated over 5,000 years before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in the fifth century AD. However, even if such a linguistic divide did exist in the late Iron Age the Isle of Wight's strong links with the *Durotriges* would seem to put it firmly on the British side of any such division and to weaken the implied suggestion by Durham (*idem*) that the Island's population did not change at the end of the Roman period. In fact, a post-Roman change in both culture and political leadership (but not necessarily in the entire population) is indicated both by late fifth and sixth century grave goods (Ulmschneider 1999, 25) and by documentary sources. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle identifies the Island's inhabitants at this time as Jutes, stating:

*from the Jutes came the people of Kent and the people of the Isle of Wight, that is the race which now dwells in the Isle of Wight and the race among the West Saxons which is still called the race of the Jutes* (Garmonsway 1972,13).

Bede also states that 'from the Jutes are descended the people of Kent and the Isle of Wight, and those in the province of Wessex opposite the Isle of Wight' (Sherley-Price 1955, 56). Nevertheless, in recent years the concept of

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<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless Durham does reserve the possibility that *Wight* derives from a proto-Celtic term (written as *Vectis* in Latin) with the meaning of 'departure, division, splitting'. He further speculates that if such a meaning is the correct reading it could refer to a political or ecological division of the Island by the River Medina.

a large-scale migration direct from Jutland to Kent, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight has been challenged (Sørensen 1999; Kruse 2007) and the use of the term 'Jutish' to describe the inhabitants of these places has been out of favour (Richardson 2011, 74). Whatever the ethnic origins of the Island's population, Yorke (2008) believes that the Isle of Wight and parts of mainland Hampshire were both occupied by people *perceived* as 'Jutes' rather than West Saxons and that there were close links between the rulers of Kent and Wight. She considers that there were Jutish kingdoms both on the Isle of Wight and on the mainland opposite (Yorke 1995, 36-39).<sup>22</sup> Systematic recording of detector finds 'has strengthened the case for seeing a relationship between the material culture of east Kent, the Isle of Wight and parts of Hampshire and its immediate environs from the mid fifth to second half of the sixth centuries AD' according to Richardson (2011, 78). He concludes that these areas shared some form of collective identity, not exclusively or even predominantly representing actual migrants arriving directly from Jutland but best characterised as a *maritory* – a definable zone of high-status maritime exchanges (*ibid*, 79). The Jutish kingdom of the Isle of Wight remained independent until AD 661 when it was conquered by Wulfhere of Mercia and subsequently donated to King Aethelwald of Sussex, according to *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Garmonsway ed 1972, 32). In AD 686 the Isle of Wight was again conquered, this time by Caedwalla, the king of the West Saxons. Bede claims that he deliberately exterminated all the natives, replacing them by settlers from his own province. According to Bede, 'two young princes, brothers of Atwald, king of the Island', escaped to the 'adjoining province of the Jutes' in mainland Hampshire. There, they were betrayed and put to death, having first accepted Christianity (Sherley-Price 1955, 227-228). This story tells us that the Isle of Wight appears to have been considered an independent kingdom (at least by Bede) even after its conquest by Wulfhere. However, following its conquest by Caedwalla in AD 686 the Island became subsumed within the Kingdom of Wessex and, later, of England. Nevertheless its location guarding one of the main gateways into

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<sup>22</sup> Eagles (1994, 25) has identified a number of Old English place-names that attest to the presence of 'Jutes' within mainland Hampshire in the New Forest, Bishopstoke on the River Itchen and in the Meon Valley.

the country ensured that the Isle of Wight would continue to attract royal and government interest through many succeeding centuries.

### **Military Significance**

The Island's location and its consequential military significance has led to effects as diverse as the construction of castles and forts, particular patterns of lordship and landholding and the preparation of surveys – both written and cartographic. The full military significance of the Isle of Wight is apparent only within the context of the English nation-state although it may have been treated as a single defensible territory by earlier tribal groups. Curiously, definite evidence for prehistoric defensive or military activity on the Island is limited. An unfinished Iron Age univallate promontory fort stands on a chalk spur at Chillerton Down near the centre of the Island whilst at Yaverland, in east Wight, a brief investigation by Time Team in 2001 revealed a low chalk hill-top defended by a substantial Iron Age ditch (Tomalin 2007a, 12-13).<sup>23</sup> Suetonius recorded that during the Claudian Conquest of Britain in AD 43 Vespasian 'fought thirty battles, subjugated two warlike tribes and captured more than twenty towns, beside the entire Isle of Wight' (Graves 1957, 275) but there is no archaeological evidence of a battle and only two buckles of possible military type have been recorded, implying that the population may have capitulated without an armed confrontation. Margham (1992b, 5) has speculated that the hill-top on which Carisbrooke Castle is built may have been used as a hillfort in the Iron Age, with the hollow-way to the east of the castle being on the line of its defences, but no archaeological features of definite Iron Age date were recorded during recent excavations (Young and Mephram 2000, 190). The earliest feature at Carisbrooke Castle that is definitely defensive in nature is the 'Lower Enclosure' which is embedded in the bank of the later medieval bailey. Young and Mephram (2000, 191) have suggested that the lower enclosure was a late Saxon *burh* built to defend the Isle of Wight against Viking raids rather than a late-Roman fort connected

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<sup>23</sup> An enclosure of possible Iron Age date at Castle Hill on the Upper Greensand ridge above Mottistone in west Wight is now thought to be a stock enclosure rather than a fortification (Currie 2003).

with the organisation of the Island as postulated by Collingwood and Richmond (1969, 52-54). However, Tomalin (2002) still regards the lower enclosure as being late Roman in origin. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in AD 530 'Cerdic and Cynric slew many men at *Wihthgaresburh*' (Garmonsway 1972, 16-17). This account may refer to the slaughter of the native British population.<sup>24</sup> It is possible that the site of this slaughter was at Carisbrooke Castle despite the fact that the place-name *Wihthgaresburh* does not correspond etymologically with the place-name Carisbrooke (Kökeritz 1940; xxvi-xxxiii, xlvii-lvi). In the later Anglo-Saxon period the Island's location made it attractive to Viking raiders. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records the first Danish raid on the Isle of Wight in AD 896. In 998 the Danish army quartered itself on the Island. From there they were safe from any land army and in a perfect strategic position to raid the south coast of England. Danish fleets returned to the Isle of Wight in 1001, 1006 and 1009. In 1048 and in 1052 the Island was again ravaged, on the second occasion by Earl Godwin. The strategic significance of the island is demonstrated by the visit of King Athelred in 1013 and its use as a fleet base by Cnut in 1022 and by both Tostig<sup>25</sup> and Harold in 1066 (Hockey 1982, 81). The importance of the Island to William the Conqueror can be judged by the rapid development of the lower enclosure at Carisbrooke Castle into a Norman ringwork (soon replaced by a motte and bailey castle) and also by the granting of the Isle of Wight by the Conqueror to his near kinsman, William Fitz Osbern (Young and Mephram 2000, 194-195). Cahill (1980, 6-7) has suggested that the Isle of Wight functioned as a 'castlery', although never named as such. A castlery was a block of territory attached to a castle or within its jurisdiction (AHRC 2007). Castleries were located in vulnerable border territories and one of their principal features was the pattern of landholding, consisting of compact groupings of lands in the hands of tenants-in-chief. Cahill (*ibid*) argues that this situation pertained on the Isle of Wight, claiming that 'there was an extraordinary scale of manorial reorganisation on the Island'. Jones & Jones (1987, 33) have reinforced

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<sup>24</sup> However, it should be noted that archaeological evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation of the Island goes back to the fifth century AD.

<sup>25</sup> Earl Tostig was in rebellion against his brother, King Harold.

Cahill's thesis, pointing out that the Isle of Wight was treated by William I in the same way as the Welsh borders and northern marches where great tracts of land were presented to a small number of noblemen to act as the first line of defence in the areas that separated the kingdom from potential enemies. Hockey (1982, 124) has also commented on the unusual concentration of royal manors on the Isle of Wight in medieval times 'which is sufficiently explained by preoccupations of defence, even from Saxon times'. The Crown still held a large amount of land in the middle of the sixteenth century, accurately recorded in the 'Royal Survey' of all Isle of Wight landholdings carried out in 1559-60 (Webster nd). However, Hockey (1982, 124) has pointed out that the crown lands recorded in the 'Royal Survey' do not tally with those recorded in Domesday Book, only the manors of Bowcombe, Freshwater, Wroxall, Niton and Wellow being common to both lists.

In the period following the Norman Conquest the lords of the Island had a large measure of autonomy despite the fact that the Isle of Wight is recorded under Hampshire in Domesday Book and formed part of the 'County of Southampton' until 1889 (Isle of Wight County Council 1990b, 23-38). Cahill (1978, 1) suggests that when William Fitz Osbern received the Lordship of the Island, he was granted 'palatine' powers which would allow him to control royal demesne, act as the crown's principle agent and be independent of any royal sheriff in the area. Following the revolt of William Fitz Osbern's son, the lordship was taken back into crown hands in 1075 before being granted to the de Redvers family in 1100. Bearman (1994, 28) has stressed the power of the de Redvers, judging that by the second half of the twelfth century the Island had an administrative and legal organisation resembling that of a private shire, a point also emphasised by Hockey (1982, 178). However, after the death of Isabella de Fortibus (last of the de Redvers) in 1293 the Isle of Wight reverted to the Crown and hereditary lordship was replaced by nominated lords (and later captains and governors), enjoying Crown estates and revenues at the pleasure of the Sovereign (Page 1912, 222-229; Sheridan 1974). Camden (1610, Isle of Wight Section: Paragraph 8) alleges that Henry de Beauchamp 1st Duke of Warwick was crowned King of the Isle

of Wight by Henry VI in 1444 but this story may be apocryphal and in any case Warwick died in 1466 when the Island would automatically have reverted to the Crown. The dominant role of the Lordship and later Captaincy led to the absence of a hereditary aristocracy, all the resident landowners in the later medieval and post-medieval periods being of the gentry class (Jones 1978, 55). This may have had an effect on the exploitation of the land and the organisation of the landscape relative to certain mainland areas. Jones (1978, 11) has suggested that the military significance of the Island was the real reason for the first statute against depopulation, dating from 1489, which dealt exclusively with the Isle of Wight.<sup>26</sup> The whole of Britain suffered a large decline in population in the later Middle Ages but Beresford and Hurst (1989, 189-190) have identified a particularly large number of so-called 'deserted medieval villages on the Isle of Wight in relation to its size. Their evidence requires reassessment but the 'Royal Survey' of 1559-60 make it clear that depopulation was a real problem (Webster nd). It is possible that the insular nature of the Isle of Wight may have made it harder to replenish the population after the famines and plagues of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Isle of Wight was certainly a dangerous place to live and defence was a preoccupation throughout the Middle Ages (Hockey 1982, 81-104). There were a series of French raids on the Island in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and in the late sixteenth century there was real fear of a Spanish invasion. On numerous occasions in the fourteenth century, and at least once in the early fifteenth century, the Crown had to order the local Isle of Wight gentry to reside on the Isle of Wight (Hockey *ibid*). In 1590 Queen Elizabeth II ordered Sir William Oglander of Nunwell, father of the diarist Sir John Oglander, to return from Beaulieu in the New Forest where he had been living with his family (pers. comm. Clifford Webster).<sup>27</sup> In 1340 the Island was defended by nine mustered companies each comprising 100 men (Worsley 1781, 32). By Tudor times the Island's militia was organised in eight (later eleven) divisions explicitly identified as *centons*, each under the command of a local landowner called a centoner

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<sup>26</sup> 4 Henry VII, cap. 16.

<sup>27</sup> In the event, however, Sir William Oglander appears not to have returned to Nunwell until after his wife's death in 1597 (Aspinall-Oglander 1945, 34).

(Jones & Jones 1987, 49). A beacon system existed in medieval and post-medieval times and beacon sites are listed in documents of 1324 and 1638 (White 1930; Kökeritz 1940, lxxvii-lxxxix); Basford 1980, 133-134). Carisbrooke Castle was strengthened throughout the Middle Ages and also after the Spanish Armada (Young and Mephram 2000, 188-200; Jones 2000, 67-76; Young 2000 76-85). Coastal forts were built in the reigns of Henry VIII and Charles I (Basford 1980, 132-133; Coad 2007, 62-65; Jones 1968). The 'Royal Survey' of the Isle of Wight in 1559/60 ordered by Elizabeth I and her Privy Council and carried out in 155-60 was prompted by government interest in the Island as a place of military importance. National interest was also focused on the Isle of Wight when Charles I fled there in 1647 and was imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle until the end of 1648 (Jones & Jones 1987, 63-72). Islands are often used for the purposes of imprisonment but the Isle of Wight's potential as a prison location was not exploited in peacetime until 1838 when the hospital of the redundant Albany Barracks was used as a training prison for boys. In 1869 Parkhurst became a prison for adult male offenders, the first of the three prisons that form a complex still standing in the same area (Jones & Jones 1987, 144-145).

During the medieval period the Isle of Wight's strongest link with the mainland had been centred on Southampton but Portsmouth's increasing military significance from the sixteenth century onward meant that the Island also forged close ties with its other large mainland neighbour. Portsmouth was of key importance by the later eighteenth century and the Island's economy and defence was closely tied to that of the mainland port. In fact, the Island was one of just a handful of localities, all of military significance, for which Ordnance Surveys were prepared at a scale of 1:10,560 in the decade following 1784 (Oliver 1993, 40). Barracks and defences were constructed on the Island during the Napoleonic Wars and fortifications were also built from the 1850s. These included the 'Palmerston' forts of the 1860s,<sup>28</sup> links in a chain of fortresses encircling Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight which were built in response to a Royal Commission on defence established in 1859

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<sup>28</sup> So-called because they were built when Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister.

(Saunders 1977; Basford 1980, 134-136; Horsey 2001, 90-91). The Palmerston forts surrounding Portsmouth added to its existing importance as a Royal Navy base and dockyard. This military significance continued into the twentieth century. In World War II, D-Day was planned from the city and Portsmouth still retains its naval base and dockyard today. The Isle of Wight played an important early warning role in World War II with Ventnor Radar Station being one of a chain of south coast stations acting as early warning sites for enemy attack by air. Operation PLUTO<sup>29</sup> to supply oil from Britain to France, planned in advance of D Day, involved pipelines crossing the Solent and running across the Island (Isle of Wight Council 2010, 17-19).

## **Conclusions**

This discussion of the Island's physical character and cultural roots suggests that the Isle of Wight is at once 'the same' as the English mainland but also physically and culturally rather distinct. Clear physiographic zones have been identified which may well prove to have influenced the cultural landscapes of the Island and which will be explored in later chapters. Plentiful trading and cultural contacts with the rest of Britain and with the Continent existed in prehistoric, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval times. Despite these contacts, insularity may have been an economic disadvantage in the later Middle Ages and at the end of this period the Island's towns were not prospering. The threat of French invasion (and actual invasions in the fourteenth century) may have been one factor inhibiting economic growth. However, from the late-eighteenth century insularity gave the Island a special attraction to visitors. All the Island's significant ports, harbours and towns are located on the Solent coast or with access to that coast, due to the existence of coastal estuaries and the pull of the mainland. The 'Back of the 'Wight' has had less contact with the Hampshire mainland and, historically, exhibited different cultural characteristics from the northern part of the Island. Although the Island has not enjoyed political independence since the seventh century AD its military significance did affect patterns of landholding and social

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<sup>29</sup> Pipeline under the ocean

organisation in the medieval and early post-medieval periods. Arguably, geographical location and military significance have shaped the Island's overall economic development as much as insularity *per se* although this latter factor has undoubtedly been an important influence on cultural identity from early times to the present day. In the following chapters insularity will be one of the factors to be considered in studying the Island's cultural landscapes and placing these within the context of national and regional models.

## Chapter 3

### **National, Regional and Local Models: Problems and Questions.**

As seen in Chapter 2, the Isle of Wight landscape is richly varied embracing partly-wooded countryside and tidal inlets north of the chalk, sweeping downland pastures and chalkland arable fields, the distinctive extremities of Freshwater Isle and Bembridge Isle, intensively farmed lands in the Greensand vale, and the broken ground of the Undercliff with its startling inner cliff. Many centuries of human endeavour are visible in this landscape: Neolithic monuments on Tennyson Down, Afton Down and Mottistone Common; Bronze Age round barrows clustered at the heads of combes and on ridge-tops; small villages, hamlets and farmsteads - some of pre-Domesday origin; planned medieval towns and the unmistakable imprint of the Victorians; all set within a matrix of fields, open pasture and woodland.<sup>30</sup>

A number of cultural landscapes can be discerned within the matrix, shaped by human effort as well as topography and underlying geology. The aim of this thesis is to define and explain the Isle of Wight's cultural landscapes by creating models and comparing them with existing models of regions and local areas, including the model of Isle of Wight HLC Areas. Isle of Wight cultural landscapes will also be examined within the context of more generalised models applicable to the whole of England. However, before embarking on a detailed analysis of Isle of Wight landscapes we must describe the models that will be utilised and explore the issues arising from their use.

### **National and Regional Models**

A fundamental issue is that of scale. The two most influential models of the English cultural landscape, defined in works by Rackham (1986) and Roberts & Wrathmell (2000; 2002), are at a national scale. Both models employ 'cultural data informed by contrasts in terrain' (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 6),

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<sup>30</sup> The Island's archaeology is covered by Basford (1980; 2006a, 10-17; 2008, 10-15) and by Tomalin (2007a)

thus differing from the Highland/Lowland model of Mackinder (1915)<sup>31</sup> which was based purely on geology and terrain. In discussing the Highland/Lowland model Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 33) have pointed out that 'few scholars would now use crude physical determinism as a way of explaining all aspects of culture' but equally that 'local conditions undoubtedly affect *genres de vie*'. The models of Rackham and of Roberts & Wrathmell both divide England into different provincial zones of countryside and are concerned mainly with understanding cultural differences at this scale although sub-provincial and local regional zones are also defined by Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 39-69 and figure 1). As the provincial zones of Rackham and of Roberts & Wrathmell are concerned with the overall broad-brush pattern at a national scale they cannot be used to study cultural variability *within* the Isle of Wight but the key attributes identified for the provincial zones can be compared with the attributes of the Island's diverse cultural landscapes. Rackham's seminal book, *The History of the Countryside*, is a scholarly but quirky work that attempts to explain the interaction between the natural world and human activities over many centuries (Rackham 1986, xiii). In the scope and ambition of its theme, *The History of the Countryside* can perhaps best be compared with *The Making of the English Landscape* (Hoskins 1955), the work that first established landscape history as a branch of historical study<sup>32</sup> (Taylor 1988, 7). However, as an economic historian Hoskins took a chronological approach, whereas Rackham, as a historical ecologist, links the evidence of ecology with that of historical documents and has chapters on the various components of the countryside such as woodland, fields, heathland, moorland, marshes, highways, hedges, trees and ponds. Rackham published a map (1986, figure 1.3) which defined two English lowland zones, these being *Ancient Countryside* and *Planned Countryside*, and also a *Highland Zone of England*. This map is reproduced here as Figure 3.1. It shows the Isle of Wight as being within Rackham's *Ancient Countryside* zone. The model of English settlement provinces, sub-provinces

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<sup>31</sup> Subsequently used by Sir Cyril Fox (1952) as a framework for exploring archaeological distributions in Britain

<sup>32</sup> Although Fleming (2007, 90-91) points out that the ancestry of landscape *archaeology* goes back to Heywood Sumner and O.G.S Crawford in the early twentieth century.

and local regions created by Roberts & Wrathmell is derived from totally different data than that of Rackham's countryside zones (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 27) and was designed for a different purpose. Whilst Rackham's work can best be described as a field guide to the historical ecology of England, Roberts & Wrathmell's model of settlement provinces was first devised specifically to provide English Heritage with a national framework for evaluating medieval settlement sites (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, viii). However, their model also embraces sub-provinces and local regions (*ibid* 39-69) and in a slightly later work the authors explore in much greater detail the cultural variability that can be observed at provincial, sub-provincial and local-regional level (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002). Roberts & Wrathmell define three rural settlement provinces based on the evidence of nineteenth-century maps, these being the *Central Province*, the *South Eastern Province* and the *Northern & Western Province*. These provinces were first mapped in the *Atlas of Rural Settlement* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, figure 1) but the slightly clearer map published in *Region and Place* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, figure 1.4) is reproduced here as Figure 3.2. This map shows the Isle of Wight as falling within the *South Eastern Province*. Roberts & Wrathmell's provinces correspond to some extent with Rackham's countryside zones but there are important differences. The most important are that the *Northern & Western Province* includes both Rackham's *Highland Zone of England* and parts of his *Ancient Countryside* zone, that the *Central Province* extends further into south-west England than does Rackham's *Planned Countryside* and that the *South Eastern Province* extends further to the west than does the western boundary of Rackham's *Ancient Countryside*. These differences can be seen clearly by comparing Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

The perception that England can be divided into two zones of lowland countryside is by no means new although its relevance to the modern discipline of landscape history was first recognised by Rackham. An Elizabethan scholar, William Harrison, described the two zones as 'champaine ground' and 'woodland' countryside (Williamson and Bellamy

1987, 13) and a contemporary, Thomas Tusser (1573), referred to the 'champion' and 'seuerall' (several), the latter term describing the many small fields into which this type of countryside was divided (Rackham 1986, 189). The great medieval historian, F W Maitland, saw the two distinctive zones mainly in terms of villages *versus* hamlets (Rackham 1986, 5). These alternative ways of understanding the separate types of English countryside, emphasising respectively the difference in field patterns and vegetation and the difference in settlement patterns, underlie the interpretative models of Rackham and of Roberts & Wrathmell although both models recognise that a variety of characteristics distinguish the two countryside zones. Some of the characteristics identified by Rackham equate with those identified by Roberts & Wrathmell but they are discrete models which utilise different sources of evidence. Rackham's model, although provincial in scope, describes the physical structure of the countryside at a very detailed level, as can be seen from his lists of the modern and historic differences between *Ancient Countryside* and *Planned Countryside*, reproduced here in Table 3.1. These distinguish two countryside zones on the basis of very specific traits: for example sinuous, species-rich hedgerows versus straight hawthorn hedges; a multiplicity of sinuous roads and tracks versus infrequent straight roads and tracks; many woods versus infrequent woods; hedgerow trees of oak, ash, alder and birch versus non-woodland thorns and elder trees. Rackham recognises the distinction between the 'hamlets and small towns' of *Ancient Countryside* and the 'villages' of *Planned Countryside* (see Table 3.1) but has little more to say on this subject. Roberts & Wrathmell, however, describe their method of mapping settlement in some detail in the *Atlas of Rural Settlement in England* and explore the significance of provincial, sub-provincial and regional variation within settlement landscapes at great depth in *Region and Place* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 9-17; Roberts & Wrathmell 2002 *passim*).

Rackham sets out the elements of his provincial model in two lists. The first list identifies modern differences between *Ancient Countryside* and *Planned Countryside*; the second sets out historic differences between the two types of countryside (see Table 3.1). This is an important distinction, for some

historic differences are no longer apparent. For instance, open-field no longer exists even in *Planned Countryside* and heathland is now rare, even in *Ancient Countryside*. Rackham's insistence on the time-specificity of certain diagnostic features in his countryside zones reminds us that even 'ancient' countryside is dynamic and subject to great change over time. In reality, all landscapes exhibit both continuity and change, with these concepts representing the two ends of a graduated scale. Roberts & Wrathmell's use of nineteenth-century settlement patterns to identify cultural provinces thought to originate in the medieval period or even earlier has been debated by various authors (e.g. Dyer 2001; Dyer 2003; Hinton 2005; Rippon 2007a, 6-7). On balance, Dyer considers that Roberts & Wrathmell's approach is justified and Rippon points out that documentary evidence, fieldwalking and study of the vernacular building stock all support the idea of medieval regional variation in the landscape. Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 4) themselves remind us that 'there are dangers in the uncritical projection of ... visible elements into earlier, more remote centuries' although they argue that the maps in their *Atlas of Rural Settlement* 'do provide...a solid...foundation for retrogressive analysis' (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 14). Unlike Rackham, Roberts & Wrathmell do not provide a tabulation of provincial characteristics in either *The Atlas*, or in *Region and Place*, possibly because they are conscious of the complexity of reality and are wary of tables that convey a spurious sense of finality, implying a definitive statement rather than suggesting further avenues of investigation. Their analysis is based very firmly on graphic models and the belief that 'cartography is more than a presentational method: it is a powerful research tool' (Roberts 1996, 1). Some key provincial characteristics are defined in the final synoptic chapter of *Region and Place* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, 173-192) but other elements must be sought elsewhere in the text of this volume or the *Atlas of Rural Settlement in England* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000 *passim*), or must be deduced from figures 3 and 9 of the *Atlas*. For the purposes of this thesis it has been necessary to construct a summary table of Roberts & Wrathmell's key provincial attributes (Table 3.2) in order to discuss the differences between their model and that of Rackham and, in later chapters of this thesis, to compare the two models with the attributes of cultural landscapes on the

Isle of Wight. One of the historic differences between *Ancient Countryside* and *Planned Countryside*, according to Rackham, was that in *Ancient Countryside* open-field was 'either absent or of modest extent and abolished before c. 1700' whereas in *Planned Countryside* there was a 'strong tradition of open-field beginning early and lasting into Enclosure Act period' (see Table 3.1). However, Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 145 and fig 5.10) have demonstrated that open-field formerly existed in many parishes within their *South Eastern* and *Northern & Western* Provinces (often referred to by the authors as 'the Outer Provinces') although they emphasise that the shading of parishes on their map 'exaggerates the presence of town-field land in the outer provinces, where core shared lands would have occupied much smaller areas'. Williamson (2003, 5) has also stressed that areas of *Ancient Countryside* often had extensive open-field systems in medieval times but points out that these were usually irregular and of smaller size than in the Midlands, often comprised more than three fields, and were enclosed at an earlier date. Williamson (*ibid*) also stresses other historic characteristics of *Ancient Countryside* such as the less rigorous and pervasive communal controls on farming practice and the fact that open fields were associated with various small hamlets within the township rather than with a single nucleated village. These additional characteristics defined by Williamson are set out in Table 3.3. In order to make direct comparison between Rackham's model and Roberts & Wrathmell model easier and to take into account Williamson's observations, Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 have been reduced to two sets of simplified indicators (Tables 3.4 and 3.5). The simplified list of 'Rackham' indicators set out in Table 3.4 does not include Rackham's distinction between hamlets and small towns in *Ancient Countryside* and villages in *Planned Countryside*. This is because settlement attributes are more thoroughly covered in Table 3.5, which is derived mainly from Roberts & Wrathmell's key attributes but also includes additional attributes identified by Williamson and defined in Table 3.3.

Other divisions within the English countryside have been identified in addition to those connected with field patterns and vegetation or with settlement patterns. The map of English farming regions from 1500-1640, first published

by Thirsk (1967, fig 1) in Volume IV of the *Agrarian History of England and Wales*, is a particularly influential model. This map, redrawn by Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, figure 3.1), is reproduced here as Figure 3.3. Everitt's concept of *pays* has been equally influential in historic landscape studies in two different ways, firstly in articulating the concept of cultural identity within regions and secondly in defining the discrete landscape types that characterise individual *pays* (Everitt 1985, 3). These landscape types were later mapped by Thirsk (1987) and a slightly adapted version of this map, published by Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, figure 3.3), is reproduced here as Figure 3.4. Wade Martins has examined provincial differences in the English countryside from a post-medieval perspective. She has pointed out that much less change to the landscape took place in this period within the area of so-called *Ancient Countryside* because many of the changes that took place in *Planned Countryside* after 1700 had already happened within the *Ancient Countryside* and, in particular, the fields were already enclosed (Wade Martins 2004, 96). The terms *Evolved Landscapes* and *Landscapes of Improvement* have been coined by Wade Martins as alternatives to the terms *Ancient Countryside* and *Planned Countryside*. Whilst Wade Martin's model operates at a provincial level, the models of Thirsk and of Everitt function at a regional scale. However, in analysing cultural landscapes, we need to be aware of a more sophisticated hierarchy of scale. Roberts (*in press*, 1, and following Warnock 2002) defines six fundamental scales of enquiry: 'national [1:2,000,000], macro-regional [1:250,000], local regional (County) [1:50,000], neighbourhood [1:25,000/1:10,000] and site 1:2500/1:500] – the bracketed notes indicating characteristic map scales. The national programme of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) developed and sponsored by English Heritage from the mid 1990s was originally designed to be presented at local regional (i.e. County) level. Nevertheless, most County-based HLC mapping programmes have been implemented at 1:25,000 or even at a larger scale. The Isle of Wight, an administrative county from 1889 until 1995, is now a Unitary Authority (Isle of Wight Council 2006, 1) but, at 380 square kilometres, is much more akin in size to an average Local Authority District (ONS 2011). Primary analysis in the Isle of Wight HLC mapping programme carried out by the present author (Basford 2008) 21-22) was therefore based

on mapping at 1:10,000 scale or larger, allowing a more fine-grained characterisation than in other counties.

### **Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)**

HLC was developed by English Heritage specifically for use in planning and landscape management. It aims to understand historic landscape character *at the present day* but has also been used to model past landscape character. A key concept of HLC is *time-depth*. This is defined by Aldred and Fairclough (2003, 44) as ‘the visible evidence in the present-day landscape for change and continuity over long periods of time’. Time-depth can be seen as the landscape-scale equivalent of *stratigraphy*, the fundamental principle governing the understanding of archaeological sites. HLC identifies generic *types* such as field patterns, open land, woodland and settlement. These types are mapped as discrete polygons using GIS and a linked database and are then subjected to further analysis and interpretation (Fairclough 2001, 25). Special emphasis is placed on the morphology of field patterns and their significance in demonstrating the evolution and cultural variability of landscapes within individual counties. Problems associated with the technique of HLC have been identified by various authors. Although the choice of a county-based scale has been justified on the basis that ‘broad patterns and generalities can be identified without losing sight of the more detailed grain of the landscape’ (Fairclough 2001, 25), the use of counties as the basic units of characterisation means that significant boundaries between cultural landscapes can be missed. As Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 39) point out, there is no automatic ‘fit between administrative units of any kind or date’ and cultural regions.<sup>33</sup> There can also be discontinuity in interpretations between counties. This problem was exacerbated by the lack of a standard methodology in the early stages of the HLC programme although published information on methodology and best practice has now been available for some time (English Heritage 2002; Aldred & Fairclough 2003). Significant

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<sup>33</sup> This problem, of course, did not affect the Isle of Wight HLC since, in common with most other islands it is self-evidently a distinctive cultural region in its own right.

queries have been raised about the accuracy of HLC in interpreting the historic landscape (e.g. Williamson, 2007b , 65-67) since historical maps, other primary sources and even works of pre-existing research have generally been used only to a very limited extent because of the relatively short amount of time allocated to individual HLC projects. However, in some recent projects the technique of retrogressive map analysis has been more fully utilised. Various other criticisms have been made of HLC, indeed a whole issue of *Landscapes* was devoted to the subject (Austin *et al.* eds. 2007). Herring (2009, 73) has defended HLC against the charge that it oversimplifies a complex world, arguing that HLC can be a 'problematizing framework' within which more detailed work may be located, resulting in revision of the characterisation. This argument has also been used by Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 192) with respect to their broad-brush settlement provinces.

### **The Isle of Wight HLC Programme**

An HLC Programme was undertaken on the Isle of Wight between 2002 and 2006 (Basford 2008, 7-8). This programme sought to take an innovative and developmental approach, informed by early work on the present thesis. However, it was also compatible with the programmes of other counties. Classification of *generic* HLC types was based on those used in Hampshire and Surrey (Lambrick & Bramhill, 1999; Bannister & Wills, 2001). These *broad types*, shown in Figure 3.5, included coastal elements<sup>34</sup>, communications<sup>35</sup>, field patterns, horticulture, industry, military and defence sites, mineral extraction sites, open land, parklands/defined landscapes, recreation and tourism areas, settlement, valley floor zone and woodland. Within the *broad types*, descriptive and interpretative sub-types were

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<sup>34</sup> Including tidal estuaries, inter-tidal areas, sand dunes, coastal slope, landslip, harbours, marinas, and reclaimed land.

<sup>35</sup> Communications were recorded only very selectively since narrow linear features are not generally mapped by HLC but a few portions of road, railway line and railway track were delineated. Airfields, ferry termini, railway stations and depots were generally mapped but were sometimes subsumed within other broad types.

identified, relating both to present day historic landscape character and to past phases of historic landscape character (Basford 2008, 17-41). The HLC digital map was prepared by identifying discrete landscape types such as woods or distinctive field patterns and mapping these as *polygons*<sup>36</sup>, the edges of which corresponded to lines on the Ordnance Survey Landline digital map representing, for instance, the edges of woodland or hedge-lines. In mapping some types of land use, such as woodland, there was no difficulty in determining the edges of polygons but with other broad types, such as field patterns, wholly subjective judgements had to be made about the boundaries between areas of contrasting character. This was done by morphological analysis and reference to a number of documentary and cartographic sources. Certain sources were consulted before the characterisation of each polygon, namely the Ordnance Survey Landline digital map, the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Outdoor Leisure Map (1992), the Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1:0560 (1862-3) and a 1999 aerial photographic survey of the Isle of Wight . Other sources consulted on a regular basis wherever they provided relevant information were as follows: the unpublished six inch to one mile 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings of the Isle of Wight, transcribed tithe maps for many (but not all) of the Island's parishes where available at the County Archaeological Centre; digitised Ordnance Survey 1:2500 maps surveyed in 1862-1893, 1897-1898, 1908-2009 and 1939-1947; and the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 1<sup>st</sup> Series (1961 and 1964). At the start of the HLC Project, only photostat versions of the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings were available at the Isle of Wight Record Office and these were unclear in places. However, digital copies of the unpublished 1790s drawings in the British Library were acquired by the Isle of Wight Council in 2004 and these proved invaluable in the later stages of HLC mapping. Digitised 1:2500 Ordnance Survey maps (ranging in date from 1862 to 1947) became available shortly after the start of the HLC Project and were used for fine-grained urban characterisation but were at too large a scale to be used consistently for the characterisation of field patterns. Other historical maps and manuscript

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<sup>36</sup> The term *polygon*, used in geometry to describe a many-sided shape defined by lines, is employed in GIS to describe a unit of land differentiated from other areas of land and defined on a digital map.

sources, including transcriptions and photocopies of various estate documents and estate maps held at the Archaeological Centre, were consulted on occasion when needed to clarify past phases of landscape character (Basford 2008, 19- 21).

In practice the Isle of Wight HLC Programme was carried out in two stages. The first stage comprised the identification and mapping of discrete polygons, the identification of various attributes relating to each polygon and the recording of these attributes in a database<sup>37</sup> linked to the GIS mapping programme (Basford 2008, 23-33). An example of a completed form from the Isle of Wight HLC database is reproduced as Figure 3.6. The database recorded the following main attributes: shape and size of field patterns, boundary characteristics of field patterns and woodland<sup>38</sup>, enclosure pattern<sup>39</sup>, extent of boundary change from 1810-1862 and extent of boundary change after 1862, dispersed settlement attributes and residential settlement attributes. It also recorded modern and historic map sources that had been consulted. A notes box appended to the database contained a short text-based commentary on each polygon, a facility that allowed the incorporation of historical information from documentary sources. The attributes recorded in the HLC database provided not only a tool for interpreting contemporary landscape components in terms of their historical roots but also a possible means of reconstructing the antecedent landscapes from which contemporary landscapes have developed. Such attributes could be indicators of processes operating at different times on individual units of land (defined as polygons on the digital map). Up to three phases of past landscape character as well as present landscape character could be recorded on the database as *interpretative types*. These types were particularly useful for recording the perceived character of field patterns in

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<sup>37</sup> The database used was Microsoft Access.

<sup>38</sup> e.g. Whether sinuous, curvilinear, rectilinear, zigzag and whether defined by presence of 'doglegs', watercourses, trees, roads/ tracks and/or medieval parish boundary.

<sup>39</sup> i.e. Long & thin, interlocking, axial, grid, long-furlong, non-rectilinear, ladder, herringbone, offset grid.

different phases. Field patterns could be classified as one of the following *interpretative types*: 'prairie fields', amalgamated fields, reorganised field pattern, enclosed open field strips, enclosed open field/open field furlongs, enclosed waste/common, enclosed pasture or meadow, enclosed heathland, enclosed downland, assarts, enclosed parkland, enclosed marsh, unidentified enclosure type.

The digital database described above was one of the two end-products of the primary HLC analysis, the other being a digital map covering the whole of the Isle of Wight.<sup>40</sup> An extract from the Isle of Wight digital map has been reproduced as Figure 3.7. This extract shows various numbered polygons, each representing a particular historic landscape type.<sup>41</sup> The numbers provide a link to the associated database. The second stage of HLC analysis involved the selection and querying of data from the primary mapping, using GIS, to produce seventy-six interpretative maps relating to all thirteen *broad types* but with a special emphasis on field pattern morphology and types, settlement types, woodland types and open land types. These maps were presented in a final report which also contained a written discussion of the various HLC types and of the Island's historic landscape character as revealed by HLC (Basford 2008, 48-64). All the maps in the HLC Final Report show HLC types within an overall framework of *HLC Areas*, which will be discussed later. Examples of these maps are reproduced as Figures 3.8 - 3.10. Figure 3.8 shows the morphology of field patterns at the present day. It identifies twelve types of field patterns, based on shape and size. In early HLC projects, field patterns were usually categorised mainly on the basis of morphological analysis. In general, small, irregular fields were associated with early piecemeal enclosure and large, regular fields with more recent planned enclosure. However, morphology is subject to problems of

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<sup>40</sup> The digital map and database were incorporated within the County Historic Environment Record (HER) at the end of the HLC Project.

<sup>41</sup> N.B. The colours in Figure 3.7 do not correspond to the various historic landscape character types but were randomly generated by the GIS programme.

interpretation and Williamson (2006, 60) has pointed out that 'there is no simple or direct correlation between the morphology of fields and their origins'.<sup>42</sup> A significant problem with some early HLC projects (e.g. Lambrick and Bramhill 1999) was that they described the morphology of field patterns, woodland, open land, settlement and other historic landscape components without discussing the origins of these components in detail or addressing fundamental questions about the nature of the landscape in medieval and post-medieval times. These projects thereby missed an opportunity to understand the roots of present-day landscape character. The Isle of Wight HLC Project, however, aimed to explain the possible origins of *present-day* field patterns by identifying a number of *interpretative sub-types* as described above and shown in Figure 3.9. The analysis was, it has to be admitted, only partially successful in identifying present-day field patterns derived from open field, waste and common, heathland, downland, woodland and other early types, for identification was often uncertain.<sup>43</sup> In addition, within many polygons it could simply not be established (either from morphology or documentary sources) how the existing field pattern had developed.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the analysis almost certainly under-estimated the extent of time-depth in the present landscape since the ages of *external* polygon boundaries and of routeways were not considered, although these features are likely to be far more ancient than most internal field boundaries within particular parcels of land (Basford 2008, 44-46). In any case, the map of present-day field patterns could not show the full extent of earlier patterns of land usage since it merely identified *the most recent land use* affecting discrete blocks of fields. Thus, many field patterns had to be described as 'reorganised' or sometimes as 'prairie fields'. These field patterns may have been open-field or unenclosed common pasture at an early stage of their

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<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere, Williamson (2007, 67) has referred to the concept of 'equifinality' used by historical geographers, whereby very different historical processes can produce very similar patterns in the landscape.

<sup>43</sup> This uncertainty was reflected in the database where 'interpretation confidence' and 'dating confidence' could be recorded as 'certain', 'probable' or "unsure".

<sup>44</sup> In these cases, the field pattern was recorded as 'Unidentified Enclosure Type'.

history but subsequently have passed through various processes of change.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the interpretation of field patterns shown in Figure 3.9 fulfilled, to some extent, the need to understand the present day landscape, which was (and remains) the primary purpose of the national HLC Programme. However, the Isle Wight HLC work undertaken by the present author sought not only to map the different types of *present-day* field patterns in terms of the earlier types from which they had evolved but to answer questions which, surprisingly, had hitherto not been discussed in relation to the Island as a whole.<sup>46</sup> These questions included such matters as the extent and distribution of open-field, common pasture and woodland in the medieval and early post-medieval periods, and the enclosure methods and dates relating to particular parcels of open-field and common land (Basford 2008, 17-18). The HLC Final Report therefore contained a series of maps which attempted to show the possible extent of various enclosure categories<sup>47</sup> by combining *interpretative types* identified within different HLC phases (Basford 2008, figures 52-64). These different enclosure categories were then presented on one synoptic map, reproduced here as Figure 3.10, which showed the possible origins of all existing field patterns on the Isle of Wight. This gives a much clearer idea of the categories of historic enclosure from which present-day field patterns ultimately derived than does Figure 3.9. Two *caveats* are necessary: firstly, for many polygons it could not be established how the field pattern had developed and these polygons were simply classified as 'unidentified'<sup>48</sup>; secondly, Figure 3.10 is *diachronous* in that not all the individual examples of each specific enclosure type would have conformed to this type at the same time. Furthermore, bearing in mind that

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<sup>45</sup> One such example is the large block of 'prairie fields' shown in Figure 3.9, corresponding largely to the *Bembridge Limestone* physiographic zone identified in Figure 2.6. These derive partly from former open-field and partly from former common land. However, the entire block of fields has gone through several phases of reorganisation since enclosure in the late-eighteenth century and early-nineteenth century, including the large-scale removal of field boundaries in the 1960s and 1970s.

<sup>46</sup> although Margham (1990;1992) has discussed the distribution of open-field, common pasture and woodland in parish surveys of Freshwater and Thorley

<sup>47</sup> These categories included enclosure from open-field, from unenclosed chalk downland, from non-downland waste or open grazing and from woodland

<sup>48</sup> As shown in Figure 3.9

HLC is a *generalising* process, and given the uncertainties of morphological analysis and the selective use of documentary sources, Figure 3.10 cannot be taken as a definitive statement about enclosure processes on the Isle of Wight. Rather, it sums up our present understanding of these processes. Future research, including this thesis, should lead to refinement and improvement of the map in the manner envisaged by Herring (2009, 73).

The characterisation of settlements in the national HLC Programme has been particularly problematic. HLC Projects generally do not characterise individual nucleated settlements by plan-type according to the classification developed by Roberts (1977, 117-158; 1987, 24-32; 1996, 87-119) which considers shape, degree of regularity, complexity and the presence or absence of greens, as shown in Figure 3.11. Instead, polygons representing discrete settlement elements are usually classified by presumed date of origin, form (nucleated or dispersed)<sup>49</sup> and function (e.g. 'farmstead', 'housing estate', 'caravan site').<sup>50</sup> The Isle of Wight HLC considered the possibility of characterising settlements by plan-type but this was rejected as being too time-consuming although a consideration of plan-types would have enhanced our understanding of historic settlement on the Island (Basford 2008, 36). In the final analysis, the Isle of Wight HLC, like other county projects, classified settlements by their presumed date of origin and by a mixture of form and function (Basford 2008, 62-3) although a map classifying all settlements by form and function was not included in the final report.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The term *pattern* is applied to the distribution of the varied elements of settlement throughout a landscape or region whilst form or morphology is applied to an individual settlement or settlement element. Thus, it is possible to talk of a 'dispersed pattern of settlement' or a 'nucleated pattern of settlement' but the terms 'dispersed' and 'nucleated' can also be used to indicate the *character* of an individual settlement (Roberts 1996, 24).

<sup>50</sup> For instance, the Hampshire HLC (Lambrick and Bramhill 1999, Volume 1, Section 2, 3,) defined the following categories: scattered settlement with paddocks (1810 extent), scattered settlements with paddocks (post-1810), common edge settlement (1810 extent), common edge settlement (post 1810), post-1810 settlement (general), village or hamlet (1810 extent), town or city (1810 extent), caravan sites.

<sup>51</sup> The Isle of Wight HLC used the following form/function categories: historic settlement core (pre-1810), urban, suburban, nucleation (more than five dwellings), dispersed settlement (less than five dwellings), farmstead, residential cluster, residential scatter, residential infill, plotlands, ribbon development, housing estate, residential mobile home site, cemetery/churchyard, hospital, school/college and prison.

Figure 3.12 shows the suggested age of Isle of Wight settlements and settlement elements<sup>52</sup> as identified from documentary and cartographic sources. Basford (2008, 44-46) concluded that HLC methodology does not adequately characterise settlements (or the routeways that articulate settlement landscapes) although the classification of settlement types, patterns and forms provided in Chapters 6 and 8 of this thesis should now remedy this deficiency for the Isle of Wight. The place of dispersed settlements in the landscape is particularly hard to characterise adequately using HLC because the scale of digitisation often prevents their being mapped as discrete polygons. Thus, although the HLC Final Report included a map of pre-nineteenth century dispersed settlement and nucleated historic settlement cores (Figure 3.13) this omitted many dispersed settlements that had not been mapped as discrete polygons. One way in which HLC practitioners seek to overcome the difficulty of characterising dispersed settlement is by defining this settlement type as an attribute associated with discrete field patterns or other HLC types. However, this does not really solve the problem. On the Isle of Wight, the difficulty was particularly acute, since more variation was discerned between field patterns than in many other counties<sup>53</sup> and therefore individual polygons representing discrete field patterns tended to cover quite small areas, ranging from as little as under 0.1 square kilometres to no more than about 2.5 square kilometres. In no sense, did any of these polygons represent settlement landscapes and so recording the number of dispersed settlements within polygons was not helpful in identifying these landscapes.

### **HLC Areas and Cultural Landscapes**

Rippon (2004, 19-24) has recognised that *HLC types*, including settlements and field patterns, are merely constituent parts of complete cultural landscapes. His schematic diagram, (Rippon 2004, table 2) showing historic

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<sup>52</sup> In urban areas and in some rural settlements several phases of development were identified.

<sup>53</sup> Probably, in part because digitisation of polygons took place at a larger scale

landscape elements, parcels, components, types and areas in a hierarchical relationship, reinforces this idea and is reproduced here as Figure 3.14.<sup>54</sup> One of the problems with HLC in general<sup>55</sup> is its failure to recognise that historic landscapes can best be understood as a series of components that are 'all functionally interrelated' (Rippon 2004, 20) and that whilst 'the historic landscape of an area can be disaggregated into its different components, the overall character of a particular place results from the way in which all the components articulate with each other' (*ibid*, 24). In fact, settlement landscapes can probably only be clearly identified within HLC programmes by defining Historic Landscape Character Areas. These Areas have been identified in some, but not all, English County HLC Projects.<sup>56</sup> They comprise discrete parts of the landscape possessing common or interrelated historic influences or components, a particular mix of HLC types and a unique identifiable local character which is distinct from other parts of the overall locality being mapped (Herring 1998, 47, Basford 2008, 69-71). Rippon (2004, 55) has suggested that 'from a past-oriented research perspective', HLC Areas are essential 'and equate to the *pays* and local regions that early topographic writers were so keenly aware of' although some HLC Areas, including those defined on the Isle of Wight, may not be sufficiently large and culturally distinct to be considered as *pays* in the sense of having clearly differentiated social structures and customs associated with a particular landscape character. Nonetheless, to a certain extent the Isle of Wight HLC Areas, although small, can be considered 'specific locations with a unique

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<sup>54</sup> Rippon's classification is paralleled by one devised by Darvill *et al* (1993) specifically for archaeological 'relict cultural landscapes'. Their criteria include integrity and articulation; diversity and structure; pattern and repetition; and degree of completeness.

<sup>55</sup> With exceptions such as the pioneering Cornish Project (Herring 1998, *passim*)

<sup>56</sup> Other counties have not defined HLC Areas but have utilised information from two programmes of character mapping developed from the 1990s by English Nature and the Countryside Agency. National Character Areas (NCAs), currently being revised by Natural England (2012a), divide England into 159 distinct 'natural' areas, each defined by a combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity but these NCAs are generally at a scale that is too small to be useful within HLC programmes. Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) uses statistical analysis and application of structured landscape assessment techniques to provide more detailed descriptions and analysis at a local level within the national framework of National Character Areas (Natural England 2012b). LCA is often utilised in HLC programmes.

identity defined by the *cultural landscape*' (Rippon 2004, 18) whereas some mainland HLC Areas are more analogous to the '*generic types of cultural landscape*' identified by Rippon (ibid)<sup>57</sup>. The Isle of Wight HLC defined more Areas in relation to its overall size than did four out of the five other HLC projects as shown in Table 3.6.<sup>58</sup> It is to be regretted that no national guidelines exist for the definition of HLC Areas. Where HLC Areas have been used within individual HLC programmes at regional, county or district level, these have generally been defined on the basis of *HLC types*. HLC Areas within some HLC programmes comprise a distinctive mixture of Present or Past HLC types but elsewhere these Areas are dominated by one particular HLC Type.<sup>59</sup> The boundaries of the fifteen Isle of Wight HLC Areas shown in Figure 3.15 were drawn up empirically at the start of the Isle of Wight HLC Programme. A more formal definition was achieved only at the end of the programme when the boundaries of these Areas were modified to take into account the distribution of HLC types. Tabulated descriptions were then compiled for each Area under headings which included physical character, 'Present HLC' types and 'Past HLC' types (Basford 2008, Appendix 1).<sup>60</sup> The

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<sup>57</sup> for instance, the HLC Areas defined in Northamptonshire where various individual localities within the County fall within each of the twelve HLC Areas, which are characterised mainly by particular types of enclosure processes e.g. pre 19th Century non parliamentary enclosure, 19th Century non parliamentary enclosure, fragmented non parliamentary enclosure, earlier parliamentary enclosure, 19th Century parliamentary enclosure, fragmented parliamentary enclosure and large modern fields.

<sup>58</sup> The *scale* of characterisation inevitably affected the number of HLC areas identified. The Isle of Wight can perhaps best be defined as a 'neighbourhood' scale project and this is reflected in the large numbers of areas defined, as in the Black Country HLC. This latter project covered a similar area to the Isle of Wight (356 square km to the 380 square km of the Isle of Wight) but defined 32 HLC areas compared with 15 on the Isle of Wight. Undoubtedly, the urban character of the Black Country contributed to the large number of areas defined there.

<sup>59</sup> The way in which HLC Areas are defined varies considerably. The Isle of Wight HLC Areas are based on various combinations of *Present HLC* types and *Past HLC* types, as well as on other characteristics, and are far more heterogeneous than those defined in some other HLC Projects, such as the Black Country HLC (Quigley 2007) and the Northamptonshire HLC (Northamptonshire Archaeology *et al* 2006). The Black Country HLC areas were based on settlement and industry. 11 of the 12 broad historic landscape character types defining the Northamptonshire historic character areas were field patterns, the remaining type being woodland.

<sup>60</sup> The various Isle of Wight HLC Areas are recognisably different from each other in their overall historic landscape character at the present day but would also have been distinguishable from each other in the past although in some cases the distinguishing criteria would have differed from present-day criteria, for instance, the *Thorley/Wellow Plain* was previously distinguishable from the adjacent *Northern Lowlands* by the presence of open-

Isle of Wight HLC Areas were drawn up primarily to reflect *present-day* variation in the landscape (although this variation has historic roots) and they may therefore be less helpful in understanding historic cultural landscapes than if they had been defined with specific reference to past landscape character.<sup>61</sup> In addition, some Areas may be mainly physiographic rather than cultural in character, in particular the various ‘downland’ HLC Areas. Furthermore, definition of the Isle of Wight Areas did not involve a detailed study of primary sources although the HLC types on which they are partly based were defined using a number of primary sources, either consistently or on a selective basis. The Isle of Wight HLC Areas can therefore by no means be accepted uncritically as accurately reflecting the cultural landscapes that were present in medieval and post-medieval times and the more detailed study of primary sources in this thesis may considerably modify the picture presented by these Areas.

### **The Potential Value of HLC in Understanding Cultural Landscapes**

In the necessarily descriptive section above, it has been seen that the mapping of individual HLC types established one level of understanding of the Island’s historic landscape and that the definition of HLC Areas enhanced this understanding by providing a preliminary classification of cultural landscapes. The maps of HLC Types and Areas reproduced here present challenges and raise questions, so that the HLC results can be useful to the present research in a number of ways. For instance, the relationship between

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field and the absence of woodland. Today, there is still an absence of woodland but the most striking feature is now the large size of its fields in comparison with those of the *Northern Lowlands*.

<sup>61</sup> In contrast with the rather *ad hoc* definition of the Isle of Wight HLC Areas, the Historic Character Areas within the Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB were created using a set of guiding principles and a formal methodology published on the AONB website (Rouse 2010). The end result was a set of defining characteristics for each Historic Character Area not dissimilar to those used in the tabulated descriptions of Isle of Wight HLC Areas (Basford 2008, Appendix 1). The final Historic Character Areas defined for the Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB are not necessarily more robust than the Isle of Wight HLC Areas but they derive more directly from HLC types and are underpinned by guiding principles which emphasise the *historic* aspects of the present-day landscape as the main criteria for definition. They may therefore reflect historic cultural landscapes more accurately than do the Isle of Wight HLC Areas.

field patterns and enclosure processes will be further discussed in Chapter 5, drawing on the findings of the Isle of Wight HLC, although additional work on cartographic and documentary sources may modify these findings. The preliminary model of Isle of Wight historic landscape character provided by the HLC Areas will be refined in Chapter 5 in the light of documentary and cartographic sources examined in Chapters 4 and 5. The local diversity of the various Isle of Wight HLC Areas can be used as an example of the need to appreciate differences of scale and purpose in modelling historic landscapes. Thus, the Isle of Wight is depicted as a single unified area within the wider provincial divisions of Rackham (Figure 3.1) and Roberts & Wrathmell (Figure 3.2).<sup>62</sup> These models conceal the variety of cultural landscapes that exist on the Isle of Wight and undoubtedly also within other mainland 'local regions' of similar size. This does not invalidate the provincial models for they depict real differences in historic character although, in order to present the general picture clearly, local variation is not shown. However, this thesis is very much concerned with the local picture and with achieving a finer-grained picture of historic landscape character. In this respect, it will need to take account of the Isle of Wight HLC Areas. It will also need to consider the five landscape regions identified by Margham (2003, fig 1) in connection with Anglo-Saxon settlement, shown here as Figure 3.17. Margham's regions may perhaps be considered physiographic regions as much as cultural landscapes but his map was a considerable influence on the definition of Isle of Wight HLC Areas (Basford 2008, 71). This chapter and the one before have provided a context for the detailed investigation of Isle of Wight cultural landscapes in future chapters. For convenience, this investigation will be structured around separate studies of land use and enclosure in Chapters 4 and 5 and of settlement in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. However, in reality land use and settlement represent interlinked components of cultural landscapes. A surprising number of such landscapes will be identified and discussed in Chapter 9, bearing some relationship to existing HLC Areas but defined on the basis of a more rigorous academic analysis.

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<sup>62</sup> Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 67) identify the Isle of Wight as one of a number of 'local regions' within their East Wessex sub-province.

## Chapter 4

### Land Use and Enclosure: An Historical Overview

This chapter provides an overview of historic land use on the Island. It will thereby raise questions which may be answered in later chapters by exploring sources more fully and by constructing models. A summary description of previous research and documentary evidence is followed by a more detailed account of land use in the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century. This is based on contemporary accounts and Ordnance Survey maps seen in the context of provincial characteristics identified by Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 2002). Isle of Wight enclosure is then examined within a national and regional context.

#### Sources for Isle of Wight Landscape Studies

In the decades since *The Making of the English Landscape* (Hoskins 1955) much research has been undertaken into local and regional historic landscapes including county-based surveys (e.g. Steane 1974; Taylor 2004) and studies of historic landscape components such as field patterns, woodland and common pasture. No comprehensive landscape history of the Island exists but much work has been undertaken relating to its historic landscape. This includes surveys of downland and heathland (Cahill 1984, Chatters 1984), parish and manorial surveys (Margham 1990; Margham 1992a, Jones 1991; Jones 2003) and historic landscape surveys of local National Trust estates (Currie 1999; Currie 2000b; Currie 2001; Currie 2002; Bannister 2003; Rushton 2005; Wessex Archaeology 2007). In addition, Margham (2003; 2005; 2007; 2011; 2012a, 2012b) has undertaken studies of the Island's Anglo-Saxon landscape. Landscape history as a distinctive discipline has emerged from and been informed by the topographical studies, local history research and field archaeology undertaken by past generations. There is a substantial body of historical and topographical writing relating to the Isle of Wight (Parker 1975, 28-43, 162-190) starting with Sir John Oglander in the seventeenth century (Bamford 1936), the earliest county history being that of Worsley (1781). Information on Isle of Wight parishes

and manors is available in the Victoria History for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (Page 1912). Modern works on the Island's medieval history include a study of Quarr Abbey and its lands (Hockey 1970) and a book of essays on medieval Wight (Hockey 1982). Good primary sources exist for the medieval period and provide valuable information on the contemporary landscape. These sources include the published cartularies of Carisbrooke Priory, Quarr Abbey and the de Redvers family (Hockey 1981; Hockey 1991; Bearman 1994). However, the source that offers the greatest potential for study of the Island's medieval and early post-medieval landscape is an unpublished transcription and annotation of Isle of Wight royal and manorial surveys, especially the royal surveys of 1559, 1560 and 1608 (Webster (nd). The 1559 Survey was ordered by Elizabeth I's Privy Council because of the Island's military significance and vulnerability. It covered the whole Island within the two hundreds of West Medine and East Medine but the Privy Council was not satisfied with the Survey of West Medine and this was resurveyed in 1560. Surviving manuscripts from the surveys of 1559 and 1560 cover three-quarters of the Island and Webster has filled in most of the gaps using near-contemporary manorial surveys.<sup>63</sup> He has also provided tenorial histories for each of the manors covered by the royal surveys, incorporating material from other medieval and post-medieval manorial records and including information from the 1608 Survey of Royal Lands on the Isle of Wight. Webster thus supplies a far more authoritative and detailed account of the Island's manorial history than that given in the Victoria County History (Page 1912) and the transcribed surveys provide invaluable information on medieval and post-medieval land use.

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<sup>63</sup> The original manuscripts of the 1559 and 1560 royal surveys comprise:

1. Detailed reports for the *centons* of Mottistone, Newport, Arreton and St Helens (National Archives SP 12/7/58, 59, 60 & 61)
2. Report of Commission 'The generall Survey of the state of T[his isle] of Wight' covering the entire Island (MSS of Earl of Dartmouth, Staffordshire Record Office)
3. 1560 Survey of West Medine (Lincolnshire Record Office).

## Summary of Evidence from Documentary Sources

The royal and manorial surveys (Webster nd) are particularly useful in providing information on the Island's medieval and early post-medieval open fields. Published works on English field systems and enclosure also include some references to the Isle of Wight (Gray 1915, 31,102-3, 108, 440, 466-468, 530; Tait 1947, 276-278). These sources and others have been used to compile a database listing the known evidence for open fields on the Island (Appendix B). The entries in the database, listed by tithing and mapped in Figure 4.1, are discussed further in Chapter 5. Here, it is merely necessary to note the clear evidence provided by Figure 4.1 for the existence of open-field within the majority of the Island's tithings although there are a good number of tithings where no evidence has been identified.<sup>64</sup> Both two-field and three-field systems are recorded locally (Gray 1915; 440, 467-468) but enclosure of open-field had apparently begun by the end of the fifteenth century since a Statute of 1489 dealing with depopulation on the Isle of Wight (4 Henry VII, cap.16) blames this on enclosure. A subsequent 'Inquisition of Depopulation' in 1517 found that only 355 acres of arable land in the Isle of Wight had been enclosed and turned to pasture since 1489, less than 0.4% of the total land area (Jones 1978, 11-12).<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, Jones (1978, 15) has stated that:

*The farming picture in the mid sixteenth century was one of mixed agriculture with arable increasingly giving way to grazing, and with more hedged enclosures steadily appearing.*

Indeed, Camden (1610, Isle of Wight Section, Paragraph 2) refers specifically to the 'corne fields enclosed' on the south side of the Island. The royal surveys of 1559 and 1560 provide much information about individual holdings in the mid-sixteenth century, including the size of holdings and rights of common, but do not list individual fields. However, the 1608 Survey of Royal Lands names individual fields within each holding, specifying whether these

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<sup>64</sup> The lack of documentary evidence or clear morphological evidence in certain tithings does not necessarily mean that open fields did not once exist there.

<sup>65</sup> Jones re-assessed figures originally published by Leadam (1893, 277-292). See also Webster (1994 Part 2, 5). Nearly three-quarters of the enclosed land belonged to ecclesiastical landlords.

were arable or pasture closes, arable lands within open-field, or meadows. The Crown owned a large amount of land on the Island at this time. Nonetheless, the 1608 Survey provides only a random, although extremely valuable, sample of information but it is supplemented by the other manorial surveys transcribed by Webster (nd), ranging in date from the medieval period to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the incomplete nature of the evidence from these surveys and the fact that they have only been sampled in the preparation of this thesis, a fairly coherent picture of early post-medieval land use emerges. By the early seventeenth century much of the Island's arable land appears to have been held 'in severalty' within closes. Open fields still existed in nearly all parts of the Island (although very scarce on the northern clays) but the surveys suggest that most surviving open fields had been subject to partial enclosure.<sup>66</sup> For instance, in the west Wight manors of Kings Freshwater and Wellow shown on Figure 4.1 the 1608 Survey records that all the demesne land had been enclosed but tenants still held strips within the open fields. At nearby Thorley nearly all the open-field had been enclosed by 1608 (Gray 1915, 102-3; Margham 1990, 124). The township of Uggaton near Brighstone on the south-west coast was also largely enclosed although tenants still held a few open strips in South Field, North Field and West Field (Gray 1915, 102). Within the southernmost tithing of Niton well over half of the strips held by recorded copyholders within the two-field system had been enclosed by 1608 (Gray 1815, 102, 530). However, progress was apparently arrested at this stage for over two hundred years since two open fields are shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and a plan of the West Field dating from c.1791 depicts many open strips as well as large enclosed blocks of land (Caws 2012, 57-58).<sup>67</sup> Considered as a whole, the 1608 Survey paints a picture of enclosure actively underway, albeit often on a small scale, and affecting both open fields and common grazing land. For example, at Billingham (within the tithing of that name) a

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<sup>66</sup> Where fields remained open, landholders sometimes exchanged strips to consolidate their land, as recorded at Shide Field near Newport in an agreement made c.1570 between Winchester College and two other parties (Webster 1994).

<sup>67</sup> The West Field map is held at IWCRO in the Ald. Mew Collection. A map of East Field at Niton, of similar date, also exists at IWCRO but is unreferenced. Another map of East Field in IWCRO dates from 1844 and shows amalgamation of strips.

close of thirty acres had been 'lately enclosed out of the common'. Within the same tithing the survey also refers to 'the heath close late enclosed' and shared between the various tenements at Roslin. Other entries relating to nearby holdings refer to 'enclosed arable called three furlongs' of ten acres at Lower Rill, a 'close enclosed in South Field' of six acres and a 'parcel of common enclosed' of one acre at Upper Rill and a 'common enclosed parcel of heath' of eight acres at Nether Loverston. The 1630 Survey of Swainston and Brighstone<sup>68</sup> paints a strong contrast between Swainston Manor in the north-west of the Island (within the tithing of that name) and Brighstone Manor which lay between the Chalk ridge and the south-west coast (Jones, 2003). In Swainston Manor the arable land amounted to only one fifth that of the pasture land and nearly all of it lay in individual closes, most of which were between one acre and four acres in size. Only the field names of 'Westfield' and 'Furlongs' listed in the 1630 Survey suggested that Swainston Manor may formerly have had some open-field.<sup>69</sup> At Newtown individual strips belonging to the Swainston Estate within one of the two small town fields had been enclosed and hedged.<sup>70</sup> In contrast, Jones (2003, 83) describes Brighstone Manor as 'open champion country, unhedged and treeless' and Brighstone itself as 'a model nucleated village where farms and cottages stood in the village streets and the common fields were nearby'.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, by 1630 change was underway and Brighstone 'was at a transitional stage, with almost an equal amount of land in the common fields

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<sup>68</sup> IWCRO/Barrington Papers

<sup>69</sup> Manorial extents for Swainston dating from 1297 and 1303 survive in the British Library (Beresford 1959, 205). These refer to 288 acres of cultivated demesne, 474 acres of pasture, 300 acres of wood and 22 acres of meadow (notes by Alan Parker on Isle of Wight Deserted Medieval Villages, County Archaeological Centre). It is unclear whether or not the term 'culturae', used to describe the cultivated demesne land, refers to open-field (Gray 1915, 14).

<sup>70</sup> The enclosed strips at Newtown, complete with gates, are shown in a delightful tracing from the lost Swainston Survey Map of 1630 (Jones 1991, 63; IWCRO MP/B/108). Further documentary research is required to gain a more detailed picture of enclosure at Newtown.

<sup>71</sup> In mainland Hampshire, the sixteenth century topographer John Leland commented on a similar difference between the enclosed fields of south Hampshire and the champion fields of the chalklands (cited by John Hare in 'Change and Continuity in Chalkland Agriculture 1300-1600', Hampshire Field Club Local History Section Spring Symposium 2008 *Agriculture in Hampshire*).

and in enclosed fields, but farms with completely enclosed fields were still few' (Jones 2003, 92). In 1735 there was an agreement to divide the lands around Brighstone including Marsh Field, Ward Field and North Fields although this could represent a reallocation of already enclosed fields between landowners.<sup>72</sup> Even so, a plan of 1750<sup>73</sup> reveals that some open-field strips still survived in Brighstone close to the coast. However, by this date only a small proportion of the Island's arable land was open-field.

Few references to the assarting of woodland have been located in the sources consulted, perhaps because it took place at an early date, mainly in north-east Wight. Except in the north of the Island, references to woodland are infrequent in the sixteenth and seventeenth century surveys, demonstrating the extremely uneven distribution of this resource. However, at Swainston Manor timber and coppice wood were very important, as recorded in the 1630 Swainston Survey (Jones 2003; 80-82, 93). Many Island manors possessed common grazing rights on the Chalk downs and the 1559 and 1560 royal surveys list rights of common both for the manorial lord and for copyholders. For some manors these rights are specified e.g. 'right of common for x sheep on the down'. The dispute over common rights on St Catherine's Hill within Chale tithing between 1559 and 1577 (Hockey 1982, 212-218) suggests that by the sixteenth century there was pressure on common downland grazing. Thirty acres on Brading Down in east Wight was recorded as 'newly enclosed' in 1583 (Hockey 1982, 141) and in 1608 the demesne of Thorley Manor included enclosed common land of 100 acres on Thorley Down. An agreement between owners and occupiers to enclose part of Niton Down was recorded in 1735. However, much downland remained open at this date. Away from the downs there were also large areas of open grazing land. Some of this land was situated on low-lying wet ground e.g. Brook Green in south-west Wight, and on broken ground below the cliff e.g. Norton Common in west Wight and Chale Common in the south. However,

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<sup>72</sup> IWCRO/BD.AC 86/43/73

<sup>73</sup> IWCRO/BD/AC.86/43/68

the extensive commons on the clay and gravel heaths in northern Wight and on the light sandstone and gravel soils in the south of the Island were far more significant. One such common in northern Wight was Calbourne Heathfield within Swainston Tithing. This was still largely unenclosed at the time of the 1560 Royal Survey but was divided up into different parcels of land in 1577.<sup>74</sup> By 1630 the heathfield was split into thirty-two closes ranging in size from one to fifteen acres (Jones 2003, 79). In 1759, enclosure of common land was recorded at Appleford to the south of Rookley.<sup>75</sup> From the end of the eighteenth century the progress of enclosure relating to waste, downland and surviving open fields can be traced in somewhat greater detail through documents and maps. For instance, an indenture and map of 1780 records land taken from Bowcombe Common Down and allotted to Idlecombe Farm in lieu of the right of common for 300 sheep.<sup>76</sup> An 1834 map of Brook Green shows the green divided into allotments.<sup>77</sup> An estate map of 1815 relating to Mottistone Manor<sup>78</sup> in the south-west of the Island shows the existence of isolated strips from former common arable fields amongst Mottistone's enclosed fields. By the time of the 1838 Mottistone tithe map, some of the strips in Mottistone Field had been amalgamated into larger fields and nearby Fernfield Common had been converted to an arable field (Currie 1999, 21-24). Individual sources such as these can provide snapshots of the Island's changing landscape in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries but to obtain a clearer picture we must examine Ordnance Survey maps and the work of contemporary agricultural writers.

## **Overview of Land Use in the Late Eighteenth Century and Nineteenth Century**

1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance surveys maps, generally created from the early nineteenth century, must be the starting point in linking documentary

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<sup>74</sup> IWCRO/JER/BAR/2/139, 382-387

<sup>75</sup> IWCRO/JER/MISC/13

<sup>76</sup> IWCRO/ JER/SEL/61A/4

<sup>77</sup> IWCRO/ JER/SEL/1A/18

<sup>78</sup> IWCRO/ 86/21

evidence with the physical landscape, for only rarely are accurate earlier maps available. However, their importance goes far beyond the illustration of documentary sources; they are vital tools of graphic analysis for the landscape historian. The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map of the Isle of Wight at a scale of one inch to one mile (the 'Old Series' map) was published in 1810 but is available as a modern reproduction by Cassini at 1:50,000 scale and referenced to the National Grid (Appendix A). The 1810 map was based on unpublished Ordnance surveys. These include field sketches and preliminary drawings made between 1791 and 1793 at three-inch and six-inch scale held at the National Archives (MR 1/489; WO 78/1648; MPH/1/776) and eight unfinished fair drawings by William Gardner at six-inch scale held at the British Library (OSD 67-74).<sup>79</sup> Three of the British Library drawings bear the faint inscription 'Surveyed area 1793-4'. Late-eighteenth century Ordnance surveys were made only in places of military significance, including Plymouth and the Medway area as well as the Isle of Wight (Oliver 1993, 40). The British Library drawings therefore constitute an unusual and important source for landscape studies on the Island. All eight drawings depict individual field boundaries sufficiently accurately for them to be used in field-pattern analysis although some specific inaccuracies can be detected suggesting that the boundaries may, at least on occasion, have been sketched in rather than measured. Appendix C discusses the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and the 'Old Series' one-inch map in more detail. Although the 1810 Ordnance Survey map does not show field boundaries it provides an excellent overview of non-arable land use on the Isle of Wight including downland, woodland, lowland open grazing land, unimproved valley-floor pasture, marshland and parkland. Substantial areas of downland along the central Chalk ridge and in the south of the Island remained as open grazing land in 1810 although a considerable amount of enclosure had taken place. The progress of downland enclosure in the nineteenth century and

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<sup>79</sup> Digital copies of the British Library drawings can be viewed online at [http://www.bl.uk/search/og/search?q=Isle+of+Wight+%2B+Ordnance+Survey+drawings&Go.x=8&Go.y=11&output=xml\\_no\\_dtd&filter=0&proxystylesheet=public\\_onlinegallery&client=public\\_onlinegallery&site=public\\_onlinegallery](http://www.bl.uk/search/og/search?q=Isle+of+Wight+%2B+Ordnance+Survey+drawings&Go.x=8&Go.y=11&output=xml_no_dtd&filter=0&proxystylesheet=public_onlinegallery&client=public_onlinegallery&site=public_onlinegallery) [Accessed 8 November 2012]

twentieth century can be traced by comparing tithe maps of the late 1830s and the 1840s with the 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey maps of 1862-3 and with later editions of these 1:10,560 scale maps, all produced from surveys at 1:2500 scale (Oliver 1993, 142).<sup>80</sup> By the end of the twentieth century unenclosed old chalk grassland occupied only 15% of the Chalk outcrop (English Nature 1998, 10), considerably less than in the late eighteenth century, although still a much greater proportion of the total downland area than the 2.1% that has survived in mainland Hampshire (Cox 1997, 7).

In 1810 woodland was concentrated in the north-east corner of the Island with north-west Wight having somewhat less woodland (apart from that surviving within Parkhurst Forest) and the rest of the Island, other than the area to the east of Newchurch, having only scattered small copses. Historically, Parkhurst Forest was a mixture of wood-pasture and heathland, similar in character to the New Forest in mainland Hampshire although on a very much smaller scale.<sup>81</sup> Warner (1794, 57) described Parkhurst Forest in the 1790s as containing 3000 acres [1200 hectares] but 'without a tree of any value' and stated that 'scarce a vestige remains' of the deer and the wood.<sup>82</sup> The forest was officially disafforested and enclosed in 1815 (Chatters 1991, 51-52).<sup>83</sup> Until that date Parkhurst Forest provided the largest single tract of unenclosed land away from the downs as can be seen on the 1810 map. Other smaller areas of unenclosed waste land or common grazing also

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<sup>80</sup> For instance, much of Bowcombe Down was enclosed in the nineteenth century.

<sup>81</sup> The New Forest covers 37,905 hectares at the present day (Tubbs 1986, 16). This compares with Parkhurst Forest's modern extent of 409 hectares, much shrunken after disafforestation in 1812, the conversion of some forestland to farmland and the use of other land for military purposes and later for the prisons of Parkhurst, Camp Hill and Albany.

<sup>82</sup> In 1770 the Surveyor General had reported that Forest contained about 3,043 acres and about 200 head of deer (Chatters 1991, 50). However, only 2,500 acres were included in the Enclosure Award of 1815 (Adams 1960). The area of the forest in the 1790s as calculated on GIS from a geo-referenced copy of the 1793/4 Ordnance Survey drawings was 2,551 acres (see Table 5.3).

<sup>83</sup> Comparison of the 1810 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 4.7) and the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing of this area shows that some land had been cleared and enclosed between the dates of these two maps, before the official disafforestation of Parkhurst. The 1810 map shows the southern edge of the forest bounded by the straight line of 'Forest Road' whereas in the 1790s the forest had extended considerably to the south of this line as far as New Park, Cockleton and Kitbridge Brook.

survived away from the downs. This non-downland open grazing land had formerly been far more extensive. For instance, in the medieval period a whole tract of land to the north-east of Newport had been covered by the interconnecting open grazing lands of Staplehurst Heath, Fairlee Common and Alverstone Common, with Clavell's Heath to the north (Hockey 1991, map 9). Wootton Common, Great Lyn Common and Little Lyn Common lay slightly further to the east. By the 1790s Staplehurst Heath and Alverstone Common had been reduced to small triangles of land at highway junctions and Clavell's Heath could no longer be identified, whilst Fairlee Common was much reduced in size. However, significant areas of open and enclosed rough grazing land away from the Chalk still remained in the 1790s and some of these areas can be identified on the 1810 map. This map also depicts greens and areas of open grazing situated in low-lying valley areas adjacent to streams, for instance Brook Green, land beside Thorley Brook and land beside the stream running from Shorwell to Brighstone. Larger areas of undrained 'rough grazing' on valley floor land can also be seen on the 1810 map in the valleys of the river Medina and the Eastern Yar.<sup>84</sup> Land beside the Eastern Yar and tributary streams was probably a mixture of damp grazing marsh and better-quality pasture land with some land used as hay meadow.<sup>85</sup> The Eastern Yar flowed into Brading Harbour, a tidal waterway about 2.5 km in length running from the town of Brading to the sea at Bembridge. Brading Harbour was finally drained in 1880 (Page 1912, 156-157) although some land to the north and south of Brading had been drained in the sixteenth century and there was an abortive scheme to drain the main haven in the seventeenth century and there was an abortive scheme to drain the main haven in the seventeenth century (Martin 2004b). At an earlier date another arm of this tidal channel ran southward to Sandown, cutting off the eastern extremity of the Island known as 'Bembridge Isle' (Martin 2004c). This was drained in

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<sup>84</sup> One such area of grazing marsh in the Medina Valley east of Cridmore is labelled 'The Wilderness' on the 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey of 1862-63. Drains are marked within 'The Wilderness' on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and on the 1862-63 Ordnance Survey map but both sources show the area as marsh.

<sup>85</sup> Today, the remaining area of grazing marsh around Alverstone is of considerable ecological value and is managed for its conservation interest. To the east of Alverstone, near Adgestone, a common meadow survived into the nineteenth century and is marked on Brading Tithe Map (IWCRO JER/T/33B).

the medieval or early post-medieval period leaving an area of marshland known as 'Sandham Level' which is shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and 1810 Ordnance Survey maps.<sup>86</sup> On the Island's north-west coast, reclamation of salt-marsh at Newtown took place in the seventeenth or eighteenth century.<sup>87</sup> Coastal salterns associated with the salt making industry are shown on the 1810 Ordnance survey map at Newtown, Hamstead, Thorness Bay<sup>88</sup> and in the area to the west of Nettlestone Point.

The 1810 Ordnance Survey map marks not only functional landscape features associated with farming and coastal activities but also nine large landscape parks belonging to the gentry.<sup>89</sup> The parks at Norris Castle, Springhill, Fernhill and St John's had been created just a few years before 1810 but those at Swainston, Gatcombe, Osborne, Appuldurcombe and Nunwell were associated with estates going back many centuries, as far as

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<sup>86</sup> The British Library Ordnance Survey drawing marks the position of drains within Sandham Level.

<sup>87</sup> Newtown Marsh was tidal salt marsh until reclamation took place between 1656 and 1768 and was used as common pasture in medieval times (Currie 2000b Volume 1, 33). Webster (nd) states that 'Bernard Marsh' was drained in 1662, and called Marsh Farm. Currie 2000 (Volume 1, 35; Volume 2, 70) also records an agreement made in 1662-63 to drain the marsh and to maintain sea walls (IWCRO JER/BAR/3/9226). Adams (nd) notes the existence of an inner embankment and suggests that reclamation took place in two stages. The marsh had certainly been completely reclaimed by 1768 when the sea wall is shown on a plan of the borough (IWCRO JER/WA/33/53) but reverted to the sea when the embankment was breached in 1954. Blocks of ridge and furrow have been recorded on Newtown Marsh. Currie (2000b, Volume 2, 51 & 79) suggests that the ridge and furrow is medieval, predating the use of the area as common pasture, but this seems unlikely as the marsh would have been inundated at high tide during the medieval period. Air photographs show that the ridge and furrow is ruler-straight (suggesting a post-medieval date), occurs in discrete small plots on different alignments and respects the inner embankment. It seems rather doubtful whether this reclaimed land was ever ploughed but the varying alignments are more suggestive of cultivated plots than the drainage of pasture land. Twentieth century cultivation during World War II is a possibility. Alternatively, the ridge and furrow could perhaps be connected with salt production.

<sup>88</sup> Labelled Thorney Bay on the 1810 map

<sup>89</sup> The Island also possessed many other landscape parks and gardens sufficiently large to be shown on various eighteenth century and early nineteenth century maps such as those published by John Andrews (1769), Sir Richard Worsley (1781), James Clarke (1812) and George Brannon (1824). Basford (1989, 65-69) identifies ninety-eight parks and gardens pre-dating 1825.

Anglo-Saxon times in the case of Swainston. Changes to the Isle of Wight landscape in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century can be observed by comparing the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and the 1810 map with the Island's tithe maps and the various editions of the 1:10,560 'County Series' Ordnance Survey. These maps show that a general 'tidying-up' of the landscape took place in the nineteenth century, including the straightening of boundaries within areas that had been subject to earlier enclosure. New landowners also acquired land on the Island and rationalised their holdings, for example the Ward family at Northwood (Basford 1992) and the Seely family at Brook and Mottistone (Currie 1999, 21-24). Fairly large-scale transfers of land took place between landowners in the Chillerton and Appleford areas to the south and west of Godshill in 1860, seemingly in an attempt to sort out piecemeal patterns of landholding in 'detached' portions of various parishes.<sup>90</sup> There were also some thorough-going transformations of estates by improving landlords in the hitherto less productive northern part of the Island, for instance by Prince Albert on the Osborne Estate (Morton 1863, 6-42)<sup>91</sup> and by George Young at Ashey Farm (Wilkinson 1861, 348-371).

Large-scale improvements by landowners seem to have been a nineteenth century phenomenon on the Isle of Wight but the Island did not escape the attention of late-eighteenth century agricultural writers. Jones (1982, 191-204) provides a good overview of the Island's agricultural economy in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries as seen through the eyes of agricultural writers and Caws (2012) discusses the effects of the 'Agricultural Revolution' on the Island. An excellent commentary on the landscape depicted in the British Library's Ordnance Survey drawings of 1793-4 is provided by William Marshall (1798, 248-285) who spent a week on the Isle

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<sup>90</sup> This seems to be the real purpose of a so-called 'enclosure award' of 1860 listed by Adams (1960, 221). This award affected 1191 acres of land at Appleford, Dollcoppice, Roud, Ramsdown and Chillerton in the parishes of Godshill, Carisbrooke (Detached) and Wootton (Detached)

<sup>91</sup> Improvements at Osborne are described in 'A summary of the various works proposed and executed on the Osborne Estate from 1845 to 1861 inclusive, by direction of HRH the Prince Consort, with continuation to the end of 1890' printed privately in 1891 by W R Yelf, Newport, Isle of Wight. Two copies are kept at Windsor Castle (RL II 42 Gall. C.).

of Wight in October 1791.<sup>92</sup> He summarised the Island's farming economy as:

*Chiefly; cultivated crops and sheep pasture with a portion of woodlands, some furze grounds and an extent of rough commonable lands but with very little lowland pasture or meadow land, except in the environs of Cowes and Newport* (Marshall 1798, 267-268).

In Marshall's opinion, 'lands of the first quality' made up only a small portion of the Island and were 'far exceeded in quantity, by those which are weak and under-productive'.<sup>93</sup> He noted an apparent discrepancy between the mediocre quality of the soil as he perceived it and the large export of corn from the Island<sup>94</sup> but accounted for this by pointing to the small population (Marshall 1798, 160). The Island had, in fact, exported corn since the Tudor period and Camden had a better opinion of local soil fertility than Marshall.<sup>95</sup> However, export of Island grain in the later eighteenth century was undoubtedly fuelled by military activity, including the build up towards the outbreak of war with France in 1793, and by the Island's proximity to the victualling yards at Portsmouth.<sup>96</sup> In 1791 the Isle of Wight was described as 'the granary of the western counties' and as 'the chief source of government contracts for wheat, malt, salt, flour and biscuit', mainly for supplying naval

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<sup>92</sup> Other agricultural writers who visited the Island in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries included Young (1771), Warner (1794) and Vancouver (1810). For a fuller bibliography of Isle of Wight agricultural history see Adams (1960).

<sup>93</sup> The Agricultural Land Classification Map of England and Wales 1969 (Sheet 180) confirms Marshall's opinion of the Isle of Wight, showing no Grade 1 land and relatively small amounts of Grade 2 land, most being Grade 3 or 4 with some Grade 5 land in the Undercliff and on the downs.

<sup>94</sup> Gilpin (1798, 303-304) reported that seven or eight times the local requirement of corn was produced each year.

<sup>95</sup> In *Britannia*, he states 'the ground ... consisteth of soile very fruitfull ... in so much as it does afford corne to be carried forth' (Camden 1610; *Isle of Wight Section*, Paragraph 2).

<sup>96</sup> An Isle of Wight grain surplus presumably existed by 1757, during the Seven Years War, when 8,000 troops were assembled on the Island for several weeks (Wikipedia 2012b). By 1777 a military hospital existed on the Isle of Wight and there were stores of corn and other provisions for the Portsmouth Squadrons at Brading and St Helens (Jones and Jones 1987, 51). A new barracks opened at Parkhurst in 1798 and hundreds of troops were camped on the Island at this time, leading to high grain prices but to prosperity for local farmers (Jones and Jones 1987, 87)

ships (Barfoot and Wilkes 1791, 398). Marshall (1798, 278) stated that 'the two principal articles of marketable produce are corn and sheep' and that 'cattle and dairy produce are subordinate objects'. In discussing sheep, Marshall (1798, 284-285) distinguished between breeding flocks of Hampshire sheep on the downs and 'Dorsetshire ewes' brought onto the Island for fattening to provide early lambs for the London market.<sup>97</sup> He depicted much of the Island as a 'sheep-corn' farming region of the type described and mapped by Thirsk (1967 figure 1, *passim*). Marshall (1798, 283) observed that 'the vale lands, on the north side of the Island' were 'adapted to cows, rearing cattle and dairy produce' but pointed out that this area, in fact, contained 'but few cattle or grasslands to maintain them'. Evidently, most of the Isle of Wight was at this time engaged in 'mixed farming' rather than 'pasture farming', a distinction fundamental to Thirsk's classification of farming regions.<sup>98</sup> This is a significant point since Rackham's provincial model of *Ancient Countryside*, within which he places the Isle of Wight, is generally associated with pasture farming, or at least with an 'anciently' enclosed, well-wooded landscape more suited to pasture farming than to arable farming. However, Roberts & Wrathmell's map of Thirsk's farming regions in relation to settlement provinces (Figure 3.3) brings out some interesting distinctions between their three provinces. The *Central Province* is clearly dominated by mixed farming landscapes (except for some wood pasture and open pasture landscapes in the south-west of the area) and the *Northern and Western Province* is equally dominated by open pasture landscapes but the *South Eastern Province* constitutes a mosaic of wood pasture landscapes and mixed landscapes, often supporting sheep and corn combinations. In considering the Island's farming regions it must also be recognised that the inflated war-time prices of the 1790s distorted the normal division of Isle of Wight agriculture whereby the northern area was devoted to

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<sup>97</sup> Sheep were essential to provide manure for light arable soils until the advent of artificial fertiliser in the nineteenth century. The adoption of crops such as turnips and clover to provide fodder for sheep and cattle was an essential part of Britain's eighteenth-century agricultural revolution and allowed more livestock to be kept (Williamson 2002, 2). Marshall (1798, 279) reported 'a large proportion' of turnips grown on the Island and also a 'considerable proportion' of clover.

<sup>98</sup> Of course, the classification by Thirsk (1967) refers specifically to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

pasture farming and the southern area to sheep and corn. The outbreak of war brought militia regiments and regular troops to the Island, 'all demanding flour for bread' and 'the security which such unfailing markets gave to farmers encouraged them to break new ground which would not normally have seen a plough' (Jones 1982, 199). Once these incentives were removed much of the marginal land reverted to waste or was converted to pasture in the early nineteenth century (Caws 2012, 108). Similarly, in the agricultural depression of the early twentieth century the area of arable on the Island fell to just over half its former acreage between 1920 and 1940, partly because it was unprofitable to cultivate 'the large proportion of heavy and other unsatisfactory soils' during a time of agricultural depression (Stamp 1940, 396). During the same period, most of the 'Tertiary Region of the North' was used for grassland (Stamp 1940, 399) with nearly all farms raising dairy cattle.

Downland pasture was vital to the sheep-corn farming that was so important in the late eighteenth century. Marshall (1798, 265) observed that the Chalk downs on the Isle of Wight were still 'almost everywhere, open' but the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawings and the 1810 map (Appendix A) show that a considerable amount of enclosure from downland had taken place.<sup>99</sup> In the western half of the Island, fields with ruler-straight boundaries are shown on one of the Ordnance Survey drawings (BL OSD 70) along the edges of Shalcombe Down, Mottistone Down, Newbarn Down, Little Down, Cheverton Down<sup>100</sup> and Gallibury Down. In the east, the Ordnance Survey drawing (BL OSD 69) shows Knighton Down divided into fields (although green shading indicates that these were used for grazing) and the north-east corner of Ashe Down was also enclosed. Some enclosures are shown on Bembridge Down but most of it was apparently still grazing land. In South Wight, the Ordnance Survey drawings (BL OSD 67 & 68) depict the Chalk and Upper

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<sup>99</sup> Wellow Down appears to have been completely enclosed by the 1790s and Westover Down to have been largely enclosed.

<sup>100</sup> Incorrectly labelled as Limerstone Down on the Ordnance Survey drawing

Greensand area around Niton and Whitwell as partly occupied by open fields and partly by enclosed fields but St Catherine's Down, Niton Down, Week Down, Rew Down and Boniface Down survived as largely unenclosed grazing lands. Shanklin Down was also grazing land but a physical boundary separated the downland of Shanklin Parish from that of Newchurch. Away from the Chalk downs, Marshall (1798, 265) noted that the rest of the Island was enclosed, 'mostly in well-sized fields' except for Parkhurst Forest and 'a suite of commons in the northeast division between Newport and Wootton Bridge' In 1791, the writer had observed that these open lands were:

*Progressively undergoing the profitable change, from a state of rough, unproductive, wet unhealthy commons, to that of drained and cultivated inclosures: not, however, by calling in costly aid of Parliament; but by general consent (ibid).*

The only area of open-field to be mentioned by Marshall (1798, 265) was at 'Nighton' (Niton) where two open fields are shown on the Ordnance Survey drawing (BL OSD 67). An adjoining field in Whitwell Parish appears to have been divided only into furlongs or cropping units.<sup>101</sup> The Niton and Whitwell lands constituted the largest surviving area of open-field in the Island. However, two smaller open fields at Freshwater (Headon Field and Easton Field) are shown virtually intact on the Ordnance Survey drawing (BL OSD 71) and numerous small strip fields are also marked in this parish, many of which were probably still unenclosed. Wellow's open-field system in Shalfleet Parish had been partly enclosed by 1608 but a portion of 'West Common Field' is still shown as open-field in the Ordnance Survey drawing (BL OSD 71). The small town fields attached to the failed medieval borough of Newtown are shown as divided into enclosed strips and blocks (BL OSD 73). Regular patterns of strip fields are depicted at St Helens and at Yaverland (BL OSD 69) and these probably remained in use as open-field. There were also surviving areas of open-field in Carisbrooke Parish to the north of Whitepit Lane and at Mountjoy (BL OSD 70). Small, interlocking fields in

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<sup>101</sup> These fields seem to have formerly been part of a large block of open-field shared between the parishes of Niton and Whitwell.

Mottistone Parish cannot be clearly identified as surviving areas of open-field on the 1793-4 drawings (BL OSD 70 & 71) but a slightly later estate map indicates the survival of isolated open-field strips (Currie 1999, 21-24). The tithe maps of the late 1830s and 1840s (available for all Isle of Wight parishes) show that open-field depicted on the 1790s drawings still survived in the parishes of Freshwater and Niton but had vanished from Shalfleet (Wellow) and Carisbrooke (north of Mountjoy). At Whitwell, the tithe map depicts some individual strips still surviving in the former common field to the south of the village. At St Helens, a field book of 1830 and the 1839 tithe schedule indicate that strips in the common field were still being worked.<sup>102</sup> Overall, the amount of surviving open-field shown on the 1793-4 Ordnance Survey drawings and on the early-nineteenth century tithe maps was very small in relation to the total extent of cultivated land on the Isle of Wight although some open-field remnants shown on the tithe maps were still marked on the 1862-3 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey maps.

### **Isle of Wight Enclosure in the National and Regional Context**

The Island's enclosure history must now be considered within a wider perspective. Tate (1947, 257) asserts that Gray's map of English field systems (Gray 1915, *Frontispiece*) 'places almost all Hampshire apart from a corner in the extreme north-east ... within the limits of the area formerly occupied and cultivated under the open field systems of the types associated with village communities of the "Midland" variety'. He observes, however, that the researches of the Orwins in the 1930s markedly reduced the gross area of Hampshire which came within the extreme limits of the open field system and that Gray's map shows the Isle of Wight as being on the outskirts of his 'great midland area' (Tate 1947, 276). Indeed, Gray (1915, 108) placed the Isle of Wight among those regions around the edges of his midland area that in the Tudor period were 'characterised by innovations in field systems'. Furthermore, Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 3, figure 5.4) have pointed out that Gray's map 'shows not field systems as such, but the ways in which similar

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<sup>102</sup> All tithe maps/schedules and the 1830 St Helens Field Book & Map are in the Isle of Wight County Record Office.

two or three-course rotational practices were followed within field systems that were, in reality, diverse in structure and character', noting that the misuse of Gray's map has obscured the contrast between the *Central Province* and the *Outer Provinces*. In the *Outer Provinces*, townfields were generally more irregular and were usually enclosed at an earlier date. Both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight fall within Roberts & Wrathmell's *South Eastern Province* (Figure 3.2). The enclosure history of southern England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been examined by Chapman & Seeliger (2001). Close study of their work, examination of supplementary sources and comparative analysis of a Midland county (Northamptonshire) will illuminate how Hampshire and the Isle of Wight compare with other counties, especially with regard to the enclosure of open-field. Chapman & Seeliger's work is based on the study of parliamentary acts and awards and of private enclosure agreements covering the counties of Dorset, Hampshire, Sussex and Wiltshire. They define three types of enclosure process, these being *informal agreements*, *formal agreements* and *enclosure by parliamentary act*.<sup>103</sup> Unfortunately, they do not examine the evidence for the Isle of Wight but this can be established to some extent from other sources. Most enclosure on the Isle of Wight in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whether of open-field or of common pasture, was the result of private agreements rather than of parliamentary awards. There are only six parliamentary enclosure awards for the Isle of Wight, shown in Table 4.1, all dating from the nineteenth century and listed by Tate (1947, 279) and Adams (1960). The earliest award deals with the enclosure of Parkhurst Forest in 1815. Only two awards relate to open fields, one in 1859 enclosing 457 acres of land on Niton 'Upper and Lower Fields' as well as 'Niton Head Down' and one in 1866 enclosing a small area of 37 acres at 'Easton Common Fields, Freshwater'. Two awards deal entirely with common pasture: one in 1852 enclosing 127 acres at Chale Common and one in 1859 enclosing 84 acres

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<sup>103</sup> The authors point out that informal enclosure did not necessarily lead to a landscape of small farms and fields. For example, informal methods were popular with substantial Hampshire landowners, who were often able to enclose large consolidated blocks in this way. On these, they were able to impose a highly regular landscape of large farms and rectilinear fields which differed little, if at all, from the landscapes of parliamentary enclosures. Here, the landscape may mislead, rather than acting as a clue to past development (Chapman and Seeliger 2001, 88).

at Norton Common in Freshwater.<sup>104</sup> In addition to these five acts that deal specifically with the enclosure of land, there was another much larger award in 1860 concerned with the transfer of land in the Chillerton and Appleford areas.

Chapman & Seeliger (2001, *passim*) record the amount of land enclosed within the counties of Dorset, Hampshire, Sussex and Wiltshire (both by parliamentary act and by agreement) from 1700 to 1899. Their figures are set out in Table 4.2 together with figures given by Tate (1949, 30) for Northamptonshire, a Midland county within the *Central Province*. For the Isle of Wight, only the extent of *parliamentary enclosure* can be estimated in Table 4.2, based on the data in Table 4.1. Williamson (2002, 13-14) has calculated that as much as 30% of the land area of England may have been enclosed after 1700 by both parliamentary act and agreement, taking into account both open fields and common pasture. Table 4.2 shows that of the four counties studied by Chapman & Seeliger, Wiltshire was subject to the largest amount of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure. This amounted to 41% of the county's land area, considerably more than the national average of 30%, and consisted mainly of parliamentary enclosure (30% of land area compared with 11% enclosed by agreement). The large amount of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure in Wiltshire is perhaps unsurprising, since half of the county falls within Roberts and Wrathmell's *Central Province*. Chapman and Seeliger (2001, 133) comment that in many ways:

*Wiltshire emerges as intermediate in its enclosure history between the traditional Midland pattern and that ... for the other three counties.*

However, they point out that there were major differences between the standard Midland pattern and that of Wiltshire. Table 4.2 demonstrates that the total land area enclosed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries within

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<sup>104</sup> However, Norton Common was sold to the War Office before it could be enclosed (Margham 1992a, 114).

Northamptonshire was far greater than in Wiltshire, possibly as much as 75% on the basis of figures given by Tate (1949, 30).<sup>105</sup> At least two-thirds of Dorset lies within the *Central Province* and one might therefore expect a level of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure similar to, or exceeding that of Wiltshire. However, the figure shown in Table 4.2 is only 30% of the county's total land area, considerably less than in Wiltshire. Hampshire was subject to the same level of enclosure as Dorset (30% of the total land area) but in Sussex only 9% of the county was enclosed during this period. In addition, the ratio between land enclosed by parliamentary act and that enclosed by agreement varies between counties. In Wiltshire and Dorset more land was enclosed by parliamentary act than by agreement whereas both Hampshire and Sussex enclosed slightly more land by agreement than by parliamentary act. For the Isle of Wight, only the total amount of land enclosed by parliamentary act in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is known, no figure being available for enclosure by agreement. Both Sussex and the Isle of Wight provide a sharp contrast with the other southern counties in having only 4% and 4.7% of their respective land areas enclosed by parliamentary act, compared with 30% in Wiltshire, 16% in Dorset and 13% in Hampshire. This low percentage of parliamentary enclosure is entirely consistent with the placement of both counties within Roberts & Wrathmell's *South Eastern Province*.

The myth that 'enclosure' equalled parliamentary enclosure of open fields has long been exploded although Chapman & Seeliger (2001, 141) point out

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<sup>105</sup> Tate states that 'when the movement towards Parliamentary inclosure began in the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, some four-fifths or at least three-quarters of Northamptonshire was still open'. He gives a figure of 59% or 368,000 acres for *parliamentary* enclosure, 56.6% from open-field and 2.4% enclosed from waste. It is not entirely clear whether Tate's figures refer to Northamptonshire's total land area or to the total number of *townships* but the overall acreage of parliamentary enclosure estimated by him does seem to relate to the county's pre-1974 land area. Hall (1997-98; 358, figure 2) states that 62% 'of the whole county' was enclosed by Act of Parliament from 1727 onwards but he seems to be referring to townships rather than to total land areas. However, in Northamptonshire there may have been relatively little pre-existing enclosed land in townships subject to parliamentary enclosure. Reed (1981, 62) gives percentages of parliamentary enclosure in the East Midlands as 53% for Northamptonshire, 46.6% for Leicestershire, 44.6% for Rutland, 38.7% for Lincolnshire, 36.4% for Nottinghamshire and 34.9% for Buckinghamshire. His figure for Northamptonshire is lower than Tate's figure of 59% or Hall's figure of 62%.

that it continues to surface. Overall, only 21% of England was enclosed by act of parliament (Williamson 2002, 13), two-thirds of this amount being arable compared with one-third common waste.<sup>106</sup> However, taken together, parliamentary enclosure and enclosure by agreement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries affected common pasture to a greater extent than open-field in the southern counties under discussion. Chapman & Seeliger (2001, 20) point out that in many cases new fields were being created from downland. Their book includes separate pie diagrams for *land enclosed by act* and *land enclosed by agreement* in Dorset, Hampshire, Sussex and Wiltshire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Each pie diagram shows the proportion of land enclosed within the various categories of 'field', 'pasture', 'meadow' and 'old enclosures'.<sup>107</sup> In Table 4.3 figures from the pie diagrams have been used to calculate the total extent of enclosure within the various categories (both by parliamentary act and by agreement) for each of the counties. Meadow accounted for a very small proportion of the total land enclosed, as meadows had always occupied only a small area within each township. However, Table 4.3 shows that in Dorset, Hampshire and Sussex the total amount of pasture enclosed by parliamentary act and agreement exceeded that of enclosed open-field. Dorset had the largest proportion of pasture enclosed by the two methods, amounting to 75.5% of the total enclosed land compared with 21.5% open-field. This figure probably reflects the existence of large areas of open downland in Dorset that were capable of conversion to arable. 56% of all land enclosed in Hampshire was pasture as was 61% of land in Sussex, reflecting the existence in these counties also of downland suitable for conversion to arable. It was only in Wiltshire that the amount of enclosed open-field (50.5% of total enclosure) exceeded that of pasture (38.5% of enclosure). At present, the amount of common pasture enclosed on the Isle of Wight during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cannot be accurately calculated and therefore the Island is not shown on

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<sup>106</sup> The relative proportions of arable and waste enclosed by Act of Parliament are taken from an online research guide to enclosure maps and awards on the website of Surrey County Council <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk>

<sup>107</sup> 'Old enclosures' represent previously enclosed land that was being exchanged or redistributed in order to consolidate holdings.

Table 4.3.<sup>108</sup> However, we have seen that lowland commons were still being enclosed in the 1790s and later, and that much downland was not enclosed until the nineteenth century or early twentieth century.

An assumption that nearly all enclosure of open-field took place after 1700 remains rooted in the popular imagination. This is despite the work of Gonner (1912) and Slater (1907) who laid the foundations of a more accurate picture. In fact it is now estimated that by 1600:

*Nearly half of open-field England had been enclosed, with a further quarter disappearing in the next hundred years, making this the most crucial period in enclosure history when the country swung from being a mainly open to a mainly enclosed landscape* (Wade Martins 2004, 7).<sup>109</sup>

Thus, by 1700 only 25% of England's *open fields* remained to be enclosed either by act of parliament or by agreement although this national figure varied greatly between different provinces and regions.<sup>110</sup> A greater proportion of open-fields in the *Outer Provinces* than of those in the *Central Province* would have been enclosed before 1700. Chapman and Seeliger (2001) do not give figures for the amount of open-field enclosed in Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Surrey before 1700.<sup>111</sup> However, using the figures in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, the amount of open-field enclosed *after 1700* within each

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<sup>108</sup> The accurate plotting and dating of enclosures from downland and lowland commons represents an important topic for future research on the Isle of Wight landscape. One pertinent question would be how far the process and timing of downland enclosure on the Isle of Wight differed from mainland Hampshire.

<sup>109</sup> Wade Martins' figures are taken from Wordie (1983).

<sup>110</sup> This figure of 25% must relate to the total amount of open-field once existing rather than representing a percentage of England's total land area since the 30% of the country estimated by Williamson (2002, 13-14) to have been enclosed after 1700 included a substantial percentage of common pasture.

<sup>111</sup> The authors do give some information on early open-field enclosure in Hampshire, stating that only 39 common arable field systems out of 235 in that county were fully enclosed before 1700 (Chapman and Seeliger 2001, 67). This contrasts sharply with the much greater extent of early open-field enclosure on the Isle of Wight.

county (both by parliamentary means and by agreement) can be calculated as a percentage of the total county land area. The figures for each county are shown in Table 4.4. Wiltshire had by far the greatest amount of field land enclosed after 1700 as a percentage of the county's total land area (20.7%). Hampshire appears to have had the next largest amount of enclosed open-field (11.6% of the county land area) with Dorset having a considerably smaller amount (6.5% of county land area). Sussex had by far the smallest amount of the mainland southern counties (2.9% of the county's total land area). Chapman and Seeliger note that:

*As Dorset forms the south-west apex of the traditional open field triangle, so Sussex forms the south-east; as open fields tended to become rare to the west in Dorset, petering out towards the Devon border, so there was a similar decline eastwards in Sussex towards the border with Kent (Chapman and Seeliger 2001, 89).*

They also note that there was a sharp north-south contrast *within* Sussex, with few open fields in the northern half of the county comprising the Wealden district. On the Isle of Wight, the percentage of open-field enclosed by parliamentary means can be very roughly calculated from Table 4.1 as a minute 0.3% of total land area.<sup>112</sup> The percentage of open-field on the Isle of Wight enclosed *by agreement* after 1700 is not known but most open-field is thought to have been enclosed before that date. It can therefore be assumed that the total amount of open-field land enclosed both by parliamentary means and by agreement on the Isle of Wight during the eighteenth century and nineteenth century was closer to the Sussex figure of 2.9% than to the Hampshire figure of 11.6%. In terms of the small amount of open-field enclosed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Isle of Wight is a classic *South Eastern Province* area. It is noticeable that in all the southern counties studied by Chapman & Seeliger (let alone the Isle of Wight) the percentage of open-field enclosed after 1700 is dramatically less than in

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<sup>112</sup> This represents the total acreage for Niton and Easton Common Fields awards, expressed as a percentage of total Isle of Wight land area. Since the Niton award also included common pasture of unknown acreage, the true percentage of open-field enclosed by parliamentary act was actually even lower.

Northamptonshire, at the heart of the *Central Province*, where calculations by Tate (1949, 30) suggest that the open-field enclosed by Act alone (leaving aside enclosure by agreement) amounted to nearly 57% of the total county acreage (see Table 4.2).

### **Land Use and Provincial Identity**

This chapter has examined the sources for study of the Island's historic landscape. Royal and manorial surveys (Webster nd) represent an enormously significant resource, particularly the royal surveys of 1559 -1560 and the 1608 Survey of Royal lands. Equally important are the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and the 1810 Ordnance Survey map whilst late-eighteenth century agricultural writers provide a commentary on the graphic evidence of the Ordnance Survey maps. The land use and enclosure patterns discernible in documents and maps correlate reasonably well with patterns characteristic of Roberts & Wrathmell's *South Eastern Province*, in particular the relatively early enclosure of much open-field by agreement and the existence of considerable areas of common pasture in the medieval period<sup>113</sup> (Roberts & Wrathmell 1998, 103; Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, 59-63 and 162). Thus, the royal and manorial surveys demonstrate that a considerable part of the Isle of Wight's arable open-field had been enclosed by the early seventeenth century and the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings show that by the end of the eighteenth century the surviving area of open-field was very small in relation to the Island's total land area, although it included at least one large surviving open field at Niton. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the total extent of enclosure on the Island in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by parliamentary act or agreement (relating both to open-field and to pasture) was exceedingly limited in relation to other counties in central southern England let alone those of the Midlands. In the 1790s much of the Island had a sheep-corn economy producing a

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<sup>113</sup> However, the majority of non-downland waste and common had been enclosed by the late eighteenth century.

surplus of grain for export, a type of mixed farming more characteristic of Rackham's *Planned Countryside* than of his *Ancient Countryside* but compatible with Roberts & Wrathmell's *South Eastern Province*. Moreover, the emphasis on grain in the 1790s was partly a product of wartime conditions and at other periods there has been more variation in farming patterns with the north of the Island concentrating on pasture farming. Divisions and variations within the Island relating to territorial and cultural landscapes also exist. These require examination and must be placed within the wider context of Roberts & Wrathmell's 'provinces'.

## Chapter 5

### Isle of Wight Territories and Landscapes

The starting point for this discussion of internal divisions and variations within the Isle of Wight landscape is a descriptive account of secular and ecclesiastical 'territories' followed by an examination of the relationship between territorial units and cultural landscapes and the manner in which resources such as core arable land were allocated within local communities. Variations in land use throughout the Island are discussed and the map of *Isle of Wight HLC Areas* which first attempted to model these diverse landscapes is subjected to critical appraisal. The 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings are then used to create a more rigorously defined model of *1790s HLC Areas*. Morphological analysis is employed to interpret the field patterns within these Areas and to compare them with patterns recorded in Hampshire and Devon. It is suggested that the 'Areas' defined from the 1790s drawings are related to regions first identified by William Camden (1610, *Isle of Wight* Section: Paragraph 2).

### Isle of Wight Territorial Units

Within any local region, the landscape can be divided up in various ways, both physically and conceptually. These divisions may relate to political administration, jurisdiction, tax collection, military organisation, religious organisation, social organisation or ownership. The resultant administrative, territorial and tenorial units may not be directly related to cultural landscapes indeed they may cut across them (Roberts & Wrathmell 1998, 107) but they must be considered in studies of such landscapes. The Isle of Wight was assessed with Hampshire in the Domesday Book and formed part of the 'County of Southampton' until 1889, although in medieval and Tudor times it was controlled by lords, captains and governors and from the mid-twelfth century to 1293 it operated as a 'private shire' (Hockey 1982, 178; Bearman 1994, 26-30). Hundreds and tithings were used for local jurisdiction and civil administration.<sup>114</sup> Kökeritz (1940, 2-3) dates the division of the Island into the

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<sup>114</sup> According to Russell (1981, xii) the Hundred Court was known on the Island as the Knighten Court, separate courts being held for the East Medine and the West Medine.

hundreds of *West Medine* and *East Medine* to the twelfth century. In fact, Domesday Book implies that by 1086 the Island was already divided into two hundreds separated by the Medina River, the western one then being named Bowcombe Hundred (which included the anomalous units of Calbourne and *Hemreswel*)<sup>115</sup> and the eastern one unnamed (Margham 2005, 100). Each hundred was divided into tithings which appear to have been first recorded in connection with the hundred courts and with fourteenth century taxation lists (Glasscock 1975, 119-20; Mitchell-Fox & Page forthcoming). Tithings were still being used in the 1560 Royal Survey of the West Medine (Webster nd) and to collect the Isle of Wight Hearth Tax between 1664 and 1774 (Russell 1981, xi-xiv). Russell's map, reproduced as Figure 5.1<sup>116</sup> shows the 'notional' boundaries of sixty-one seventeenth-century tithings but his printed list records sixty-five tithings despite excluding Bonchurch and counting only one of the constituent parts of St Nicholas. Tax lists of fourteenth to sixteenth century date (Hockey 1982, 146-153) record fifty-one separate tithings or townships during this period although not all tithings are included on each list. Court rolls of 1605 list forty-four tithings which held their own courts (Page, 1912; 138, 210). Information on Isle of Wight tithings derived from these various sources is set out in Table 5.1. In addition to the civil divisions of the tithings, the Isle of Wight population was also organised into military divisions in medieval and post-medieval times. In 1340 the Island was defended by nine mustered companies each comprising 100 men (Worsley 1781, 32).<sup>117</sup>

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However, thirteenth century records cited by Hockey (1970; 107, 111) suggest that the Knighten Court and the hundred courts were discrete institutions with different functions.

<sup>115</sup> Calbourne 'Hundred' equated with the Bishop of Winchester's estate and *Hemreswel* with the manors of Yarmouth, Shate and Ningwood.

<sup>116</sup> The tithing boundaries shown in Figure 4.1 are also based on Russell's map but with some modifications based on other sources of evidence (see Appendix B and Appendix C).

<sup>117</sup> A document entitled 'Disposition of the Militia in the Isle of Wight, *temp.* Edw.III (Worsley 1781, Appendix XII) lists the commanders of the nine companies, each of whom was responsible for a group of tithings. By mapping the hypothetical territories of ten named officers Tomalin (*in press*, figure 16) has sought to demonstrate that the early seventeenth-century centons were also composed of groups of tithings, suggesting that both centons and tithings shared a common ancestry.

By 1559, there were eight military divisions, known as centons<sup>118</sup> and by the 1580s this had expanded to eleven centons, each under an officer called a centoner (Camden 1610, Isle of Wight Section: Paragraph 4; Jones and Jones 1987, 49).

Twenty-nine ecclesiastical parishes are marked on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1:10560 Ordnance Survey of 1862-63 (including the nominal parish of St Nicholas in Casto)<sup>119</sup> and are shown here in Figure 5.2.<sup>120</sup> Hockey (1982, 2) has postulated the existence of six mother parishes<sup>121</sup>, the boundaries of which ran north-south from the Solent to the English Channel and could still be detected on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1862-63. According to Hockey, the mother parishes were Freshwater, Shalfleet, Calbourne, Carisbrooke, Newchurch and Brading. Margham (2000, 121-123), drawing on the work of Hase (1988, 47; 1994, 65-66) and his own studies, has made a case for the six possible original parish units being Freshwater, Calbourne, Carisbrooke, Arreton, Newchurch and Brading although he points out that the church at Newchurch may be of later origin as suggested by the place-name. More recently Margham (2012a, 14) has identified Freshwater, Calbourne, Bowcombe/Carisbrooke, Arreton and Brading as the earliest estate centres with mother churches.<sup>122</sup> The configuration of the parish boundaries between Shalfleet, Brook and Mottistone (as shown on the 1:10560 Ordnance Survey

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<sup>118</sup> In a typed introduction to the Royal Surveys of 1559 and 1560, held at the Isle of Wight Record Office, Webster (nd) states that the original 1559 Survey covered 'all eight centons of the Isle of Wight'.

<sup>119</sup> St Nicholas in Casto was a chapel founded by William Fitz Osborne inside Carisbrooke Castle. He refused to allow this chapel to be subordinate to the mother church of Carisbrooke: the chaplains of St Nicholas-in-Castro therefore held a parish made up of the castle and numerous tiny detached pieces of land throughout the Island, which formed the chapel glebe (Hase 1994, 65).

<sup>120</sup> The boundaries marked on the 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey maps of 1862-63 depict historic ecclesiastical parishes before new parishes were created in the late-nineteenth century to reflect the growth of new settlements (Page 1912, *passim*). Newport became a separate ecclesiastical parish in 1858 (Page 1912, 221) but is defined on the 1862-63 OS map only by its parliamentary and municipal boundary and so is not shown in Figure 5.2.

<sup>121</sup> 'Mother parishes' or 'parochiae' were large areas of land served by 'minster' churches and groups of clergy which formed the basis of church ministry in the early phase of Anglo-Saxon Christianity.

<sup>122</sup> The early estate centre at Bowcombe/Carisbrooke may have been at Bowcombe rather than Carisbrooke.

of 1862-63) and other evidence suggests to the present researcher that Shalfleet and Calbourne may originally have been one parochia that also embraced the later Thorley Parish (see Figure 5.2).<sup>123</sup> There are arguments against this hypothesis but the fact that Shalfleet appears to have had a Christian burial site adjoining the church by c.700 (Trott 2007, Margham 2012a, 16) considerably strengthens the argument and even suggests that Shalfleet may have been the original estate centre. There is some evidence that the Arreton Parochia may originally have included Newchurch.<sup>124</sup> Hockey (1982, 2) implies as much although he names Newchurch as the original parish unit.<sup>125</sup> Tomalin (*in press*) has suggested that an additional early parochial unit may have existed between Carisbrooke and Arreton, based on Whippingham. This hypothesis is based on evidence for an ancient boundary (the 'Motkin Boundary') running north-south from King's Quay near Whippingham to the crest of the Undercliff south of Whitwell (Hayes 2012). Figure 5.3 shows possible mother parishes and the 'Motkin Boundary'. It raises the intriguing possibility that there were, at one point, three narrow territorial units between Carisbrooke/Bowcombe and Brading, perhaps with *foci* at Whippingham, Arreton and Newchurch. Hockey (1982, 2) supposed that the Isle of Wight mother parishes were all laid out in the early eighth century by Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, shortly after the conversion of the

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<sup>123</sup> There are various strands of evidence including the narrow southern 'tail' of Shalfleet Parish which is squeezed between Brook and Mottistone, the fact that the parish boundary between Shalfleet and Calbourne runs through the middle of Shalfleet village and the fact that the hamlet of Brook Green was divided between the parishes of Brook and Shalfleet in the nineteenth century, suggesting the possibility of an ancient link between these two parishes. In addition, the seventeenth century tithing of Thorley included part of the medieval parish of Shalfleet as well as Thorley Parish and the commons of Thorley Manor and Wellow Manor lay beside each other within this tithing, hinting at the inclusion of Thorley in an earlier parochial unit of Shalfleet/Calbourne. Furthermore, the parish boundary between Thorley and Shalfleet shown on the 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey of 1862-3 contains a series of doglegs, suggesting that when the open fields in this area were laid out Thorley and Shalfleet fell within the same parish unit. However, Margham (1992a, 105) has suggested that Freshwater, Thorley and Brook formed a single late Saxon estate. Elsewhere, Margham (2000, 122) has also drawn attention to a tenurial link between the parishes of Freshwater and Brook before the Norman Conquest but he concedes that this link may reflect the situation in the eleventh century rather than at an earlier period.

<sup>124</sup> The main piece of evidence is the fact that the tithing of Knighton lies partly in Arreton parish and partly in Newchurch Parish (see Figure 5.5).

<sup>125</sup> It seems more likely that the unit was based around Arreton, which was a royal estate centre, rather than around Newchurch, which bears a name suggestive of a late foundation and where no Domesday manor is recorded, although a church did exist by 1071 (Margham 1992b, 3).

Island to Christianity. This may fit with Hase's assertion (1998, 48) that the West Saxon kings Cædwalla (AD 685-688) and Ine (AD 688-726) had a deliberate policy of setting up one mother church in every *villa regalis* (royal estate) although royal associations for possible Isle of Wight mother parishes are not documented at this early date and royal estate centres were not stable during the seventh and eighth centuries (Blair 2005, 266-290). Sewell (2000, 40) has proposed that the establishment of physical boundaries between early Isle of Wight parishes may date from the legal imposition of tithe in the tenth century. Margham (2000, 121-122) believes that the 'system' of parochial responsibility before the development of local churches can be seen as such only in retrospect and that parochiae and their minsters were not imposed upon the landscape during one particular episode in history but evolved through time. He suggests, for instance, that Calbourne Church may have originated when the Calbourne estate of 30 hides was granted to the Old Minster at Winchester, allegedly in AD 826 (Margham 2005, 91-98).<sup>126</sup> However, Margham (2012a, 28) has also pointed out that the mother churches of Freshwater, Calbourne, Bowcombe/Carisbrooke and Brading occur at estate centres of known high-status in the middle to late Anglo-Saxon period whose early origins are indicated by their topographical place-name elements.<sup>127</sup> This suggests that the Island's mother parishes may be coterminous with *multiple estates* or areas of *extensive lordship*<sup>128</sup> as has been suggested for other parts of England (Rippon 2010, 62). The tenth-century charters relating to the Isle of Wight (Margham 2003; 2005; 2007) certainly seem to imply the former existence of such estates and to document their break-up.<sup>129</sup> In origin, these estates may even predate the Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>126</sup> A charter catalogued by Sawyer (1968, 274) as S274 purports to record a grant made in 826 by King Egbert to the bishopric of Winchester but may be a tenth century fabrication (Margham 2005, 91). The boundaries of the Calbourne estate correspond with the medieval parishes of Calbourne and Brighstone.

<sup>127</sup> The only *definite* high status early estate centre and parochial unit whose name does not include a topographical place-name element is Arretton.

<sup>128</sup> The concept of *extensive lordship* has been developed by Faith (1997, 10), who defines this as 'the power to command goods and services from the population of an area'.

<sup>129</sup> Further evidence for the fragmentation of large estates is the fact that certain royal manors held downland divorced from their main territory in 1086. Domesday Book records

period as proposed for some Wiltshire estates by Bonney (1972, 1979) and for Dorset estates by Taylor (2004; 6-7, 72-73) although concepts of territorial continuity have not been unchallenged (Winchester 2008, 31-37). Tomalin (*in press*) has suggested that Isle of Wight mother parishes may have evolved from Romano-British taxation units connected with payment of the *annona* although there is no concrete evidence to support this idea. However, recent dates obtained for the 'Motkin Boundary' embrace both the Iron Age and the Anglo-Saxon periods (Hayes 2012, 25), suggesting that at least one of the Island's territorial boundaries may either have continued in uninterrupted use over a long period of time or have been re-established in the seventh century AD. As a prehistorian, Fleming (1998, 50-51) has argued the case for territorial continuity in the English landscape from the late Iron Age into the early Middle Ages. Landscape continuity will be further discussed in Chapters 8 and 9. Here, we are primarily concerned with territorial and cultural landscapes of medieval and post-medieval date including the development of the Island's parish system from the tenth century.

Firm evidence exists for only ten churches on the Isle of Wight by 1086 including St Nicholas-in-Castro<sup>130</sup> and Domesday Book names only four of these, demonstrating that it is an unreliable source for the existence of churches.<sup>131</sup> It is quite possible that some local churches subordinate to the mother churches may have originated in the tenth century or perhaps even earlier although we have no evidence for this. However, Hockey (1982, 3) suggests that we must seek the origins of many of the Island's smaller parishes in rural chapels set up by various lords after 1086 (Hockey 1982, 3) and indeed thirteen of these churches are situated close to manor houses. These 'daughter churches' were carved from the territories of the Island's

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'Knighton and the Down', 'Bathingbourne and the Down' and 'Sandford with Week' (Munby 1982; 1,W1; 1,W2; 1,W3).

<sup>130</sup> Hockey (1982, 2) lists these churches as Freshwater, Shalfleet, Calbourne, Carisbrooke, Arreton, Whippingham, Godshill, Niton and Newchurch plus St Nicholas-in-Castro. There is no reference to Brading Church in Domesday Book but Margham (2000, 128) has concluded that the church and parish of Brading originated in the Anglo-Saxon period.

<sup>131</sup> In his unpublished paper 'From Parochiae to Parishes', Margham (nd) identifies good documentary and/or architectural evidence for the existence of fifteen churches or chapels on the Island by 1120.

mother parishes and gradually gained independence from their respective mother churches (Hockey 1982, 3-8; Hase 1994, 65-66). Other potential churches never obtained parochial status but remained as private chapels associated with adjacent manor houses (Hockey 1982, 8-12). The parish boundaries on the 1862-3 Ordnance Survey maps (Figure 5.2) reveal how later medieval daughter parishes were carved out of the original mother parishes but the 1862-3 survey also records the striking survival of a parochial territory at Newchurch stretching from the north to the south coast of the Island.<sup>132</sup> The ad hoc creation of daughter parishes on the estates of lay lords led to great variation in the size of medieval Isle of Wight parishes. This variation contrasts sharply with the much more evenly-sized ecclesiastical parishes in Northamptonshire (Figure 5.4) and could possibly be an indication that the Island was not subjected to the wholesale planning and reorganisation of settlements and field systems that affected parishes in the *Central Province*. The relationship between parishes and tithings on the Isle of Wight may also provide clues concerning early territories and estates. According to Russell (1981, xii), tithing boundaries bore 'little or no relationship to the Island's ecclesiastical parishes though no ecclesiastical parish crossed the boundary between East and West Medine'. However, this view appears to be contradicted by Figure 5.5. The seventeenth-century tithing boundaries in this figure are based on Russell's map but many of these divisions appear to be medieval in origin. Figure 5.5 and Table 5.1 show that nearly half of all parishes contained several tithings and that the boundaries of tithings generally respected parish boundaries. The relationship of tithings with the possible Anglo-Saxon mother parishes defined above appears to be even stronger, as shown in Figure 5.6, and suggests that tithings may have originated as sub-divisions of these mother parishes or of the large estates with which the mother parishes seem to be so closely connected.<sup>133</sup> In this respect the Isle of Wight may differ from Dorset where Taylor (2004, 49-73) considers that ecclesiastical parishes,

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<sup>132</sup> Thus, Newchurch provides a reminder of the Island's pre-Conquest parochial system when parishes ran right across the Island, despite evidence that it was not itself one of the earliest mother parishes.

<sup>133</sup> However, there does not appear to be any relationship between tithings and the 'Motkin Boundary'.

generally in existence by the tenth century at the latest, resulted from the grouping together of land units (tithings) of Romano-British origin. Margham (*nd*, 28) takes a different view from that of Taylor, suggesting that the development of parishes from parochiae in the Isle of Purbeck resulted from the 'fission of larger units' as on the Isle of Wight.

### **Territorial Units and Cultural Resources**

Despite the fact that tithings clearly played a significant role on the Isle of Wight during the medieval and early post-medieval period it is uncertain whether they represented the basic units of settlement and community (Winchester 2008, 21) that were at the heart of rural life. In medieval England each rural community would have possessed a 'territory' that comprised not only the settlement(s) inhabited by local people but also the land farmed by the community. This block of land might be called a *township* or a *vill*. The term *township* is encountered mainly in northern England whereas *vill* is more common in southern England. In some areas of southern England the *tithing* was the equivalent of the *township* or *vill* but in other areas the tithing 'was a much more shadowy unit which barely survived the medieval period' (Winchester *ibid*). One of the characteristics that differentiate Roberts & Wrathmell's settlement provinces (Figure 3.2) is the relationship between townships and parishes. In the *Central Province* parishes tend to contain one, two or three townships each with a single settlement surrounded by its open fields such as East Haddon in North-West Northamptonshire (Figure 5.7),<sup>134</sup> described by Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 85) as typifying the classic 'Midland' open-field township. In contrast, in the *South Eastern Province* and the *Northern & Western Province* one might encounter several settlements within a single parish. This multiplicity of settlements can even be encountered on the periphery of the *Central Province* in Dorset (Taylor 2004, 7). Figure 5.8 and Table 5.2 show that nearly half of the Isle of Wight's parishes contained more than one nucleated settlement by the 1790s and

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<sup>134</sup> NB The 'township boundary' of East Haddon marked on Figure 5.6 and the East Haddon parish boundary correspond, as can be seen by reference to the map of Northamptonshire parishes (Figure 5.4).

nearly all contained numerous dispersed settlements.<sup>135</sup> Although some of these settlements are of post-medieval origin the majority have earlier origins (as will be demonstrated in Chapter 8). It would therefore seem that the Isle of Wight is typical of Roberts & Wrathmell's *South Eastern Province*. However, there are individual Isle of Wight parishes that bear a closer relationship to the *Central Province* model. These are all 'daughter parishes' carved out of the older mother parishes. Good examples of such parishes are Mottistone, Niton, Whitwell and Gatcombe. Niton is perhaps the Island parish that most closely resembled a typical medieval parish of the Central Province. It contained one main medieval nucleated settlement<sup>136</sup> surrounded by open fields. Niton and Whitwell once appear to have been a single unit within Godshill Parish and to have become separate parishes after the development of open fields in the area, since the boundary between Niton and Whitwell cuts across a large block of open-field that may formerly have been shared between the two communities. At Gatcombe, there is similar evidence that this parish was taken out of Carisbrooke after the open fields had been developed. The parish boundary between Carisbrooke and Gatcombe is exceedingly complex and dog-legged, clearly running between blocks of strips in the townfields of the two parishes.

This review of administrative and territorial divisions in the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods has suggested why such divisions are important in the study of the Island's historic landscape. The putative mother parish boundaries indicate early organisation of the landscape and hint at the former presence of areas of extensive lordship (also known as multiple estates) operative in the Middle Anglo-Saxon Period but possibly going back to the Roman period or even earlier. The early mother parishes/estates stretched

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<sup>135</sup> The settlement data shown in Figure 5.8 and summarised in Table 5.2 is derived from the 1790s Ordnance Survey maps as set out in Appendix F. This data is discussed in Chapters 6 and 8.

<sup>136</sup> The loosely-clustered hamlet of Niton Undercliff may have developed at a later date than the main village although the farm of Buddle (Bodale), in existence by 1580, has an Old English name (Kökeritz 1940, 182).

from coast to coast, embracing a variety of physiographic regions<sup>137</sup> suitable for different uses such as arable, grazing, woodland and fishery, and providing all the resources necessary for large domains.<sup>138</sup> Given the small-scale of the Island, it is unlikely that transhumance was practiced as in Anglo-Saxon Kent (Everitt 1985, 61-91) but regular movements between different resource-areas within estates may have produced the predominantly north-south pattern of routeways shown on the 1810 Ordnance Survey map (Appendix A). It is also possible that patterns of movement indicated by routeways could be very much more ancient than the Anglo-Saxon estates and that these routeways could themselves have contributed to the shaping of later land units and parishes (Fowler 1998, 40). After the break-up of the large Middle-Saxon estates, there was still an attempt to distribute and hence share resources. For instance, several of the west Wight parishes lay to the north or south of the central downland ridge with their boundaries meeting on the tops of the downs which provided common grazing for manorial tenants (see Figure 5.2) and this pattern is more apparent in the boundaries of tithings (Figures 4.1 and 5.1), there continuing into the east Wight. Medieval manors and settlements located away from the downs were more restricted in the resources available to them but they generally had access to lower-lying open grazing land and (in some areas of the Island) to woodland which could provide grazing, 'timber' and 'wood'<sup>139</sup>. All the Island's settlements needed arable land whether they were villages, hamlets or isolated farmsteads, Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 171) have discussed the significance of 'anciently cultivated land', the good soils that, 'carefully husbanded and fertilised', represented 'a vital and long-lasting resource to successive generations of farmers', particularly in the *Outer Provinces* where

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<sup>137</sup> Mainland examples of 'strip parishes' embracing different geologies occur in Berkshire, Wiltshire and Dorset (Rackham 1986, figure 2.3; Aston 1985, figure 15, Taylor 2004, 49-72). In Wiltshire and Dorset river valleys were often at the centre of parish units whereas on the Island the Chalk ridge was at the centre of these units.

<sup>138</sup> Rippon (2004, 18-19) has pointed out that during the early medieval period, the strategy of incorporating both upland and lowland within a territory was central to the principle behind the 'multiple estate' structure documented in Wales.

<sup>139</sup> See Rackham (1986, 67) for the distinction between *timber*, which provided building material, and *wood*, which provided rods and poles for fencing and wattlework and logs for fuel.

good land was less readily available than in the *Central Province*. They suggest that these lands, denominated *arable cores*, may have been in cultivation since prehistoric and Romano-British times, and that they formed the nuclei of each settlement's open fields when open-field farming was introduced in the later Anglo-Saxon period. On the Isle of Wight these arable cores would have been of variable size. In the northern part of the Island, which still contained a great deal of woodland and open grazing land in the medieval period, the arable cores would have been small. In some other parts of the Island the areas of open-field appear to have been much larger.

The Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation (Basford 2008) attempted to calculate the extent of field patterns enclosed from open-field (Figure 3.16) and other land use types and to understand the enclosure processes operating on the Island but it was only partially successful in that goal. Many discrete areas of field patterns could not be confidently classified and had to be recorded as 'unidentified enclosure type'. Even where an interpretation was made, the confidence level recorded in the HLC database was often 'uncertain' and with hindsight some of these interpretations must be regarded as suspect. Much of the evidence for the field pattern interpretations was derived from the 1790s Ordnance Survey but clear digital copies of these drawings were available only in the later stages of HLC mapping. In order to establish a sound basis for the examination of open-field in this thesis Appendix B has been constructed, using morphological evidence derived from the British Library version of the Ordnance Survey drawings (1793-4) combined with documentary evidence from the royal and manorial surveys (Webster nd) and other sources. In this new database of open fields, briefly referred to in Chapter 4, open fields are listed by parish and tithing as in the royal surveys of 1559 and 1560. Individual open fields can usually be allocated to specific tithings and sometimes to individual settlements marked on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings. Figure 4.1 maps all the open fields listed in Appendix B in relation to tithings and

settlements.<sup>140</sup> It provides a more academically rigorous, if schematic, picture of the evidence for open-field than the original HLC (Figure 3.16) since it shows only those open fields for which there is documentary evidence, strong morphological evidence or both. The basis on which Figure 4.1 has been compiled is set out in Appendix D. Figure 4.1 and Appendix B indicate that open-field existed within the majority of the Island's tithings. Figure 4.1 almost certainly does not show all the open fields that may once have existed on the Island since the lack of documentary evidence or clear morphological evidence in certain tithings does not necessarily mean that open fields did not once exist there. Moreover, Figure 4.1 does not show the *extent* of open-field in each tithing or the date and method of enclosure. However, sufficient clear morphological evidence exists to demonstrate that some parts of the Island had relatively large open fields whilst in other areas the open fields were much smaller. Different areas also exhibit varied chronologies and processes of enclosure which can often be deduced from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings. The distribution of open-field was, historically, just one of a number of attributes which created a varied Island landscape remarked upon by Camden (1610, Isle of Wight Section: Paragraph 2) in the late sixteenth century. Distinct cultural landscapes can be recognised and these must now be examined.

### **Definition and Analysis of Isle of Wight 1790s Historic Landscape Character Areas**

Variation in field patterns was one of the criteria governing the definition of the Isle of Wight HLC Areas described in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.15). However, these HLC Areas took into account other characteristics as well as field patterns, represented present-day landscape character rather than past landscape character, and in some parts of the Island reflected primarily physiographic divisions. To overcome the limitations of the original HLC Areas in identifying the Island's historic cultural landscapes the Areas have

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<sup>140</sup> The list of settlements is derived from the 1793/4 Ordnance Survey drawings as set out in Appendix F (discussed in Chapter 6).

been redefined using only the 1793/94 Ordnance Survey fair drawings as the basis for definition. These drawings have been used to form a geo-rectified digital base map upon which it has been possible to delineate discrete 1790s *HLC Areas* shown in Figure 5.9. Areas have been identified according to variations in field pattern morphology shown on the Ordnance Survey drawings. Each Area is *heterogeneous i.e.* it includes a variety of field patterns and a number of different land uses. Nevertheless, it has been possible to identify dominant types of field patterns within each Area. The central downland ridge has not been treated as an *HLC Area* in its own right but as a particular type of land use available to different Areas. Distinct 1790s *HLC Areas* have been identified to the north and south of the ridge and the boundary between these Areas has been drawn along the crest of the downs, in many cases following historic parish or manorial boundaries, thus allocating a block of downland to the areas on either side of the crest.<sup>141</sup> The concept of *HLC Areas* based entirely on historic mapping has been taken from the Devon *HLC* where Turner (2007, 117-133) defined *local historic character areas* for c.1890 as well as for c.2000. Some of the Isle of Wight's 1790s *HLC Areas* (Figure 5.9) are similar to the present-day *HLC Areas* (Figure 3.15). However, there are also significant differences which are attributable to the different criteria used in defining the Areas. Enclosure processes and patterns affecting the 1790s *HLC Areas* (plus other key attributes) have been analysed in tables relating to each of the seventeen Areas (Appendix E) and summarised in Figure 5.10. These maps and tables demonstrate the great variety of the Island's landscape, one of the key themes of this thesis. The rigorous analysis of the 1790s *HLC Areas* undertaken in Appendix E means that they can be used with some confidence in retrogressive analysis of the Isle of Wight landscape.

Time did not permit the digital mapping and classification of all individual field patterns shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings since analysis of

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<sup>141</sup> Historic parish boundaries have not generally been used to define 1790s *HLC Areas* except along downland crests or when 1790s *HLC Area* boundaries follow the centre of a river or stream that also constitutes a parish boundary.

field-pattern morphology forms only a relatively small part of the work in this thesis.<sup>142</sup> However, all other land uses shown on the 1790s drawings have been mapped including downland, rough ground, woodland, valley land, coastal marsh, salterns, parks and gardens and main settlement clusters (Figure 5.11). This creates *positive* and *negative* mapping or *tegulation* (Roberts, *in press*, 2) with field patterns representing the negative element. The area occupied by the mapped land uses has been calculated on GIS and listed in Table 5.3.<sup>143</sup> These land uses occupy 26.3% of the Island and therefore the remaining percentage of land occupied by fields in 1793/4 can be calculated as 72.5% (including 0.6% surviving open-field). The areas occupied by different enclosure types within the 72.5% of field land have been estimated, based on various sources of evidence set out in Table 5.3. According to this estimation, enclosed open-field appears to have occupied about 30% of the Island's total land area in 1793/4, with fields enclosed from waste occupying roughly the same area. Table 5.4 is a summary of the key characteristics found within the Island's various 1790s HLC Areas based on the detailed analysis of 1790s field patterns and other attributes in Appendix E. This table identifies the dominant enclosure processes and estimates the percentage of former and existing open-field in each Area based on a visual assessment of the 1793-94 Ordnance Survey drawings supported by other eighteenth and nineteenth century cartographic and documentary sources. It therefore helps to overcome the evidential gaps caused by the inability to map individual field patterns in Figure 5.11. Table 5.4 reveals a great variation in the estimated amounts of former or existing open-field within different Areas but most of these amounts are probably under-estimates since some of the medieval open-field known from early documentary sources (such as royal and manorial surveys) and listed in Appendix B has not left identifiable traces that can be recognised in the enclosure patterns of the Ordnance Survey drawings. However, it is clear that two of the Island's

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<sup>142</sup> Nevertheless, it would be relatively straightforward to map and classify these field patterns in the future and this would further advance our understanding of the chronology and processes relating to Isle of Wight enclosure.

<sup>143</sup> The area of the various land uses has been calculated in acres to allow comparison with figures quoted in eighteenth and nineteenth century accounts.

1790s HLC Areas were dominated by open-field in the Middle Ages, these being the *Bowcombe, Carisbrooke and Medina Valley* where an estimated 80% of the land area was occupied by open-field and *South-West Wight* where the estimated area was 70%. In four HLC Areas, estimated percentages of open-field varied between 60% and 40% of land area, these being *Bembridge Isle & Yaverland, South Wight Downland & Downland Edge, Freshwater and Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley*. Four further HLC Areas contained between 30% and 20% of open-field, these being *Shorwell, Kingston & Atherfield Sandstone, Apse, Shanklin & Luccombe* and the *Lower Yar Valley*. Areas containing between 10% and 5% of open-field were *Whippingham, Hamstead & Cranmore* and *North-East Wight*. Areas containing up to 5% were the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley, Hamstead & Cranmore, Parkhurst & Northwood*, and the *West-Central Chalk Downland*. *The Undercliff* contained no clearly identifiable evidence of former open-field. Five of the eight Areas containing evidence of 10% or less open-field were in the northern part of the Island, predominantly on claylands. In *The Undercliff* landslipped terrain accounts for the lack of open-field whilst the *West-Central Chalk Downland* is remote from settlements and has steep slopes. However, the low 'score' of the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley* (Figure 5.12) with only an estimated 5% of former open-field requires further explanation. The Arreton Valley is today considered to contain the Island's richest arable and horticultural land but in the 1790s there was a considerable amount of valley-floor land. Much of this is still in use as pasture but there is evidence for the drainage of some land. There are frequent medieval and post-medieval references to 'moor' in this Area, in this context referring to low-lying marshy land, therefore drainage may have been a problem in the Middle Ages away from the drier gravel 'islands'. Nonetheless, open-field is known from documentary evidence to have existed close to Arreton Manor and Arreton Street, at Blackwater, at Merston, at Fulford and at Pidford (see Appendix B) although the total land area covered by open-field appears, on morphological evidence, to have been very small.

## Isle of Wight Field Patterns and Other Land Uses: Origins and Analogies

When the original Isle of Wight HLC was being prepared (Basford 2008) it proved difficult to correlate the historic field patterns identified on the Island with the field pattern typology published in the Hampshire HLC (Lambrick and Bramhill 1999). For instance, few large-scale 'planned enclosures' of the type found in Hampshire<sup>144</sup> are shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings within the Isle of Wight except in the *West-Central Chalk Downland Area* (see Figure 5.13 and Table 5.4). Difference in enclosure patterns may be partly the result of physiographic factors in that the Isle of Wight has less Chalk downland than Hampshire and much of the Island's downland consists of narrow ridges and steep slopes rather than broad plateaux partly covered in clay-with-flints, thus limiting the potential for large-scale enclosure. The Devon HLC (Turner 2007, 27-79) provides a more helpful morphological model for examining Isle of Wight enclosures although the system of husbandry in Devon may have differed considerably from that on the Island. Turner (2007, 32) considers that most farmed land in medieval Devon (as in Cornwall) was originally cultivated in strip fields although not all strip fields were also *common fields* and some - perhaps many - seem to have been made up of large blocks of contiguous strips that all belonged to one owner (Turner 2007, 39). Cultivation methods in Devon were very different from those practiced in the open fields of the Midlands, involving *convertible husbandry*<sup>145</sup> (Turner 2007, 53-54) and between about 1250 and 1400 many open strips were enclosed. These early *strip-enclosures* consisted of single open-field strips or a few strips, creating enclosures that were long and narrow. Between the thirteenth century and the sixteenth century larger *enclosures based on strip fields* were created from bundles of strip and these had more equal sides than *strip enclosures*. Both types normally had sinuous field boundaries which often contained 'dog-legs' (kinks where blocks of

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<sup>144</sup> Eighteenth and nineteenth century Hampshire enclosures were often the result of private arrangements rather than parliamentary acts (Chapman and Seeliger 2001, 88) but frequently resulted in a 'planned' look to the countryside.

<sup>145</sup> Convertible husbandry was also practised in Cornwall (Herring 2006, 68-69).

strips once met or where a former boundary between two or more fields had been removed). Turner (2007, 56) states that *enclosures based on strip fields* are 'the most common landscape character type in Devon' and that in c.1890 they occupied about 32% of the total land area. Just over 70% of Devon's total land area may have consisted of enclosed fields in the 1890s.<sup>146</sup> Over half of this notional 70% of field land must therefore represent other enclosure types, for instance *assarts*, *barton fields* or later post-medieval fields reclaimed from waste. *Assarts* from woodland seem to have been uncommon (Turner 2007, 94) and medieval enclosures from heathland or moorland seem to have been relatively limited in extent. These categories do not occur as discrete HLC types and presumably form part of a general category of *medieval enclosures* (other than *strip enclosures* or *enclosures based on strip fields*) Enclosures 'with straight-sided surveyed field boundaries typical of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' appear to have been much more common, occupying about 20 per cent of Devon's land area in the 1890s and associated mainly with land enclosed from high moorland (Turner 2004, 21). *Barton fields* appear to have been enclosed mainly from former open arable fields (Turner 2007, 60-68). They consist of closes created between the fifteenth century and seventeenth century from groups of strip fields that had come into the possession of a single landowner. These fields are larger and more regular than medieval enclosures and some have almost straight boundaries but many are based on cropping units in former blocks of strip fields and have parallel, slightly curving boundaries marking the general alignment of former furlongs.

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<sup>146</sup> Turner does not give an overall figure for fields as a percentage of total land area but it can be calculated that nearly 20% of Devon's land area was occupied by rough grazing in the 1890s (Turner 2007, 20, 104). Allowing up to 10% for other land uses (e.g. woodland, coastal, parks & gardens and settlement), there would have been about 70% field land. This probably included enclosed pasture, meadows and orchards as well as arable fields (Turner 2004, 22). Fox (1991, table 2.17) suggests that 66% of Devon's land area was arable in the period from 1295-1325, a surprisingly large figure and possibly an over-estimate since it implies that there was little more rough grazing in the High Middle Ages than in the 1890s whereas Turner (2004, 21) states that about 20% of Devon's land area in the 1890s was occupied by eighteenth and nineteenth century fields which appear to have been created mainly from enclosed moorland. Fox's figure presumably comprises all land potentially available for arable including areas under convertible husbandry. The amount of arable may have been very much lower in the 1890s than in the period from 1295-1325 since Devon specialised more in pastoral production in the post-medieval period (Turner 2004, 28).

Identification of Isle of Wight open-field and former open-field from the 1790s field patterns presents a challenge since enclosure took place over many centuries at different scales and by different processes. However, by utilising and expanding on the typology set out by Turner (2007, 32-68) we can recognise a number of different forms. Existing blocks of open field survived in the 1790s at Niton (Figure 5.14), Freshwater, Wellow (Figure 5.23) and Carisbroke (Figure 5.36) and have been discussed in Chapter 4. The two surviving open-field blocks in the *Freshwater Area* were Headon Field and Easton Field but a much larger part of *Freshwater* contained small *strip-enclosures* (Figure 5.15). The small size and irregularity of these fields suggests piecemeal medieval enclosure from open-field although many of the boundaries do not display typically sinuous aratal shapes. The 1608 Survey of royal lands indicates that a considerable amount of land had been enclosed in Freshwater Parish but much was still held as open-field strips and indeed open-field strips still existed in the nineteenth century. In this part of the Island, therefore, piecemeal enclosure was taking place over at least three hundred years, suggesting that landholdings remained small and fragmented. Small *strip-enclosures* can also be recognised at Chillerton in the *Bowcombe, Carisbrooke and Medina Valley Area* (Figure 5.16). These are on steeply-sloping ground and take the form of strip lynchets, a few of which survive to the present day. *Strip-enclosures* shown on the 1793-4 drawings at Newtown, St Helens and Yaverland (Figure 5.17) were arranged in far more regular patterns than at Freshwater and Chillerton. The strips at St Helens (and possibly at Yaverland) appear to have been at least partly unenclosed in the 1790s as discussed in Chapter 4. In *South West Wight* the lower-lying land was dominated by *enclosures based on strip fields* (Figure 5.18). These enclosures were somewhat larger than *strip-enclosures* and tended towards block shapes rather than strips although with characteristic doglegs. The result was a brick-like pattern with 'courses' at right angles to each other and of unequal depth, in which certain 'bricks' were interlocking. The enclosures from open-field in Brighstone Manor within the *South West Wight Area* can be attributed to the seventeenth and possibly the early eighteenth centuries (see Chapter 4). The dating of the Brighstone *enclosures based on strip fields* may suggest a date-range for similar

enclosures within the *Bembridge Isle & Yaverland* HLC Area (Figure 5.19). These particular enclosures lie to the south-east of Bembridge Street and are similar to those around Brighstone although exhibiting greater regularity and lying within a loose grid of sinuous lanes and tracks. *Enclosures based on strip fields* around Adgestone in the *Lower Yar Valley* (Figure 5.20) are more irregular and varied in shape than those at Brighstone or Bembridge, suggesting an earlier enclosure date but manorial surveys of 1576 and 1579 indicate that the Adgestone fields were still unenclosed in the later sixteenth century. Some field patterns on the Isle of Wight may equate with Turner's *barton fields*, created between the fifteenth century and seventeenth century, often from blocks of strip fields that had come into the possession of a single landowner but larger and more regular than medieval enclosures. Possible examples are enclosures to the south-east of Bowcombe Farm in the *West-Central Chalk Downland* Area, enclosures to the south-west of 'The Priory' in the *North-East Wight* Area and enclosures to the south of Wroxall Farm in the *South Wight Downland & Downland Edge* Area (Figure 5.21). The fields in these locations are of medium size (in terms of average 1793 field sizes) and semi-regular in form with fairly straight boundaries. They may have been enclosed from open-field but it is also possible that they represent demesne lands that had always been enclosed from the medieval period onwards although, if so, the fairly straight boundaries suggest later reorganisation. The medium irregular block fields with mainly wavy boundaries to the south of Eades Farm and Westover in the *Shalfleet & Calbourne* Area (Figure 5.22) perhaps provide a closer parallel for Turner's *barton fields*. Somewhat different in character are the large irregular block fields with sinuous and straight boundaries around Thorley Manor and south-east of Wellow in the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley* Area (Figures 5.23 and 5.26). Documentary evidence suggests that field patterns in both locations derive from open fields enclosed by 1608 but their forms are dissimilar and neither is obviously recognisable as this enclosure type. The same is true of a pattern of large semi-regular block fields with straight and wavy boundaries to the east of Landguard Manor in the *Apse, Shanklin & Luccombe* Area (Figure 5.24). This field pattern is thought, from documentary evidence, to derive from open-field that was at least partially unenclosed in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries and probably into the eighteenth century. Here, the absence of recognisable open-field characteristics may be attributable to the relatively late enclosure date.<sup>147</sup>

Both the morphological evidence examined above and the documentary evidence reviewed in Chapter 4 suggests that enclosure of open-field started later on the Island than in Devon and continued for a longer period, commencing in earnest in the sixteenth century and carrying on, by means of individual *piecemeal* initiatives, *unity of possession* or *agreement* into the nineteenth century.<sup>148</sup> However, the Island is similar to Devon in being little affected by parliamentary enclosure. What the above analysis has not discussed is the relative proportions of land once occupied by open-field in the Island and in Devon. Table 5.3 estimates that 30.9% of the Island's total area in the 1790s was occupied by land enclosed from open-field or by extant open-field. This is very much higher than the maximum estimate of just over 15% calculated from the original HLC data (Basford 2008, 58-59) but many of the 'unidentified' field patterns in that characterisation (*ibid*, figure 64) may have been derived from open-field. Even the figure of 30.9% arrived at in Table 5.3 may well be an under-estimate, given the documentary evidence for the presence (but not the extent) of open-field in most parts of the Island, the difficulties involved in morphological identification and the likelihood that some enclosures derived from open-field were subsumed within later enclosures as may also have happened in Devon. Table 5.3 also estimates the percentage of other enclosure types on the Island including enclosed waste, assarts and enclosed downland but excluding enclosed valley-floor meadows and pastures. It demonstrates that 72.5% of the Island lay within fields above the valley-floor in the 1790s. This compares with just

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<sup>147</sup> An alternative explanation would be that the open-field recorded at Landguard Manor lay to the west of the farmstead.

<sup>148</sup> Chapman and Seeliger (2001, 11) distinguish between *piecemeal enclosure* involving uncoordinated individual action, *unity of possession* when one individual acquired all the land and rights in it, *formal agreement* involving a properly drawn up and signed arrangement amongst all the parties to enclose a specific piece of land and *parliamentary enclosure* involving the passing of an individual act or an award under one of the general enclosure acts.

over 70% of field land estimated for Devon in 1890 on the basis of HLC analysis by Turner (2004).<sup>149</sup> Nonetheless, the estimated percentage of land enclosed from open-field strips on the Isle of Wight (30.3%) is slightly lower than in Devon (over 32%).

The extent of open rough grazing on the Island before the commencement of enclosure from waste and downland (perhaps in the early medieval period) may have been nearly 44%.<sup>150</sup> Devon may have had slightly more open grazing at a similar period and relatively little of this appears to have been reclaimed directly into enclosed fields until the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries when large-scale reclamation took place (Turner 2004, 21). 20% of Devon's land area was still occupied by rough grazing in 1890 (Turner 2007, 20, 104), a considerably larger percentage than that remaining on the Island in 1815 following the enclosure of Parkhurst Forest. By that date rough grazing amounted to only 10.1% of the Island's total land area including downland and other rough ground. During the nineteenth century nearly all remaining areas of heathland, commons and other rough ground away from the downs were enclosed and also considerable areas of downland. By 1999 only 2.1% of the Island was occupied by downland as defined in the Isle of Wight HLC (Basford 2008, 56). There were considerable differences between the character of the open grazing land in Devon and the Isle of Wight. High moorland such as Dartmoor comprised most of the rough ground in Devon. On the Isle of Wight there appears to have been a large area of lowland open grazing (including heathland) in the early medieval period, possibly occupying nearly 35% of the land area whilst downland grazing seems to have occupied only around 9% of the land area.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> This percentage has been inferred from Turner as calculated in footnote 144. The definition of *medieval fields* by Turner (2004, 22) includes pasture, meadows and orchards as well as arable open-field and enclosed fields.

<sup>150</sup> This figure has been calculated from the total percentages of downland, rough ground, enclosed downland and enclosed waste shown in Table 5.3.

<sup>151</sup> Downland grazing would not have covered the total area of Chalk and Upper Greensand (13.7%), some of which would have been occupied by open fields.

The proportion of fields on the Island enclosed directly from non-downland waste (estimated in Table 5.3) is comparable to that enclosed from open-field, comprising roughly 30% of the total land area. Semi-regular field patterns, some with straight-sided boundaries, form a considerable proportion of the 'enclosed waste' category in Table 5.3, indicating that many of these fields were enclosed in the post-medieval period but before the 1790s. Nonetheless, the morphology of Isle of Wight land enclosed from waste or rough ground is as variable as the enclosure processes and dates involved. Piecemeal enclosure from waste into enclosed fields by tenants was not normally an option if this 'waste' was a manorial common. However, the 1235 Statute of Merton authorised manorial lords to enclose portions of the commons and wastes provided that sufficient pasture remained for tenants (Richardson 1986, 19) and land could be enclosed by agreement of landowner and tenants. The common land of Calbourne Heathfield in the *Shalfleet & Calbourne Area* was enclosed in 1577<sup>152</sup> and distributed amongst the tenants of Swainston Manor, resulting in a pattern of small-medium semi-regular block fields with slightly wavy edges (Figure 5.25). Thorley Common and Wellow Common adjoined each other in the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley Area*. Documentary evidence suggests that Thorley Common was enclosed at some time between 1680 and 1793. The enclosed plots are shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing (Figure 5.23) whilst the tithe map and apportionment of c.1840 indicate former copyholders' shares and some fieldnames as shown in Figure 5.26, reproduced from Margham (1990, figure 4). The enclosure of Thorley Common seems to have been part of a larger agreed enclosure including the coterminous Wellow Common (in Shalfleet Parish) since the enclosure shapes on the Shalfleet side of the parish boundary are similar.<sup>153</sup> Other areas of common or waste may have been enclosed unilaterally by the lord of the manor as appears to have been the case at Gaulden Common in the manor of Kings Freshwater. This amounted to 120 acres and was still unenclosed in 1608 but is shown as

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<sup>152</sup> IWCRO/JER/BAR/2/139, 382-387

<sup>153</sup> In Figures 5.23 and 5.26, note the similarity in field patterns derived from enclosure of common pasture and from piecemeal enclosure of open-field (north of the enclosed pasture).

medium irregular enclosures (one wooded) on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing (Figure 5.27). The large regular block enclosures to the north of Heasley in the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley Area* (Figure 5.28) may have been enclosed from a medieval 'moor' below Arrreton Down which formed part of Quarr Abbey's grange at Heasley and is referred to in a document of 1235-1238 (Hockey 1991, 31). The word 'moor' in this context refers to rough ground, possibly a sheep walk belonging to the abbey and perhaps enclosed by the new lay landlord after the dissolution of the monasteries. Quarr also owned a grange at Hamstead. Other landowners within the *Hamstead & Cranmore Area* were Christchurch Priory, Cranmore Farm and Ningwood Manor. This Area includes Ningwood Common but it was a sparsely populated part of the Island and therefore there may have been no manorial copyholders outside the land of Ningwood Manor. Much of the land, although probably 'waste' that functioned as rough grazing land was perhaps not technically 'common'.<sup>154</sup> The large irregular enclosures within this Area may therefore have been created by individual landowners in the early post-medieval period (Figure 5.29). The *Apse, Shanklin & Luccombe Area* is also characterised by medium and large irregular enclosures, some containing pasture or rough ground, and individual landholders may have been responsible for reclaiming these enclosures from waste (Figure 5.30). No documentary evidence has been found relating to manorial commons in the *Undercliff Area* so the small and small-medium irregular enclosures that characterised this Area in the 1790s were probably made by individual landholders or tenants. The small size and irregularity of these enclosures suggests that they may possibly date back to the medieval period (Figure 5.31). The medium and large semi-regular fields with slightly wavy boundaries in a 'herringbone' pattern enclosed from the south part of Alverstone Common and north part of Staplers Heath exemplify a very different kind of enclosure from waste (Figure 5.32), being the result of arrangements and agreements made by substantial landowners and datable to the eighteenth century (Webster nd).

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<sup>154</sup> Chapman and Seeliger (2001, 9) emphasise that land which was 'open' (without physical divisions) was not necessarily 'common' (subject to common rights and communal control). Land which was merely open could be enclosed at will by the owners, whereas land which was common could not.

Various types of downland enclosure can be distinguished in the centre and south of the Island. An irregular sub-circular enclosure known as 'Gallibury Fields' lies between Brighstone Down (Brixton Down) and Cheverton Down (incorrectly named Limerstone Down on the British Library drawing). This enclosure may be of medieval or early post-medieval origin although subdivided by a later straight boundary (Figure 5.33). In the post-medieval period a number of new farms were created on land at the edge of the downs<sup>155</sup>, several being named 'Newbarn'. The 'Newbarn Farm' on the northern edge of the *West-Central Chalk Downland* near Calbourne was newly established when the 1630 survey of Swainston Manor was undertaken<sup>156</sup> and had large semi-regular fields with straight and slightly wavy boundaries in the 1790s (Figure 5.33). The ruler-straight boundaries seen on the enclosed downland at Gotten Leaze (Figure 5.33) were uncommon on the Island except on land within the *West Central Chalk Downland* which was obviously subject to late enclosure. Straight-sided semi-regular fields can also be seen within this Area between 'Gallebury Down' and 'Roughborough Down', these being created in or after 1780, when plans to enclose the downland here were recorded in an indenture (Figure 5.34).<sup>157</sup> Land was often enclosed in regular blocks at the foot of the downs, as can be seen to the north of Afton Down and east of Wroxall Farm (Figure 5.35). Enclosed downland accounted for an estimated 3.5% of the Island's land area in the 1790s (Table 5.3), considerably less than the estimated 7.8% of land assarted from woodland. Clear evidence of assarts is found mainly in the *Parkhurst & Northwood* and *North-East Wight* Areas. Parkhurst itself, technically a royal forest, accounted for another 2.7% of land. The forest functioned effectively as a large common and on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing its southern edge displays the characteristic indented profile of wooded and heathland commons. The fields

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<sup>155</sup> Week Farm, c. 1580, may be one of the earliest of these post-medieval downland farms (Webster nd, manor of Appuldurcombe).

<sup>156</sup> It was described in the 1630 survey as 'plot 473 A Barne [site of New Barn Farm] removed from Swaynston by John Jeeves [in 1629] and set up upon this peece of arable land called Brandpitt which the said John Jeeves holdeth lying next Brandpitt [plot 485] aforesaid in part and the Downes in part towards the east and abutt upon Sandyhill Cops in part towards the north and containing 24a. 0r. 26p (Webster nd).

<sup>157</sup> IWCRO/JER/SEL/61/A/4

to the south of the forest clearly represent medieval and early post-medieval assarts (Figure 5.36). In *North-East Wight* assarts can be recognised most readily in the field patterns between Firestone Copse and Combley Farm (Figure 5.37). Virtually no evidence for assarts can be found in the centre or south of the Island and this particular distinction between different parts of the study area is just one example of the internal variety in historic landscape character that has been demonstrated by examination of the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings.

### **Assessing Isle of Wight Territories and Cultural Landscapes**

This chapter has shown that both territorial divisions and cultural landscapes within the Island display distinctive characteristics. At least five mother parishes can be identified and these ancient divisions, stretching across the Island from the Solent to English Channel, may be equated with Middle Saxon estates although they could have even earlier origins. Daughter parishes were gradually established, many dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries but some perhaps being earlier. These daughter parishes are characterised by irregularity of shape and size in contrast with the Island's Anglo-Saxon mother parishes which form a regular 'bacon rasher' pattern. Many Island parishes, particularly the older ones, contain more than one settlement and several manors, characteristics typical of parishes within Roberts & Wrathmell's *Outer Provinces* and possibly connected with a relatively *ad hoc* development of settlements and field systems, two further indicators that differentiate the *Outer Provinces* from the *Central Province*. Civil administrative divisions known as tithings also existed on the Island in the medieval and post-medieval periods. Their dates of origin are not known although they generally respect parish boundaries. Isle of Wight tithings may not represent the basic units of settlement and community that *townships* do in northern England but there appears to be a relationship between tithings and medieval open fields as illustrated by Figure 4.1. The 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings provide evidence for field patterns derived from open-field and other enclosure types as well as depicting various different land uses mapped in Figure 5.11. Definition of *1790s HLC Areas*, based on variations in field patterns and other land uses, has allowed a more rigorous analysis of

the Island's historic landscape than was possible in the original *Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation* (Basford 2008). A recent analysis of Devon's historic landscape (Turner 2007) has provided a useful model for the re-assessment of historic Isle of Wight field patterns. Examination of enclosure types, processes and dates within the 1790s HLC Areas has shown that there are some parallels between historic enclosure types on the Isle of Wight and in Devon. Enclosure of open-field appears to have taken place considerably later on the Island than in Devon, although generally earlier than in counties within the *Central Province*, but as in Devon this enclosure was achieved by agreement rather than by parliamentary act. Evidence set out in Table 5.3 suggests that enclosed open-field on the Island occupied a slightly smaller proportion of total land area than did *strip enclosures* and *enclosures based on strip fields* in Devon. No single characteristic type of open-field enclosure has been identified on the Island. Examples of *strip-enclosures* occur as do block *enclosures from strip fields*, especially in *South West Wight* and to the south of Bembridge. More irregular *enclosures from strip fields* can also be seen, as can larger fields reminiscent of Devon's *barton fields*. In addition, there are larger post-medieval enclosures from open-fields that are not morphologically distinctive. Indeed this chapter has demonstrated very clearly the limitations of morphology in understanding the types, processes and dates of enclosure. However, it would seem that on the Island land reclaimed from waste and downland directly into enclosed fields occupied a similar amount of land to that which was initially farmed in communal open fields. One question raised by the study of field patterns is what proportion of the Island's field land can be considered as 'ancient enclosure'. This landscape type is defined in the Cornish HLC as land enclosed before the seventeenth century and mainly before the fourteenth century (Herring 2006, 44). It has been calculated by Herring (*ibid*) that about 67% of Cornwall comprises extant or former 'Anciently Enclosed Land'. The percentage of anciently enclosed land on the Isle of Wight is probably considerably lower than in Cornwall for although much open-field land was enclosed during the sixteenth century this process continued into the seventeenth, eighteenth and even the nineteenth centuries. Moreover, enclosure from waste may have taken place mainly

during the post-medieval period since many of the resultant field patterns are semi-regular and have fairly straight boundaries. Nevertheless, most non-downland waste had been enclosed by the 1790s. In the early nineteenth century downland and non-downland open grazing occupied only 10.1% of the Island and by the end of the nineteenth century the extent of open land had declined still further. By comparison, 20% of Devon was still occupied by rough grazing in the 1890s. Since Isle of Wight enclosure was generally somewhat later than that in Devon and more comprehensive, leaving a smaller area of open ground, the Island cannot be so clearly identified with Rackham's *Ancient Countryside* as Devon.<sup>158</sup> However, Isle of Wight enclosure, whether of open-field or waste, was predominantly undertaken on a fairly small scale, sometimes in a piecemeal way but also by unity of possession or by informal or formal agreements and in this respect enclosure patterns on the Island overall show more similarity to those identified in the Devon HLC than to those in the Hampshire HLC. Inside the Island there is a great variety of enclosure patterns both within and between the various *Isle of Wight 1790s HLC Areas*. Other types of land use also vary considerably between the different HLC Areas. This internal variety within the Island appears to date at least from the sixteenth century when it was commented on by Camden (1610, Isle of Wight Section: Paragraph 2). It may perhaps be of considerably greater age and may embrace not only variation in land use between different Areas but also variation in settlement patterns. These possibilities will be explored in Chapters 8 and 9 but first the settlement characteristics of the Island as a whole must be identified.

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<sup>158</sup> Rackham (1986, figure 1.3) actually places Devon and Cornwall within his *Highland Zone of England* but Turner (2007, 7-9) treats Devon as *Ancient Countryside*.

## Chapter 6:

### **Settlement Patterns and Cultural Identity: The Isle of Wight in a National and Regional Context**

This chapter will quantify, plot and assess Isle of Wight settlements in relation to the *provinces*, *sub-provinces* and *local regions* identified by Roberts & Wrathmell (2000) in the *Atlas of Rural Settlement*. Questions will also be raised about the Island's cultural identity within the context of southern England. The Isle of Wight is defined in the *Atlas* as a *local region* within the *East Wessex Sub-Province* and the *South Eastern Province*. Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 45) characterise the *South Eastern Province* as 'an area of scattered nucleations, hamlets, villages and market towns' in contrast with the *Central Province* which they describe as an area dominated by 'the presence of large concentrations of nucleated settlements, villages and hamlets'. This basic contrast will be explored below. The 1810 one inch to one mile Ordnance Survey map, included here as Appendix A, provides a convenient starting point for an exploration of settlement before nineteenth century changes<sup>159</sup> whilst in the unpublished Ordnance Survey six inch scale fair drawings of 1793-4 (British Library OSD 67-74) we can discern much more detail, including the depiction of individual buildings within rural settlements.<sup>160</sup> At a glance, the 1810 map reveals a complex settlement pattern including small nucleations, linked hamlet/ farmstead clusters, and isolated farmsteads. It provides a comprehensive picture of Isle of Wight settlement that includes all the places shown on the 1790s drawings.<sup>161</sup> The only major difference between the 1790s drawings and the 1810 map is at Ryde, which saw rapid development as a seaside resort for the wealthy from the late eighteenth century (Brinton 2006, 74-78).<sup>162</sup> Elsewhere, the 1810

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<sup>159</sup> These changes mainly concerned the development of seaside resort towns at Ventnor, Sandown and Shanklin. Industrialisation did not affect the Isle of Wight in the nineteenth century, except in the miniature industrial towns of Cowes and East Cowes.

<sup>160</sup> The 1790s drawings were used in the preparation of the smaller-scale 1810 map

<sup>161</sup> On both the 1790s drawings and the 1810 map, certain places are shown but not named. However, the 1810 map names some places that are unnamed on the 1790s drawings.

<sup>162</sup> The 1790s OS drawings shows two separate settlements of Ryde and Lower Ryde but by 1810 the town centre had been laid out, joining the two settlements together into the single

map shows only a few additional dwellings and structures not marked on the 1790s drawings. Several towns are shown on the 1790s drawings and 1810 map but all are of small size. Newport, the Island's 'capital', was a planned medieval borough which remained almost entirely within its twelfth-century street grid in 1810. Two other medieval planned towns at Yarmouth and Brading, although very small, still had some urban characteristics by 1810, but Newtown had declined to a hamlet<sup>163</sup>. Cowes and East Cowes developed as small ports from the early seventeenth century and had become ship-building centres in the eighteenth century. Away from its towns, the Island possessed some settlements of concentrated form and village size such as Carisbrooke, Brighstone, Niton, Whitwell and Godshill but most settlements other than individual farmsteads were essentially hamlets rather than villages. Indeed, the majority were tiny places that possessed no more than five dwellings and cannot be defined as 'nucleated'. Individual farmsteads are noticeable on the Ordnance Survey maps of the 1790s and 1810 and form a very significant part of the settlement pattern. A feature of the 1790s maps is the way that many farmsteads are distinguished by the appendage 'Farm', occasionally contracted to 'Fm' or 'F'. The 1810 map also frequently distinguishes farmsteads and here the contraction 'F.' is invariably used. Generally speaking, the places named as 'Farm', 'Fm' or 'F.' are, indeed, individual farmsteads but some locations possessing more than one dwelling are given this appellation. Conversely, many individual farmsteads are denominated by a simple place-name or are unnamed. There does not seem to be a link between the age of farmsteads and the use of the term 'Farm' which is applied both to ancient farmsteads recorded in Domesday Book or later in the Middle Ages and to farmsteads first recorded in the eighteenth century.<sup>164</sup>

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town of Ryde, whilst on the outskirts of the town seasonal homes were built for wealthy visitors.

<sup>163</sup> Yarmouth and Newtown were both medieval boroughs. Brading never received a charter of incorporation but the affairs of the town were administered by two bailiffs and thirteen jurors (Edwards 1999d, 3).

<sup>164</sup> The earliest recorded dates for individual place-names are given by Kökeritz (1940) and Mills (1996) but some place-names first recorded in post-medieval times have an Old English derivation.

## Plotting and Classifying Isle of Wight Settlements from the 1790s Ordnance Survey Drawings

The 1810 Ordnance Survey map at one inch scale enables the overall pattern of Isle of Wight settlement to be studied but for details we must turn to the Ordnance Survey six inch scale fair drawings of 1793-4. These drawings have been used to prepare a database (Appendix F) that classifies all settlements by size and form. This is an essential preliminary to the detailed study of settlement origins in Chapters 8 and 9. In the present chapter the database will be used to identify, categorise and plot settlements and to compare the pattern of Isle of Wight settlement thus plotted with that shown on the map of nineteenth-century English rural settlements in the *Atlas of Rural Settlement*<sup>165</sup> (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, figure 3) and in *Region and Place* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, figure 1.14), reproduced here as Figure 6.1. This task has been rendered easier by the recent conversion of the *Atlas* data to GIS format by English Heritage and the dissemination of this data via the Internet (Lowerre *et al* 2011). In *Region and Place*, Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 192) expressed a wish that researchers should 'reference their local studies to our national frameworks', adding that 'it is this interaction of detailed investigations and general hypotheses that drives research forward'. Since the Isle of Wight is identified as a *local region* by Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 67) it is an ideal candidate for a detailed study using their methodology, an approach also advocated by Lambourne (2010, 138). However, Roberts & Wrathmell warn that researchers will not 'invariably find national and local perspectives in accord: there will often be discord'. As Lambourne (2010, 137) emphasises, 'our ability to perceive patterns is directly related to the scale at which our data are presented'. These *caveats* will be kept in mind during the analyses carried out below.

A database of Hampshire and Isle of Wight medieval settlements already existed when work on this thesis started. This was prepared by Lewis (1996) as a pilot project for a proposed multi-county survey by RCHME but was

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<sup>165</sup> Henceforth the *Atlas*

specifically concerned with medieval settlement and included many places that no longer existed by the end of the eighteenth century, so did not allow a direct comparison with the data of Roberts & Wrathmell. In addition, settlements in the RCHME database were listed under modern civil parishes whereas the new database (Appendix F) lists settlements by pre-1862/3 ecclesiastical parishes, which is more useful for historic settlement analysis. The new database has also used GIS to provide ten-figure grid references for settlements, allowing much more accurate plotting of results than the six-figure grid references of the RCHME database. Within the new database, the primary analysis is by size, based on the classification used in the *Atlas* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 11-15) which defined nucleations of various sizes as follows:

- A. Towns – all major towns irrespective of actual size
- B. Large villages and small towns
- C. Normal/average villages
- D. Hamlets and small villages
- E. Small hamlets.

Roberts & Wrathmell also carried out sample 'dispersion counts' and used these to map dispersed settlements not falling into categories A - E, employing a method that will be explained below. In plotting nucleations for the *Atlas*, Roberts & Wrathmell identified sites from the Ordnance Survey Old Series one inch maps before marking them on smaller scale maps. They were not able to make an accurate count of individual buildings from the one inch maps but assigned nucleations to various categories by means of an overall visual assessment, using symbols to denote their categories A to E. In re-examining the Isle of Wight rural settlement data for this study, it has been possible to count individual dwellings within most nucleations and all dispersed settlements. This has been possible because individual buildings are defined on the British Library Ordnance Survey fair drawings of 1793-4 in rural areas although buildings in towns and a few larger villages are shown as undifferentiated blocks. The drawings show farmhouses, cottages,

townhouses and other dwellings in red and outbuildings, including farm buildings, in black (Figure 6.2). Outbuildings were excluded from the count but were useful in differentiating cottages and private houses from farmsteads since the latter would be more likely to have outbuildings. Roberts & Wrathmell did not define their various categories of nucleation numerically in the *Atlas* but for the detailed local analysis of Isle of Wight settlement in this thesis it was thought desirable to define categories in numerical terms, on the basis of various authorities. English Heritage (1993b) has identified a dispersed settlement as 'five or less homesteads clustered together'. Roberts (1996, 16) has defined 'hamlet' as 'a neutral term for settlements comprising a cluster of six to eight farms'. Thorpe (1964) considered a hamlet to be a nucleated settlement having from three to nineteen homesteads and a village to be a nucleated settlement of twenty or more homesteads (cited in Roberts 1977, 83). Using the above information, the categories employed by Roberts & Wrathmell have been adapted and expanded to provide numerical criteria for the 'Basford Categories' defined below. Lower case letters have been used to distinguish these new categories from those of Roberts & Wrathmell. The criteria for the Basford categories are as follows:

- a. Towns: 50 or more dwellings and possessing recognised urban attributes (see Heighway 1972, 8-10; Darvill, 1992; Isle of Wight Council 2009b for definition of these attributes).
- b. 'Large' villages: 40 or more dwellings
- c. 'Average' villages: 20 – 39 dwellings
- d. Hamlets/small villages: 10 – 19 dwellings
- e. Small hamlets: 6 – 9 dwellings
- f. Dispersed settlements: 2 – 5 dwellings
- g. Individual farmsteads or single dwellings.

All settlements shown on the British Library Ordnance Survey drawings of 1793-4 have been assigned to one of the Basford categories a-g and have been listed in the database (Appendix F). The total number of settlements in each Basford category is shown in Table 6.1.

Figure 6.3 shows all settlements recorded in the Basford database plotted in relation to physiographic regions.<sup>166</sup> Figure 6.4 shows only the nucleated settlements from the Basford database. This latter map can be compared with an extract from the *Atlas* (GIS version) showing nucleated settlements recorded by Roberts & Wrathmell (Figure 6.5). Comparison of the *Atlas GIS* nucleations with those plotted from the Basford database reveals an apparently large discrepancy in the numbers of settlements. The *Atlas* shows 24 nucleations in categories A-E on the Isle of Wight (Figure 6.5) whereas Figure 6.4 and Table 6.1 record 83 nucleations in Basford categories a-e. Close inspection of the digital data in the GIS version of the *Atlas* (Lowerre *et al* 2011) indicates how this apparent discrepancy has arisen. It is clear that most of the smaller nucleations in Basford categories 'd' and 'e' have not been counted as nucleations by Roberts & Wrathmell. A total of sixty settlements in these categories are listed in Table 6.1 and only eight appear to be shown in the *Atlas GIS* extract (Figure 6.5). This can be demonstrated from the list of *Atlas* nucleations identified in Table 6.2<sup>167</sup> where the categories assigned by Roberts & Wrathmell (as shown in the digital *Atlas*) are compared with those recorded in the Basford database. The majority of the nucleations mapped both in the *Atlas* and in the Basford database (fifteen out of twenty-four) have been assigned to a higher category by Basford than by Roberts & Wrathmell (see Table 6.2). It is worth noting that Table 6.2 includes seven settlements recorded by Basford within her categories a-c which are not recorded as nucleations in the *Atlas*. Surprisingly, these missing nucleations include Cowes and East Cowes although both these settlements were established in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and could be characterised as small towns by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Another surprising omission is that of St Helens, a fairly substantial nucleation placed

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<sup>166</sup> When Appendix F (the database of settlements) was being compiled, the 1790s drawings had not been geo-referenced and therefore it was not possible to plot individual buildings using GIS. Instead, accurate grid references were identified for the centres of all nucleations and dispersed settlements by comparing the digital 1790s drawings with the modern digital 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey. An Access database was created listing details of all settlements, including grid references. (Further details are given in a note attached to Appendix F.) The Access database was then used to create a digital map with symbols showing the positions of all settlements (Figure 6.3).

<sup>167</sup> The nucleations plotted in the *Atlas GIS* are not named but in most cases can be confidently identified from the Ordnance Survey 1810.

by Basford in Category 'c'. However, despite these omissions it is clear that the discrepancy between the two sets of data for nucleated settlements can be largely accounted for by differences in category definition. If the sixty nucleations in Basford categories 'd' and 'e' were to be reassessed as dispersed settlements, twenty-three nucleations would be left in Basford categories 'a', 'b' and 'c'. This is only one less than the number of Isle of Wight nucleations shown on the *Atlas* even though there is some variation in the identity of settlements mapped within the two groups (Table 6.2). Of course, the suggestion that Isle of Wight settlements in Basford categories 'd' and 'e' should perhaps be classified as dispersed settlements rather than nucleated settlements raises the question of what constitutes nucleation. Size matters, and the distinction between nucleated and dispersed settlement is partly a matter of size but this is not the whole story even though numerical criteria have been used in this study to define settlement categories. Comparison of Isle of Wight settlements with those in Northamptonshire (a zone of big villages within the *Central Province*), using the Cassini reproductions of the Ordnance Survey Old Series map, *does* suggest that many Isle of Wight settlements counted as nucleations in the Basford classification are generally fairly small in size when compared with those in Northamptonshire. However, the *forms* of settlements in the two areas are equally distinctive.<sup>168</sup> The houses within Northamptonshire villages are tightly packed and generally more regular in form than those within Isle of Wight settlements (even those classified as nucleations) where houses are loosely grouped with gaps between house plots. Nucleation would appear to be a relative term. In her survey report for RCHME, Lewis (1997a 1.4) confidently asserted that 'very few nucleated settlements are found on the Isle of Wight' but elsewhere she provided a more nuanced assessment, stating that 'large nucleations are uncommon on the Isle of Wight, where the settlement pattern is dominated by farmsteads, small hamlets and interrupted rows' (Lewis and Mitchell-Fox 1995, 9-10).

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<sup>168</sup> The way in which land attached to settlements was managed was also different in the two areas. Isle of Wight settlement forms and the relationships between settlements and their lands are discussed fully in Chapter 8.

The database prepared from the 1790s drawings (Appendix F) characterises Isle of Wight settlements in Basford categories f and g as being dispersed. These two categories contain a total of 545 dispersed settlements (145 in Category f and 400 in Category g) as recorded in Table 6.1. Dispersion densities can be calculated from the number and distribution of settlements in Basford categories f and g and compared with the dispersion densities mapped by Roberts & Wrathmell. These densities were plotted by Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 12-13) for the whole of England within squares of 2x2 kms. A formula was employed that involved counting the *total* number of dispersions within each 2x2 km area (i.e. all settlements not in the nucleated categories A-E). A separate count was then made within sample areas of tiny 'hamlet' clusters (identified by the code 'H') already counted within the dispersion total. The two figures were then combined to give *overall* 'scores' ranging from 1/HO (exceptionally low densities) to 5/H3 (low densities), 8/H5 (medium densities), 13/H6 (high densities), 21/H8 (very high densities) and 35/H10 (exceptionally high densities) as shown in Figure 6.6. These scores were converted to a system of variable greyscale shading in the original *Atlas* map depicting dispersion density in England, (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, figure 9; 2002, figure 1.3) whilst coloured shading was used in Roberts & Wrathmell's synoptic map of nucleated and dispersed rural settlement (Figure 6.1). In the *Atlas GIS*, layers can be selected and displayed to show both the overall dispersion 'scores' as originally plotted by Roberts & Wrathmell and shading indicative of varying dispersion densities. Figure 6.7 displays data from the digital *Atlas* showing dispersion densities on the Isle of Wight and the adjoining mainland area of Roberts & Wrathmell's *East Wessex Sub-Province*. The dispersion scores for the Island shown in Figure 6.7 are set out in tabular form below.

**Atlas of Rural Settlement GIS: Isle of Wight Dispersion Scores**

Sample Unit	Total Dispersion Count	'H' Count
1	8	0
2	8	2
3	8	3
4	0	0
5	5	4
6	5	0
7	5	2
8	5	0

The shading and dispersion scores shown on the synoptic map in the original *Atlas* (Figure 6.1) and in the *Atlas GIS* (Figure 6.7) indicate medium dispersion densities on the Island except for a band broadly corresponding with the central Chalk ridge, which is represented by a score of 0/0 and by shading indicative of very low dispersion densities, as one would expect on high downland. If this score is discarded the remaining seven sets of figures give an overall dispersion score of 6.2/1.6. This dispersion score derived from the *Atlas GIS* can be compared with results from the Basford database (Appendix F). In this comparison, dispersions are assumed to include not only settlements in Basford categories 'f' and 'g' but also those in categories 'd' and 'e'. These two categories appear to correspond largely with settlements mapped as dispersions by Roberts & Wrathmell but classified as nucleations by Basford, as was discovered when the nucleations recorded by Basford and Roberts & Wrathmell were discussed above. The numbers of settlements in the various categories are tabulated here.

**Basford Database:  
Potential Dispersion Categories for Comparison with *Atlas GIS***

Basford Category	Number of Dwellings	Number
d	10-19	24
e	6-9	36
f	2-5	145
g	1	400
<b>Total</b>		605

The Isle of Wight has a land area of 381.7 square kms, giving a notional number of 95.4 squares of 2x2 km. (The actual number of *complete* 2x2 km

squares is considerably less than 95 as the Island's coastline truncates many squares). There are 605 settlements in Basford categories d-g and this gives an average of 6.3 settlements per 2x2km, almost identical to the figure of 6.2 calculated from the digital *Atlas* after the removal of the low score relating to the central Chalk area. The 'hamlet count' can be calculated by adding together categories d, e and f, making a total of 205 'hamlets'. This would give a hamlet count of 2.1 per 2x2 km, somewhat higher than the 1.6 calculated from the digital *Atlas* but still within the same overall range. However, it is likely that the hamlets in Basford Category d are larger than the 'tiny settlement clusters' in Roberts & Wrathmell's Category 'H' and would therefore have been excluded from their hamlet count.

Comparison of the Isle of Wight settlement pattern mapped by Roberts & Wrathmell with that mapped from the Basford database, although initially suggesting a large discrepancy in densities of nucleation and dispersion, has in fact indicated that both sets of data provide a broadly similar picture. Most apparent discrepancies can be related to differences in category definitions although a few specific omissions in the *Atlas* data illustrate the fact that working at a *national scale* creates a broad-brush picture, in contrast with the more detailed picture created by *local scale work* such as that in the present thesis. The minor omissions in the *Atlas* data do not in any way invalidate the provincial model of Roberts & Wrathmell when viewed *at a national scale*. Their model has been assembled from the bottom up 'by means of the painstaking collection of ample data' (Lambourne 2010, 44). In some areas (although not to a very significant degree on the Isle of Wight) the scale of local analysis may lead to numerical data that differ from those collected at a national scale but these effects of scale do not undermine the overall *provincial patterns* discernible in the *Atlas* data. It would be a valuable exercise to compare the *local scale* settlement data for the Isle of Wight as set out in this chapter with data collected from other local scale studies in both the *South Eastern Province* and the *Central Province*. Such data has not been identified in the present work other than that of Hinton (2005), discussed below, although a detailed *county-scale* analysis of Somerset has

been carried out by Rippon (2004, 115-131). In this thesis the main aim is to characterise the Isle of Wight in relation to the English historic landscape as a whole and it is to this topic that we now turn.

### **The Isle of Wight and East Wessex within a National Context**

The establishment of a basic concordance between the Isle of Wight settlement pattern identified from the Basford database and that mapped in the *Atlas GIS* provides an increased level of confidence when comparing the pattern of Isle of Wight settlement with that of the various *provinces, sub-provinces* and *local regions* delineated by Roberts & Wrathmell. The Isle of Wight falls within Roberts & Wrathmell's *South Eastern Province* and *East Wessex Sub-Province*. 'Scattered nucleations, hamlets, villages and market towns' are perceived to be defining characteristics of the *South Eastern Province* in contrast with 'large concentrations of nucleated settlements, villages and hamlets' in the *Central Province* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000; 40, 45). Thus, the relative density of nucleations is seen as a key provincial characteristic. However, Roberts & Wrathmell do not record the concentration of nucleations for their three main provinces numerically.<sup>169</sup> This numerical calculation has now been done by Lowerre (2010) and his list of nucleation densities, reproduced as Table 6.3, shows that the *South Eastern Province* as a whole had 47.6 nucleations within each unit of 25x25 kms compared with 34.2 in the *Northern and Western Province* and 67.2 in the *Central Province*. A specific figure for nucleation density on the Isle of Wight can be calculated on the basis of the 24 nucleations mapped in the *Atlas GIS* (Figure 6.5).<sup>170</sup> The Isle of Wight has a land area of 380 square kms. This gives a nucleation density of 0.063 per square km and translates into a density of 39.5 nucleations within a unit of 25x25 kms, a surprisingly low figure which compares more closely with densities in the *Northern and Western Province* than with those in most parts of the *South Eastern*

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<sup>169</sup> They do provide numerical figures for settlement density within some of their sub-provinces, as noted by Lowerre (2010, 27).

<sup>170</sup> Bearing in mind that the Basford database identified a similar number of nucleations (23) in categories a-c although these were not all the same as those of Roberts and Wrathmell.

*Province* (see Table 6.3). The figure for the Isle of Wight is broadly comparable with recorded densities of 41.8 in the *Weald* and 42.2 in *Anglia* (both within the *South Eastern Sub-Province*) but is very much lower than the overall nucleation density of 60.8 recorded for the *East Wessex Sub-Province* of which the Island is a part. A new digital map created by Lowerre (2010, figure 8) from data in the *Atlas GIS* does not emphasise the Island's low nucleation density as dramatically as the numerical calculation above. This new grid-based map (Figure 6.8) shows combined dispersion scores, hamlet counts and proximity to B, C and D nucleations throughout England. Much of the Island has been given a medium score in terms of proximity to B, C and D nucleations, meaning that the distance between these nucleations is further than in most parts of the *Central Province* and that the Isle of Wight as a whole can be placed firmly within the *South Eastern Province* based on nucleation density. However, it also suggests that the Island has a low dispersion score and hamlet count. This finding appears to conflict with Figure 6.7 where the coloured shading indicates a medium dispersion for the Island, as discussed above. When the *Atlas GIS* map showing dispersion density for *local regions* within the *whole* of England (Figure 6.9) is examined, it undoubtedly does show the Isle of Wight to have a lower density of dispersion than many parts of the *South-East Province*. Nevertheless, the Island's dispersion density is considerably higher than for almost all of the *local regions* within the *Central Province*.

We turn now to a detailed examination of the *East Wessex Sub-Province* and the *local regions* within it. Within this sub-province the density of dispersion on the Isle of Wight (relatively low within the national context) is very much higher than in much of mainland *East Wessex*, specifically the *local regions* of *Salisbury Plain* and *Hampshire Downs*.<sup>171</sup> Indeed, the *East Wessex Sub-Province* as a whole is atypical of the *South-Eastern Province* in having

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<sup>171</sup> The New Forest *Local Region* appears to have been subsumed within that of the Hampshire Downs in the *Atlas GIS* (Lowerre *et al* 2011) although it has a very different landscape and is listed as a separate local region in the original *Atlas* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 5a).

'extremely low densities of dispersion' according to Roberts & Wrathmell. The authors note that:

*Only along the coast east of Southampton Water and in the Isle of Wight do higher, even very high densities appear, perhaps already by the nineteenth century, reflecting the kindly climate, proximity to major harbours and relative proximity to London* (Roberts & Wrathmell, 2000, 44).

The first part of this statement should no doubt read 'along the coast **west** of Southampton Water' for, as Hinton (2005, 71) points out, this is where the *Atlas* shows high densities of nineteenth-century dispersion (see Figure 6.1). However, Lowerre's revised digital mapping of Roberts & Wrathmell's data (Figures 6.7 and 6.9) reveals very high densities of dispersion on both sides of Southampton Water. Since figure 1.2 in *Region and Place* also shows high dispersion scores on both sides of Southampton Water, it would appear that the appropriate shading was accidentally omitted by Roberts & Wrathmell from their original map of rural settlement (Figure 6.1). The suggestion by Roberts & Wrathmell that higher levels of dispersed settlement around Southampton Water are the result of Regency settlement is misleading as far as the Isle of Wight is concerned. Wealthy incomers certainly built second homes on the Isle of Wight from Regency times onwards, particularly in Ryde and along the Undercliff (Basford 1989, 49-60). However, this did not significantly affect the existing pattern of dispersion, much of which is undoubtedly of medieval or even pre-Domesday origin, as will be shown in Chapter 8. The high dispersion scores to the west of Southampton Water, on the southern fringes of the New Forest and on the heathland to the west of the New Forest may also be ancient in origin. As we have seen, these high and medium dispersion scores are anomalous for the *East Wessex Sub-Province* as a whole which is generally an area of extremely low dispersion densities, dramatically emphasised in Figure 6.9. In contrast, the average nucleation density within *East Wessex* is considerably higher than the average for the *South Eastern Province* as shown in Table 6.3 (60.8 nucleations per 25x25 kms in *East Wessex* compared with 47.6 for the *South Eastern Province*). Nevertheless, the density of nucleations in *East Wessex* is still lower than the

average density of 67.2 nucleations per 25x25 kms within the *Central Province*. On this basis Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 44) decided to include *East Wessex* within the *South-Eastern Province*. This decision has been challenged by some scholars (Dyer 2003; Hinton 2005). Lowerre (2010, 39) also considers (on the basis of Figure 6.8) that the *East Wessex* sub-province 'does appear more similar to lands to its north and west, in the Central province, than to those to its east, in the South-eastern province'. However, it must be emphasised that the density of nucleation on the Isle of Wight is certainly lower than in *East Wessex* as a whole whilst the dispersion density is much higher (see Figures 6.7 and 6.10). The maps presented in this chapter make it clear that the Isle of Wight could certainly not be considered part of the *Central Province*.

A *local-scale* study of settlement in south Hampshire within the *East Wessex Sub-Province* has been made by Hinton (2005) who has challenged settlement densities shown in the *Atlas*. Hinton has used the 1810 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey at one inch scale<sup>172</sup> to produce his own map and diagram of settlements in the area (*idem* figures 2 and 3). He appears to have identified much larger numbers of nucleated and dispersed settlements in his mapping area than did Roberts & Wrathmell. However, his main map (figure 2) includes both nucleated and dispersed settlements without distinguishing between the two categories so cannot be compared directly with the mapping for south Hampshire in the *Atlas*. In addition, Hinton seems to have counted only *named* settlements in preparing his map although both the Isle of Wight 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and the Isle of Wight section of the 1810 Ordnance Survey one inch map show some settlements that are unnamed. A brief inspection of the OS 1810 map (Cassini Edition), which includes the coastal fringe of Hampshire, suggests that some unnamed places are indeed shown in mainland Hampshire. Hinton may, perhaps, have included these unnamed settlements with nearby named settlements. This would actually have resulted in a lesser number of smaller settlements being recorded but possibly in more settlements being defined as nucleations. More critically,

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<sup>172</sup> Apparently not the Cassini edition reproduced at 1:50,000 scale

Hinton (2005, 1) has misinterpreted Roberts & Wrathmell's method of counting dispersion. He asserts that Roberts & Wrathmell's overall dispersion count was arrived at by counting the number of settlements smaller than category E within sample 2km x2km squares and 'then doing another count that included the *category E dots*' (my italics). In fact, Roberts & Wrathmell's 'H' count consisted of tiny settlement units *smaller* than category E. Consequently, Hinton's figure 3, which compares dispersion densities shown in the *Atlas* for South Hampshire with his own calculation of dispersion densities for the area, is not actually comparing similar data and therefore cannot be regarded as sound. Nevertheless, there is a large discrepancy between the total number of settlements counted by Hinton within his study area and the much smaller number attributed to Roberts & Wrathmell's in Hinton's figure 3. This might appear to undermine Roberts & Wrathmell's assessment of settlement density in East Wessex but it has already been remarked that the scale of local analysis may well lead to numerical data that differ from those collected at a national scale and that these effects of scale do not undermine the overall provincial *pattern* that has been identified by one team of researchers using a single data set.

The variability of settlement in Hampshire is rightly pointed out by Hinton who reminds readers that much open downland and heathland had no settlement at all. We have already noticed the discrepancy between the very low dispersion densities in much of mainland *East Wessex* and the higher dispersion densities covering much of the Isle of Wight, even though the densities on the Island are certainly not high by national standards. In seeking a reason for this discrepancy, differences in terrain may be suspected. The high percentage of Chalk within *East Wessex* is evident in the map of English physical regions and terrains prepared by Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, figure 2.1) and included in the *Atlas GIS* (Figure 6.11). High Chalk downland is typically characterised by an absence of settlement, either nucleated or dispersed, and Chalk valleys are associated with linear nucleated settlements. There does appear to be a strong correlation between the extremely low densities of dispersion within *East Wessex* shown in Figure

6.9 and the Chalk terrain shown in Figure 6.11.<sup>173</sup> Areas of high dispersion density on either side of Southampton Water occur within terrains comprising sand, sandstone and gravel lands, with superficial deposits of alluvium and gravel along the coast. These may have been less productive lands not favoured for nucleated settlement. On the Isle of Wight, the terrain map distinguishes between the clay and marl lands of the north and the 'sandy lands' of the south although the Chalk lands are not fully shown.<sup>174</sup> These discrete zones had different cultural landscapes and levels of agricultural productivity. Nonetheless, all parts of the Island have dispersion densities that are higher than in much of *East Wessex*. The Isle of Wight's overall higher dispersion density and lower nucleation density relative to much of *East Wessex* may possibly be partly a product of insularity or of different cultural traditions although clearly the correspondence between 'physical' and 'cultural' landscapes on both sides of the Solent is suggestive, as it is throughout much of England (Lowerre, 2010, 30) . The distinctive origins, patterns and character of Isle of Wight settlement will be further explored in chapters 7, 8 and 9. However, we must first examine the concept of 'Wessex' (generally considered to include the Isle of Wight) as perceived by various scholars including Roberts & Wrathmell.

### **Cultural Identity and Settlement Provinces in Southern England**

Central southern England is often defined as having a unified cultural identity and being synonymous with Wessex although this 'region' was a political entity for only a short period. Aston and Lewis (1994, 1) define Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire as the counties which made up the

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<sup>173</sup> The Isle of Wight HLC identifies three discrete areas of Chalk: the *West Wight Chalk* Downland, the *East Wight Chalk Ridge* and the *South Wight Downland* (comprising Chalk and Upper Greensand) but together these only occupy 13.7% of the total land area and therefore probably did not influence settlement patterns to the same extent as happened in the Chalk areas of mainland *East Wessex*. Note, however, that the broader physiographic zones of the *Central Chalk & Greensand* and the *Southern Chalk & Greensand* identified in Chapter 2 of this thesis cover 23.1% of the Island's land area.

<sup>174</sup> The national terrain map (Figure 6.11) shows only one of the two Chalk areas on the Island and even this area is not shown extending into east Wight, as it does in reality. These 'inaccuracies' are related to the scale of Figure 6.10.

Wessex heartland in the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods but archaeology reveals a much older cultural pattern. In the Neolithic, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight did not possess so rich an array of monuments as the area of Wessex to the north and west (Megaw and Simpson 1979; figures 3.4, 4.12, 4.21). However, in the Early Bronze Age, when Wessex was the outstanding region in England for round barrows (Fowler 1967, 32) large numbers of these monuments were constructed in both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight<sup>175</sup> although grave goods were not so rich as in Wiltshire and Dorset, the heartland of the *Wessex Culture* (Darvill 2002, 464). Strong similarities also existed between Dorset and Hampshire in the Iron Age (exemplified by the hillforts of Maiden Castle and Danebury) although Cunliffe (1995, figure 3) places these two counties within a much larger zone of southern England and the west midlands that was dominated by hillforts. Lambourne (2010; 29-33, 42-43, 133-134) has pointed out how regional variation within England appears to have changed alignment over time. The south-west to north-east alignment noticeable on Roberts & Wrathmell's map of settlement provinces (Figure 6.1) appears to have emerged only at the end of the Iron Age in the early first century AD when the South East became strongly influenced by continental Europe, as exemplified by Cunliffe's map of core and peripheral zones of Britain (Cunliffe 1995, 61). At this time there was a political divide between the tribes of the *Atrebates* and the *Durotriges* corresponding very roughly to the later divide between Hampshire and Dorset (Gardiner and Allen 2006, figure 3.20). Hampshire came firmly within Cunliffe's 'core zone', characterised by hierarchical social structures, extensive internal and external trade, and large scale communal exploitation of the landscape (Cunliffe 1995, 72; Short 2006, 74-5). Late Iron Age coin finds from the Isle of Wight suggest much stronger links with the *Durotriges* than with the *Atrebates* (Basford 2007, 203) although the Island also had trading links with continental Europe (Trott & Tomalin 2003; Wilkes 2004, 125-126). The Island's 'conquest' by Vespasian in AD 43 does suggest that it was hostile to Rome at this time. Nevertheless, Walton (2011; 211,260) considers that the Isle of Wight was by no means 'a rural backwater' during the Roman period

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<sup>175</sup> For discussions of the Isle of Wight Neolithic and Bronze Age see Tomalin (1980, 17-25; 1991).

and continued to play a role 'within long distance networks of trade and exchange'. Links between the *Durotriges* and the inhabitants of the Isle of Wight may have dissolved during the Roman period. In the immediate post-Roman period, Germanic settlements were established in Eastern Wessex by the end of the fifth century AD (Yorke 1995, 32) whilst Dorset remained 'British' until the mid-seventh century (Eagles 1994, 27-29). The Isle of Wight, like south Hampshire, was settled by people with a 'Jutish' culture (Eagles 1994, 25; Yorke 1995, 36-39). This region seems, initially, to have independent of West Saxon rule. By the late seventh century, however, Jutish territories had been subsumed within the kingdom of Wessex (Yorke 1995, 59) and by the tenth century Wessex had annexed much of southern England (Aston and Lewis 1994, 1).

The *Atlas of Rural Settlement* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 39-57) divides Wessex into the separate sub-provinces of *West Wessex* and *East Wessex*, the former being placed within the *Central Province* and the latter in the *South Eastern Province*.<sup>176</sup> Dorset and Wiltshire fall partly within *West Wessex* and partly within *East Wessex* whilst Hampshire and the Isle of Wight both lie in *East Wessex* (Figures 3.2 and 6.11). Hinton (2012, 131-133) has challenged the validity of Roberts & Wrathmell's division of central southern England between the *Central Province* and the *South Eastern Province* and between the sub-provinces of *West Wessex* and *East Wessex*.<sup>177</sup> He maintains that 'linear settlements on the chalk, the extent of open fields, the amount of woodland, greens, marsh and commons all argue against separating Dorset and Wiltshire from Berkshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight' although he does point out that all five counties are 'very different from the central Midlands'. One very strong characteristic linking Hampshire with Dorset and Wiltshire is the great sweep of chalk downland occupying large areas of all three counties (Figure 6.10). As we have seen in

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<sup>176</sup> It is tempting to see this division as mirroring the division between regions of Anglo-Saxon and British dominance in the sixth century AD but modern scholarship strongly refutes any suggestion that the origins of existing villages can be traced back to this early period.

<sup>177</sup> Taylor (2007, 95) has also queried the validity of separating the eastern and western half of the Wessex chalklands.

Chapter 4, the extent, method and type of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure did vary very considerably between Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Sussex. However, the strongest contrasts appear to be between Wiltshire on the one hand and Sussex and the Isle of Wight on the other. Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 show that the total percentage of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure was the same in Dorset as in Hampshire and that during this period slightly more open-field was enclosed in Hampshire than in Dorset, although one would expect the reverse to be the case according to the provincial model. Another paradox is the mismatch between the provincial boundaries identified by Roberts & Wrathmell and the maps of farming regions and landscape types redrawn by the same authors after Thirsk 1987 (Figures 3.3 and 3.4). These maps show much of *West Wessex* (within the *Central Province*) as a 'Pasture' landscape and much of *East Wessex* (within the *South Eastern Province*) as 'a Mixed Farming' Landscape with the emphasis on 'sheep and corn combinations', although the *Weald* is distinguished as a 'Wood Pasture' landscape. However, on the basis of the provincial settlement data in the *Atlas* calculated by Lowerre (Table 6.3 ), *East Wessex* and *West Wessex* can be very clearly distinguished by the much higher nucleation density in *West Wessex* which had 93.8 nucleations per 25 square kms compared with 60.8 nucleations per 25 square kms in *East Wessex*. This is graphically illustrated in Figure 6.10 which also shows the very different *pattern* of settlement in *East Wessex*, focussed on river valleys. There is also a clear distinction in the density of dispersion between the two sub-provinces as shown in the *Atlas* (Figure 6.9) although, paradoxically, it is *East Wessex* that has the lower dispersion scores even though the *South Eastern Province* is typically characterised by higher dispersion levels. In relating the foregoing analysis of historic settlement and land use patterns in Wessex to the provincial and sub-provincial boundaries within the *Atlas*, it is important to recognise that the *Atlas* was originally constructed to map regional diversity in rural settlement in order to provide a national framework for evaluating medieval settlement sites (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, vii-ix). It did not set out to follow regional divisions established by other scholars and considerations of land use were secondary to the mapping of settlement, although these considerations came

to assume an important role in the analysis developed in *Region and Place* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002). It is therefore unsurprising that mismatches with other regional definitions appear, reflecting the problems of defining regions using boundaries when permeable zones are more usual, in fact zones which actually vary from township to township and parish to parish. Such regions are best seen as tools, the spatial versions of temporal phases in history. Lambourne (2010, 44-55) has expressed reservations about the boundaries of the *Central Province* defined by Roberts & Wrathmell but he acknowledges the necessary tensions between 'the national and the local, between the general and the specific, between the pattern and the exception' (*ibid*, 155).

The cohesion of the main provinces defined by Roberts & Wrathmell is undoubtedly problematic. The authors acknowledge the diverse character of the *South Eastern Province*, stating:

*It is an area of very mixed landscapes, some, the chalk, being anciently cleared while others, notably the ridges of the Weald, still remain the most wooded parts of the country. Populous, prosperous and generally early enclosed, its mixed farming and woodland countryside nevertheless exhibit sharp local regional variations* (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 40).

It is clear that provincial and sub-provincial models can only reflect important but broad-brush patterns of settlement type, settlement density, land use and enclosure type. Within each province and each sub-province there will be deviations from the theoretical model and very considerable variations in character. In fact, variations in historic settlement and land use patterns are quite marked even at county level. For instance, Lewis (1997b, 65-66) has stated that whilst in medieval Hampshire:

*Nucleated villages dominated the major river valleys of the chalkland, and the chalk massif of central Hampshire ... it is clear that the north, east and south of the region is largely characterised by dispersed settlement.*

Hughes (1994, 203) has also discussed the broad distribution of rural settlement in Hampshire during the Middle Ages. He identified a general pattern of nucleated villages on the central chalklands and in the west, contrasting with a mixed pattern of villages, satellite hamlets and dispersed farmsteads in other parts such as the south-eastern coastal plain, the south-west and the north and east. He noted that some nucleated settlements have evidence of planned streets but that many villages, especially those located in river valleys, are one-street villages with the occasional side street. Hinton (2005, 72) has written that in early-nineteenth century Hampshire:

*Few villages were nucleated in the sense of consisting of houses tightly grouped around a central focus or within parallel streets or rows. Instead, even its larger rural settlements were mostly strung out along a single street, or along streets if sited at a cross-roads. There were many small hamlets, and many isolated farms.*

It is a characteristic of the 'Wessex' counties of Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Dorset and Wiltshire that they all have a mixture of chalkland and 'woodland' landscapes. Hinton (2012) entitles his study of medieval rural settlement in the area *Central Southern England: Chalk and Cheese*. Lewis (1994, 172) refers to the contrasting areas of the 'Chalk' and the 'Cheese' in Wiltshire and Hare (1994, 159-169) also emphasises this contrast in relation both to Wiltshire and Hampshire.<sup>178</sup> In Wiltshire, settlement type and form bear a strong correlation to topographical divisions in the county, as Lewis (1994, figure 8.5) illustrates in her distribution map of settlement forms in 1773. This map shows a strong contrast between irregular rows and isolated farmsteads within the northern clay vale in the north-west of the County and regular rows within the chalkland river valleys dissecting and bordering Salisbury Plain.

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<sup>178</sup> Vivid descriptions of contrasting landscapes of the 'Chalk' and the 'Cheese' (and also of heathland landscapes) can be found in the 'Wessex' novels of Thomas Hardy.

The complexities of landscapes when viewed at scales larger than the provincial model of Roberts & Wrathmell may perhaps imply that it would be better, as Hinton (2012, 133) suggests with reference to the medieval period:

*To think in terms of downland, forests, wood-pasture, marshland and commons, in other word **pays**, as denoting what characterised central southern England, with varied ownership, the coast and geopolitics also to be borne in mind.*

Here, Hinton is using the term *pays* in the sense of ‘generic types of *topographically* defined areas’ (Rippon 2004, 18). Downland is a good example of such a generic type but in fact forms only a constituent part of wider chalkland landscapes. These have been discussed by Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 44) with reference to their *East Wessex* sub-province and by Williamson (2003, 79-89) with reference to the ‘sheep-corn’ lands of the Chilterns and East Anglia. Both accounts stress how far chalkland landscapes may be considered to have their own identity, distinct from both the heavy clay landscapes of the Midlands and the wood pasture landscapes more prevalent in the South East. Williamson (2007a, 95-97) has further discussed these ‘sheep-corn’ lands as part of an overall analysis of ‘woodland’ and ‘champion’ landscapes. He points out that the central ‘champion’ belt (corresponding to Roberts & Wrathmell’s *Central Province*) embraces both the open-field systems of the light lands – the wolds, downs and heaths – and those found in the clay vales. He then makes an important distinction between the light lands and the clay vales, commenting that:

*The arable lands of the latter, by the thirteenth century, generally ran all the way to the township boundaries. There was little woodland or pasture: these were landscapes of unrelieved arable. On the light lands, in contrast, there were often extensive areas of grazing in the form of chalk grassland, heath or other pasture, beyond the open fields (Williamson 2007a, 95).*

Chalkland landscapes also possess distinctive settlement forms. Hinton (2012, 127), writes that:

*Use of the early nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps to plot dispersed and nucleated settlements and to propose Provinces and Sub-Provinces from the results, is a technique that may treat as non-nucleated too many of the long linear villages characteristic of the valleys in central southern England, particularly if they are in interrupted rather than continuous rows.*

Both the *Central Province* and the *South-East Province*, as defined by Roberts & Wrathmell, include chalkland landscapes. In fact, these landscapes occur in southern England within the *Weald*, *East Wessex* and *West Wessex* sub-provinces, stretching from Kent and East Sussex to Dorset. Roberts & Wrathmell acknowledge the difficulty of determining where to place *East Wessex Sub-Province* within their provincial framework, commenting that:

*This chalkland node and associated lowland basin, so distinctive in its settlement characteristics, could well be designated a province in its own right (Roberts & Wrathmell 2000, 44).*

The authors justify the inclusion of *East Wessex* within their *South-East Province* on the basis of its 'relatively low overall densities of nucleations' but as we have seen, Dyer (2001; 2003), Hinton (2005), Taylor (2007) and Lowerre (2010) have all challenged the validity of excluding the chalk country of Wiltshire and Hampshire from the *Central Province*. Lambourne (2010; 50,-52,119-121, 140, figure 4.6) has also debated the rationale for excluding *East Wessex* from the *Central Province* although, on balance, he appears to think that this exclusion is justified. In view of the distinctive landscape character of Wessex downland it might be feasible to see both *West Wessex* and *East Wessex* as one sub-province within the *Central Province*. However, there are very substantial variations in settlement density between these two areas. Moreover, the Isle of Wight would certainly not fit neatly within such a revised classification. The nucleation densities mapped in the *Atlas GIS* (Figure 6.10) place the Island firmly within the *South-East Province* and,

indeed, its nucleation densities are closer to those of the *Weald* than to those of Hampshire. On the other hand, settlement forms on the Isle of Wight are more similar to East Anglian and Devon forms than to those of the *Weald* and the Island bears little relationship to the *Weald* with respect to its field patterns and extent of woodland. This raises an interesting point concerning the difference between Roberts & Wrathmell's provinces and Rackham's countryside zones. The boundary between the eastern part of Rackham's *Ancient Countryside* zone and his *Planned Countryside* zone cuts diagonally through Hampshire whereas Roberts & Wrathmell's boundary between the *South-East Province* and the *Central Province* is placed further to the west. This difference in boundaries is shown in a map by Lambourne (2010, figure 8.1) reproduced here as Figure 6.12. Rackham's boundary undoubtedly distinguishes different types of field patterns that can be observed to the south and north of Winchester in a manner ignored by Roberts & Wrathmell's boundary but, as we have seen, the *South-East Province /Central Province* boundary represents a clear distinction between settlement densities in *East Wessex* and *West Wessex* (Figures 6.9 and 6.10). The Isle of Wight is included in Rackham's *Ancient Countryside* Zone. Parts of the Island can certainly be described as typical *Ancient Countryside*, having small irregular fields with thickly hedged boundaries set within a well-wooded landscape where small hamlets and isolated farms are linked by a complex network of winding tracks, but only the northern half of the Island has much ancient woodland and fields vary greatly in their degree of regularity. However, the Isle of Wight undoubtedly has settlement and enclosure characteristics that are typical of the *South Eastern Province*.

Most academic debates on historic landscapes focus on settlement and enclosure characteristics but study of these landscapes must also embrace locally perceived identity, which is closely linked with folk culture, dialect and place-names. The term *pays* can be used in this sense to mean 'specific locations with a unique identity defined by the *cultural* landscape' Rippon (2004, 18). Hinton (2012, 133) is perhaps thinking of this type of cultural identity when he asserts that the concept of a *West Wessex* Sub-Province

within the *Central Province* and an *East Wessex Sub-Province* within the *South Eastern Province* would not 'have been meaningful during the Middle Ages'. This critique misses the point of Roberts & Wrathmell's model. Their provinces and sub-provinces have been defined to bring into focus differences between settlement and land use patterns and as tools to stimulate debate on these topics. They do not necessarily relate to provincial or regional *social* identities recognised by the inhabitants of these areas. Everitt observed that regions vary greatly in kind, stating that:

*There is a clear distinction between what one might call a 'conscious' region, on one hand, an area with a sense of its own identity, a sense of belonging together, and on the other hand, a region which is rather a perception of historians and geographers and which probably had no conscious significance for contemporaries* (Everitt 1985, 12).

Roberts & Wrathmell's provinces and sub-provinces, and the Isle of Wight HLC Areas (all at very different scales) may arguably be considered examples of 'unconscious regions'. They are useful models which, as Everitt (*idem*) put it, 'relate to real ideas' but one cannot say that they relate to conscious regions with their own sense of unity and identity. It is surely necessary to distinguish here between *historic landscape character* and *social identity*. Furthermore, Everitt (1985, 13) pointed out that regions are not necessarily constant or static units. Current regional terms used in England are of very recent origin. Dorset and Wiltshire now fall within the modern administrative region of *South West England* whilst Hampshire and the Isle of Wight fall within *South East England* (Wikipedia 2012c) but arguably the Isle of Wight's economic and social identity at the present day and in the recent past is more akin to that of *South West England*. Peripherality is clearly a factor. Mackinder (1915, 15) remarked that 'insular or peninsular' provinces are inherently different from the 'merely historical or administrative' divisions of a great plain. Although tiny in area and in no sense a 'province', the Isle of Wight has a special sense of identity (defined perhaps by 'liminality') which may be akin to that felt in the south-west

peninsula of Devon and Cornwall even though this identity has now been very substantially diluted.

### **The Isle of Wight in Relation to Provincial and Sub-Provincial Models**

In this chapter, the character of Isle of Wight settlement has been assessed in a national and regional context, using the Ordnance Survey 1810 one inch map as a starting point and the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings for more detailed analysis. A complex settlement pattern has been traced on the 1810 map, consisting mainly of small nucleations, hamlets and individual farmsteads. The database of Isle of Wight settlements compiled from the 1790s drawings (Appendix F) initially suggested a large discrepancy with the numbers and types of settlements identified in the *Atlas of Rural Settlement* but this discrepancy appears to be the result of differences between Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 11-15) and Basford in the definition of 'nucleation' and 'dispersion'. It has therefore been concluded that data compiled from the 1790s drawings does, in fact, confirm the pattern initially revealed by Roberts & Wrathmell in 2000 (Figure 5.1) and clarified in the *Atlas of Rural Settlement in England GIS* (Lowerre *et al* 2011), which places the Isle of Wight firmly within the *South Eastern Province*. The new *Atlas GIS* and other data by Lowerre (2010) identify the low density of nucleation on the Isle of Wight, even in comparison with the rest of the *South Eastern Province* and particularly in comparison with *East Wessex*. Dispersion levels on the Isle of Wight are of low to medium density but are comparable with those of the *South Eastern Province* as a whole and are higher than those in much of *East Wessex*. These discrepancies between the Island and the adjacent mainland may be partly explained by terrain but cultural factors may also be involved and will be examined further in chapters 7, 8 and 9. The Island's place within central southern England has been discussed, as has been the concept of *Wessex* as a cultural region in its own right. There are arguments in favour of defining a single *sub-province* of *Wessex*, possibly placed within the *Central Province* rather than in the *South Eastern Province*. This might be justified for most of the area in terms of landscape and enclosure patterns but

there is clearly a higher density of nucleation in *West Wessex* than in *East Wessex* which supports the placement of *East Wessex* in the *South Eastern Province*. Moreover, it is clear that the Isle of Wight certainly does not fit within the *Central Province*, either in terms of settlement patterns or of enclosure history. However, in terms of perceived social and economic identity the Isle of Wight appears to have had a closer affinity to *South West England* than to *South East England* in the recent past. It would be extremely difficult to identify the Island's social affinities in the more distant past but it may be possible to trace the origins and evolution of settlements and their associated landscapes by the investigation of documentary sources from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards.

## Chapter 7

### Early Sources for Isle of Wight Settlement and Land Use

Classification of Isle of Wight settlements in terms of nucleation, dispersion and density, undertaken in Chapter 6, represents merely the first stage in understanding these entities. Important questions remain about the origins and evolution of Island settlements and the relationship of these settlements with the landscape. These questions will be explored in Chapters 8 and 9. However, no deep understanding of settlement and land use can be achieved without an understanding of early sources and therefore this chapter departs from the general approach of using the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and 1810 Ordnance Survey map as starting points for retrogressive analysis. Here, a different method will be used, comprising a review of early sources including Old English place-names, Domesday Book, medieval and later tax records, and the royal surveys. In Chapter 8 evidence from these sources will be applied to an examination of settlement origins and forms which once again takes the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings as a starting point.

#### Place-name Evidence

Place-names can be used to help in identifying settlements of Anglo-Saxon origin although the forms of such settlements as shown on the earliest maps may be completely different from their Anglo-Saxon forms and even the exact locations may have changed. Isle of Wight place-names have been recorded by Kökeritz (1940) and Mills (1996), the latter providing a less detailed account and dealing only with names marked on the latest edition of the 1:50000 Ordnance Survey map but giving earlier recorded dates than Kökeritz for certain place-names and revising some interpretations. Some of the names recorded by Mills are included in the definitive *Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Watts, 2004). 360 Isle of Wight place-names with Old English elements identified by Kökeritz and Mills are listed in Appendix G and shown in Figure 7.1. The chronology of Old-English place-names is much debated but recent work suggests that ‘the topographical

type of settlement-name' is the one 'most likely to have been coined by English-speaking immigrants in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries' (Gelling and Cole 2000, xii-xiii). However, topographical place-names were formed throughout the Anglo-Saxon period and beyond and therefore a combination of place-name and other evidence is required to identify likely 'early', pre-habitative names, for example recognising topographical names associated with early estate centres and minster churches. Margham (2012a, 277) has argued for the primacy of some topographical names in the Isle of Wight on the evidence of place-names associated with the five mother church sites and estate centres at Freshwater, Calbourne, Bowcombe (Carisbrooke), Arreton and Brading, all these names being fairly close to the central Cahlk ridge.<sup>179</sup> Old English *hām* has a range of meanings including dwelling, homestead, hamlet, village, manor, estate and household (Copley 1986, 23) and is considered to be the earliest habitative Germanic place-name element but names in *-hām* probably represent later settlements than certain topographical names. *Hām* occurs in written sources between AD 670 and 730 (Gelling 1992, 122). Margham (2012b, 277) has pointed out that there is little correspondence between the sites of pagan cemeteries and *hām* locations on the Island, suggesting that *hām* names do not generally represent primary Anglo-Saxon settlement. In fact Mills (1996, 119) has identified only three Isle of Wight place-names that indisputably include the element *hām* (Whippingham, Wilmingham and Hamstead) as well as three (Billingham, Newnham and Sainham) that may contain either this element or the separate element *hamm* meaning an enclosure or land in a river-bend. Margham (2012b, 277) has drawn attention to a 'Newnham' in Chale Parish as well as the 'Newnham' in Binstead Parish identified by Mills but asserts that names containing *nīwe*, when used in conjunction with habitative place-name elements, represent additions to the early pattern of settlements. The elements *-ingas* and *-inga* in settlement names, denoting the followers or 'people of' a particular individual, may be 'contemporary with a colonizing process later than, but soon after the immigration-settlement that is recorded

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<sup>179</sup> Seven of the ten or eleven place-name elements in these names are topographic rather than habitative, with stream and valley names featuring prominently.

in the early burials' (Dodgson 1966, 19) since these name-elements do not characteristically occur close to Pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. Figure 7.2 shows names in *-hām*, *-hamm*, *-ingas* and *-inga*, as recorded by Mills.<sup>180</sup> Early name elements have also been plotted by Margham (2012b, figure 8.31) and are shown in Figure 3.17. It is clear that early topographical and habitative names account for a very small proportion of the Island's Old-English place-names, perhaps no more than thirty.

Place-names in the north of the Island which incorporate the name-elements *-inga*, *-hām* and *-stede* appear to be associated with outcrops of gravel (Margham 2012b, 277-279). Figure 3.17 demonstrates this association and shows that names in *-tun* also have a marked association with gravel 'islands' (Margham 2003, 18-21). A variety of meanings are associated with the name-element *-tūn* (Watts 2004, xlvi) including 'enclosure, garden, field, yard; farm, manor; homestead dwelling, house mansion; group of houses, village town'. Watts (*ibid*) comments that:

*Although tūn is already found as a place-name forming element before 730 its period of greatest frequency is in the centuries thereafter. Its main use seems, in fact, to coincide with the period of the break-up of large unitary estates due to land-grants made out of them by kings, noblemen and bishops to individuals of the thegnal class.*

Margham (2012b, 278) considers that many *tūn* place-names on the Island were probably not of any great antiquity by the time of Domesday but that the vast majority were in existence by that time. He calculates that eighteen out of fifty-four Isle of Wight *tūn* names have personal name prefixes and links these names with the fragmentation of large Mid-Saxon estates. This may have led to a change in the status of existing settlements rather than indicating the founding of new settlements (Sawyer 1979, 5). The process of estate fragmentation within Freshwater Parish has been discussed by Margham (1992 a), and can be demonstrated elsewhere by comparing the boundaries of the Middle Saxon estates/mother parishes proposed in

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<sup>180</sup> The name 'Huffingford recorded by Kökeritz has also been included.

Chapter 5 (Figure 5.6) with those of later Anglo-Saxon estates and of medieval parishes (Figure 7.3). Fourteen surviving Anglo-Saxon charters deal with the Isle of Wight (Margham 2005, table 1), recording the names of eighteen estate centres with a date range of c.700 to 1043/4 (Margham 2012a, 13). These charters also provide information about landscape features such as hedgerows, pastures, meadows, roads, lanes, gates, boundary stones, trees, pits, ponds and woodland (Margham 2007, 136-139). Estates recorded in the charters utilise most of the Island's main physiographic regions including the more heavily-wooded northern region away from the main estate centres. The estates of Ningwood, Watchingwell and *Stathe* (Figure 7.3, Margham 2012b, 279-284) lie entirely within this region. Names associated with woodland and pasture occur frequently in north Wight, which may have been less favoured for early settlement and subject to less intensive land use except around gravel 'islands'. Certain names such as *hyrst* (wooded hill), *lēah* (forest, wood, glade, clearing and later pasture or meadow) and *wudu* (wood) indicate the establishment of settlements in wooded areas (Gelling and Cole 2000, 220-261). It can be seen that these place-names occur mainly in the north of the Island (Figure 7.4) although there is also a cluster of *leah* names around the East Yar valley. *Feld* names, also shown in Figure 7.4, do occur in the south of the Island but are more common in the north, as are the name-elements *hæthen*, *land* and *stede* (Margham 2012b, 277-279). *Feld* may indicate an area 'converted from rough pasture to arable in the Anglo-Saxon period' (Gelling & Cole 2000, 271). *Hæthen* derives from *hæth*, meaning a tract of heather or uncultivated land (Gelling & Cole 2000, 279), whilst *land* is indicative of 'ground newly broken-in for arable farming' (*ibid*). *Stede* may be associated with settlement sites established on areas of pasture (Sandred 1963, 174-5).

Out of 360 place-names with Old English name-elements listed in Appendix G only just over one hundred are recorded in Domesday Book or earlier, in some cases relating to settlements that were named several centuries earlier. Margham (2012a, table 1) calculates that 52% of all Isle of Wight places listed in Domesday Book have topographical name elements. Places

with the relatively early elements *hām*, *inga*, and *ingas* are also recorded but the frequent occurrence of the elements *tūn*, *lēah*, *wudu*, *land* and *feld* suggests that a goodmany of the estates listed in 1086 were established or achieved new status from the Middle Saxon period. 243 places with place-names containing Old English elements are not recorded in Domesday Book. Indeed, just over a quarter of all places with Old English name-elements are not recorded until the post-medieval period and twenty-seven of the places listed in Appendix G have compound names qualified by the words 'Little', 'Lower' etc, suggesting that they were formed later than the parent settlement and very possibly after 1086. Many of the places with Old-English name-elements listed in Appendix G probably **did** exist by 1086 or at an earlier date and their absence from the record may be explained by the fact that Domesday Book concentrated on the more important places – the chief settlements within townships that produced revenue for the Crown. However, Old English place-names continued to be formed after the Norman Conquest. More importantly, the customary fashion amongst etymologists 'to refer place-name elements to Old English forms irrespective of the likely date of coinage' (Watts 2004, xiv) means that Appendix G must almost certainly contain names which relate to settlements created in the later medieval or post-medieval periods, including, most probably, the various instances of 'Heathfield Farm'. Moreover, topographical names such as 'Longdown' or 'Rancombe' may have been applied to farmsteads many centuries after they were first used to describe landscape features. For these reasons, Appendix G is best regarded as a list of settlements that are *potentially* of Anglo-Saxon origin.

### **The Evidence of Domesday Book for settlement and land use**

The Domesday survey compiled for William I in 1086 is an 'incomparable national record' (West 1997, 39) with the potential to provide information about settlement patterns and land use but certain important limitations must be considered. The survey represents a 'tax assessment' of land holdings and describes 'manors' or estates rather than villages, hamlets or

farmsteads. It is not a population census and named individuals are almost exclusively land-holders whilst *villeins*, *cottars*, *bordars* and slaves are merely enumerated (National Archives, 2010). The text for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, translated from the Latin, is available in a modern edition by Phillimore (Munby 1982) and has been discussed by Welldon Finn (1962). For analysis within this thesis, the Isle of Wight Domesday entries have been set out in a database (Appendix H)<sup>181</sup> and mapped (Figure 7.5). There are 126 Domesday entries for the Island including a few 'lost names' that cannot be equated with places still existing today and nine holdings that are unnamed or included with other manors. About fifteen names occur more than once but each occurrence of these names appears to represent a separate manor and has been counted as such. Welldon Finn (1962, 287-293) discusses various problems associated with the Domesday entries<sup>182</sup>. He emphasises that a place with a name of its own may simply be enumerated as part of a larger manor. In addition, the sum of named and unnamed holdings recorded within each manor may not represent the total of its dependencies. The database of Isle of Wight Domesday entries (Appendix H) follows the text of the Phillimore Edition (Munby 1982) and therefore refers to 'villagers', 'smallholders' and 'slaves' rather than to *villeins*, *bordars* and serfs (Welldon Finn 1962, 314). However, the term 'villagers' is perhaps rather misleading since Domesday Book does not explicitly describe the type of settlement within individual manors, whether village, hamlet or farmstead. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that all the inhabitants of each manor lived in the manorial centre. In some cases, individual manors may have possessed a number of dispersed settlements. 117 of the Domesday entries for the Isle of Wight record populations of 'villagers', 'smallholders' and 'slaves' within individual manors. These recorded populations, on the Isle of Wight and

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<sup>181</sup> The order of information in the database differs slightly from that of the original text.

<sup>182</sup> He points out, for instance, that six manors in the New Forest area had connections in the Isle of Wight although no Isle of Wight entries mention these manors and suggests that there may have been at least twenty-seven hides on the Island (some 13% of its total assessment) about which we are told nothing. He notes, in addition, information in the Wiltshire folios stating that Bowcombe on the Island had, up to 1070 or earlier, been part of the *firma* of Amesbury in Wiltshire. In conclusion, Welldon Finn states that 'the tenorial arrangements of the Island seem to have been very complex'.

nationally, are likely to be four or five times lower than the actual populations since only heads of households were enumerated in the case of villagers and smallholders (Margham 1988, 57). Moreover, in some manors the recorded population appears to be insufficient to work the land, indeed in certain manors no people at all are recorded. Domesday population figures must therefore be regarded as unreliable but can be used with caution for comparative analysis.

Appendix J lists the total recorded population of each Isle of Wight manor.<sup>183</sup> These recorded populations can be broken down into seven main categories as shown below.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Recorded Population</b>	<b>Number of Manors</b>
A	Over 50	3
B	30 - 40	3
C	21 - 29	7
D	10 – 19	18
E	5 – 9	25
F	1 - 4	51
G	0	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>117</b>

Manors in Category A were the two Anglo-Saxon estate centres and parochial *foci* of Calbourne and Bowcombe (with recorded populations of ninety-one and seventy-nine respectively) and Wroxall (recorded population fifty-one), which never became a parish focus but was an important Anglo-Saxon estate documented in a charter of 1034x1044 (Margham 2007, 131-134). Manors in Category B existed at Freshwater, Niton & Apse<sup>184</sup> and Afton. Freshwater was an Anglo-Saxon estate centre and parochial focus

<sup>183</sup> The population figures are taken from Appendix H.

<sup>184</sup> Apse has been identified as the Domesday manor of *Abla* (Mills 1996, 23). Niton and *Abla* were recorded together in Domesday Book. Both were held by the king but they lay some kilometres from each other in different parishes.

whilst Niton had a church by 1086 (Hockey 1982, 2) and was a medieval parish focus. However, by the 1790s Afton was represented simply by an eighteenth century manor house and associated farmstead (see Appendix F). The Anglo-Saxon estate centre and parochial focus at Arreton was in Category C, as were medieval parish *foci* at Shalfleet, Thorley and Gatcombe. The combined populations of Stenbury and Whippingham<sup>185</sup> place these jointly-recorded manors in Category C but later medieval tax lists (discussed below) suggest that Whippingham, whilst a Middle Saxon estate centre (Finberg 1964, no. 4) and medieval parish focus, was not populous by the fourteenth century. Sandford, another Category C manor, was never a parish focus but was a well-populated hamlet of eighteen dwellings in the 1790s (Appendix F). In contrast, Heasley, also in Category C, comprised a single (although very substantial) farmstead by the 1790s. The eighteen manors in Category D included the medieval parish *foci* of Brook, Shorwell, Mottistone, Yaverland and Shanklin. Category E manors included the medieval parish *foci* of Yarmouth, Chale and Kingston. The fifty-one manors in Category F (with tiny recorded populations of between one and four) included, rather surprisingly, the presumed Anglo-Saxon estate centre and medieval parish focus at Brading (Margham 2000) as well as the medieval parish *foci* at Wootton, Bonchurch and Binstead. Ten manors in Category G had no recorded inhabitants. The medieval parish *foci* of Northwood, Godshell, Newchurch and Whitwell were not recorded as manors in Domesday Book. It is possible that the small settlement of Northwood in the north of the Island did not exist in 1086<sup>186</sup> but Godshell and Newchurch almost certainly did. Indeed, churches were recorded at both places by 1086 (Hockey 1982, 2). These notable absences suggest that Domesday Book considerably underestimates the number of separate settlements on the Isle of Wight.<sup>187</sup> Overton (2006, 110) states that W G Hoskins equated the

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<sup>185</sup> Recorded together in Domesday Book and both held by the king but, like Niton and *Abia*, lying some distance from each other in different parishes.

<sup>186</sup> The place-name 'Northwood' is first recorded in 1181-85 (Mills 1996, 78) and the parish church dates from the late twelfth century (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 197).

<sup>187</sup> Weldon Finn recognised that the 458 places recorded for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight did not accurately reflect the total number of settlements in the county and this underestimation probably applies to all counties recorded in Domesday Book.

number of plough-lands recorded for individual manors in Devon with the number of farms from which rents could be expected. Hoskins (1963, 44-45) did indeed postulate a general correlation between *villein* farms and ploughlands although he pointed out that there were many exceptions for which explanations were not easy. The supposed correlation between farms and ploughlands in Devon relates to a landscape of scattered farmsteads but could be relevant to the Isle of Wight where recorded inhabitants per manor were relatively low. Welldon Finn (1962, 306) calculated that there were 335 plough-lands on the Island, making allowance for those entries where the figure is missing, and consequently we may infer that there were over 300 settlements. This number apparently corresponds well with the 360 Old English place-names recorded in Appendix G although a good number of these could be of post-Domesday origin. The possible figure of approximately 300 settlements in 1086 compares with 628 settlements recorded from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings.<sup>188</sup>

Figure 7.6 maps Domesday manors in relation to medieval parishes and seventeenth century tithings. A disproportionately large number of manors occur in Brading Parish within the tithings of Sandham, Kern and St Helens and this requires explanation.<sup>189</sup> We have seen that holdings were generally greatly under-recorded in Domesday Book so the apparently higher density of manors in Brading may be simply the result of more accurate recording in this area. However, the concentration of manors within Brading does correlate to some extent with the occurrence of reasonable agricultural land within this large parish.<sup>190</sup> Equally, there is an absence of recorded Domesday manors on land less suitable for arable cultivation around the

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<sup>188</sup> See Chapter 6 where the number of settlements in the 1790s has been calculated. The figure of 628 settlements derived from Appendix F is a slight-underestimation as a few settlements were missed off the original database.

<sup>189</sup> The identifications of some of these manors have been made recently by Clifford Webster (see Appendix H and Mills, 1996)

<sup>190</sup> The manors in the tithings of Kern and Sandham are situated close to the favoured land of the Eastern Yar valley and those in St Helens Tithing to the north of the central Chalk ridge do not occupy the heavy Hamstead clays found in other parts of northern Wight.

southern downs, in north-west Wight and in parts of north-east Wight. These areas may have been used mainly for extensive grazing and (in northern Wight) for managed woodland. The information in Domesday Book is arranged by ownership under manors and does not allow us to reconstruct the 'pattern of economic exploitation' relating to individual settlements, including the communal resources of arable lands, meadows and pastures (Roberts 1977, 73). Chapter 5 discussed the 'territories' associated with individual settlements and Figure 4.1 attempted to identify the relationships between tithings, settlements and open fields. Figure 5.5 maps parishes and tithings in relation to settlements plotted from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings. It invites speculation that the units of agricultural exploitation associated with the main settlements may possibly have been defined by a mixture of parochial and tithing boundaries<sup>191</sup> but many of these divisions contain more than one 'village-sized' settlement and some do not contain any larger settlements (villages or hamlets). The parish/tithing divisions therefore do not seem to provide a coherent map of agricultural 'territories' associated with the main settlements.<sup>192</sup> The boundaries of medieval manors may provide a clearer picture of these territories. At present, there is no published work that maps the boundaries of Isle of Wight manors and relates these boundaries to settlements and their lands, including areas of core arable, grazing and meadow. This would be a major research topic but would fill a large lacuna in our knowledge of the Island's settlement and land use history.

The Domesday statistics for mainland Hampshire and the Isle of Wight may usefully be compared. Welldon Finn (1962, 314) calculated that mainland Hampshire had a recorded rural population of 8,835 compared with 1,068 for the Island. Hampshire also had three towns with borough status: Winchester, Southampton and Twynham (Christchurch). Winchester, described as a city, was the ancient capital of Wessex but Domesday Book provides no account

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<sup>191</sup> For instance, Thorley Tithing can be sub-divided into a part within Thorley Parish (containing the settlement of Thorley) and a part within Shalfleet Parish (containing the settlement of Wellow).

<sup>192</sup> It should also be considered that the seventeenth-century tithings shown in Figure 4.1 were not identical with those recorded in the medieval period.

of this important place. There were no boroughs recorded on the Isle of Wight in 1086. The manor of Bowcombe, which had the second largest recorded population after Calbourne, provides the clearest evidence for the probable existence of a nucleated settlement on the Island. The monks of Lyre had a church at Bowcombe and Domesday Book refers to twenty smallholders' dwellings 'attached to this church' as well as twenty-five villagers, fifteen smallholders and ten slaves attached to the King's own land. It also records a 'toll which produces 30s' at Bowcombe, perhaps indicating the presence of a market. Welldon Finn (1962, 351) has suggested that Bowcombe was 'a possible nascent urban development'. Margham (1992b) has gone further, locating the Domesday settlement of Bowcombe on the site of present-day Carisbrooke<sup>193</sup> and suggesting that it was a planned linear settlement (probably created by William Fitz Osbern or his son by 1076) which functioned as a small town and market centre before the establishment of nearby Newport between 1177 and 1184. The recorded population of the Isle of Wight as a whole was distributed between 117 named entries in Domesday Book (Appendix H). This is somewhat higher than the 101 entries calculated by Welldon Finn (1962, 293) out of a total of 458 for Hampshire as a whole (including the mainland and the Isle of Wight). Clearly, the Island contained a greater number of manors relative to its size than mainland Hampshire which is nearly ten times larger than the Isle of Wight. The population of most individual manors on the Island appears to have been considerably less than that of many manors in mainland Hampshire according to Figure 7.7 (reproduced from Welldon Finn 1962, figure 95). Indeed, using population totals and numbers of manors given in Welldon Finn (1962, 293 and 314) the average recorded population within Isle of Wight manors can be calculated as eleven,<sup>194</sup> compared with an average recorded population of twenty-five in mainland manors. There is a particularly marked incidence of individual manors with low populations in the north of the Island. However, this does not mean that population *density* on the Isle of Wight as a

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<sup>193</sup> This identification is subject to some debate. See Edwards 1999e, 3 and Chapter 8.

<sup>194</sup> A slightly lower figure of nine people per Isle of Wight manor can be calculated from Appendix J

whole was less than in Hampshire. Another map by Welldon Finn (1962, figure 94), reproduced here as Figure 7.8, emphasises the variability of population density per square mile in different parts of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight which is clearly related to the contemporary productivity of the land. Only three people per square mile are recorded in the northern part of the Island, lying mainly on heavy Oligocene clays, but the rest of the Island had a density of ten people per square mile, higher than in all but one of the twenty-four regions identified by Welldon Finn in mainland Hampshire. Margham (1988) has re-evaluated the Domesday data for the Isle of Wight and has produced a map showing recorded population per 2 square km. His map (Figure 7.9) presents a more nuanced picture than that of Welldon Finn, indicating above-average population densities within some grid squares in the north of the Island, including those containing the manors of Freshwater, Shalfleet, Calbourne, Bowcombe, Whippingham, Shide and Pan.<sup>195</sup> Nevertheless, Margham's map shows a considerable area of land in northern Wight on either side of the Medina estuary with no recorded population apart from the manors of Luton and Whippingham, including land in and around Parkhurst Forest. Margham also notes an absence of recorded population in some areas to the south of the Oligocene beds. These areas are the western extremity of the Island; the Chalk upland between Carisbrooke, Calbourne and Shorwell; the Mersley-Ashey portion of the central Chalk ridge; the higher parts of the southern Chalk block and the upper Medina valley.

Lewis (1997a, 3.2) observes that the Domesday population density of 6.1 people per square mile recorded for Hampshire as a whole (including the Isle of Wight) was below average for English counties although the actual difference between Hampshire and counties standing markedly higher in the national list was quite small.<sup>196</sup> The national map of Domesday population densities prepared by Darby (1977), reproduced as Figure 7.10, irons out the distinctions between the south part of the Island and the various local regions

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<sup>195</sup> The densities for Calbourne Manor are considerably above the national average, at over sixty recorded persons per 2km square.

<sup>196</sup> Like Welldon Finn, Lewis also emphasises variation within the county, pointing to a recorded population density of twelve per square mile in the upper Test Valley and densities of between six and ten in the centre and north of mainland Hampshire.

of mainland Hampshire. His map depicts the population densities of mainland Hampshire and the southern part of the Isle of Wight as being within the average range of 5-10 recorded individuals per square mile. This average density covered much of central southern England, the Midlands and parts of Devon, and was exceeded only in East Anglia, other parts of eastern England and restricted areas of the South-East and South-West (Roberts 1977, 57). In conclusion, we may state from the Domesday evidence that much of the Isle of Wight was relatively well populated compared with mainland Hampshire and some other parts of the country but that the population of individual manors was relatively small. It may be justifiable to infer from this evidence that most settlements took the form of small hamlets and farmsteads rather than villages. The distribution and density of plough-teams in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight reveals a similar profile to that of population. There are fewer plough-teams per manor on the Isle of Wight than in Hampshire as shown in Figure 7.11, reproduced from Welldon Finn (1962, figure 93). However, a map plotting the numbers of plough-teams per square mile (Welldon Finn 1962, figures 92) paints a different picture (Figure 7.12). As might be expected, the northern part of the Island had a relatively low arable capability, probably accounting for its low population, possessing an average of only one plough-team per square mile. In contrast, the rest of the Island had an average of three plough-teams per square mile, a figure matched in only two of the twenty-four regions of mainland Hampshire identified by Welldon Finn.<sup>197</sup> This figure can be compared both with highly fertile areas, for instance in Sussex and Herefordshire, that could support at least four ploughs per square mile and with poor lands in the North and on the Somerset Levels that could only support one plough in every two square miles (Domesdaybook.co.uk 2011). What is notable in the Domesday figures for population and plough-team densities is their indication that in 1086 the Isle of Wight was by no means the poor relation of Hampshire. The number of plough teams per square mile may be considered a measure of agricultural potential and therefore, indirectly, of prosperity. By this measure,

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<sup>197</sup> The contrast between the north and south of the Island in terms of plough teams mirrors a similar difference between the 'Feldon' and 'Woodland' parts of Warwickshire (Roberts 1977, 73-75).

much of the Island appears to have been more prosperous than many parts of mainland Hampshire. However, the northern part of the Island, accounting for an estimated 38% of the total land area,<sup>198</sup> was generally much less populated and had a much smaller number of plough teams.

Domesday Book records a variety of resources besides plough lands including woodland, meadow, pasture, waste, fisheries, salt-pans, mills and churches (Welldon Finn 1962, 340-357). Meadow was recorded in as large a proportion of Island manors as in mainland Hampshire manors (Figure 7.13) but the number of acres per manor was much smaller than within manors situated beside Hampshire's major rivers, the Avon, the Test and the Itchen. Welldon Finn's map of Domesday woodland (1962, figure 96), reproduced as Figure 7.14, shows that the Island possessed twelve entries for woods paying swine rents compared with 126 entries for woods paying swine rent in mainland Hampshire. These numbers suggest numbers of woods proportional to the size of the two areas but the rents for the Island woods were very much smaller than for many of the woods in mainland Hampshire. Domesday Book also records ten 'other mentions' of woodland for the Island compared with forty-two for mainland Hampshire. These latter woods were presumably of less value than woods yielding swine rents. Overall, the Domesday evidence suggests a much smaller percentage of woodland on the Island than in mainland Hampshire, which by about 1200 had eleven royal forests including the New Forest, although these legal 'forests' were far larger than the actual physical forests of woodland and heathland (Coleburn 1983). Welldon Finn (1962, 324) comments that 'there was, apparently, but little woodland in the Isle of Wight, and it is surprising that scarcely any was recorded for the sparsely inhabited Oligocene clays of the north where one would expect to find wood'. However, Parkhurst Forest, which would have contained a mixture of woodland and heathland, was not recorded in Domesday Book presumably because it was royal land and therefore not taxable (Chatters 1991, 43). Otherwise, the lack of recorded woodland in the

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<sup>198</sup> Based on the percentage of the Island occupied by the 'Northern Lowlands' HLC Area (see Figure 3.15).

north of the Island may be explained to some extent by its enumeration under the main estate centres situated mainly in the centre and south of the Island. Calbourne, for instance had 'woodland at 20 pigs' Bowcombe had 'woodland at 5 pigs' Shalfleet had 'woodland at 4 pigs' and Brading had 'woodland at 2 pigs'. The lack of recorded woodland at Freshwater may well represent early clearance in this area (Margham 1992a, 113) but a similar lack of woodland recorded in the north-east of the Island or within the manor of Arreton (which included land in the north-east of the Island) is more surprising. The model of land use at Domesday (Figure 7.15) prepared for the Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), in contrast with Figure 7.14, postulates the existence of a considerable area of woodland in north-east Wight on the basis of field patterns thought to be derived from assarted woodland. This HLC model is founded on the assumption that the earliest HLC interpretation recorded for discrete land parcels (or polygons) may equate with land uses established in the later Anglo-Saxon period when the foundations of the 'historic landscape' were laid in many parts of England (Rippon 2006, 62-65). The HLC model makes very large assumptions and Basford (2008, 51) acknowledges that 'it must be regarded as a purely notional starting point for academic discussion and study of the Island's landscape in the eleventh century'. A pie diagram prepared from the HLC model (Figure 7.16) estimates that over 19% of the Island's land area at this period may have been woodland or royal forest compared with a present-day total (including Parkhurst Forest) of just over 9% made up of approximately 4% ancient woodland/replanted ancient woodland and 5% secondary woodland/ recent plantations (Basford 2008, 53).<sup>199</sup> When set against Figure 7.14, the HLC estimate of Domesday woodland appears to be much too high. It is certainly very much higher than the 6% suggested by Rackham (1986, 78) in his list of Domesday woodland areas by counties, reproduced here as Table 7.1. Rackham places the Isle of Wight low in the 'league table' of Domesday woodland, far below Hampshire with 15% and considerably below Midland counties such as Northamptonshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire and

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<sup>199</sup> A slightly higher 10% present-day woodland cover is estimated in the local biodiversity audit (Isle of Wight Council 2000, 10).

Huntingdonshire. Rackham's figure of 6% Domesday woodland may be compared with the GIS calculation of Isle of Wight woodland and forest shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings, presented in Table 5.3. This indicates that 6.3% of the Island was woodland in the 1790s with Parkhurst Forest occupying a further 2.7% of the land area. Table 5.3 also estimates that 7.8% of land had been assarted from woodland by the 1790s but this estimate comes directly from the HLC (Basford 2008, figures 16 and 24).<sup>200</sup> The combined figures for woodland, forest and assarts in Table 5.3 give a total of 16.8% for these land uses. This is still a very much higher percentage than that given by Rackham and is very probably still an over-estimate. Figure 7.17 published by Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, figure 1.13), showing presences of woodland in England c730-1086 and using evidence from place-names as well as from Domesday Book, does indicate that the Island was reasonably well-wooded compared with some parts of the Midlands and some eastern counties although woods were fairly small. Lewis (1997a, 44) suggests that Domesday Book recorded only demesne woods in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and this would imply that Rackham's Domesday totals are an under-estimate. It is notable that his figure of 15% woodland cover for mainland Hampshire in 1086 is less than the 18% present-day woodland estimated in the Hampshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (Lambrick and Bramhill 1999, figure 3.3) which includes surviving ancient woodland accounting for nearly 10% of the county's land area (Coleburn 1983, 57). However, many modern landscape historians consider that there was considerably less woodland in post-Roman Britain than previously thought (Hill 1981, 16-17) and even that its extent in the fifth century was roughly comparable to that of the present day (Gelling and Cole 2000, 220). Some woodland regeneration undoubtedly took place in the Post-Roman period but, equally, much assarting took place in the centuries before and after Domesday Book. Hallam (1988, 981) writing of the period between 1042 and 1350, considered that 'in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, early medieval population and new assarts multiplied faster than anywhere else in the

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<sup>200</sup> The HLC pie diagram of Domesday land use (Figure 7.16) does not include assarts so the figure of 19.38% Domesday 'woodland and forest' in that diagram may include land that had been assarted before 1086.

region, due to the attack on the woodlands' and Lewis (1997a, 3.5) attests to copious mainland references covering the clearance and new cultivation of land during this period.

Despite its highly speculative nature, the HLC model of Isle of Wight land use at Domesday (Figures 7.15 and 7.16) affords an estimate of both downland and non-downland open grazing land which is particularly useful since pasture is recorded for only two Domesday manors on the Isle of Wight, at Sandford and Week (Welldon Finn 1962, 340).<sup>201</sup> This model also attempts to estimate the possible extent of arable cultivation at about the time of the 1086 Survey by defining 'arable cores', a term based on the concept of 'ancient townfield arable cores' conceived by Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 171) and indicating the land most likely to have been in cultivation at the time. The HLC Domesday Model is built on the assumption that areas of former open-field identified in the HLC from field morphology shown on modern and historic maps (and occasionally from documentary evidence) are likely to be roughly coincident with the core arable areas around settlements at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period. It is **not** based upon calculations derived from Domesday Book such as the amount of land or the number of plough teams recorded for each manor. Various caveats must be attached to the HLC calculation of arable land at Domesday. Firstly, field morphology is not always a clear guide to the origins of field patterns. Secondly, this calculation is based on an assumption that the total percentage of open-field once existing on the Island equates reasonably well with land in arable use at the end of the eleventh century. This assumption does not allow for land brought into cultivation as open-field during the Middle Ages. Finally, the map of Domesday land use includes large 'blank' areas where no HLC interpretation of early land use was available. The concept of gathering together interpreted evidence from the HLC to form a synoptic overview may be sound. Indeed the model bears a superficial resemblance to synoptic maps of medieval settlement and land use in County Durham prepared by

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<sup>201</sup> In mainland Hampshire, pasture is recorded for only thirty-three of the 456 Domesday manors.

Roberts (2008, 45-52) using the technique of *positive* and *negative* mapping but Roberts' work is based on rigorous academic research without the large assumptions made in the HLC model. The pie-diagram derived from the Isle of Wight Domesday Model (Figure 7.16) suggests that 'arable core' land comprised only just over 15% of the Island's total land area but the blank areas of the HLC map (Figure 7.15) cover over 17% of the total land area and most of that could conceivably have been arable land. This would give an estimated arable area covering up to 32% of the Island compared with open grazing (both downland and non-downland) covering nearly 44% of the Island.<sup>202</sup> These figures may be compared with those estimated from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings in Table 5.3. Here, the total extent of former and existing open-field is calculated as 30.9% of the Island whilst the total extent of former or existing open grazing is calculated at 43.9% (most of this latter category being enclosed pasture or arable by the 1790s). These two sets of figures are remarkably similar although calculated by different methods.<sup>203</sup> They broadly agree with the conclusions of Lewis (1997a, 42) who suggests that a little over one quarter of mainland Hampshire was under cultivation in 1086 and 'perhaps as much as a third of the Isle of Wight'. She considers that this 'extent of cultivation, though far from negligible, is 'somewhat limited in comparison with the counties of the midlands and East Anglia' where cultivated land may have covered as much as 50% to 70% of the total land area. However, these percentages must surely relate to arable land in use at the height of medieval expansion, perhaps in the early fourteenth century. In fact, national land use in 1086 has been calculated as 35% arable, 25% pasture and meadow, 15% woodland and 25% 'other'

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<sup>202</sup> However, the extent of downland shown in Figure 7.16 is considerably greater than can be calculated from Table 5.3 and the amount of non-downland open grazing is considerably smaller.

<sup>203</sup> Nonetheless, when individual land use categories are examined there are considerable discrepancies between the HLC Domesday model, Table 5.3 (dealing with 1790s land use) and figures from other sources. For instance, the two physiographic 'downland and downland edge' zones in Figure 2.6 account for 23.1% of land area, downland grazing in the Domesday model (Figure 7.16) accounts for 19.7% whilst in Table 5.3 open and enclosed downland together account for only 9.2%. The differences between these figures are probably partly a matter of definition as to what constitutes downland. In addition, the total percentage of downland calculated from Table 5.3 does not include field patterns derived from open-field and enclosed open-field lying on the Chalk.

(Domesdaybook.co.uk 2011). Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, table 7.1) suggest percentages of Domesday arable in the midlands and East Anglia that are roughly comparable with the national figure (for example 38.5% in Northamptonshire, 32.5% in Warwickshire and 38.5% in Norfolk). Their method of equating ploughlands recorded in Domesday Book with 100 acres of arable would give the Island 35.7% of arable land in 1086, slightly higher than the national average and also higher than the percentages for the Island suggested in Table 5.3 and Figure 7.16. More surprisingly, it would imply that in 1086 the percentage of non-arable land (open pasture and woodland) in the midlands was as high as on the Isle of Wight. Whatever the exact figure, arable fields do seem to have occupied somewhere between 30% and 36% of the total land area on the Island at Domesday. This percentage does not seem to have increased during the medieval period since analysis of the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings suggests a maximum area of open-field that amounted to no more than 30.9 % of the Island's land area. The correlation between these two figures suggests that most land reclaimed after Domesday may have been enclosed directly into individually farmed fields rather than being added to the area of communally-farmed open-field. Much of the reclamation from waste may have taken place during the post-medieval period, as discussed in Chapter 5, implying that there was a large resource of open grazing land during the medieval period.

### **Population and Prosperity in the Later Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Periods**

The Survey of Medieval Settlement in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight prepared for RCHME (Lewis 1997a) provides a useful overview based on documentary sources. Comparing estimates of the Domesday population with population estimates compiled from the 'tax of a fifteenth' in 1225 and the Poll Tax of 1377, Lewis & Mitchell Fox (1995, 9) suggest that expansion in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight was relatively sluggish between the mid eleventh century and early thirteenth century. A larger than average population growth by national standards in the century following 1225, perhaps fuelled by the creation of new assarts, still resulted in a less than

average growth rate for the whole period from 1086-1377. The lay subsidy of 1334 provides evidence that Hampshire as a whole ranked amongst the bottom half of the counties of England and Wales in terms of population density (Lewis 1997a, Section 3.3). Separate figures for the Hampshire mainland and the Isle of Wight are provided in the 1377 Poll Tax. As in 1086, the population density on the Island was significantly higher overall than on the mainland and a similar contrast can be implied from the taxations of 1327 and 1334, although the contrast in 1327 was not very marked. The population of Hampshire as a whole was very little higher in 1524 than in the late fourteenth century (Lewis & Mitchell-Fox 1995, 9). By the 1520s population density on the Isle of Wight had fallen slightly below that of mainland Hampshire, representing a very considerable decline in comparison with 1377. (Lewis 1997a, Section 3.2). Given that this decline occurred after 1377 it cannot be attributed directly to the climatic deterioration and famines of the early fourteenth century or to the Black Death of 1348-50. Even so, the effects of the Black Death may have been particularly severe on the Island. Whereas 48.8% of all beneficed clergy died in 1348-9 within the diocese of Winchester (including Hampshire and the Isle of Wight), almost every benefice on the Island fell vacant in this short period and in 1350 the king was persuaded to remit the tax due from his tenants (Ziegler 1969, 149-150). The ravages of the plague were augmented by the damage caused by French raids. From 1337 the Island was always at risk from invasion. In 1340 the French attacked St Helens and 1377 brought a larger invasion, reaching inland as far as Arreton and devastating the towns of Yarmouth, Newtown and Newport. Hockey (1982, 149) comments that on the evidence of the 1377/8 tax list, drawn up just after the French raid, it is 'difficult to see the consequences of destruction or to note any shift of population'. However, Hockey does refer to locations mentioned as 'destroyed' in appeals for tax relief in 1380 and 1387.<sup>204</sup> Jones and Jones (1987, 35) felt that the Island economy was slow to recover after the French raids and noted that some landowners, adapting to changed circumstances, began to let out land on long leases. Further French raids occurred in the fifteenth and sixteenth

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<sup>204</sup> The locations listed in the appeals appear to have been tithings rather than specific settlements.

centuries and a feeling of insecurity may have contributed to a decline in prosperity.

Taxation and census documents are helpful in recording prosperity within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight as a whole but are also potential means of identifying patterns of settlement and changing levels of relative prosperity within different parts of the Island. However, there are problems with the data. Tax lists for 1327, 1334, 1337/8 and 1522/3 were arranged by hundreds, liberties and tithings but parishes were used for assessment in 1563 although hearth tax returns from 1664 to 1674 were based on tithings. (Medieval tax lists are reproduced and discussed further in Appendix K). Tithings differed in size (Figure 5.1), boundaries may have changed over time and in some cases assessment units included more than one tithing. Furthermore, the names of tithings appear to vary between the different tax lists. Another difficulty is that the assessments (and population figures in 1377/8 and 1522/3) relate to whole tithings and not to individual settlements. In mapping seventeenth century hearth tax returns, Russell (1981) overcame the problem of variable tithing size by mapping the number of hearths *per square mile* within each tithing (Figure 7.18). The highest densities of hearths occurred between the Central chalk ridge and the coast in south-west Wight; at the southern foot of the central Chalk ridge in East Wight; around the edge of the southern Chalk block; and in parts of the Greensand Vale (although Rookley tithing had a fairly low density). The density within 'Freshwater Isle' was also relatively high. The map shows levels of prosperity rather than population since many households had more than one hearth. Evasion of payment must also be taken into account, as with the medieval tax lists. Moreover, Russell maps all hearths within the chief settlement of each tithing and therefore his map does not show the actual distribution of settlements. Nevertheless, areas of higher and lower hearth tax densities do show some correlation with specific *physiographic regions* (Figure 2.6) and *1790s HLC Areas* (Figure 5.9) and probably relate fairly closely to differential population densities. Further work on post-medieval taxation records could compare population densities suggested by the hearth tax returns with actual

population figures from the Compton Census of 1676 (Whiteman 1986) although this is arranged by parishes rather than tithings.

Two examples illustrate the problem of variable tithing size in medieval tax lists. The borough of Newtown, founded in 1256, is nearly at the bottom of the 1327 tax list for West Medina Hundred. This was not necessarily due to the decline of the nascent town, which may have only just started (Edwards 1999c, 2-3). In fact, the low tax assessment in 1327 is probably linked to the small size of the taxation unit since in the late seventeenth century Newtown had a comparatively high density of hearths *per square mile* relative to surrounding tithings (Figure 7.18). Swainston tithing had the highest assessment for the whole Island in 1334 although this declined markedly in later tax lists. It also had the highest recorded population of any Island tithing in 1377/8 although by 1522/3 the recorded population was lower, both in absolute terms and relative to Freshwater tithing. At Domesday, Swainston (*alias* Calbourne) had been the Island's most heavily populated manor so fourteenth century tax figures almost certainly *do* reflect Swainston's continuing importance despite the fact that the whole tithing was in the north of the Island and partly on heavy Hamstead clay. However, the large size of the tithing was undoubtedly reflected in its tax assessment and recorded population. In the late seventeenth century Swainston had a relatively low density of hearths per square mile, strongly indicating that the high figures in the medieval tax lists relate partly to the size of the tithing although Swainston probably also declined in prosperity from the late fourteenth century. The examples of Newtown and Swainston show the difficulties in making useful comparisons between tithings. To obtain mappable data it would be necessary to relate all assessments and population figures to the size of tithings. Any such exercise would be complicated by the grouping-together of tithings in some tax lists and by uncertainty as to how far the 'notional' boundaries of the seventeenth century tithings (Figure 7.18) correspond to those of medieval tithings.

Despite the impossibility of mapping tax-list data in this thesis, some useful comparisons can be made. For instance, in 1327 West Medina seems to have been much richer than East Medina. Wroxall had the highest assessment in East Medina. This tithing appears to have been important from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards despite its lack of a parish church. Hardley, which occupied the whole of 'Bembridge Isle' in the seventeenth century, (see Figure 5.1) was also surprisingly high up the 1327 list. The tithings of Sandham/Week, Roud/ Rookley and St Helens were near the top of the assessment lists for East Medina in 1334 and 1377 but Wroxall and Niton, high on the list for 1334, had lesser assessments in 1377/8. Roud was significant at the time of Domesday but lacked a church. On the basis of historic map evidence and the modern disposition of roads and hedges, Hockey (1982, 147) considered Roud as 'good an example of a deserted vill ... as Newtown' but its decline appears to post-date the 1790s when fourteen dwellings are shown on the Ordnance Survey drawing. Indeed, there are still several farmsteads at Roud today. In 1327 Brading (in East Medina) had a much lower assessment than the towns of Newport and Yarmouth in West Medina, being halfway-down the list of non-urban tithings. Brading also had a low assessment in 1334 although this was probably linked to the small size of the tithing (Figure 5.1). St Helens, which in 1377/8 had the highest recorded population of anywhere except Swainston, was much larger than the adjacent Brading tithing. Nevertheless, the variety of non-agricultural occupations listed for St Helens in the 1370s suggests that the main settlement was a proto-town and possibly the main port within Brading Harbour (Edwards 1999f, 2). Surprisingly, although Brading had a recorded population of only 57 compared with 83 in St Helens in the 1370s it was listed as the most highly-taxed tithing in the Island. By 1522/3 Brading's assessment was more than double that of St Helens although it had a similar recorded population. In the 1563 tax list, based on groups of parishes rather than tithings, St Helens had a relatively low assessment. Brading was included within a group of parishes with a much higher assessment but since this group included Shanklin, Bonchurch and Yaverland it is hard to compare the real relative prosperity of Brading and St Helens. Nonetheless, the tax lists suggest that St Helens did not achieve 'self-sustained take-off' as a town

in the late medieval period and subsequently declined in status. In contrast, Brading did retain its status as a very small post-medieval town although it was much less significant than Newport and struggled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Isle of Wight Council 2008a, 13-14). In rural areas, tithings in agriculturally fertile parts of the Island generally (but not always) appeared in the top half of the tax lists from 1327 to 1522/3 but no simple north-south divide is apparent. For instance, Northwood, entirely north of the Chalk and with fairly poor agricultural land, was quite high in the lists. Its tax rating may perhaps have been boosted not by agricultural prosperity but by the presence of the port at *Shamblord*, a forerunner of Cowes (Page 1912, 197; Edwards 1999g, 2).

The Isle of Wight's difficulties in the later Middle Ages, reflected in the tax lists, must be seen in the context of a national economic decline and a falling population from the early fourteenth century which led to settlement desertion and shrinkage (Roberts 1977, 110-115; Taylor 1988, 96-97). Beresford & Hurst (1989, 189-190) recorded an unusually large number of 'deserted medieval villages' on the Island (Table 7.2). The apparent density of these deserted sites is the highest in England (Table 7.3). Indeed, a distribution map of national densities (Figure 7.19) provoked Sir Mortimer Wheeler to exclaim 'My God, they've sunk the Isle of Wight' (Beresford & Hurst 1989, 36). The Island's apparent leading position matches the fact that the first anti-depopulation statute of 1488 applied solely to the Isle of Wight (Beresford & Hurst, *ibid*). Nevertheless, the Isle of Wight figures are anomalous and require further investigation. Generally, Roberts & Wrathmell's *Central Province* displays a much greater density of deserted sites than the *South Eastern Province* and the high densities shown for East Anglia and the Isle of Wight within the *South Eastern Province* may have particular explanations. The high density of desertion recorded in East Anglia is noted by Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 27) who suggest that it may not be appropriate to refer to 'village' depopulation in an East Anglian context where the typical settlement type comprises a ribbon of homesteads along the edges of commons and

greens. On the Isle of Wight, the thirty-two 'deserted' sites mapped by Beresford and Hurst were identified mainly from tax records. There are only a handful of rural sites with earthworks or other archaeological evidence indicating desertion or shrinkage (Basford 1980, 37-41 and 149-151; Sly 1988; Lewis 1997a, 3.1, Basford 2006b, 8-9) apart from the impressive remains of the failed medieval borough at Newtown (Beresford & St Joseph 1979, 242-245).<sup>205</sup> In contrast, Midland counties such as Northamptonshire possess many substantial earthwork remains relating to deserted settlements. At least sixteen of the Isle of Wight sites recorded by Beresford & Hurst correspond with the names of tithing units and in these cases the taxation figures for different dates appear to document a population decline within the whole tithing rather than in the specific settlement after which the tithing was named.<sup>206</sup> Nevertheless, a few of the localities listed by Beresford & Hurst may have experienced severe shrinkage at a specific settlement rather than a general decline in dispersed settlements within the entire tithing. These localities correlate with Domesday manors having recorded populations of more than ten (suggesting actual populations of forty to fifty) which had declined to single farmsteads by the 1790s. Two of these places do not bear the name of a tithing (Alvington and Heasley) and the others (Afton, Compton and Watchingwell) are located where no other likely settlement sites are apparent in the immediate area. Other farmsteads shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings may also have declined from larger settlements since they correspond to Domesday manors with recorded populations in excess of four, statistics suggestive of small hamlets rather than single farms.<sup>207</sup> These places may have declined in size for various

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<sup>205</sup> Earthworks indicating shrinkage of small manorial settlements occur near Lower Watchingwell (SZ 445 895) and at East Ashe, Nettlecombe, Stenbury and Woolverton (Brading). Soil marks and pottery finds provide evidence of desertion at West Nunwell where desertion is also attested in a seventeenth century account by Sir John Oglander. Road patterns suggest shrinkage at Roud (Hockey 1982, 147) and settlement shift at Thorley (Margham 1990, 119-124). There is also a record of former earthworks near Gatcombe which may be associated with medieval settlement (Basford 1980, 150).

<sup>206</sup> Lewis (1997a, 1.2) points out that if settlements within a region are of dispersed form it is likely that the medieval record of a population under a single place name represents an administrative convenience, and that the named place was never the site of a large nucleated settlement, but was perhaps merely the site of the manor house.

reasons including *engrossment* whereby separate holdings were turned into one farming unit as happened, for instance, in Cornwall (Herring 2006, 63) but also more widely throughout England. By the 1790s there were 400 single farmsteads, houses and cottages on the Isle Wight compared with twenty-three villages of twenty or more houses, sixty substantial hamlets of ten or more houses and 145 small hamlets of five or more houses (Appendix F).

Whatever the pattern of depopulation on the Island, it formed part of a national picture of perceived rural decline which was of deep concern to government. Depopulation was connected in many areas with the enclosure of land and its conversion from arable to sheep pasture (Roberts 1977, 112-114), leading to social ills outlined in the preamble to the first act against depopulation in 1489 (4 Henry VII, cap. 16). This act dealt specifically with the Isle of Wight but recognised the wider national context to depopulation. Complaint was made that 'many towns and villages have been let doen, and the fields dyked and made pasture for beasts and cattle'. Enclosure was clearly perceived to be responsible for depopulation. However, Jones (1978, 11) has commented that 'the reason for this early legislation for the Island could have been the military vulnerability of its position rather than any exceptional speed with which rural enclosures were taking place'. An Inquisition of Depopulation in 1517 found that 355 acres of arable land in the Isle of Wight had been enclosed and turned to pasture since 1489, less than 0.4% of the total land area (Leadam 1893, 277-292; Jones 1978, 11-12; Webster 1994 Part 2, 5).<sup>208</sup> Nevertheless, Jones (1978, 12-15) considers that evidence given to the Knolles commission during the royal surveys of the Isle of Wight in 1559 and 1560 'does support the picture of progressive and damaging enclosure, albeit the comments are subjective and non-

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<sup>207</sup> However, as with the fourteenth century taxation records it is quite likely that the figures for individual Domesday manors may in many cases represent the population of several dispersed settlements.

<sup>208</sup> Nearly three-quarters of the enclosed land belonged to ecclesiastical landlords.

quantitative'.<sup>209</sup> This evidence comes from detailed returns that survive for the two *centons* of St Helens and Arreton in the East Medine Hundred. In the return for St Helens, the centoners complained that:

*The enclosing of coman fields Abowt townys & villagis ... hath altered myche common land to pastur wherby mych tylladge hath decayed, that setteth a worke many people* (National Archives SP 12/7/60).

They had also experienced the problem of engrossing and perceived that this led to depopulation, stating:

*Another cawse we suppose, and yt is the ingrossyng of fermes & small tenements to gether.*

In Arreton, the centoners were indignant:

*We canne thinke no lesse but by Reason many men Covetithe to have many holdes & tenements in theyr hands And then put owt the howse only to some pore man ans occupieth the grounde [and] kepeth the half voyd without a tenure* (National Archives. SP 12/7/58).

Jones (1978, 13) concluded that 'the picture from the centoners' testimony was of small farms being swallowed up in larger ones, with houses standing empty and armies of sheep nibbling the country population out of its subsistence'. He gives the following figures for empty dwellings in the centons of Arreton and St Helens, abstracted from the detailed returns:

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<sup>209</sup> An unpublished note by Webster (nd) explains the background to these royal surveys. A commission was issued on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1559 to Sir Francis Knolles, Sir Edward Warner and John Goodwin 'to survey the state of the Isle of Wighte and the fortifications and castles by the sea in the county of Southampton'. Nineteen questions were put to all eight *centons* (military divisions) and the detailed replies for Arreton, Mottistone, St Helens and Newport have survived. From these centoners' reports, Knolles drew up his general report, surveying all the properties in each centon. The Privy Council does not seem to have been satisfied with this, at least in the West Wight, for a new Survey of the West Medine excluding Newport was ordered. This was carried out by the civil divisions of tithings rather than by centons.

<b>Centon</b>	<b>Number of Dwellings</b>	<b>Number Empty</b>	<b>Percentage Empty</b>
Arreton	170	43	25.3%
St. Helens	92	16	17.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>21.4%</b>

The separate survey of West Medine carried out in 1560 (excluding Newport) also lists the number of void tenements within each main holding. A rapid scan of this survey has identified evidence for 267 void tenements. This suggests that the incidence of void tenements in West Medine may have been slightly higher than in East Medine since fifty-nine void tenements are recorded within the centons of Arreton and St Helens which seems to have covered a little more than a quarter of East Medine.<sup>210</sup>

Additional work needs to be done on the royal surveys of 1559 and 1560 to ensure that all recorded void tenements have been identified but certain observations can be made relating to West Medine. Some holdings with high numbers of void tenements in this hundred seem to be located in areas where there had been a relatively large extent of open-field in the Middle Ages but which may have been undergoing enclosure by the mid-sixteenth century (see Chapters 4 and 5). These areas included Freshwater, Thorley, Wellow, Brighstone, Gatcombe and Carisbrooke. Gray (1915, 102-103) inferred from a survey of 1608 that the passage from open fields to enclosures on royal manors at Uggaton (near Brighstone) and Thorley was effected 'without serious diminution of tenants' but perhaps dispossession of some tenants had already taken place. Elsewhere in the West Medine, the 1560 survey records high numbers of void tenements in areas such as Northwood, Watchingwell and Swainston which may always have possessed enclosed arable fields. The loss of dwellings associated with particular holdings and tenements may not have been permanent. Indeed, some tenements stated to be 'void' in the surveys of 1559 and 1560 are shown as

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<sup>210</sup> The area of the two centons has been calculated on the assumption that Arreton Centon covered the tithings of Arreton, West Standen, East Standen, Combley, Rookley, Whippingham, Fairlee, Wootton and Binstead and that St Helens Centon covered the tithings of St Helens, Kern and Yaverland.

dwelling on the 1790s Ordnance Survey. Nevertheless, the picture painted by the Royal Surveys is of substantial abandonment of farmsteads in the mid-sixteenth century although these surveys do not appear to provide evidence for the complete or near-complete desertion of any specific hamlets. The percentage of empty properties that can be calculated from the detailed return for the town of Newport is lower than in the centons of Arreton and St Helens (21 empty dwellings out of 240 houses or 8.75 % of the total). Jones (1978, 14) therefore suggests that depopulation was a rural rather than an urban trend on the Island. People were moving from country to town and one economic factor that seemed to emerge clearly from the reports of the commission was the unprofitability of cereal cropping. According to Jones (1978, 15), the overall farming picture at the time of the Royal surveys, was 'of mixed agriculture with arable increasingly giving way to grazing, and with more hedged enclosures steadily appearing'. The acquisition of monastic land by new owners following the dissolution of monasteries and priories in the 1530s (Hockey 1970, 239-255) undoubtedly encouraged changes in land use (Aston & Bettey 1998). Further study of the 1559 and 1560 royal surveys and other contemporary records transcribed by Webster (nd) may provide information on post-dissolution changes. These sources certainly provide interesting information about the Island's woodland cover. The 1560 survey records the royal forest at Parkhurst (or Alvington) in the West Medine although for information on its estimated extent (2,500 acres) we must turn to the contemporary records of Newport Borough (IWCRO/NBC/45/22). Similarly, the 1559 survey of East Medine records the existence of 'the Forest of Borthwood, being an ancient possession of the Crown of England' but to discover its extremely modest extent of 189 acres we must turn to a later 1608 survey of royal lands on the Island (Webster nd). John Speed's 1611 map of 'Wight Island' (Figure 1.1) shows Parkhurst Forest, named as Alvington Forest, and the two impaled parks at Watchingwell and Wootton. This map does not name Borthwood Forest but indicates trees in the general position of the forest to the west of Sandown. Drawing on the evidence of the 1559 and 1560 royal surveys, Jones (1978, 15-17) states that apart from the two royal forests 'the woodland on the Isle of Wight was extensive but not dense'. The detailed returns of 1559 for the centons of St Helens and Arreton

record that St Helens had about 205 acres of woodland and copse whilst Arreton had about 284 acres.<sup>211</sup> According to Jones (1978, 15) these two centons comprised about 18,786 acres although a GIS calculation (based on the tithings assumed to lie within these centons) gives a combined area of 24,476 acres. The lower acreage suggests woodland coverage of about 2.6% whilst the higher acreage indicates only 2%. Both figures are very much lower than might be expected, particularly as the two centons included land in that part of the Island most heavily wooded in the 1790s (see Figure 7.20). In the late eighteenth century woodland occupied 6.3% of the Island (Table 5.3), excluding Parkhurst Forest. The figure suggested by Basford for woodland cover in the eleventh century is very much higher than that suggested for the 1790s although Rackham has proposed a figure of 6% (Table 7.1). Clearly, a more detailed investigation of Isle of Wight historic woodland is required but the information in the Royal Survey certainly makes Rackham's figure for Domesday woodland seem more credible than that proposed in the Isle of Wight HLC (Figure 7.15 and 7.16).

## Overview of Evidence from Early Sources

This chapter has examined early documentary sources for settlement and land use. Evidence for different 'generations' of Island settlements is provided by place-names. Topographical names, suggestive in certain cases of early Anglo-Saxon settlement, are well represented in Domesday Book although there are very few names of the relatively early *-hām* form and only a scattering of *-inga* and *-ingas* forms. Names in *-tūn*, perhaps of Middle Saxon date, are much more plentiful and may be indicative of estate fragmentation. The elements *lēah*, *wudu*, *land* and *feld*, of similar date, often occur in the north of the Island. They provide evidence for the settlement and cultivation of areas that may formerly have lain on the periphery of Middle

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<sup>211</sup> Woodland in the two centons was distributed in thirty-three copses, generally fairly small. Returns for both Arreton and St Helens specify that the hedges were strengthened with trees.

The St Helens return gives the age of plantations and indicates that in this eastern corner of the Island there was a high proportion of young timber.

Saxon estates and have been subject to less intensive land use. The 360 Old English place-names and 335 Domesday plough-lands on the Island calculated by Welldon Finn (1962, 306), may both imply that there were many more settlements on the Island in 1086 than the 117 manors recorded in Domesday Book although considerably less than in the 1790s when as many as 650 places are shown on the Ordnance Survey drawings. Domesday Book suggests that Island manors were generally smaller than on the Hampshire mainland and it may be inferred that most settlements were small hamlets rather than villages. However, the Isle of Wight as a whole appears to have had a higher population density and more cultivated land than mainland Hampshire, perhaps indicating a higher level of prosperity. Nevertheless, there were substantial differences in the density of population and intensity of cultivation within the Island with northern Wight having fewer manors and plough-teams. The Island probably had considerably less woodland than mainland Hampshire but may still have had more than the average for some Midland and eastern counties although the HLC model of Domesday land use appears to substantially overestimate the amount of woodland. Even so, the island-wide percentage of woodland that can be estimated from royal survey returns of 1559 seems anomalously low and requires further investigation. The amount of arable land on the Island at Domesday may have roughly equalled the national average and could have been broadly equivalent to the percentage of former or existing open-field identified from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings but much of the rough grazing and woodland reclaimed for arable use after 1086 may have been farmed within enclosed fields from the outset. Population growth in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight was sluggish between the mid-eleventh and early thirteenth centuries. Despite a larger than average increase in the next hundred years, population density in the fourteenth century was still below the national average although the density on the Island remained significantly higher overall than in mainland Hampshire. The population of Hampshire as a whole was very little higher in 1524-5 than in the late fourteenth century and by this time the population density on the Island had fallen slightly below that of mainland Hampshire. This relative decline of the Isle of Wight seems to have been quite great. The Black Death may have been a factor but if so,

its long-term effects were not immediately apparent. The uncertainty caused by French raids could also have affected the Island adversely but once again its effects are hard to detect in the tax lists. Problems of interpretation have prevented the use of taxation data to map medieval settlement patterns on the Island. However, the lists do record variable levels of prosperity in different parts of the Island and demonstrate that patterns of prosperity and the significance of particular areas changed over time. This can be observed particularly with the two settlements of Brading and St Helens. A map of late seventeenth-century hearth tax returns shows areas of higher and lower hearth tax densities correlation to some extent with specific *physiographic regions* and *1790s HLC Areas*. High levels of medieval settlement desertion have been suggested for the Island but are not borne out by field evidence although the Island may well have suffered from a general population decline in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Government concern was expressed in an Act of 1485 which linked depopulation on the Island to the change from arable to sheep farming and the consequent removal or decay of houses occupied by peasant proprietors. This change in agricultural practice was nationwide but the royal surveys of 1559 and 1560 provide specific and plentiful evidence of abandoned tenements (assumed to be single farmsteads) on the Island, linked with the engrossment of holdings and the enclosure of open fields. However, a brief inspection of the royal surveys has not identified any clear evidence for the decline of hamlets into isolated farmsteads although detailed study of these sources might well yield evidence of this process as well as other valuable information on settlements and land use in the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>212</sup> Recorded populations within a few Domesday manors, when compared with settlements bearing the same names on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings, do suggest the decline of certain early medieval hamlets into single farmsteads. Further work could profitably be done in relating the size of Domesday manors to later settlement sizes. Overall, however, the sources studied in this chapter have

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<sup>212</sup> The surveys of 1559 and 1560 do not always specifically record the presence of nucleated settlements although explicit statements sometimes occur such as 'here is Calbourne Village'. In other cases, the presence of nucleated settlements can be inferred where significant numbers of copyhold tenements comprising small parcels of land are listed under particular manors.

provided a firm grounding for Chapter 8 where the impact of time upon the island's settlements and their evolving patterns and forms will be assessed.

## Chapter 8

### The Evolution of Isle of Wight Settlements

Chapter 6 established that the Island's settlement pattern in the 1790s consisted mainly of small nucleations, hamlets and individual farmsteads although some larger villages existed. Furthermore, it concluded that the low density of nucleation and medium density of dispersion shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings corresponded with densities within Roberts & Wrathmell's *South Eastern Province*. Chapter 7 looked at early sources of evidence for Isle of Wight settlement and land use and noted possible changes to the local settlement pattern which may have taken place between Domesday Book and the post-medieval period. In this chapter an attempt will be made to identify the various layers of settlement shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and the 1810 Ordnance Survey map, to construct a relative chronology for these layers and to analyse the associated settlement forms. Similarities with patterns and forms occurring elsewhere in the country will also be discussed. The problems of using relatively late map sources must be acknowledged (see for instance, Taylor 2006) but the 1790s and 1810 Ordnance Survey maps do provide substantial clues about much earlier settlement patterns as well as giving a wonderful picture of the Isle of Wight before nineteenth century growth. They depict a settlement pattern which is complex and composed of diverse ingredients, some clearly nucleated, some dispersed but with a surprising number that are problematic. Relatively large nucleations appear, mainly as parish foci and sometimes exhibiting a regular plan, but there are also smaller, more irregular, hamlet-sized settlements and isolated farmsteads. Parallels can be drawn with Devon, personified as a 'land of hamlets' by Maitland in 1897.<sup>213</sup> The compound nature of the Isle of Wight settlement pattern is illustrated by the frequent appearance of 'Great' and 'Little'; 'Upper' and 'Lower'; and 'East' and 'West' as place-name elements (Figure 8.1). In Devon, farmsteads with

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<sup>213</sup> This description appears in *Domesday Book and Beyond* on a map of the Somerset/Devon border reproduced between pages 32 and 33 of the 1961 Fontana edition. Hoskins (1952) also recognised that Devonshire villages were superimposed on a landscape of existing hamlets and farmsteads although he attributed the foundation of villages in Devon to the early Anglo-Saxon Period whereas modern scholarship would place these settlements in the later Anglo-Saxon or Norman period.

these elements sometimes represent constituent parts of single manors recorded in Domesday Book and later divided into several farms (Hoskins 1963, 22-23). Such 'linked farmsteads' are also found elsewhere in England and can indicate 'marginal, peripheral environments' (Roberts 1987, 140). The place-name elements 'green' and 'street' occur on the Isle of Wight (Figure 8.2) and form part of a national distribution restricted mainly to the outer provinces with the element 'green' occurring particularly within East Anglia, Thames and the Weald (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, 54-56). These various types of settlement require investigation, as do their relationships to areas of arable land, commons, downs, meadows and valley pastures. Island settlements will be placed within the context of parochial organisation and variations in settlement patterns within the Island will be observed. Possible explanations for the origins and evolution of Isle of Wight settlements will be discussed and compared with models of settlement evolution relating to different regions and provinces. Places named in this discussion can be located by reference to Figure 8.3 which shows 1790s settlements in relation to parishes.<sup>214</sup> In some instances four figure or six figure grid references are given, allowing settlements to be located on the Cassini edition of the 1810 Ordnance Survey map (Appendix A). Statements in this chapter relating to information in Domesday Book are derived from Appendices H and J.

### **Provincial Variations in Medieval Settlement Origins**

English Settlements have been studied for many years but study has focussed mainly on the *Central Province* (Figure 3.2). In the medieval period this was typically a landscape of nucleated villages, often planned, surrounded by extensive open fields. There has been much debate about the origins of villages and open fields. Taylor (1988, 9) sees these linked events as being a 'revolution' which occurred between the ninth and the twelfth century whilst Lewis *et al* (2001, 191) view the emergence of villages and open fields as starting in the mid ninth century but continuing into the

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<sup>214</sup> In Figure 8.3 settlements in Basford category a are labelled 'towns', those in categories b and c 'villages', those in categories d and e 'hamlets' and those in categories f and g 'dispersed settlements'.

thirteenth century. Village formation may have occurred in two stages in some areas with a 'Great Replanning' of the ninth and tenth centuries in which existing nucleated settlements were substantially reconfigured in association with the laying out of common fields (Brown & Foard 1998). Despite the focus on villages in medieval landscape studies, Taylor (1983, 125) has argued that they are an aberration, not just in their limited spatial distribution but in their relatively late appearance in the British countryside. However, until recently less attention has been paid to the origins of the medieval dispersed settlement patterns which dominated the *Northern & Western Province* and (to some extent) the *South Eastern Province*. This has been remedied in south-west England by recent studies (Herring 2006; Rippon *et al* 2006; Rippon 2008, Rippon 2010). In particular, Rippon (2007b, 106) has posed the question:

*If landscapes characterised by villages and open fields are an aberration, are the landscapes of dispersed settlement in areas such as the South West what the 'Central Province' would have looked like if villages had not been created?*

As a result of detailed work within a study area situated in northern Devon and Somerset he has convincingly demonstrated that the historic landscape of south west England does not represent a continuum from the late prehistoric and Romano-British periods. On the contrary, the small enclosed settlements and limited field systems of these periods were replaced around the seventh to eighth centuries with unenclosed small hamlets and isolated farmsteads set within a near continuous fieldscape with a farming system based on convertible husbandry. Rippon's model is not necessarily relevant to the Isle of Wight since convertible husbandry may be associated specifically with south-west England at this early date. However, it does challenge the 'implicit assumption' that areas of England outside the *Central Province* 'failed to develop the classic form of High-medieval landscape as they had low populations, were colonised late, or were simply peripheral to the centre of gravity of the late 1<sup>st</sup> millennium landscape-reorganisation' (Rippon *et al* 2006, 32). Rather, his model demonstrates that areas outside the *Central Province* could follow their own regionally distinctive trajectories

of change within different antecedent landscapes.<sup>215</sup> Rippon's work provides a context for exploring the Isle of Wight's complex and distinctive settlement pattern and for questioning whether it contains ancient elements 'wiped' from the *Central Province* or emerged out of the social and economic changes of the Middle Saxon period. The settlement patterns of south-east England in general certainly saw significant changes at this time. Rippon (2007b, 119-120) has pointed out that early Saxon settlements in south east England, including Chalton (Hampshire), Mucking (Essex), West Stow (Suffolk) and Bishopstone (Sussex) and other less well-known examples in Wiltshire, were abandoned around the seventh or early eighth centuries suggesting a retreat from the more peripheral locations that communities had settled in the fifth century. Lewis (1997a, Section 2) considers that the density of Roman settlement in Hampshire was greatest across the central Chalk zone where both downland and river valley sites were occupied. However, settlement on the higher downland appears to have ceased by the eighth century. Lewis further claims that 'despite intensive fieldwalking projects in two parts of the region, there is no observable evidence for the pattern noted in the midlands' where 'a widespread pattern of small dispersed hamlets in the early/middle Anglo-Saxon period was deserted and replaced by nucleated villages in the later Anglo-Saxon period'. Rather, she considers that 'in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight it was instead the seventh century which witnessed the more profound changes in the settlement pattern and administration'. She does not provide concrete examples of these changes on the Isle of Wight but may be thinking of the Middle Saxon estate centres/parochial *foci* which seem to have been established following the Island's conquest by Cædwalla in AD 686.

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<sup>215</sup> Elsewhere, Rippon (2008, 181) has suggested that in Essex and south-west Suffolk, a landscape of dispersed medieval settlement and predominantly enclosed fields, there was a degree of continuity from the Roman to the medieval periods in places. Interim results from the *Fields of Britannia Project* (Rippon *et al* 2012) suggest variable levels of continuity between Romano-British and early medieval settlement patterns in different *pays*.

## Continuity in the Isle of Wight Landscape

Rippon *et al* (2006) have used evidence from surviving earthworks and palynological investigations to demonstrate lack of continuity between the late prehistoric/Romano-British/post-Roman landscape and the seventh-eighth century landscape in south-west England. In Northamptonshire, information from air photography, systematic fieldwalking and targeted excavations has been used to demonstrate changes in Anglo-Saxon settlement and land use (Brown & Foard 1998). Unfortunately, information from these sources is either not available on the Isle of Wight or does not throw clear light on settlement and land use patterns in the Roman, Post-Roman or Anglo-Saxon periods, nor has the Island benefitted from the technique of test-pitting which has helped to explain the origins of medieval settlement in the Whittlewood area (Jones and Page 2003) and in eastern England (Lewis 2011, 48). In any case, Hinton (2012, 121) has pointed out that fieldwalking is not very rewarding in Wessex since much of the Anglo-Saxon pottery from this region is too friable to survive and that the lack of good-quality pottery may make 'test-pit' excavations less fruitful than elsewhere (Hinton 2011, 122-123). Much relevant archaeological evidence is available for the Island but there are large gaps. Good evidence exists for high-status Romano-British settlement in the form of known Roman villas and finds of building material, in several cases suggesting continuity from the late Iron Age, but relatively few sites have provided structural evidence of lower-status Romano-British or Iron Age settlement (Lyne 2006; Waller 2006a). Find scatters indicative of occupation have been recorded but still provide only limited evidence for wider patterns of native settlement. Earthwork remains of field systems survive on the Chalk downs but only a few have been dated to the Iron Age or Roman periods on stylistic grounds, including one possibly associated with Brading Roman villa (Rivet 1969, 43-44; Waller 2006a, 3). Air photography programmes have been undertaken but in most parts of the Island have not revealed clear dateable evidence for Iron Age or Romano-British settlements or field systems.<sup>216</sup> In the Anglo-Saxon period

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<sup>216</sup> Most linear and areal features plotted in the Isle of Wight HER are classified as being of 'unknown date'. We must be aware that air photography reveals more on certain soils than on others. The Island also contains 'zones of preservation' and 'zones of destruction' as on

there is good archaeological evidence for Pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries (Arnold 1982; Salter 2010) but little evidence for settlement. To date there have been no targeted programmes of fieldwalking or excavation aimed at addressing this deficit.

Given the very limited evidence from excavation or fieldwork for Anglo-Saxon settlement on the Isle of Wight, Margham (2012b) has taken a broader approach, identifying 'landscapes of continuity' and 'landscapes of colonisation' mainly by the use of place-name evidence and study of the Island's physiology and soils (Figure 3.17). However, certain specific areas displaying continuity from the Iron Age to the Anglo-Saxon period can be identified using the archaeological record although as elsewhere in England (Taylor 1983, 121) this does not mean that precisely the same sites were always occupied. Foremost among these areas is the Bowcombe Valley which appears to have been a 'Central Place' for the Isle of Wight from the Iron Age. Finds made near Bowcombe Farm (SZ 470 867) indicate Late Iron Age occupation and structural remains indicate the presence of a nearby Roman villa (Basford 1980, 123). Further Roman villas have been recorded lower down the valley at Clatterford (Busby *et al* 2001) and Carisbrooke (Lyne 2006, 5-6). Margham (1992b, 5) has argued that the site of the medieval Carisbrooke Castle could have been an Iron Age hillfort, citing the evidence of a deep ditch cutting off the promontory on which the castle sits from Mount Joy to the east, but no evidence of Iron Age occupation has been found in excavations. The 'lower enclosure' at Carisbrooke Castle was interpreted for many years as a Roman fortification but has now been reinterpreted as a late Saxon *burh* (Young and Mephram 2000). A late twentieth-century excavation revealed the remains of two large timber buildings within the lower enclosure, dating from the eleventh century AD and providing the earliest structural evidence for occupation (Young 2000; 54-55, figure 67). Nevertheless, Tomalin (2002) still advocates a late Roman origin for the 'lower enclosure' on the evidence of the building materials although no dated Roman features and only a few sherds of Roman pottery were found

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the mainland (Williamson 1998) and these will inevitably have skewed the archaeological record.

during the most recent excavations. However, these excavations did locate three graves from a Pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery of early sixth century date inside the lower enclosure. Just over two kilometres to the east a much larger Anglo-Saxon cemetery dating from the late fifth and sixth centuries was recorded on Bowcombe Down in the nineteenth century (Arnold 1982, 89-96). The Old English place-name 'Bowcombe' can be interpreted as 'the place above the valley' i.e. the Anglo-Saxon cemetery and later assembly place (Margham 2012a; 8, 12). This suggests that the focus of settlement must have been in the valley itself although the earliest-dated Anglo-Saxon activity in the valley relates to the productive (and possible market) site where coins occur from a little before c. 710-715 onwards. (Ulmschneider 2003). The only archaeological evidence of actual Anglo-Saxon buildings in the Bowcombe area comes from the eleventh century structures at Carisbrooke Castle.

Another very significant part of the Island was the area around Brading Haven. The prosperous multi-phased Brading Roman villa to the south-west of the haven (SZ 599 863) appears to have been built on the site of previous Late Iron Age occupation (Basford 1980, 31, 123). Moreover, a hill near Yaverland overlooking the haven (SZ 612 864) and just over one kilometre to the east of Brading Villa was apparently defended by a triple ditched defensive system. This earthwork, dated by late Iron Age pottery found in the upper fills of the ditches (Lyne 2006, 3), could have been built to control trade coming into the haven (Waller 2006a, 3). 'Time Team' excavations in 2001 (unpublished) recorded post settings for possible Iron Age round houses and large quantities of local Late Iron Age pottery and domestic waste were recovered (Waller 2006a; 3, 6). The excavators also recorded a Roman building dating from the late third to fourth century (apparently industrial in nature) and different phases of Saxon occupation including postholes indicating the sites of longhouses (Lyne 2006, 13, Waller 2006b 4). This continuity of use may possibly indicate a continuing role for the Yaverland hilltop site in trade or the control of trade using the nearby Brading Haven. The third area of the Island where there is evidence for longstanding occupation and rich finds is quite different in character from the Bowcombe

Valley and the Brading Haven area. This region is situated to the south of Thorley and Wellow in the north-west of the Island, much of it lying above a deposit of Bembridge Limestone (Isle of Wight Council 2008d). No Roman villas have yet been positively identified in this region although finds recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme suggest the presence of a possible Roman building on its southern edge about 700 metres west of Shalcombe Manor.<sup>217</sup> However, an abundance of cropmarks have been recorded, indicating tree clearance by the second millennium B.C and providing evidence for at least thirteen Bronze Age ring-ditches. One of these has been partially excavated, proving to be a ploughed-out round barrow (Margham 1990, 116). Romano-British material was found in plough soil during the excavation. Air photographs have also revealed many linear features and sub-rectangular crop marks indicating enclosures (O'Rourke 2006; 4.15, 4.16). High levels of Roman coin loss, including one substantial coin hoard, have been recorded within this area (in Shalfleet Parish) by metal detectorists (Walton 2012, 139). Other finds include Roman pottery, Anglo-Saxon metalwork and a pagan Anglo-Saxon grave with associated goods (O'Rourke 2006, 4.17). An early Christian skilnet thought to be a baptismal vessel of the seventh or eighth century AD has also been discovered (Basford 2007, 204). In fact the quantity and richness of pagan Anglo-Saxon material from this area is comparable to that from the nationally important Chessell Down Cemetery some two and a half kilometres to the south-east, recorded by Arnold (1982, 13-72). Until the advent of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, pagan cemeteries and associated finds were known only from the Chalk downland but lower-level sites are now known, not only in Shalfleet Parish but also elsewhere although these are mainly sited away from existing settlements (Salter 2010). There are no pagan cemeteries recorded from the seventh century despite the fact that the Isle of Wight was allegedly converted to Christianity only in AD 686 (Sherley-Price 1955, 227-228). Very few specific occupation sites of Anglo-Saxon date have been recorded or excavated on the Island other than at Yaverland and at Carisbrooke Castle. The evidence provided by tenurial and ecclesiastical organisation, place-

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<sup>217</sup> Finds recorded by the PAS at Chessell Plantation, 750 metres east of Shalcombe Manor, definitely indicate the presence of a Roman building.

names, Domesday Book and settlement morphology is therefore very important in any attempt to trace the evolution of the Island's settlement pattern from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards. This chapter will combine evidence from these sources to construct a relative chronology for the Island's various layers of settlement and to analyse the settlement forms associated with them

### **Chronology and Classification**

Roberts (1987; 10-11, 214-215) distinguishes between various 'chronologies' of settlement. Archaeological techniques rarely allow the establishment of absolute chronologies given that most historic settlements are still occupied and large-scale excavation is not an option. Place-names can help to establish relative chronologies despite difficulties in interpretation although important places generally enter the documentary record earlier than less important places so the study of place-names must be linked to an understanding of the hierarchy of settlement. Rents and services also provide evidence about the relative antiquity of different places. Finally, a typology of forms can be attempted although visible forms are almost invariably later than the origins of a given settlement. The classification of settlement forms, as exemplified by the work of Roberts (1977; 1987) and depicted in Figure 3.11, is an important tool for understanding the origins and development of villages and hamlets. Such morphological studies are fraught with difficulties and have been subject to considerable critique (Austin 1985; Taylor 1983, 138-141; Page and Jones 2007; Jones 2010) but morphology and typology, despite their limitations, are techniques constantly used both by archaeologists and by historical geographers (Roberts 1987, 221). However, it is important to recognise that 'village shapes appearing on contemporary or earlier maps represent the end-product of centuries of development, involving both addition and subtraction' Roberts (1987, 22). Notwithstanding the attendant problems, Aston and Lewis (1994, 1-11) have stressed the need for widespread plan analysis in the Wessex area as a tool for examining the development of settlements but the dynamic nature of settlement must be recognised. Taylor (1994) for instance has demonstrated

the mutability of Dorset village plans and Lewis (1994, 176) has identified change in some Wiltshire settlement plans over time. One issue which affects attempts to reconstruct medieval settlement patterns is the problem of settlement desertion and it has been argued in Chapter 7 that on the Isle of Wight, as in Devon, some of the single farmsteads shown on early Ordnance Survey maps may have been hamlets in the Middle Ages. It is with these various *caveats* in mind that we turn to a detailed discussion of Isle of Wight settlements.

There has been some previous work on settlement origins and morphology in the Isle of Wight. Cahill (1980) studied early medieval territorial organisation and settlement. Influenced by the work of W G Hoskins on the origins of Devon villages, Cahill suggested that the plan-forms of the oldest Isle of Wight parish *foci* might be attributable to the West Saxons who conquered the Island in the late seventh century. Modern scholarship would generally reject the idea that existing plan forms could have such an early origin<sup>218</sup> but the estate centres which became the earliest parish *foci* on the Island may have been established by the West Saxons. Furthermore, Cahill's comparison of early parish *foci* on the Island with places having *-bury* place-names in Devon has a certain resonance with recent work on Middle Saxon settlement in Wiltshire and elsewhere (Draper 2006; Rippon 2008, 262). Caution is needed, however, since Blair (2005, 266-290) has recently expressed the view that royal estate centres were not stable in the seventh and eighth centuries. Margham's short studies of Isle of Wight settlement morphology (1982; 1983) used Roberts' classification (Figure 3.11) but were confined to parish *foci* or settlements possessing ten or more buildings. More recently, local settlement morphology has been discussed in the Isle of Wight Historic Environment Action Plan (Isle of Wight Council 2008e). An RCHME medieval settlement survey of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight was carried out in the 1990s resulting in a database (Lewis 1996) and a survey report (Lewis 1997a). The RCHME database classified all medieval settlements by

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<sup>218</sup> Although Fox (2006, xiv) has recently suggested that Hoskins' idea of Devon villages being instruments of royal plantation needs to be followed up.

form as assessed from the 1810 one inch Ordnance Survey map. However, as explained in Chapter 6, it was decided to prepare a new Isle of Wight settlement database for this thesis (the 'Basford database') using data from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings because their detailed, accurate mapping at a comparatively large scale provides a useful comparison with Roberts and Wrathmell's *Atlas of Rural Settlement in England* (2000). The Basford database (Appendix F) includes cottages (many of which may be of post-medieval origin), eighteenth century private houses, inns and mills. It is therefore not directly comparable with Lewis's medieval settlement database which excludes places of post-medieval origin but includes shrunken, shifted and deserted settlements, probable and possible settlements and sites known only from pottery evidence or documented place-names. 513 settlements are listed by Lewis in her medieval settlement database compared with 628 in the Basford database<sup>219</sup> but Lewis includes eighty sites that are not listed by Basford, probably because they were not extant in the 1790s. In Chapter 7 it was suggested that the Isle of Wight might have had over three hundred settlements by 1086 based on the number of ploughlands (even though there are only 126 manors listed in Domesday Book) and this number can be compared with the 360 Old-English place-names recorded on the Island (Appendix G and Figure 7.1) although a considerable number of these place-names were undoubtedly formed after 1086. If we compare the potential number of Domesday settlements with the 513 medieval settlements recorded by Lewis we can estimate very roughly that three-fifths of the settlements on her database may have existed at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period whilst another two-fifths were established during the medieval period. Mathematical precision is not to be aimed at in medieval studies where surviving evidence is so incomplete and reality so complex (Roberts 1987, 216) but this very crude estimate is one of the ways in which we may attempt to construct a relative chronology of Isle of Wight settlements.

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<sup>219</sup> The Basford database contains about one hundred entries relating to cottages and private houses. If these are excluded we are left with 528 entries dealing with nucleated settlements, hamlets, individual farmsteads, inns and mills. (The latter two categories may be of medieval origin).

In Appendix F the Basford database arranged the settlements identified from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings by size (categories a-g) but Appendix L sorts them by form including all settlements in Basford categories a- e and those in Category f which possess a definite form. Table 8.1 provides a summary list of the forms recorded in Appendix L and the number of settlements in each category.<sup>220</sup> By examining the various categories in Table 8.1 it can be seen that regular forms comprise only 23 out of the 146 settlement elements (including regular rows, regular grids and regular radial forms). Irregular forms account for 123 settlement elements including 87 irregular rows, interrupted rows and irregular radial forms; 28 green-edge, common-edge or forest-edge settlements; and 8 church/manor house complexes. The classification in Appendix L is broadly compatible with that used by Edwards (1995) and Hewitt (1998) in their surveys of historic rural settlement in various Hampshire Local Authority Districts although these authors used the term 'agglomeration' rather than 'irregular radial plan or cluster' and had separate categories for 'manor house only' and for 'linked farmstead cluster'. Both the classification adopted for this study and that used by Edwards and Hewitt derive from the system developed by Roberts (1987, figure 2.3) and shown in Figure 3.11. However, although Appendix L provides a guide to the main settlement forms present on the Isle of Wight it is inadequate as a typology of settlements, not least because the classification of sites is problematical, subjective and liable to revision by the classifier! For instance the category of green-edge, common-edge and forest-edge settlement defined in Appendix L omits a considerable number of settlements that should probably be classified as such. This is partly because some settlements with peripheral greens were placed in other categories.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> The total number of 'settlement elements' shown in Table 8.1 is 146, ten more than the total number of settlements in categories a-f (83 in categories a-e and 53 in Category 'f') because settlements within the 'composite' category have more than one settlement element and each of these elements has been counted separately within the relevant 'form' category. Appendix L also records composite settlements as a category in their own right (numbers shown in brackets Table 8.1) but these settlements have not been included in the overall total of settlement forms.

<sup>221</sup> For instance, Chilton Green (Brighstone) was classified as an 'Irregular Multiple Row' and Marsh Green (Brighstone) as an 'Irregular Radial' settlement. In Freshwater Parish, the hamlets at Norton, More Green, Crossacres, Middleton Green, Pound Green, Sheepwash,

In addition, the database only recorded greens that were extant at the time of the 1790s Ordnance Survey but the 1790s drawings show many small pasture enclosures beside farmsteads and hamlets which may formerly have been greens. Furthermore, the classification in Appendix L takes no account of settlement origins, hierarchies and relationships or of relative dating. In the discussion and analysis below, no attempt has been made to provide a revised categorisation of all settlements by form. The existing classification will inform the discussion but alternative interpretations will be suggested in some cases.

Discussion of Isle of Wight settlement origins will start by examining probable Anglo-Saxon parish *foci* and early estate centres, drawing on the study of ecclesiastical and tenorial units in Chapter 5. It will then examine the Island's other parish *foci* before discussing settlements away from these *foci*. Several phases of parish formation can be identified on the Island, based on various criteria listed in Table 8.2 and on recent work by Margham (2012a, 13-15). Phases relate to the likely order of parish formation and not necessarily to that of settlement formation since the settlement *foci* of the less ancient parishes may have existed as satellite settlements within large Middle Saxon estates long before becoming parish *foci*. Moreover, the chronology of the forms exhibited by these *foci* may be unrelated to the order in which the *foci* developed since settlements will have evolved or been re-planned through time. Table 8.2 is only a 'model' of parish evolution and various problems associated with the model will emerge in discussion.<sup>222</sup> Data from Table 8.2 is summarised below.

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Stroud and Easton were all classified as 'Irregular Single Rows' despite the evidence for greens.

<sup>222</sup> The model simplifies the complexity of parish formation. It takes no account of the tenorial links which resulted in several parishes having detached portions.

Phase	Parish and Estate <i>Foci</i>
1	Freshwater, Calbourne, Carisbrooke, Arreton, Brading?
2	Shalfleet (?), Whippingham (?), Godshill, Newchurch, Wroxall
3a	Brighstone, Shorwell, Chale, Niton, Bonchurch?
3b	Yarmouth, Thorley, Brook. Mottistone, Kingston, Northwood, Gatcombe, Whitwell, St Lawrence, Wootton, Binstead, St Helens ?, Shanklin, Yaverland

Wroxall, included in Table 8.2 and the summary table, was not a parish focus but was an important early estate centre. Table 8.3 lists the size and form of parish *foci* in the 1790s, using information from Appendix L.

### Origins and Evolution of Early Parish and Estate *Foci*

Papers by Margham have laid the foundations for studies of Anglo-Saxon parochial organisation, settlement and land use on the Isle of Wight and are drawn on extensively in the sections below. Five settlements identified as Anglo-Saxon estate centres and the probable *foci* of mother parishes (Margham 2012a, 14) have been described in Chapter 5. Figure 8.4 shows Phase 1 and Phase 2 *foci* in relation to postulated mother parish boundaries running across the Island from the Solent to the English Channel.<sup>223</sup> Topographical elements predominate in the place-names of Phase 1 parish *foci*, and are indicative of early Anglo-Saxon settlement.<sup>224</sup> All five Phase 1 *foci* are situated in fairly close proximity to the central Chalk ridge and at the time of Domesday Book the parishes in which they lay all contained more than one manor. However, these *foci* display no consistency of size or form. The settlement around Freshwater Church lies about one kilometre north of the Chalk ridge, a somewhat greater distance from the ridge than other

<sup>223</sup> Estate centres/parish *foci* have been plotted at the sites of medieval parish churches except for Wroxall, which has been plotted at Wroxall Manor Farm.

<sup>224</sup> All but one of the names contains one or more topographical place-name elements, the exception being Arreton which comprises an Old English personal name *Ēadhere* with connective *-ing* and *tūn* elements (Mills 1996, 23).

Phase 1 *foci*. This site occupied an advantageous position close to the head of the Western Yar estuary on a dry gravel terrace (Figure 2.4). No Roman settlement sites have been recorded in Freshwater although a Roman cist burial and coin hoard have been found in the parish (Basford 1980, 124-125) as well as other scatters of coins and pottery. The church and its associated settlement lie some 900 metres to the south of Freshwater Farm (or Kings Manor), the manorial centre of the main Domesday estate. This manor had a recorded population of thirty-five (including slaves) at Domesday, a high number by Island standards, but possibly distributed throughout the estate. Freshwater church is one of only two Island churches containing Saxon work, in this case dating from the later eleventh century (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 138). A medieval document confirms the existence of a church in 1071 (Margham 1992a 3). By the 1790s the eponymous parish focus at Freshwater was a very small nucleation of composite form in Basford Category e. It comprised a fairly regular double row with the church at its eastern end, giving access to an enclosed space at right angles to the row and containing one house (Figure 8.5).<sup>225</sup> Cahill (1980) compares this plan and that of other Isle of Wight parish *foci* with Devon 'bury' settlements which have a central quadrangular area with the church standing to one side, often in its own fortified enclosure (Hoskins 1952, 290-293). However, if the purpose of the enclosure at Freshwater was defensive one would expect to find the chief magnate farmstead within it whereas Freshwater Farm is some distance away although it could have moved to the present site at a later date (Figure 8.6). It is worth noting that although open fields existed within 'Freshwater Isle'<sup>226</sup> the Parish Focus is not associated with nearby open fields as might be expected of an early settlement. The 1608 Survey of Royal lands (Webster nd) indicates that the fields to the north of the church were within the demesne of Freshwater Farm. Morphological evidence suggests that they were never farmed as open-field strips and some could be ancient

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<sup>225</sup> In the 1790s this enclosure could be entered at its north end from the row beside the church and at its south end by the road from Freshwater causeway. Today the public highway runs to the left of the enclosure which no longer forms part of the settlement plan.

<sup>226</sup> The part of Freshwater Parish to the west of the River Yar, so-called on Speed's 1611 map of 'Wight Island' (Figure 1.1)

enclosures although others may have been enclosed from 'Gaulden Common'. The Parish Focus beside the church may have been unable to lay out open fields because it was squeezed between the demesne land of the manor to the north and marshland to the south.

Calbourne lies on the northern edge of the central Chalk downland close to the point where the downland broadens out from a narrow ridge into a wider dissected plateau. The Caul Bourne stream rises a short distance to the south of the settlement. Rock Roman villa lies some 2.5 km to the south on the other side of the Chalk ridge but is closer to Brighstone than to Calbourne. The Anglo-Saxon estate of Calbourne may have been documented as early as AD 826 when it was allegedly granted to the bishopric of Winchester.<sup>227</sup> Its territory then included the whole of the medieval parishes of Calbourne and Brighstone (Margham 2005, 91-96) but Brighstone appears to have been a separate estate by 1086 (Appendix H). Two manors are recorded in Domesday Book, both named Calbourne. The larger of the two, later known as Swainston, was the most populous of all Island manors in 1086 (Appendix J). However, Swainston manor house (SZ 442 878) is very close to the eastern boundary of Calbourne Parish (see Figure 8.4). This situation appears to be anomalous and may represent a re-location by medieval bishops who had a warren at Swainston (Basford 1989, 16).<sup>228</sup> The place-name 'Swainston', with its *tūn* ending, suggests an outlying place, perhaps an economically specialised farm (Fleming 1998, 47).<sup>229</sup> Calbourne village, some 1.5 kilometres west of Swainston, lies in the middle of the parish, so the estate centres of both Domesday manors may have

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<sup>227</sup> The charter in which it is first recorded may be a tenth-century fabrication (Margham 2005, 91).

<sup>228</sup> Parts of the manor house at Swainston date from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when the manor was still owned by the diocese of Winchester (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 278-280).

<sup>229</sup> Both Kökeritz (1940, 85-86) and Mills (1996, 100) interpret this place-name as meaning 'the farmstead or estate belonging to a man called Sveinn' from Old English *tūn* and an Old Scandinavian personal name. Significantly, Mills points out that this personal name was in use among the Normans as well as the Vikings, raising the possibility that the estate centre was moved in the Norman period.

been here and it may also have been the focus of the much larger Middle Saxon estate and mother parish. By the 1790s, Calbourne was a medium-sized village (by Island standards) of twenty-five dwellings within Basford Category c. Three elements may be discerned in the composite settlement plan shown on the 1790s drawing (Figure 8.7). The central element, including the church, appears to be a semi-regular double row with a much-attenuated green. About 100 metres to the north there are a few dwellings around the crossroads where local roads join the Newport to Freshwater road, possibly representing a fairly late element. A more significant plan-element is the lane running alongside the Caul Bourne stream to the west of the main plan-element around the church and at approximately ninety degrees to it. This now contains a row of estate cottages (many later than the 1790s) known as Barrington Row or 'Winkle Street'. It is possible that the two plan-elements around the church and the Caul Bourne originated as separate settlements within either or both of the Domesday manors, one settlement perhaps being inhabited by at least some of the forty-two recorded tenants of the Bishop of Winchester and the other by some of the twenty-six recorded tenants of lesser lords who held part of the manor from the Bishop. Alternatively, the part of the village beside the Caul Bourne may have been associated with the second Domesday manor of Calbourne, later known as Westover, although this had only four recorded tenants. The estate centre of Westover may have been at Westover House on the southern edge of the 1790s settlement (although by the late eighteenth century this was a hunting box with a small park rather than a farmstead)<sup>230</sup> or at one of the other farmsteads labelled on Figure 8.7.

The village of Carisbrooke is located in the Bowcombe Valley, close to the centre of the Island and surrounded by Chalk downland. Lukely Brook rises to the west of Bowcombe Farm and flows through the Bowcombe Valley and Carisbrooke village. The significance of the Bowcombe Valley as the Island's 'Central Place' has been discussed earlier, as has been the evidence for late Iron Age, Roman and Middle Saxon settlement in the valley and for the

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<sup>230</sup> Basford (1989, 45).

pagan Saxon cemetery on Bowcombe Down. Carisbrooke has been identified as a Middle Saxon *parochia* by Hase (1988, 45-66; 1994, 47-81) but Domesday Book refers to Bowcombe rather than to Carisbrooke. The earliest estate centre may have been at Bowcombe Farm, some two kilometres from Carisbrooke village and close to the site of a Roman villa, although it may be significant that another Roman villa lies within Carisbrooke village less than 200 kilometres from the parish church (Margham 2012a 15). After 1066 Bowcombe Manor was held by William Fitz Osbern, the first Norman Lord of the Island, and then briefly by his son but was owned by the King in 1086 (Page 1912, 228). Margham (1992b) has proposed that the church recorded in Domesday Book within Bowcombe Manor was actually on the site of the present church in Carisbrooke village although this site, like Carisbrooke Castle, lay not in Bowcombe Manor but in Alvington Manor (Page 1912, 232). However, both Bowcombe Manor and Alvington Manor were held by William Fitz Osbern and his son before being forfeited to the Crown in 1078 (Page 1912, 222). This makes Margham's argument more plausible and it is strengthened by the fact that no trace of an earlier church has been located close to Bowcombe Manor. Bowcombe had the second largest population of all the Island manors listed in Domesday Book and a 'toll' was recorded within the manor, probably indicative of a market. The entry for Bowcombe included the following items: the king's demesne land and ten slaves, the land of twenty-five 'villagers' and fifteen smallholders, the holding of a subsidiary landowner with one 'villager' and the land granted to the monks of Lyre Abbey by William Fitz Osbern by 1071. This holding of Lyre Abbey consisted of the church at Bowcombe with twenty smallholders' dwellings and the land of two subsidiary landowners with eight 'men' and four houses. Margham (1992b, 23-24) has suggested that the present nucleated settlement of regular double-row form at Carisbrooke was laid out by William Fitz Osbern or his son between 1067 and 1076 as a planned settlement and functioned as a small town before the establishment of nearby Newport as a planned borough in the late twelfth century. This implies that Carisbrooke was a settlement nucleus not only for the twenty dwellings on land gifted to the church but also for Fitz Osbern's own tenants since his own land would be the source of any revenue generated by the

creation of a town or market centre. A map of Carisbrooke in 1846 (Figure 8.8) shows regular property divisions with straight boundaries to the east of the church and curving property boundaries to the south of the High Street, perhaps indicating the setting out of messuages over open-field strips (Margham 1992b, figure 2). The map also shows the precinct belonging to the Priory of Lyre Abbey from 1147 (Hockey 1982, 36), delineated by Priory Farm Lane and a field boundary to the north of the church and by Carisbrooke High Street to the south (Margham 1992, 12; Edwards 1999e, 5). In the 1790s Carisbrooke was a large settlement by Island standards, having over forty dwellings and being placed in Basford Category b.

Whereas Freshwater, Calbourne and Carisbrooke lay in the western half of the Island within the ancient hundred of 'West Medine', the postulated Anglo-Saxon estate centres and *parochiae* or Arreton and Brading lay in the eastern half of the Island within the hundred of 'East Medine'. Arreton is situated immediately to the south of Arreton Down (SZ 533 866) and is about one kilometre from the site of Combley Roman villa on the north side of the down (Fennelly 1969 and 1971). The settlement contains a *tūn* element in its name, often indicative of later or more marginal settlements but is mentioned in the will of King Alfred, to whom the manor belonged, c.880. Arreton is a composite settlement comprising a church/manor house complex (Figure 8.9) with an associated 'Street' settlement to the south-east. A small stream rises to the east of the church and flows in a south-easterly direction to join the Eastern Yar at Heasley. The church is the only one on the Island other than Freshwater Church to contain clearly-dated late Anglo-Saxon masonry (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 73). Arreton Manor had a population of twenty-two tenants and seven slaves at Domesday which was quite high in relation to other Island manors. Hockey (1991, Map 3) records the medieval open fields of 'West Field' and 'East Field' to the north of the manor house and 'South Field' opposite Arreton Street. There were twenty-eight houses within the composite settlement in the 1790s, placing it in Basford Category c. The 1790s drawing shows the church/manor house complex as a seemingly unplanned cluster whilst the houses in the 'street' element are non-

continuous .The 'street' element at Arreton may be later than the church/manor house complex.

Iron Age, Roman and early Anglo-Saxon settlement in the Brading area has been discussed above. Brading Church is traditionally alleged to have been founded by St Wilfrid in the late seventh or early eighth century. The name of the settlement occurs in a document of c.1300 which purports to be a copy of a charter in which King Ine (688x726) granted thirty hides at Yaverland and fifty hides at Brading to the church at Winchester. Margham (2000) considers that there was a Brading *parochia* in the Anglo-Saxon period based on a discrete estate that may have existed as early as c. 700. In support of this suggestion he draws attention to the boundary between the medieval parishes of Brading and Newchurch, part of which is remarkably straight and part of which constitutes a deep sunken way. Margham (2000, 119) views the sunken way as being arguably a very ancient feature and points out that long, straight boundaries of prehistoric origin are documented for other areas of lowland Britain. However, the location and status of the Domesday manor at Brading is debatable. Webster (nd) equates the Domesday estate with Morton Manor (SZ 603 864) which lies very close to the site of Brading Roman villa but is about one kilometre south of Brading church. Only four tenants were recorded at Brading in 1086. There is no documentary evidence of a church at Brading before the mid twelfth century and the earliest structural fabric in the building is of late twelfth century date (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 91). However, Margham (2000, 120-121) has drawn attention to a reused volute capital in the church dateable to the late eleventh or early twelfth century. This would tie in with the claim by Webster (1994) that Brading was founded as the Island's first town by William Fitz Stur who held Whitefield Manor in 1086.<sup>231</sup> Webster's date for the foundation of Brading town is much earlier than that given by Page (1912, 158) who also noted that the town was built on the manor of Whitefield but suggested that it was established by Edward I after he acquired the manor of Whitefield in 1285,

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<sup>231</sup> The evidence for this is certain building plots within Brading town which were retained by William Fitz Stur for his own use and remained with Whitefield Manor, plots which can be seen on the eighteenth-century Oglander estate maps.

when he granted Brading a weekly market and a four day fair. Morphological evidence suggests that a substantial area of open-field may have been sited to the west of Morton Manor, the presumed Domesday manorial centre (Figure 5.20), whilst smaller areas of possible open field were sited to the west of Brading town and could have been laid out after its foundation. Brading may have taken some time to become established since it was only in the Lay Subsidy records of 1377/8 that it became the most heavily taxed tithing in the East Medine (see Appendix K).<sup>232</sup> In the 1790s, Brading comprised a regular double row of more than fifty houses in Basford Category a (Figure 8.10), making it clearly recognisable as a small town. At that date it was noticeably larger than Carisbrooke and the disposition of buildings relative to the street frontage was more regular. However, there are similarities between the regular double-row plan forms of Brading and Carisbrooke whereas the other three Phase 1 settlements were dissimilar in size and form in the 1790s, with limited evidence of planning at Freshwater and Calbourne and none at Arreton.

Parish and estate *foci* assigned to Phase 2 generally seem to have originated at a time when the large Middle Saxon estates were fragmenting but the relationships of Shalfleet, Whippingham and Newchurch to Phase 1 parishes are questionable. All Phase 2 parishes and estates had quite large territories which contained more than one manor at the time of Domesday and all except Wroxall possessed a church by 1086. Shalfleet (SZ 4189) is strategically placed at the head of a tidal inlet from the Newtown Estuary and has a topographical place-name meaning 'shallow fleet'. This name is first recorded in a charter purporting to date from AD 838 but probably a fabrication (Margham 2005, 105). Domesday Book records both Shalfleet Manor and its church. The early Norman west tower of the church is described as 'like a small keep' (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 259-261) and clearly defence was a consideration when it was built. Indeed, the situation and impressive tower of Shalfleet Church suggests that it was a place of

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<sup>232</sup> St Helens actually had a higher population than Brading in 1377/8 but paid less tax.

some significance in 1086 when it had a recorded population of twenty-nine, above average for an Island manor. It is tempting to speculate that it might formerly have been of greater importance. The anomalous position of the settlement on the eastern edge of the parish suggests that the Middle Saxon Calbourne estate may possibly have included Shalfleet as suggested by Cahill (1980, 22-23) and it could even be hypothesised that Shalfleet rather than Calbourne was the original estate centre. This hypothesis is strengthened by the recent discovery of a Christian burial ground adjoining the parish church (Trott 2007) allegedly dating from c.700 which is a surprisingly early date. In the 1790s, Shalfleet had 25 dwellings (including several dwellings that are some distance from the nucleus around the church), placing it in Basford Category c with a form that could be interpreted as an irregular row or radial plan.

Whippingham contains the early habitative place-name elements *-ing* and *-hām*. An estate at Whippingham was recorded in a lost charter between 740 and 756 (Finberg 1964, no. 4) and a Whippingham *parochia* may have been taken out of Arreton in the Middle Anglo-Saxon period. However, it is also possible that a Whippingham estate and *parochia* may once have extended right across the Island from the Solent to the south coast, including the western halves of the medieval Arreton and Godshill parishes, Whitwell Parish and Niton Parish (Tomalin *in press*; 22-23, 43). The evidence for this possible configuration of the Whippingham estate is the 'Motkin' boundary which runs from King's Quay to the crest of the Undercliff (Figure 8.4) and may have demarcated separate territories in the Anglo-Saxon period although it possibly originated in the Iron Age (Hayes 2012, 25). The medieval parish of Whippingham lay entirely to the north of the central Chalk ridge and had a dispersed settlement pattern in the 1790s, as did the north of the Island generally, although Northwood Parish on the other side of the River Medina had a denser scatter of farmsteads than Whippingham. Early settlement at Whippingham seems to have been concentrated on a gravel outcrop in the north of the parish where Old English place-names occur at Barton, Alverstone, Osborne and Padmore although none are mentioned in Domesday Book. A church existed at Whippingham by 1071 (Margham

1992b, 3), occupying a strategic site overlooking the Medina Estuary. Domesday Book lists three manors at Whippingham. Two of these had small recorded populations of five and three respectively. The main manor, owned by the King, was listed with the separate manor of Stenbury (situated some distance away near Godshill) and it is not known how the recorded population of twenty-one was divided between the two estates. In the 1790s, settlement around Whippingham Church (SZ5193) comprised only the rectory and an unnamed farmhouse or cottage<sup>233</sup> with no indication of an adjacent manor house. In fact Whippingham was one of only three parish churches without some degree of nearby settlement nucleation in the 1790s (the others being Kingston and Wootton, both of which had associated manor houses). However, the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and 1810 map do record small interrupted-row settlements to the west of Osborne at SZ 5194 (possibly called 'Little Shamblers') and at 'Whippingham Street' about one kilometre east of the church<sup>234</sup> (SZ 5293) and these may have been the main settlement *foci* for Whippingham Parish in the Middle Ages and perhaps even before 1086. Both settlements ceased to have a distinctive identity following 'improvements' made to the Osborne estate by the Royal family from the 1850s.

Godshill's origin as part of an early Arreton *parochia* is suggested by the Island's nineteenth-century parish boundaries (Figure 5.2) and by the position of the parish focus close to the boundary with Arreton. An alternative possibility proposed above is that the western part of the parish may have lain within an early Whippingham *parochia* but the medieval parish boundaries between Arreton, Godshill and Newchurch in the Bathingbourne area are prefigured in the bounds of a number of Anglo-Saxon land charters dating from the tenth century (Margham 2007), as shown in Figure 7.3. The church at Godshill (SZ 5281) is sited on a locally prominent hill surrounded by flatter land. Legend suggests that the building of the church was

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<sup>233</sup> This property was named as 'Truckles' on the Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition six inch map (1862-3). The name is first recorded in 1424 (Kökeritz 1940, 248).

<sup>234</sup> Whippingham Street (named on the 1810 Ordnance Survey map) was called Alverstone on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing .

commenced elsewhere but that the present site was selected after the stones had been removed to it on three occasions (IWFWI 1974, 29). This legend may be an attempt to explain the dramatic site of the church<sup>235</sup> but could conceivably record an early settlement shift within the parish. Godshill had a church by 1071 (Margham 1992b, 3) but no manor of Godshill is recorded in Domesday Book, perhaps because it was an untaxable possession of the Abbey of Lyre (Tomalin *in press*, 44).<sup>236</sup> In the 1790s Godshill was a substantial settlement in Basford Category b comprising an irregular radial element around the church and a regular double row of possibly later date. Newchurch Parish lies to the east of Godshill. Figure 5.2 reveals Newchurch to be a striking survival of a parish unit stretching from the north to the south coast as the Island's five original mother parishes are thought to have done. It is possible that Newchurch may have been a 'first generation' *parochia* but its name suggests otherwise. In Chapter 5 it was suggested that Whippingham, Godshill and Newchurch may all have been taken out of an original Arreton *parochia* (Figure 8.4). The fairly indented boundary between Newchurch and the parishes of Arreton and Godshill certainly suggests that they may originally have been one unit. Furthermore, the configuration of the Knighton tithing unit, which lies partly in Newchurch Parish and partly in Arreton Parish, is a strong indication that Newchurch once formed part of an Arreton mother parish (Figure 5.5). At one point in time Newchurch may possibly have had a link with Bonchurch Parish. In an unpublished article, Margham (nd) suggested that Bonchurch was formerly dependent upon Newchurch Parish, based on the configuration of their parish boundaries.<sup>237</sup> However, it might equally be possible that Newchurch was dependent on Bonchurch. There is a local tradition that the first church at Bonchurch was built by monks in the eighth century (Renn 1969, 266). Its dedication to St

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<sup>235</sup> There are similar legends for mainland settlements, for instance, Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire (Roberts 1987, 127-129).

<sup>236</sup> Domesday Book also omits to mention Appuldurcombe (SZ 543 799), some two kilometres from Godshill church, which was to become an important Island estate. Webster (nd) states that Appuldurcombe was part of the tithing of Week as shown in the seventeenth century hearth tax returns (Russell 1981, *passim*). It may therefore be assumed that in 1086 it formed part of the Domesday manor of Week which lay in Godshill Parish.

<sup>237</sup> I am grateful to John Margham for allowing me to read this unpublished paper.

Boniface is alleged to be connected with a visit from the eighth century missionary and the name 'Bonchurch' may refer to the name of this saint (Mills 1996, 31). In contrast, the name 'Newchurch' suggests a relatively late foundation or rebuilding. On balance it seems more likely that Bonchurch was part of an Anglo-Saxon parochial unit which lay to the east of Newchurch (whether or not Brading was the focus of this unit) than that it was connected with Newchurch. Evidence for a link with Brading is provided by Worsley (1781, 202) who stated that Shanklin was annexed to Bonchurch, having formerly been taken out of the parish of Brading. Domesday Book does not explicitly record either a church or a manor at Newchurch but the church is known to have existed by 1071 (Margham 1992b, 3). The main settlement occupies a prominent local hill above the Eastern Yar at SZ 5685. In the 1790s it had twenty-six dwellings, placing it in Basford Category c. Its composite plan, comprising an irregular double row and a regular double row, may possibly suggest a partial late Saxon or Norman reorganisation. Wroxall, about six kilometres south of Newchurch village, never became a parish focus with its own church but fell within Newchurch Parish in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, it was an important estate in the late Saxon and Norman periods, first recorded in a charter of 1043-4 (Margham 2007, 132). Domesday Book records that it was held by King William and had a recorded population of fifty-one, the third largest Domesday population after the manors of Calbourne and Bowcombe. Its significance continued into the medieval and post-medieval period when it was a tithing unit used for tax assessments (Appendix K and Figure 5.1) In the Hampshire Tax List for 1327, the tithing of Wroxall had the highest assessment of any tithing in the East Medine and it was quite highly placed in other tax lists of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries (see Appendix K). By the 1790s Wroxall consisted of various elements (Figure 5.21). Wroxall Farm (now Wroxall Manor Farm), situated in a valley enclosed by downland at SZ 558 792, was perhaps the original manorial centre at Domesday. There were a few dwellings further up the valley (possibly indicating settlement shrinkage) and a separate farm cluster slightly lower down the valley. At the foot of the valley, approximately half a kilometre north-west of Wroxall Manor Farm, there was an irregular double row. Some 200km further north there was an irregular cluster at the

junction of several roads which became the main focus in the nineteenth century. Further fieldwork and documentary research would be necessary to attempt a relative dating of these various settlement elements.

### **Origins and Evolution of Later Parish and Estate *Foci***

Most or all the parishes in Phase 3 appear to be daughter parishes carved out of the early parishes described above and having links with the mother churches in these parishes (see Table 8.2) although there are questions relating to St Helens and Bonchurch. Churches in Phase 3 parishes (not necessarily the present buildings) were constructed mainly from the eleventh century onwards but formal separation from the mother parish usually took place after that date, in some cases not until the post-medieval period (Hockey 1982, 1-8). The main factor distinguishing parishes in Phase 3a from those in 3b is that all Phase 3a parishes except Niton contained more than one Domesday manor whereas St Helens is the only Phase 3b parish to have done so. In addition, Phase 3a parishes are all relatively large whereas Phase 3b parishes generally had fairly small territories. There is evidence that pre-Domesday churches existed in only two of the five Phase 3a parishes (Niton and Bonchurch) whilst no churches in Phase 3b parishes are known to have existed in 1086. However, we cannot be entirely confident that all parishes in Phase 3a were created earlier than those in 3b. At Brighstone, the *tūn* element in the name of the village suggests that it was established when the large middle Anglo-Saxon estates were starting to fragment. It was included in a grant of land at Calbourne to the See of Winchester, allegedly in 826, but later became a separate manor. This may have been recorded in Domesday Book under the name of *Weristetone* (Mills 1996, 33-34). In 1086 *Weristetone* was held by four lesser lords under a lord called Jocelyn but no 'villagers', smallholders or slaves were recorded. There is no documentary evidence for a church at Brighstone until 1291 (Margham nd, 3) but the northern nave arcade is late twelfth century (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 98). The Royal Survey of 1559 (Webster nd) distinguished the hamlets of Uggerton and Coombe from the main settlement of Brighstone which belonged to the manor of Swainston with Brighstone, an ancient connection

dating back to the Middle Saxon period when Brighstone was part of the Calbourne estate. Uggerton may also have been held from the See of Winchester as part of the Calbourne estate in 1086 (Page 1912, 211-212; Margham 2005, 94). Coombe was recorded as a manor in Domesday Book but in 1559 it comprised only two farmsteads, one of which was void. In the 1790s Brighstone was a large composite village in Basford Category b containing fifty-two dwellings including those in Combe and in Uggerton (which was unnamed on the 1790s drawing).

Shorwell's topographical name hints at an early origin for the settlement and this is also suggested by the recent discovery of a pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery nearby (Salter 2010, 77-86; Margham 2012a, 15). Indeed Tomalin (*in press* 44) speculates about a putative Shorwell *parochia* occupying part of the territory assigned to the Carisbrooke mother parish by Hase (1994, 66). However, documentary evidence records that Shorwell was dependent on Carisbrooke in the thirteenth century, only gaining parochial status in the reign of Edward III (Worsley 1781, 251). Furthermore, Hockey (1982, 5) suggests that the church may not have been founded until 1263 although it has a re-set early thirteenth-century doorway (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 270). The main manor at Shorwell was held by the King in 1086, having a recorded population of sixteen, and the estate centre was probably at North Court (SZ 4583) to the north of the church. There was also a second Domesday Manor of Shorwell to the south-west of the church at West Court (Page 1912, 279-281). In the 1790s, Shorwell was a compact but substantial village of twenty-seven dwellings in Basford Category c, having the form of a regular double row. Chale, like Shorwell, was taken out of Carisbrooke Parish and its church was founded in 1114 (Hockey 1982, 6). Two manors are recorded at Chale in Domesday Book and these manors had recorded populations of eight and two respectively. In the 1790s, there were three nucleations at Chale, each distinct but forming a semi-continuous chain of settlement stretching for about two kilometres. The main parish focus lay around the church and manor house at SZ484 777), Chale Street lay to the north at SZ 483 788 and beyond that was Strood Green (later Chale Green) at SZ 485 798). Chale

Street and Chale Green were probably secondary to the parish focus and will be considered later. The main settlement was an irregular or semi-regular multiple row around the church comprising sixteen dwellings in Basford Category d.

Niton and Whitwell parishes may both have been taken out of Godshill Parish (itself perhaps part of an earlier Arreton *parochia*) judging by the relationship between their parish boundaries, although there is also the possibility that their territories may have been taken from an early *parochia* stretching from Whippingham to the Island's south coast, as discussed above. The place-name of Niton, meaning 'the new *tūn*', is further evidence that this settlement and its territory were taken out of an older estate. However, Niton possessed its own church by 1071 (Margham 1992b, 3) and may have attained parochial status by this date, long before Whitwell obtained its own chapel or gained parochial privileges. The manor of Niton is recorded jointly with *Abla* in Domesday Book, when it was held by the King and had a recorded population of thirty-four, the fifth highest population out of all the Island's manors. *Abla* has been identified with Apse Manor in Newchurch Parish (Mills 1996, 23) but the connection between the two manors is not known. Niton's parish territory is reasonably large but it is akin to most of the generally small Phase 3b parishes in having only one recorded Domesday manor and one medieval nucleated settlement within the parish, an arrangement more typical of parishes in the *Central Province* than of those in the *South Eastern Province*. Niton's large area of open-field is also reminiscent of parishes in the *Central Province*. In the 1790s Niton (SZ 5076) was a substantial village of thirty-seven dwellings in Basford Category c with a regular radial form (Figure 5.14) and it is possible that the settlement was laid out in this form when the open-fields were established or reorganised. The final parish assigned to Phase 3a is Bonchurch where the possible antiquity of the church has already been discussed, as has the relationship between Bonchurch Parish and Newchurch Parish. However, the position of Bonchurch in the broken ground of the Undercliff, permitting only fairly small-scale cultivation, may be an argument against its primacy over

Newchurch. Moreover, Bonchurch's ancient links may not lie with Newchurch, but with the *parochia* thought to have been centred on Brading. The manor of Bonchurch appears in Domesday Book when there was a recorded population of only three. In the 1790s, Bonchurch (SZ 5778) comprised a semi-regular double row of thirteen dwellings in Basford Category d.

Parish *foci* in Phase 3b seem to have originated as secondary settlements on the periphery of the Island's large Middle Anglo-Saxon estates. Their place-names suggest that they were not primary settlements (e.g. Thorley, Binstead, Yaverland, Kingston and Wootton) although *tūn* names were in widespread use after about AD 750 (Gelling 1992, 123). Most of these settlements had undoubtedly become established before 1086 since the names of all but three (Northwood, Whitwell and St Lawrence) correspond with manors recorded in Domesday Book. Their parish churches seem mainly to have originated as manorial chapels and in most settlements the church is sited close to a manor house. Phase 3b parishes generally had small territories (with the exceptions of Northwood, St Helens and Whitwell) and contained only one or two Domesday manors (apart from St Helens). Their focal settlements usually appear as fairly small nucleations with irregular plans on the 1790s drawings although St Helens and Whitwell are larger and have more formal plans. Kingston (SZ 4781) and Wootton (SZ 5492) were not nucleated at all, both being classified as church/manor house complexes in Basford Category f and each having only two dwellings beside the church. The tiny irregular cluster of six dwellings around Northwood Church (SZ 4992) was barely nucleated and St Lawrence (SZ 5376), in the Undercliff, was an irregular double row of similar size. Binstead (SZ 5792) appears to have been a straggling common-edge settlement of nine dwellings, all but one being to the south of the church. Wootton, Northwood and Binstead are in the north of the Island within an area characterised by dispersed settlement and having only a small amount of open-field in the Middle Ages. St Lawrence in the Undercliff also lay on marginal land and much of Kingston Parish may have been heathland in the Middle Ages.

However, many of the parish *foci* of Phase 3b were set in good agricultural land. The church/manor house complex, an element of nearly all settlements in this phase, was sometimes combined with an interrupted or irregular row as at Thorley (SZ 3689- SZ 3788), Gatcombe (SZ 4985 – SZ 4885), Yaverland (SZ 6185) and Shanklin (SZ 5780 – SZ 5880). These linear elements may have developed at a later date than the church/manor house complexes and two phases of settlement development may also be postulated at Brook where the informal hamlet of Brook Green (SZ 3983) is about 750 metres from the church. Three parish *foci* had non-agricultural interests in the medieval period. Quarrying of local stone had taken place in the Binstead area from the Anglo Saxon period (Loader *et al* 2002) and by the late eleventh century stone was being quarried there for the cathedral at Winchester (Page 1912, 151). Yarmouth (SZ 3589) was a fairly small manor with a recorded population of nine in 1086 but became a borough in the late twelfth century, being granted its first charter by Baldwin de Redvers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Devon (Edwards 1999b). A variety of non-agricultural occupations were recorded at St Helens in the fourteenth century and the settlement may even have been a proto-town or the main port for Brading, as suggested in Chapter 7.

The parishes of Whitwell and St Helens are larger than those of most other parishes in Phase 3b and did not arise simply as territories attached to the manorial chapels of single lay lords. They are also the only two parish *foci* in Phase 3b to possess regular row plans. We have seen that Whitwell may have fallen within an early *parochia* centred either on Arreton/Godshill or on Whippingham.<sup>238</sup> No manor of Whitwell was recorded in Domesday Book<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> A charter issued by King Cuthred between AD 740 and AD 756 links properties at Whippingham, *Muleburnam* and *Banewadam* (Margham 205, 105). Kökeritz (1940, lviii) identifies the latter two places as Whitwell and St Lawrence and this might support the inclusion of Whitwell within an early Whippingham *parochia* (Tomalin *in press* 23) although St Lawrence Parish appears to have been taken out of Godshill Parish.

<sup>239</sup> Kökeritz (1940, 252-25) and Mills (1996, 45) equate Downcourt, a farmstead within Whitwell Parish, with *Ladone*, a Domesday manor held jointly with Bathingbourne in Godshill Parish by the King.

and the chapel of St Rhadegund at Whitwell was founded only in the twelfth century by the de Estur family of Gatcombe who owned land in the area (Hockey 1982, 6-7; Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 299). In about 1200 a second chapel of St Mary was built alongside the earlier building as a chapel of ease dependant on Godshill Church, since Whitwell lay within the medieval parish of Godshill (Worsley 1781, 209). Technically, Whitwell still did not have full parochial status in 1781. Nevertheless, by the 1790s there was a substantial village in Basford Category c to the north of the church (SZ 5277) containing thirty-seven dwellings in a regular double row. The medieval parish of St Helens may have been taken out of Brading Parish. However, Sir John Oglander claimed in the seventeenth century that St Helens church 'wase first bwylt by Hildila, yt was Chapeleyne to Sanctus Wilfydus' (Long 1888, 187). This story may be apocryphal but there was an ongoing dispute in the medieval period about the advowson of Brading church, which was renounced by the prior of St Helens in 1346 (Hockey 1982, 63). Stone (1891, 13) regarded this as evidence that St Helens church was founded before Brading church. Nevertheless, Margham (2000, 119) has argued for the primacy of Brading as the centre of an Anglo-Saxon *parochia* although he concedes that St Helens may have originated as a chapel in the mid Saxon period. The Domesday manor of *Etharin* has been equated with Eddington Manor at St Helens (Kökeritz 1940, 197). *Etharin* was linked with the manor of Puckpool near Ryde in the Domesday account but the two manors had a recorded population of only three. St Helens Priory was founded between 1090 and 1155 (Margham 2000, 119). The priory church (SZ 6289) appears to have functioned also as a parish church as was the case at Carisbrooke but St Helens' parochial status may date only from the late thirteenth century when a vicar of St Helens was recorded along with the prior and one monk (Doubleday and Page 1903, 215).<sup>240</sup> Prior to Domesday Book, Middle/late Saxon settlement in the area of St Helens is suggested by the place-name Eddington, incorporating a *-tun* element. Eddington lay on the southern edge of a gravel deposit (Figure 2.4), a typical setting for *-tun* settlements in the

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<sup>240</sup> The old priory church of St Helens fell into disrepair in the sixteenth century and a new church was built to the north of the village (SZ 6289), this being replaced by the present building in 1831-32 (Edwards 1999f, 5).

north of the Island (Margham 2003, 18-21). The significance of the place-name 'St Helens' has been highlighted by Margham (nd, 26). Names of settlements derived from the dedication of the local church are common in areas of dispersed settlement as in Devon (Hoskins 2003, 4-5) and Kent (Everitt 1986, 183). Thus, the church dedication at St Helens may predate the development of the nucleated settlement. In the 1790s St Helens (SZ 6288) was a regular two-row village with twenty-one dwellings in Basford Category c and appears to have been the only Isle of Wight settlement to possess a large formal village green.<sup>241</sup> However, this apparent regularity may conceal the origins of the settlement. Roberts and Wrathmell (2002, 54) distinguish between 'green villages' comprising 'planned layouts geometrically devised, with farmsteads and tofts arranged around a formalised central open space' and settlements that 'developed from an area of open common waste around which farmsteads and cottages accreted'. The outline of St Helens Green, at its western end, has the 'straggling concave outline' identified by Rackham (1986, 141-145) as the typical shape of commons. It is possible that a common-edge settlement developed at St Helens to the west of an original magnate farmstead at Eddington Manor, perhaps in the post-Conquest period. This common-edge settlement appears to have had some open-field to the north and Margham (nd, 27) has suggested that the tofts and crofts associated with houses on the south side of the green were laid out over former open-field furlongs although these plots could equally have been carved out of a larger expanse of open grazing, of which St Helens Green is a remnant (Figure 8.11). Either way, the plots on the south side of the green suggest a replanning of the common-edge settlement, probably in or before the later fourteenth century, by which time the tax lists (Appendix K) indicate that St Helens tithing had a large and prosperous population. The 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing suggests some late medieval or post-medieval settlement contraction on both sides of the green. It also shows regular house plots and a back lane on the north side of

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<sup>241</sup> Strood Green (Chale Green) was smaller and had fewer houses, arranged in a less regular manner.

the green separating domestic tofts or crofts from the open field beyond, an arrangement commonly found in planned villages.<sup>242</sup>

### **Characteristics of Isle of Wight Parish *Foci***

The foregoing review of parishes and parish *foci* has shown that medieval manor houses and churches were often sited close together.<sup>243</sup> However, this association is not so apparent in the earliest parishes which are thought to have developed around Middle Saxon estate centres. Freshwater church is some distance from Kings Manor (Freshwater Farm), as is Calbourne church from Swainston manor house, Carisbrooke church from Bowcombe Farm and Brading church from Morton manor house. In this presumed 'first generation' of parishes, the church and the medieval manor house site are in close proximity only at Arreton. Nevertheless, the positions of the medieval manor houses at Freshwater and Calbourne may not be the original locations of the chief magnate farmsteads and there is also the possibility that Shalfleet may have been the focus for the earliest Calbourne *parochia*, whilst the original location of the early Bowcombe/Carisbrooke mother church is debatable. Within the next postulated phase of parish formation, Whippingham church was isolated in the 1790s apart from the rectory and a low-status farmhouse. These early churches probably did not originate as the private manorial chapels of lay lords, as did the later parish churches. Instead, they were intended to serve much wider *parochiae* which in the Middle Saxon period might each have contained a number of small dispersed settlements away from estate centres that were originally simply 'magnate farmsteads. However, the estate centres seem to have acted as *foci* around

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<sup>242</sup> Evidence from estate surveys and the St Helens Tithe map cited by Webster (nd) suggests that the open field on the north side of St Helens Green extended as far as Eddington Road at SZ 627897. The 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing and the tithe map do suggest that the land on the south side of St Helens Green between Carpenters Road and Mill Road may formerly have been open-field, as suggested by Margham, but that land to the east of Mill Road may have been enclosed from St Helens Common which could formerly have been one entity with St Helens Green before the possible re-planning of the village in the later medieval period.

<sup>243</sup> Various morphological studies have discussed church locations in relation to manor houses and associated settlements e.g. Roberts (1987, 152-155; McDonagh 2003; Stocker and Everson 2006).

which nucleated settlements may have developed. All but three of the Island's twenty-eight medieval rural settlements with parish churches were nucleated to some extent in the 1790s although some were hamlet-sized rather than village-sized. In the north of the Island the settlement pattern remained one of dispersion, accounting for the isolation of Whippingham church and the very small parish *foci* of Northwood and Wootton. This mixed pattern of nucleation and dispersion, with villages aggregating at pre-existing *foci*, has similarities with a pattern identified on the Northamptonshire-Oxfordshire border during the Whittlewood Project (Jones and Page 2006, figure 30). It also conforms to a model of settlement evolution set out by Roberts (2008, table 1.1), reproduced here as Table 8.4. Individual parish *foci* appear to have become nucleated at different times. Appendix J records high Domesday populations (over twenty-five) at the chief manors within four out of five Phase 1 parish *foci*, only Brading having a low Domesday population of four. By comparison, only fourteen of the twenty-three named Domesday manors corresponding with parish *foci* of all phases have relatively high recorded populations (over ten). The fact that a manor was populous does not necessarily imply the existence of a nucleated settlement. As emphasised in Chapter 7, Domesday population figures have to be used with extreme caution and manors cannot simply be equated with settlements. It is even more difficult to date the settlement forms shown on the early Ordnance Survey maps. Nevertheless, the accounts of individual parish *foci* above have provided possible chronological contexts for some nucleated forms shown on later maps. It has been suggested that a few parish *foci* may have become nucleated in the Middle or Late Anglo-Saxon period whilst in other settlements nucleation occurred after the Norman Conquest. However, Carisbrooke and Brading are the only settlements where definite late eleventh-century dates and historical contexts can be suggested for the establishment of regular double-row settlements. Regularity was not the norm in Isle of Wight settlements, at least as depicted in the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings. The drawings show only seven parish *foci* as having regular plans, these being Freshwater, Carisbrooke, Brading, Shorwell, Niton, Whitwell and St Helens (Table 8.3). Two other rural parish *foci* had

semi-regular plans (Bonchurch and Yaverland) and three had regular and irregular plan elements (Brighstone, Godshill and Newchurch).

### **Nucleated Settlements away from Parish *Foci***

By the 1790s the Island had fifty-five nucleated rural settlements in Basford categories b-e that were not parish *foci*. These settlements are listed in Appendix M and can be located on Figure 8.3. A summary list is provided below.<sup>244</sup>

#### **Settlements other than Parish *Foci***

<b>Forms</b>	<b>Settlements</b>	<b>Total</b>
Regular Grid	Newtown	1
Regular Rows	Freshwater Green, Bembridge Street, Plaish, Clatterford, Lower Ryde, Yaverland Street	6
Irregular and Interrupted Rows	Wellow, Easton/Blackbridge, Bowcombe, Chillerton Street, Wootton Bridge, Sandham, Lake, Limerstone, Little Stenbury, Nettlecombe, Lower Adgestone, Peacock Hill, Southdown/Pile, Chale Street, Whippingham Street ( <i>alias</i> Alverstone), Little Shamblers, Appuldurcombe Street	17
Irregular Clusters and Scatters	Roud, Blackwater, Steephill, Niton Undercliff, Kite Hill, Langbridge, Ventnor, Bembridge Point, Fairy Hill,	9
Composite	Merston, Sandford, Yafford, Alverstone (Brading Parish), Wroxall	5
Green Edge, Common Edge or Forest Edge	Ningwood Green, Strood Green ( <i>alias</i> Chale Green), Adgestone, Norton, Norton Green (More Green), Strood, Crossacres, Brook Green, Atherfield, Rookley, Hale Common, Havenstreet, Branstone, Five Houses, Binstead Area (unnamed), Middleton Green, Cockleton/Poleclose	17

Most of these nucleations away from the parish *foci* are hamlets in Basford categories d and e and many are very loosely nucleated. Some of these settlements will feature in a discussion of settlement forms below but others merit individual comment here. Newtown (SZ 4290) stands out as the only

<sup>244</sup> Towns in Basford Category a have not been included in Appendix M. The rural settlements of Newbridge (SZ 411876) and Porchfield (SZ446973) have also been excluded as they are not shown as nucleations on the 1810 Ordnance Survey map and developed after that date. The seaside villages of Totland, Gurnard and Seaview also developed in the nineteenth century whilst Bembridge expanded greatly.

settlement with a regular grid (Figures 5.17 and 8.12). This regularity derives from its origins as a planned thirteenth-century borough but by the 1790s Newtown was a mere hamlet. Lower Ryde (SZ 59 92) appears on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing as a named coastal settlement that was still distinct from the developing town of Ryde to the south. Sandham (SZ 5984) was recorded in Domesday Book and its name includes the Old English place-name element *-hamm*, meaning enclosure or river-meadow (Mills 1996, 92). It was the focal settlement within a medieval tithing of the same name. The settlement lay to the north of the site where the nineteenth century coastal resort of Sandown would be developed and somewhat inland. In the 1790s it was an irregular two row hamlet of about thirteen dwellings extending southward from Sandham Farm and lying below the ten metre contour on the western edge of 'Sandham Level', a large area of reclaimed marshland.<sup>245</sup> Roud (SZ51 80) has been discussed in Chapter 7 as a settlement that may have been more significant in the Middle Ages when it was the head of a tithing unit with a relatively large taxable population. Steephill (SZ 5577) is now a residential suburb of Ventnor but in the 1790s Steep Hill and Ventnor were quite distinct hamlets in separate parishes (Steep Hill being in Godshill and Ventnor in Newchurch). A developer-funded excavation at Steephill (Flowersbrook) uncovered forty inhumations associated with a stone-vaulted building on the nearby cliff-edge and a small quantity of Saxo-Norman pottery (Basford 2006b, 12). Steephill is not listed in Domesday Book and no chapel or burial ground is recorded in documentary sources but, nevertheless, it does appear to have been a significant settlement in the medieval and post-medieval periods. In the 1790s both Steephill and Ventnor had a mere eight dwellings but those at Steephill were in a fairly tight cluster close to the recently erected Steephill Cottage<sup>246</sup> whereas in Ventnor there were buildings both at the foot of the inner cliff and closer to the shore, the most prominent of these latter buildings being the mill. Sandford (SZ 5381), about one and a half kilometres north of

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<sup>245</sup> Sandham Fort, a seventeenth century structure replacing a Tudor fort (Jones 1968) lay to the east of the settlement on the coast.

<sup>246</sup> A cottage orné built for Hans Stanley, Governor of the Isle of Wight, in about 1770 (Basford 1989, 50).

Appuldurcombe, was recorded jointly with the manor of Week in Domesday Book. At that time it was held by the King and had a recorded population of twenty three, quite a high number in terms of Island manors. Later, the manor was held by the Abbey of Montebourg, as was Appuldurcombe. In the medieval and post-medieval period Sandford was the chief settlement in the tithing of Weeke (see Figure 5.1).<sup>247</sup> However, the form of the settlement as shown on the 1790s drawing contrasts strongly with the regular row settlement of Godshill about one kilometre to the west. Appendix L classifies Sandford as a composite settlement comprised of an interrupted row and an irregular row but its haphazard form is perhaps more suggestive of organic growth around a green or common. This form may have developed in later medieval times and the Domesday settlement pattern may have comprised a single magnate farmstead at Sandford Farm<sup>248</sup> with dispersed settlement throughout the tithing.

Some distinctive irregular forms on the Isle of Wight require special comment including linear settlements in downland-edge valleys. These are well-represented in the chalklands of mainland Wessex which have significant river valleys but there are only two examples on the Island, at Gatcombe (SZ 4885) and Chillerton (SZ 4984), both in narrow combs with small streams. The linear settlement at Gatcombe was associated with the nearby church/manor house complex but Chillerton never possessed its own parish church, being divided between detached portions of Carisbrooke Parish and Wootton Parish. It is named 'Chillerton Street' on the 1790s drawing and can thus be included in another distinctive plan-form recognisable on the Isle of Wight, that of interrupted-rows and 'street' settlements. There are eight Island settlements with the name-element 'street' (Figure 8.2), of which those associated with church/manor house complexes (Chale Street, Thorley Street, Whippingham Street, Arreton Street, and Yaverland Street) have already been mentioned. The earliest recorded references to Isle of Wight

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<sup>247</sup> The present Week Farm, beneath Week Down, is not an ancient holding but was carved out of downland c. 1580 (Webster nd, manor of Appuldurcombe).

<sup>248</sup> Named on the 1992 Ordnance Survey Outdoor Leisure Map (no. 29) at SZ 539819.

'street' place-names appears to have been on the 1790s and 1810 Ordnance Survey maps,<sup>249</sup> Chillerton Street, Arreton Street, Yaverland Street and Bembridge Street are first named on the 1790s drawings whilst Thorley Street, Chale Street, Whippingham Street and Appuldurcombe Street are first named on the 1810 map. Chale Street (SZ 4878) links an irregular row settlement around the parish church with another irregular row around a green (Stroad Green on the 1790s drawing, now Chale Green). Bembridge Street (SZ 6487) lies in the tithing of Hardley which does not contain a parish church and is otherwise characterised by a regular pattern of farmsteads. Appuldurcombe Street (SZ 5480), no longer recognisable as a discrete settlement, lay to the east of Appuldurcombe Park along Redhill Lane. It may represent the remnants of a formerly larger settlement affected by the enlargement of Appuldurcombe Park in the 1770s (Basford 1989, 36-37).<sup>250</sup> Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 56) imply that the bulk of 'street' names occur in their two *Outer Provinces* (although there are scatters in the *Central Province*) and state that the name element 'street', as well as the elements 'green' and 'end' carry discussion to 'those settlement forms that lie on the threshold between true nucleation and true dispersion. The eight Isle of Wight examples of settlement elements with 'street' names occur in different physiographic areas and at different altitudes (Figure 8.2). Four of the settlements (Chale Street, Thorley Street, Chillerton Street and Arreton Street) are long straggling interrupted rows but Bembridge Street and Yaverland Street are more compact rows. All lie beside areas of former open-field, which may date their origins, but four at least appear to be secondary foci, being associated with church/manor house complexes of presumably earlier date.<sup>251</sup> Wellow (SZ 3888) does not have a 'street' name or a parish

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<sup>249</sup> Kökeritz (1940) does not give any earlier instances of 'street' place-names.

<sup>250</sup> A walled garden was constructed at the south end of Redhill Lane when Appuldurcombe Park was remodelled (Masters 2005, 39-40) and by the 1790s there was a small cluster of estate workers' cottages beside the walled garden.

<sup>251</sup> Research into the vernacular architecture of Isle of Wight 'street' settlements could be instructive. Whilst very few vernacular buildings anywhere on the Island pre-date the seventeenth century, there seem to be a higher proportion of substantial stone-built properties within parish *foci* whilst some 'street' settlements may consist mainly of nineteenth-century brick-built cottages.

church but it is akin to the 'street' settlements in its form and in its situation beside an area of open-field. It has similar characteristics to Thorley Street and lies to the east of that settlement along the same road but in Shalfleet Parish. The houses in both settlements lie mainly on the north side of the road with stream-side grazing beyond whilst the open fields of the two parishes lie on the south side of the road (Figure 5.23). Manors were recorded at both Thorley and Wellow in Domesday Book. The earliest settlement element at Thorley was presumably the manor house beside the church at the western end of the village and Margham (1990, 119-124) has suggested that Thorley Street represents settlement shift away from this site. He tentatively links this shift with the enclosure of the parish's open fields which was substantially complete by the early seventeenth century. However, it seems more likely that the settlement drift away from the magnate farmstead to the stream-side pasture beside the open fields happened during the Middle Ages, not necessarily later than the foundation of the church which existed by the early twelfth century.<sup>252</sup> By the 1790s both Thorley/Thorley Street and Wellow were relatively large settlements, falling into Basford Category c. Arreton Street displays similar characteristics to Thorley Street, probably representing settlement drift from the church/manor house complex to a stream-side ribbon of alluvial grazing north of the settlement's open fields.

### **Relationships between Settlements and Open Fields**

In settlement studies it is important to take account of the resources available to individual agrarian communities. Roberts & Wrathmell (1998, 113) have remarked that it is vital to look at the wider context of medieval occupation sites and:

*to shift our focus from the lineaments of the settlement itself to the 'peripheral' structures of fields and tracks, if we are to avoid attaching unwarranted significance to contingent aspects of settlement morphology.*

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<sup>252</sup> The church of Thorley was granted by Richard de Redvers to the priory of Christchurch Tyneham (Page ed 1912, 285). Richard de Redvers died in 1137 (Worsley 1781, Appendix XIX).

At present, very little is known about the way in which the Island's open fields were organised, a process that varied greatly in different parts of the country. Generally speaking, the *Central Province* had a heavily regulated system of village organisation and land use where the village was surrounded by two or three communally-farmed open fields in which strips were systematically distributed to reflect not only the size of individual holdings but also differences in soil quality and distance from the village. Within the *Central Province* there was a tendency for parishes to consist of one, two or three townships that each contained a single settlement surrounded by a large block of open fields as noted in Chapter 5. Many of these open fields survived into the eighteenth and nineteenth century when they were often abolished by parliamentary acts. However, most parts of England's two *Outer Provinces* developed a less-regulated system of village organisation and land use, perhaps because greater reserves of open land were available or alternative land-use strategies existed although communal cooperation was also important (Herring 2006, 50-51). There tended to be numerous small, irregular open fields mixed in with enclosed fields rather than two or three heavily-regulated open fields and these fields were associated with hamlets and individual farmsteads. Most open-field in the *Outer Provinces* disappeared at a relatively earlier date from the late Middle Ages onwards, often by a process of piecemeal enclosure.

The Island's open fields have been discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Figure 4.1 shows the known distribution of open-field within tithings. It is based on incomplete evidence but demonstrates that during the Middle Ages most settlements away from the Hamstead clays probably had access to open fields situated within their tithings.<sup>253</sup> However, the pattern typical of the *Central Province*, that of a substantial but compact nucleated village

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<sup>253</sup> Figure 4.1 marks open field only where documentary evidence is known or very clear morphological evidence exists. It almost certainly underestimates the amount of open-field that formerly existed since some open-field may have disappeared without documentary or cartographic record because of the relatively early date of enclosure in parts of the Island and because later reorganisation of fields sometimes makes the morphological evidence difficult to interpret.

surrounded by two or three open fields, is unusual on the Island. Morphological evidence from the attribute tables of '1790s HLC Areas' (Appendix E) is used below to discuss open fields in relation to settlements. Medieval settlements that developed around the earliest parish *foci* were associated with varied types of open-field. In the various tithings of Freshwater Parish there were numerous open fields, some of small size, interspersed with several large commons and many small greens around which were small hamlets. Information in the Royal and manorial surveys (Webster nd) suggests that strips in individual open fields were not restricted to the inhabitants of a single manor or even a single tithing but might be associated with tenements that belonged to various manors and tithings within the parish. In Calbourne Parish no common townfield serving the parish *focus* has been identified although Swainston Manor had 288 acres of cultivated demesne land in 1297-8 (Beresford 1959, 205). However, the planned thirteenth century borough of Newtown was laid out in a form similar to that of many *Central Province* nucleated villages, having regular house plots with medieval open-field to the north and south of the settlement at its eastern end although this open-field was of quite modest extent (Figures 5.17 and 8.12). Carisbrooke's open fields were extensive but occupied two distinct locations. One large area of open-field lay to the south-east of the demesne land belonging to the chief manor of Bowcombe<sup>254</sup> and ran right up to the boundary with Gatcombe Parish, interlocking with that parish's open-field in a manner which suggests that the two parishes had formerly shared one block of open-field before Gatcombe became a parish in its own right. This open-field lay some distance from the settlement at Carisbrooke which may have been established after the Norman Conquest (Margham 1992 b). However, there could have been an earlier small settlement beside the church with an adjacent open field since the planned village appears to have been laid out partially over existing open-field strips (Figure 8.8). The second large block of open-field lay between Carisbrooke and Newport on either side of Whitepit Lane (Figure 5.36) and was known as Carisbroke Field or Shide Field

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<sup>254</sup> The Bowcombe Manor demesne may always have been enclosed land separate from the common open fields. In a 1608 survey of Isle of Wight royal estates all the Bowcombe Demesne was described as being held in closes, many of them very large (Webster nd).

(Webster 1994).<sup>255</sup> It may have been laid out after the planned settlement at Carisbrooke was purportedly established in the late eleventh century or it may be a later resource, shared with the planned borough of Newport which was founded in c. 1180.<sup>256</sup> The original parish focus at Arreton seems to have been a church/manor house complex with a small town field named 'East Field' to the east of the complex (Hockey 1991, Map 3).<sup>257</sup> 'South Field' lay to the south-east of the church/ manor house complex on the other side of the road opposite Arreton Street. It may have been laid out later than the open field around the church/ manor house complex when settlement drift had taken place to a stream-side location (Figure 8.9). A substantial area of open-field in Brading Parish seems to have been sited to the west of Morton Manor (Figure 8.10), thought by Webster (nd) to equate with the Domesday manor of Brading.<sup>258</sup> Slightly further to the west lay the two Domesday manors of Adgestone. An area of former open-field appears to surround the green-edge hamlet of Adgestone which perhaps grew up on waste land at the junction of separate fields (Figure 5.20). The planned settlement at Brading, possibly founded in the late eleventh century, lay to the north of Morton Manor. A relatively small area of possible open-field to the west of the town may have been laid out after its foundation (Figure 8.10). Niton Parish contained only one recorded Domesday manor and had one substantial but compact nucleated settlement with a large open field on either side of the village (Figure 5.14), an arrangement typical of the *Central Province* but unusual on the Island. Its eastern open field ran right up to the boundary with the open field belonging to Whitwell Parish. Clearly these open fields had

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<sup>255</sup> The extent of this open-field has been inferred from references in Royal and manorial surveys (Webster nd) and form the large open area shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing to the north of Whitepit Lane.

<sup>256</sup> The main secondary sources for the history of Newport (Page 1912, 253-268; Jones 1978, 19-28 and 117-154; Edwards 1999a) make no reference to any town fields but as a market town of modest size it is likely that some of its inhabitants did engage in agriculture.

<sup>257</sup> 'West Field' is also shown on this map to the west of the church/manor house complex but Hockey (1991, 41) identifies this with land acquired by the abbey from East Standen manor in 1319.

<sup>258</sup> Only four small holders are recorded in Domesday Book at Brading, surely providing insufficient labour to work an open-field system. Is this a case of under-recording or did Morton (which comprised only three farmsteads in the post-medieval period) attract a larger population after 1086, then suffer later depopulation?

been one entity when both Niton and Whitwell were within a larger parish unit (probably Godshill but conceivably an early Whippingham *parochia*). We can therefore tentatively suggest that the open fields predate 1071, by which time Niton is known to have had its own church (Margham 1992b, 3) and may also have had parochial status.

The form of St Helens village on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing appears to be that of a regular two-row settlement around a village green but it has been suggested above that the settlement may have developed as a more informal green-edge settlement that was re-planned, perhaps as late as the thirteenth or fourteenth century. It is possible that the relatively small area of open-field associated with the settlement may have also been re-planned at this time as it exhibits greater regularity and a closer relationship to the village than does most of the Island's open-field (Figure 8.11). Indeed it is only at St Helens and Newtown (Figures 5.17 and 8.12) that there appears to be clear evidence for tofts of regular form and size adjacent to open-field strips in a layout reminiscent of the classic 'Midlands' village although Yaverland Street was a compact settlement surrounded by regular blocks of open-field strips (Figure 5.17). The open fields in Brighstone Parish (Figure 5.18) were extensive but were related to a settlement pattern more complex than that at Niton or St Helens and were divided between the two tithings of Brighstone and Limerstone. Brighstone was a composite or polyfocal settlement and the two fields within Brighstone tithing ('Ugdon' Field and 'Westfield') appear to have been associated with different settlement elements at the western end of the village and with the hamlet of Chilton Green. 'Eastfield' adjoined the eastern end of Brighstone village but was in Limerstone Tithing so may have been shared with the hamlet of Limerstone. There were other open fields in Limerstone Tithing named 'Northmarshfield', 'Southmarshfield' and 'Sutton Field' which appear to have been associated with the hamlets of Marsh Green, Thorncross and Sutton (Jones 2003, 83). The parish of Mottistone to the west of Brighstone had a fairly extensive area of open-field to the south of the parish focus although the settlement was only hamlet-sized (Figure 5.18). There seems also to have been an area of

open or enclosed grazing land to the south-east of Mottistone, on which the hamlet of Hoxall grew up. Thorley appears to have had some open-field close to the manor house and some further to the east associated with Thorley Street, shown in Figure 5.23 (Margham 1990, 123-124). The open-field land at Thorley Street may be of later date than that around Thorley's church and manor house complex, having been created after settlement had drifted away from the original parish focus. It lay to the south of Thorley Street and was contiguous with the open-field land of Wellow. The two settlements of Thorley Street and Wellow were adjacent to each other, lying in different parishes (Thorley and Shalfleet) but both in Thorley Tithing. 'Bembridge Isle'<sup>259</sup> at the eastern extremity of the Island corresponds with the tithing of Hardley in Brading Parish (Figure 5.1). The relationship between settlements and open-field in 'Bembridge Isle' is unparalleled elsewhere on the Island. Within this area there was a loose grid of lanes and tracks along which were farmsteads at regular intervals, with the hamlet of Bembridge Street lying on the western edge of the grid close to Brading Haven (Figure 5.19). The open fields within this tithing seem to have occupied all the space within the grid, the whole arrangement having a greater regularity than that indicated by the 1790s drawings elsewhere on the Island. In summary, no one characteristic type of open-field seems to be present on the Island neither do the layouts of the main settlements and their open fields generally display the regularity that is often apparent in the *Central Province*. In most areas, open-field appears to have gradually developed around pre-existing settlements. Only in a few cases do settlements and open fields appear to have been planned or re-planned as a coherent whole and to a regular pattern. It would appear that there are cultural reasons for the variety of settlement forms associated with open fields. Seigniorial or community impetus for the planning or re-planning of villages seems to have been present in only a minority of the Island's settlements and the development of settlements elsewhere appears to have been a more informal process, influenced by antecedent settlement and land use patterns, as in Freshwater Parish. Much work remains to be done in understanding links between

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<sup>259</sup> Referred to as 'the isle of Bimbridge' in Worsley (1781, 194).

specific open fields and individual tenements; in working out the relationships between open fields, townships and parishes; in investigating how strips were distributed between holdings and in examining how open fields were regulated.

### **Green-Edge and Common Edge Settlements**

Various factors may have played a part in the evolution of settlements and open fields but physical conditions undoubtedly had a particular influence on the positions and forms of certain settlements. The 'street' settlements of Thorley, Wellow and Arreton may owe their origins to the attraction of damp grazing and this also appears to have determined the locations of green-edge settlements. Roberts & Wrathmell (2002, 54-56) have mapped and discussed place-names with the affix 'Green' which they characterise as a type (like 'street' settlements) falling on the boundary between nucleation and dispersion and distinguishable from 'green villages' with planned layouts and a formalised central space. The authors suggest that affixed 'greens' developed from areas of open common waste around which farmsteads and cottages accreted and that they tend to be first documented in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A distribution map of these 'Green' place-names (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, figure 2.11) shows that they occur mainly in the two *Outer Provinces*, particularly the *South Eastern Province*. Three Isle of Wight sites are recorded on Roberts & Wrathmell's map, probably Chilton Green (Mottistone/Brighstone), Marsh Green (Brighstone) and Chale Green<sup>260</sup> but to these must be added ten other sites recorded on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings (Figure 8.2 and Table 8.5). Dating green-edge settlements is problematical both nationally and on the Isle of Wight. They may not all post-date the Anglo-Saxon period despite Roberts & Wrathmell's suggestion of thirteenth and fourteenth century dates specifically for places with the affix 'green'. In south Cambridgeshire, just within the Central Province, Taylor (2002) has identified a primary pattern of dispersed

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<sup>260</sup> Shown as Strood Green on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing

settlement around large oval greens that was replaced by a nucleated settlement pattern as late as the eleventh century. A different settlement trajectory may have occurred in East Anglia. Here, Williamson (2003, 174) has suggested that 'where very little meadow existed, as in much of northern East Anglia, damp grazing of all kinds formed powerful magnets for settlement as population rose in late Saxon times, and in many parishes by the twelfth century the majority of farms had come to cluster on the margins of greens and commons.' Martin (2012, 245) also sees greens in East Anglia as secondary settlements but supplementing rather than replacing existing small settlements. In south Suffolk and Essex greens and 'tyes'<sup>261</sup> were usually smaller in size than in northern East Anglia (Williamson 2003; 161, figure 30). Like Williamson, Taylor (2002, 69) has stressed the importance of settlement location on the margins between contrasting resources, postulating that 'the precise locations of rural settlements, of whatever form or date, are not the result of simplistic determinism arising out of access to water, dry ground, routeways or crossing places, but of a more complex interrelationship of meadow/pasture land and actual or potential arable.' The 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and 1810 Ordnance Survey map show that valley-bottom meadows and damp pasture occur only in certain parts of the Isle of Wight: to the west of Norton (Freshwater), at Brook Green (Brook), at Moortown and Yafford (Brighstone), in the upper reaches of the River Medina ('The Wilderness'), between Niton and Whitwell, between Blackwater and Merston (Arreton), in the East Yar Valley from Godshill to Sandown, and along the Scotchells Brook and Wroxall valleys. The location of these meadows and damp pasture generally bears a close relationship to that of settlements. Elsewhere, greens, wastes and commons above the valley floor were important and the Island possessed an abundance of these in the medieval period. Many had disappeared by the 1790s but surviving remnants can be seen on the 1810 Ordnance Survey map.

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<sup>261</sup> Williamson (2003, 162-163) defines a 'tye' as an East Anglian term used for a small common surrounded by farms, derived from the Old English *Teag*, meaning a close or small enclosure.

The sizes of most Isle of Wight greens are not comparable with those of south Norfolk and north Suffolk, which tend to be large, but are perhaps more similar to those of south Suffolk and Essex. There are two clusters of settlements with the affix 'Green', in Freshwater Isle and in south-west Wight, and also isolated examples elsewhere (Figure 8.2) but many more settlements are associated with greens. These can be divided into straggling green-edge forms and more compact clusters around triangular greens. Single farmsteads beside greens are also common in north-west Wight and are discussed later in this chapter. Ningwood Green may be a settlement that developed later than the original manorial focus. An estate at Ningwood was recorded in an Anglo-Saxon charter of AD 949 (Margham 2005, 80-82) and Ningwood was also recorded as a manor in Domesday Book (Mills 1996, 76) but the estate centre was probably at Ningwood Farm (SZ 397883). The 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing marks two loosely-nucleated *foci* named 'Ningwood Green', one located to the north of the magnate farmstead and one to the east, but both beside strips of low-lying pasture. Brook Green in south-west Wight (SZ3983) is a straggling green-edge settlement beside low-lying alluvial streamside pasture divided between the parishes of Brook and Shalfleet. The vanished common-edge hamlet of Fernfield<sup>262</sup>, located close to Brook Green at SZ 4084 but in the adjacent parish of Mottistone, was similar in character to other settlements described in this section although lacking the 'Green' affix.<sup>263</sup> Chilton Green and Marsh Green in Brighstone Parish are small hamlets in low-lying areas. Significantly, Chilton Green straddles the boundary between the parishes of Mottistone and Brighstone, Chilton Farm being in Brighstone but other cottages being in Mottistone. Chilton is recorded in Domesday Book and this entry presumably refers to Chilton Farm (SZ 413 824). The green-side settlement may be later, perhaps much later, in date and occupies a parish-edge site typical of

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<sup>262</sup> Fernfield no longer exists but is shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and early nineteenth century maps (Currie 1999, 21-24)

<sup>263</sup> Fernfield is one of twenty-six places listed in Appendix L under the category of 'Green-Edge, Common-Edge or Forest-Edge' settlement but this category omits many places that have evidence of existing or former greens or commons adjacent to dwellings, in some cases because these settlements have been placed in other categories.

secondary settlements. Chale Green<sup>264</sup> and St Helens possess much larger greens than other green-edge settlements on the Island (both still extant). However, Chale Green is a communal grazing area of irregular form, not a formal village green and at St Helens the apparently regular layout of the settlement contrasts with the straggling concave outline of the green itself at its western end. It has been suggested earlier that a common-edge settlement at St Helens developed beside the original magnate farmstead but was subject to more formal planning in the later medieval period. The hamlet of Atherfield Green is named on the Ordnance Survey 1810 map at SZ 463 797 but the triangular green shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing lies somewhat to the east of the eponymous settlement and south of Atherfield Farm which was presumably the Anglo-Saxon estate centre. Atherfield is recorded in a lost tenth-century charter (Margham 2005, 82-85) and in Domesday Book. It bears an Old-English *-feld* place-name suggestive of Anglo-Saxon encroachment on pasture land (Roberts & Wrathmell 2002, 21). Nettlestone is recorded in Domesday Book but the manorial centre was probably at Nettlestone Farm (SZ 622908) whilst Nettlestone Green, located to the south of the farm and clustered around a triangular open space, perhaps represents a later extension of settlement to a nearby area of common grazing.

Freshwater Farm (now known as Kings Manor), the possible centre of a Middle Saxon estate and the chief manor of Freshwater recorded in Domesday Book, appears to be located beside anciently enclosed land (Figure 8.13). The small closes surrounding the farmstead could originally have been cleared from waste in the Anglo-Saxon period. In the medieval period there were areas of open-field throughout Freshwater Parish but none were adjacent to Freshwater Farm or to the small settlement that grew up about one kilometre to the south around the church. However, the cluster of compact green-edge hamlets within 'Freshwater Isle' are all adjacent to open-field and some appear to be relatively early, given the *tūn* elements in the names of Norton, Weston, Middleton and Easton although none are

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<sup>264</sup> named Strood Green on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing

recorded in Domesday Book. Thirteen hamlets are shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing (Figure 8.13) and most of these may have originated as green-edge settlements including those with 'Green' affixes at Freshwater Green, More Green (Norton Green), Middleton Green, and Pound Green.<sup>265</sup> Margham (1992a, 105-107) first drew attention to the curious polyfocal settlement pattern in Freshwater and its similarity to the settlement pattern in Thurleigh Parish, Bedfordshire which was characterised by 'ends' (small hamlets with associated greens). Brown and Taylor (1989) suggested that the hamlets in Thurleigh parish were woodland-edge settlements in existence by Domesday and that in the following two centuries open-field lands expanded into the woodland areas. Very little woodland existed in Freshwater by Domesday but there do appear to have been large areas of open grazing land north of the Chalk ridge, from which the open fields discernible on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing and 1838 tithe map could have been taken. The settlement at Freshwater Green (SZ 338 871) lies about one kilometre west of the parish church and has a different form from that of the other hamlets in Freshwater Isle. Here, the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing shows the apparent remains of a regular row with back lane opposite a stream-side green and to the east of an adjacent cluster around a probable former triangular green. Margham (1992a, 107) has suggested that the first element is the remains of a planned settlement laid out in the late eleventh century and later partially deserted although no documentary evidence for either event is known. An alternative interpretation is that the narrow parallel plots of land between the stream-side green and the back lane could be post-medieval allotments of common land on which cottages were built rather than deliberately laid-out medieval tofts.

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<sup>265</sup> Margham (1992a, 106-107) suggests that these green-edge settlements were manorial hamlets. However, Domesday Book recorded only 'Kings Freshwater' and one other small manor within 'Freshwater Isle' (to the west of the River Yar). Later medieval and post-medieval sources record five manors within four tithings to the west of the Yar estuary (Webster nd), these being Kings Freshwater in Norton Tithing, Weston Braboeef in Weston Tithing, Priors Freshwater and Farringford in Priors Tithing and Priory of Carisbrooke lands in Sutton Tithing. Worsley (1781, 268) distinguishes five districts within Freshwater Isle, namely Easton, Weston, Norton, Sutton and Middleton. The tithings of Norton and Easton/Sutton both contained several hamlets in the 1790s although Weston and Priors each had only one hamlet.

Rookley Green (SZ 508 835) is marked as a small hamlet of five houses on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing but is first named on the Ordnance Survey six inch map of 1862-63. This tiny settlement lies about 500 metres south of the main settlement at Rookley which had nine dwellings in the 1790s. The main settlement itself displays the liminality typical of green-edge settlements, being divided between the parishes of Arreton and Godshill although it was the head of a seventeenth century tithing unit (Figure 5.1). Havenstreet (SZ 5590) in north-east Wight is classified in Appendix L as an irregular multiple row but the 1790s drawing suggests that it originated as a common-edge settlement. Like Rookley, Havenstreet occupies a liminal position, being divided between the parishes of Arreton and Newchurch and lying at the intersection of three tithings (Combley, Newchurch and Binstead/Quarr). Havenstreet was not recorded in Domesday Book but Kökeritz (1940; xxv, 32, 281) considered the name to be Old English, meaning either the 'heathen street' or the 'street running through heathland'. Mills (1996, 57-58) has suggested that the name may be based on a medieval personal name but the 1790s drawing suggests the presence of relict heathland, thus favouring Kökeritz's interpretation. Elsewhere on the Island, post-medieval heathland-edge and common-edge settlements sometimes developed as a result of casual squatting on unenclosed land. The 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing shows a typical pattern of scattered cottages at Hale Common to the south of Hale Farm (Arreton). At Apse Heath (Newchurch), the 1790s drawing shows a single cottage but this had become a small hamlet by the end of the nineteenth century.

### **Dispersed Settlements**

In addition to the nucleations of varying sizes and forms discussed above, dispersed settlements are distributed fairly evenly throughout the Island except within the *Central Chalk & Greensand* Region on the higher downland and within the *Bembridge Limestone* Region around Thorley and Wellow (Figure 8.14). Out of 545 dispersed settlements in Basford categories f and g, over one hundred are farmsteads bearing the same name as one or more

nearby farmsteads, the name of the main farmstead often being qualified by the element 'Great' or 'Upper' whilst subsidiary farmsteads bear a qualifying element such as 'Little', 'Lower', 'East' or 'West' (Figure 8.1). The distribution of these 'linked farmsteads is biased towards the north and east of the Island with notable concentrations within the *Northern Clays, Sands & Gravels*, the *Greensand Vale* and the *Southern Chalk & Greensand*. Dispersed settlements provide only one element in the overall settlement pattern within most of the Island's physiographic regions. However, on the heavy Hamstead clays in the north of the Island dispersed settlements are the norm, there being no medieval villages and relatively few hamlets to the east of Shalfleet and Calbourne (Figure 8.15). At the start of the Anglo-Saxon period this region appears to have been dominated by a mixture of woodland and waste (including clay heath) much of which was gradually brought into cultivation. The north-east quadrant of the Island (except the Whippingham area) retains, even today, a heavier woodland cover than elsewhere and the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings show a pattern of individual farmsteads and small hamlets dotted amongst wooded areas. Here, even the parish *foci* of Wootton and Binstead did not develop into substantial villages. In this well-wooded area, still clearly discernible on the Ordnance Survey 1810 map (Appendix A), there were only a few recorded Domesday manors within the parishes of Arreton, Newchurch and Binstead although further east there was a much greater concentration of Domesday manors within the more lightly-wooded parishes of Brading and St Helens. The scarcity of Domesday manors within the most heavily wooded part of north-east Wight does not mean that there was no Anglo-Saxon settlement but perhaps that holdings were still subservient to other manorial estates, a pattern going back to the Middle Saxon period when the main estate centres were located in the centre of the Island. At the time, this area may have been predominantly wood-pasture used for the extensive grazing of animals. The irregular field patterns and ragged, indented profiles of woods shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings strongly suggest that fields were assarted from woodland and waste whilst place-names indicate that this process started in the Anglo-Saxon period. Hints of early land use occur in an Anglo-Saxon charter of AD 842 dealing with the estate of 'Stathe', identified by Margham (2007, 130-

132) as lying to the west of Binstead. The charter refers to a 'wheat marshy meadow' and to an earthwork boundary which may suggest an area of open land. Several farmsteads in the area that are not recorded in Domesday Book have names of Old English origin, including those at Briddlesford, Combley, Newnham,<sup>266</sup> Chillingwood<sup>267</sup> and Upton.<sup>268</sup> Population growth in this area from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards seems to have led to the creation of new farmsteads rather than to the foundation of nucleated settlements as indicated by the prevalence of linked farmsteads with compound names. Some farms in the wooded part of north-east Wight are not recorded until the post-medieval period, for instance, Crook's Heath at SZ 573 902 (Kökeritz 1940, 31), Bean Acre at SZ 576 893) (Kökeritz 1940, 27) and Great and Little Duxmore (Mills 1996, 47).<sup>269</sup>

In north-west Wight, as in north-east Wight, there were few early high-status settlements on the Hamstead Clays. Domesday manors are recorded in this area only at Luton (SZ 486 928), Watchingwell (SZ 447 884) and Hamstead (SZ 399 914), linked farmsteads being marked on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings at 'Upper' and 'Lower' Watchingwell, 'Hamstead, 'Lower Hamstead' and 'East Hamstead'. Away from Parkhurst Forest, north-west Wight was generally somewhat less wooded than north-east Wight albeit with more woodland than the southern part of the Island (see Appendix A). Parkhurst Forest, historically a mixture of woodpasture, heathland and open grassland 'lawns', was a hunting preserve of the lords of the Island and of the Crown in the Middle Ages but also functioned well into the post-medieval period as a large common in which the tenants of various manors had grazing rights (Chatters 1991). The forest was considerably larger than at the present day and its irregular profile, typical of unenclosed commons and

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<sup>266</sup> Ninham on 1790s Ordnance Survey drawing

<sup>267</sup> Chillingwood is recorded in an Anglo-Saxon charter of AD 842 (Margham 2007, 126-130).

<sup>268</sup> However, Upton was first recorded in 1560 (Mills 1996, 103).

<sup>269</sup> However, the original name for Duxmore seems to have been *Kyngeswelle* from Old English *cyning* and *wella*.

testimony to piecemeal assarting, survived into the 1790s when it was shown on the Ordnance Survey drawings (Figure 8.16). The farms of Porchfield (SZ 453 913), Vittlefields (SZ 459 894) and Youngwoods (SZ 457914) on the western edge of the forest and Kitbridge (SZ 487 896) on the southern edge of the forest (Kökeritz 1940, *passim*) have names with Old English elements suggestive of early assarts. However, other farms on the forest's southern edge such as 'Cook's' and 'Reeds' are of later origin. The King's Park of Watchingwell to the south-west of Parkhurst Forest is recorded in Domesday Book and the farms of 'New Park' (SZ 465 885) and 'Little Park' (SZ 462 879) attest to later encroachments around its edge whilst Great Park Farm (SZ 457 883) was established when Watchingwell was finally disemparked in the early eighteenth century (Basford 1989, 13-14). The edges of the Forest attracted informal settlement as late as the early nineteenth century when the hamlet of Marks Corner (SZ 470 921) became established.<sup>270</sup> Away from Parkhurst Forest, the pattern of settlement on the Hamstead clays in north-west Wight was one of farms sited beside greens and commons with particular concentrations in the parishes of Northwood and Calbourne. Werrar Farm (SZ 503 927) lies to the north-east of Parkhurst Forest in Northwood parish. It was first recorded in 1199 but has a place-name of Old English origin meaning 'the river bank by a weir' (Mills 1996, 106) although the farmstead itself could be much later. In the 1790s the farmstead, then called Werror, comprised two or three dwellings on the edge of an irregularly-shaped green. This settlement can be compared with Lydlinch in Dorset where Taylor (1969, 252-253) identified a pattern of irregular fields lying around a triangular piece of common land (Blackbarrow Common), on the edge of which were two small farms. He interpreted the fields as being the result of gradual clearance of the forest or waste in or before the fifteenth century by people living at the farms and the common as possibly being the original clearing left for pasture. The greens and field patterns associated with Werrar and Lylinch are shown in Figure 8.17. Other examples of green-edge farmsteads in Northwood Parish marked on the 1790s Ordnance

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<sup>270</sup> Only two cottages are shown on the Ordnance Survey 1790s drawing but eight are shown on the 1810 map

Survey drawings include Gurnard Farm, Rue Farm, Hardhill Farm, Skinners Grove, Comforts Farm, Cockleton Farm, More Green Farm, Broadfields Farm, Nodes Farm, Crockers Farm, Ridge Farm and Great Thorness Farm.<sup>271</sup> Examples of green-edge farmsteads in Calbourne Parish include Hebbardens, Langbridge Farm, Locks Farm and Elm Farm. Documentary sources sometimes refer to greens, such as the reference in the 1630 Swainston Survey<sup>272</sup> to Goldsgreen near Elm Farm in Calbourne Parish.<sup>273</sup> The green-edge farmsteads in the parishes of Northwood and Calbourne are associated with a pattern of small and generally irregular fields but fields shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings within the Hamstead and Cranmore area in Shalfleet Parish are larger, suggesting post-medieval enclosure from waste. There were two Domesday manors at Hamstead (SZ 395909), one later becoming a grange of Quarr Abbey so the land may have been unenclosed and used for extensive sheep grazing in the medieval period. The name Cranmore (SZ 390 900) is first recorded in 1235 although the place-name is of Old English origin, meaning ‘the marshy ground frequented by cranes or herons’ (Mills 1996, 43). However, this name may simply have been describing a locality and Cranmore Farm may have been established at a later date. This farm may have had very little arable land, relying mainly on the use of open grazing for subsistence.

### **The Origins of the Island’s Dispersed Settlement Pattern**

Some, but not all, of the isolated farmsteads in the northern part of the Island, described above, appear to represent the colonisation of less favourable land in the late Anglo-Saxon, medieval and even post-medieval periods. However, dispersed settlements elsewhere may have older origins as discussed at the

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<sup>271</sup> Informal post-medieval squatting sometimes took place on strips of green alongside trackways as in the cases of the so-called Rew Street ‘manor house’ in Northwood Parish (actually a small cottage) and the cottages at Locks Green, Calbourne Parish.

<sup>272</sup> A Survey of the Manors of Swainston and Brighstone, 1630. Barrington/Simeon Collection, IWCRO.

<sup>273</sup> I am indebted to John Margham for sharing with me his unpublished note ‘Isle of Wight Settlement Morphology Revisited’ from which some of the information on settlements with greens is taken.

start of this chapter when the hypothesis was put forward that they could be ancient elements 'wiped' from the *Central Province*. Isolated farmsteads on downland edge sites may be possible early settlement sites since Cahill (1980, 50) and Margham (*in press a* 278-279) have both suggested that the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlement was on the margins of the chalk downs. The names of over fifty of the 126 manors recorded in Domesday Book (Appendix H) correspond to the names of dispersed settlements classified in Appendix F as being in Basford Category 'f' (no more than five dwellings) or 'g' (single farmsteads). Hooke (1997, 26) reminds us that there are dangers in equating names of manors listed in Domesday Book with discrete settlements of the present day or recent past but these names do provide a list from which to select candidates for further investigation. A few downland-edge farmsteads have place-names with potentially early topographical elements such as Coombe (SZ 428 837), Shalcombe (SZ 396 856) and Luccombe (SZ 577 79 5). Others have place-names with *tūn* elements suggesting slightly later settlement from the Middle Saxon period onwards, examples being Afton (SZ 351 866), Compton (SZ 375 850), Cheverton (SZ 459 945) and Knighton (SZ 566 868). Heasley Manor (SZ 547 857) now lies within an intensively farmed arable area but the place-name means 'the wood or woodland clearing where hazels grow' (Mills 1996, 58), suggesting secondary Anglo-Saxon settlement. The name of Kern Farm (SZ 578 867) is from the Old English for a quern or a mill (Mills 1996, 63). All these places were manors recorded in Domesday Book but recorded populations varied considerably. Kern had only two smallholders in 1086 (although five slaves are recorded), Coombe had two smallholders and two slaves whilst Shalcombe had just one smallholder and no slaves. Two dwellings were shown at Coombe in the 1790s and the same number were recorded in the Royal Survey of 1560 (Webster nd). Kern and Shalcombe are shown as single farmsteads on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings. In these three places, therefore, dispersed settlements appear to have existed for over seven hundred years if not longer. Elsewhere, however, Domesday manorial populations were greater than could have been accommodated in settlements shown on the 1790s drawings which may equate with Domesday manorial centres. For instance, there were fourteen 'villagers', eight 'smallholders' and twelve slaves recorded at Afton; seven

'villagers', three 'smallholders' and one slave at Compton; four 'villagers', four 'smallholders' and 'fifteen' slaves at Heasley; six 'smallholders' and two slaves at Luccombe and four 'villagers plus one 'smallholder' at Cheverton. The actual populations of these places are likely to have been four to five times larger than the numbers of 'villagers' and 'smallholders' listed.<sup>274</sup> On the basis of taxation records, Afton, Compton and Heasley have been proposed as sites where medieval settlement desertion took place (see Chapter 7 and Table 7.2). Many of the supposed deserted settlements listed in Table 7.2 appear actually to have been tithing units where the tax records indicate general reductions in dispersed populations within tithings rather the desertion of one specific settlement site. Indeed, there is some evidence for medieval dispersed settlement away from the magnate farmstead at Heasley in the twelfth century (Hockey 1970, 76-78). However, the topography surrounding the downland farmsteads at Compton, Luccombe and Cheverton would probably not have accommodated additional dispersed settlements away from the main sites so it is possible that these sites were hamlets at the time of Domesday Book rather than isolated farmsteads as they were by the 1790s. These case studies have suggested that farmsteads with early place-names cannot be assumed to have had the same form over many centuries. Looking back further in time, it may be that the Island's *pattern* of dispersed settlements has similarities with that which existed in the Romano-British period or even earlier as suggested by Taylor (2004, 72-73) for Dorset but this does not necessarily mean that the same sites were occupied. It would be difficult to establish the earliest occupation dates of specific downland-edge settlement sites, quite apart from their form, without a programme of fieldwalking and test-pitting.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Each 'villager' and 'smallholder' probably represented the head of a household although slaves may have been counted as individuals. For a discussion on the calculation of the Isle of Wight's Domesday population see Margham (1988).

<sup>275</sup> Pollen analysis might also be helpful but the alkalinity of Chalk soils would be a problem at some sites.

## **A Provisional Model of Isle of Wight Settlement Evolution**

Questions about the origins of dispersed settlements have not been answered conclusively in this chapter. A lack of relevant archaeological research means that it is impossible to say whether dispersed elements in the Isle of Wight's settlement pattern represent a continuum from the late prehistoric, Romano-British or early Post-Roman periods. It can certainly be shown that some *areas* of the Island demonstrate continuity of settlement from the later prehistoric period but only in a very few cases are specific *sites* known to have been occupied both in the Roman and medieval periods (e.g. at Bowcombe and Carisbrooke) although such occupation was not necessarily continuous. Many settlements that are now represented by individual farmsteads may date at least from the Anglo-Saxon period and some clues about the origins of these settlements are provided by Old English place-names, Anglo-Saxon charters and Domesday Book. However, it can only rarely be suggested that these settlements have both occupied the same site and remained unchanged in form since the early/middle Anglo-Saxon period. There is a much stronger body of evidence, including place-names, which suggests that many small and dispersed settlements were established following the clearance of woodland or more systematic exploitation of waste in the later Anglo-Saxon or medieval periods. Examples include green-edge and common-edge settlements throughout the Island as well as farmsteads in northern Wight. Dispersed settlements are generally associated with the concept of *Ancient Countryside* but use of this term is potentially dangerous because it implies a static landscape in which little change took place over centuries whereas, in reality, settlement is a dynamic process.

Investigation of the larger Isle of Wight settlements has demonstrated that their development was 'evolutionary' and that the settlement 'revolution' which took place in central England between the ninth and the twelfth centuries (Taylor 1988, 9) was not adopted wholesale on the Island. In the Middle Saxon period estate centres possibly consisted simply of magnate

farmsteads controlling large estates. Churches serving the parochiae associated with these estates may have been located centrally, ministering initially to a scattered population but gradually attracting settlement. As large estates fragmented from the ninth to the eleventh centuries more churches were built and these attracted settlement as did the earliest churches, becoming parish *foci*. After 1066 the new Norman lords of certain manors built chapels beside their manor houses which gradually obtained parochial status and acted as *foci* for settlement. Most parish *foci* exhibit some degree of nucleation although some are hamlet-sized rather than village-sized. However, only a minority of parish *foci* show signs of deliberate planning or re-planning and definite historical contexts can be suggested for these planning 'events' only at Carisbrooke, Brading, Yarmouth and St Helens. In addition to nucleated parish *foci* the Island also possesses a variety of nucleated settlements without parish churches, generally hamlets rather than villages and nearly all of irregular form. In summary, it has been demonstrated that nucleated settlements are important components of the Isle of Wight settlement pattern although only a small proportion of these settlements appear to have been planned and most have a different character from nucleated settlements in the *Central Province*. Generally, the Island's medieval open fields are associated with villages and hamlets but not necessarily with villages having a formal plan, nor do most Island parishes exhibit the typical form of the *Central Province* consisting of one central village surrounded by a consolidated block of open-field. This suggests that seigniorial or community impetus for the planning or re-planning of villages was only present in a minority of the Island's settlements and that the development of settlements elsewhere was a more informal process, influenced by antecedent settlement and land use, as has been suggested for Freshwater Parish which has a polyfocal settlement pattern of green-edge hamlets. The Island's settlement pattern in the 1790s consisted of scattered nucleations surrounded by dispersed settlements but some settlements comprising individual farmsteads at that date may have been small hamlets in the medieval period. In the northern part of the Island on the heavy Hamstead clays dispersion appears to have been the normal form of settlement and villages were generally absent. Differences can be detected

between north-west Wight and north-east Wight. In the latter area woodland clearance seems to have been taking place from the late Saxon period onwards whilst in the north-west Wight assarting of open 'waste' may have been more common. This chapter has highlighted large gaps in the archaeological evidence available to assist in understanding the origins of the Island's settlement pattern. Nevertheless, the foregoing picture of Isle of Wight settlement evolution conforms well with the generalised retrospective national model set out by Roberts (2008, table 1.1), reproduced here as Table 8.4. A more specific model of the processes at work on the Island is set out in Figure 8.18. Considerable variations in settlement patterns within different parts of the Island have been identified in this chapter and these will be further examined in Chapter 9. The contrasts between settlement and land use in the north of the Island and elsewhere suggest that it may be justifiable to think in terms of 'preferred' and 'less preferred' areas of occupation in the Anglo-Saxon Period, possibly based on antecedent patterns going back to the Roman period or earlier, even if continuity of settlement at precisely the same sites can rarely be demonstrated. This concept of 'preferred' and 'less preferred' areas of occupation is similar to Margham's model of 'landscapes of continuity and 'landscapes of colonisation' in which the margins of the 'Lateral Ridge' and the 'Southern Massif' (Figure 3.17) are seen as the *foci* for early Anglo-Saxon settlement on the Island (Margham 2012b, 278-281). However, Chapter 9 will set out an alternative model to that of Margham based on defining and characterising discrete cultural zones.

## Chapter 9

### The Character of Isle of Wight Cultural Zones

*The ancients divided the circle of the lands into parts, the parts into provinces, the provinces into regions, the regions into districts, the districts into territories, the territories into fields, the fields into centuries, the centuries into acres (jugera), the acres into climata*<sup>276</sup> (Isadore of Seville cited in Brehaut 1912, 250-251)

Landscape patterns have fascinated scholars at national level (e.g. Rackham 1986; Roberts & Wrathmell 2000; Roberts & Wrathmell 2002) and regional level (e.g. Williamson 2003; 24-27 *passim*; Lambourne 2010). However, by zooming in to the local level distinctive cultural patterning can also be discerned within a very small compass, as on the Isle of Wight. This thesis opened with Camden's description of the Isle of Wight landscape and queried whether other historical sources supported his assessment of the Island's diversity, whether these diverse landscapes had existed for a significant duration in time and whether zones additional to those mentioned in Camden's description could be recognised. It has been demonstrated in the foregoing chapters that late eighteenth-century Ordnance Survey drawings not only support Camden's assessment of the Island's landscape diversity but also indicate the existence of many additional zones.<sup>277</sup> Chapter 5 identified seventeen 1790s HLC Areas based on discrete enclosure and land use patterns (Figure 5.9) whilst Chapter 8 identified a great variety of settlement patterns. Such variety is remarkable in so small an island and could be the result of underlying terrain, cultural influences, antecedent patterns or a mixture of all three factors. This chapter will attempt to identify the different influences on settlement and land use patterns and to examine how far these patterns can be traced back in time, employing the 1790s HLC

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<sup>276</sup> (About 60 feet square).

<sup>277</sup> The limited study in this thesis of medieval and post-medieval manorial and royal surveys (Webster nd) has provided relatively few specific illustrations of landscape diversity but a more detailed study of these surveys within the framework of 1790s HLC Areas might well provide additional evidence.

*Areas* as a convenient framework. Use of the 1790s *HLC Areas* does not imply that they would be recognised as entities by past Island inhabitants. However, they appear to reflect real differences in historic landscape character although the boundaries of the Island's various cultural zones may have changed over time.

### **Terrain, Cultural Influences and Antecedent Patterns**

Debates about the influences on England's medieval settlement and land use patterns have dominated national and regional studies. Crude geographical determinism has long been rejected but Williamson (2003, 180-199) has re-affirmed the importance of physical criteria. The terrain on the Isle of Wight, with its varied relief, drainage, geology and soils, has clearly influenced the density and type of settlement. Semi-natural resources (e.g. woodland, downland, heathland and marsh) have also influenced the positioning of settlements as well as being greatly modified by human exploitation. Figure 9.1 shows 1790s land use in relation to contemporary settlement patterns and *HLC Areas*. Proximity to navigable waterways has been the prime influence in the location of medieval and post-medieval towns at Newport, Yarmouth, Brading, Cowes and East Cowes, and may also have facilitated the development of St Helens. The distribution of rural settlement types bears some relationship to the Island's physiographic regions. All these regions contain a mix of nucleated settlements (villages and hamlets) and dispersed settlements. However, whilst dispersed settlements are distributed evenly throughout most regions (Figure 8.14) nucleated settlements are concentrated more heavily in the southern half of the Island (Figure 8.15). In this respect parallels can be drawn between the Isle of Wight and the nearby Isle of Purbeck, the latter being not a true island but a peninsula possessing distinctive characteristics which set it apart from the rest of Dorset. Purbeck has great geological variety within an even smaller area than Wight. The geology of the two areas is by no means identical. However, the historic landscape contrasts on Purbeck (Harris 2012; Natural England nd), between sparsely populated heathland overlying Palaeogene deposits in the

north, downland grazing on the central Chalk uplands and a heavily populated clay vale in the south, mirror contrasts between different physiographic regions in the Isle of Wight. Clustering of settlements at the interface between different physiographic zones occurs both in Purbeck and Wight. Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 17) have emphasised this tendency for concentrations of villages and hamlets to appear along *preferred settlement zones* where terrain contrasts exist (see also Roberts 2008, 29-33). Plotting Isle of Wight settlements in relation to physiographic zones (Figure 8.15) clearly shows the clustering of villages and hamlets where different zones meet. A slightly different clustering effect is observable if villages and hamlets are plotted in relation to *1790s HLC Areas* (Figure 9.2). Here, the positioning of certain settlements on the borderline between different *1790s HLC Areas* may reflect subtle terrain changes which encouraged differential land use or may be related to cultural factors. The concept of *preferred settlement zones* implies linear concentrations of settlements along terrain boundaries. However, this chapter will also seek to identify broader *preferred settlement areas*, perhaps correlating with specific *1790s HLC Areas*, and will describe settlement and cultural patterns that existed in the medieval period or earlier.

Settlement patterns shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings cannot necessarily be assumed to be of great antiquity and some settlements shown on these drawings (particularly common-edge or heathland-edge farmsteads and cottages) are undoubtedly of post-medieval origin. Plotting Old English place-names listed in Appendix G reveals the overall distribution of early settlements although it cannot indicate the early *forms* of these settlements. In fact, Old English place-names are fairly uniformly distributed throughout the whole Island across all physiographic regions (Figure 7.1) apart from some noticeable gaps shown in Figure 9.3. Figure 9.4 shows Old English place-names and areas devoid of these names in relation to land use plotted from the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings. Late eighteenth-century conditions were clearly very different from those at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, since much clearance of woodland and waste had taken place during the intervening centuries but this map does provide an indication of

the landscape's potential. It also demonstrates that with the exception of the mapped gaps in distribution, early settlement was spread fairly evenly across most land away from heavy woodland, high downland and areas of waste. In effect, this map indicates the areas of potential arable where early settlement was concentrated. It provides valuable clues about the historic settlement character of the Island, possibly depicting basic patterns going back as far as Domesday Book or earlier. Nevertheless, there are problems and limitations associated with these place-names. It must be remembered that, like Old English place-names elsewhere in England, these names were not all formed before the Norman Conquest (Watts 2004, xiv). A certain proportion almost certainly relate to settlements created in the later medieval period or even in the post-medieval period, as where the names of topographical features have been applied to farmsteads founded many centuries after these features were named. In some ways the *gaps* in the distribution of Old English place-names provide more insights into medieval and post-medieval settlement patterns than the positions of such names in the landscape, using the principle of *negative mapping* (Roberts *in press*, 2). Figure 9.5 plots gaps in Old English place-names in relation to late eighteenth century settlement patterns within the various 1790s HLC Areas. It demonstrates that the areas lacking Old English place-names were also sparsely settled or devoid of settlement in the 1790s. All areas except 'Thorley, Wellow & Shalcombe' were largely uncultivated at that date, four being on high downland (Figure 9.4).<sup>278</sup> The 'Wilderness & Bleak Down' area (Figure 9.6) encompasses both the high ground of Bleak Down and low-lying land in the upper Medina Valley. Bleak Down, on superficial gravel deposits rather than Chalk, was listed in the Royal Survey of 1559 as 'a heath and furze of 200 acres pertaining to the manor of Rookley' (Webster nd). The land in the Medina Valley, known as 'The Wilderness', was grazing marsh in the 1790s. Thus it can be seen that the absence of Old English place-names correlates closely with the presence of terrain unsuitable for settlement or intensive agriculture.

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<sup>278</sup> Smaller blocks of settlement-free downland have not been plotted and named individually.

Any attempt to assess the past significance of 1790s HLC Areas by interrogation of the Isle of Wight Historic Environment Record (HER) presents difficulties.<sup>279</sup> Medieval records have been excluded from this analysis since the recording method in the HER for sites of this period results in duplication of data and therefore in less meaningful distribution maps. Archaeological sites and finds from the Bronze Age to the Anglo-Saxon periods and those of unknown period have been mapped to identify significant concentrations in relation to 1790s HLC Areas. Within the HER each period is sub-divided into categories of 'point', 'linear' and 'polygon' data. Sites are mapped as linear features or polygons only when their approximate extent has been plotted from field survey, maps or rectified air photographs. Figure 9.7 plots point, linear and polygon data. The map includes individual find spots as well as 'monuments' (buildings, earthworks, buried features and artefact scatters). It reveals a concentration of archaeological sites and finds on or near the coast and beside estuaries. This reflects not only genuine distributional patterns but also patterns of field work and serendipitous discoveries in cliff-falls and broken ground. However, significant concentrations of sites and finds do seem to occur within the northern part of the *Bowcombe, Carisbrooke & Medina Valley 1790s HLC Area* and within the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley 1790s HLC Area*. The exclusion of all point data in Figure 9.8 enables linear features and those mapped as polygons to be seen more clearly. Both categories represent sites discovered mainly from air photographs. They include enclosures, banks,

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<sup>279</sup> In interrogating the archaeological record one needs to be aware of biases in the discovery, collection and recording of material. For instance, since the north of the Island is less-heavily ploughed than the south, archaeological material and crop-mark sites are less likely to be found there. Moreover, until fairly recently the Island has not experienced any large-scale development or linear engineering works comparable to those carried out on the mainland and which have revolutionised perceptions of settlement densities in all archaeological periods and on all geologies and soil types. In the last twenty years there have been developer-funded excavations as a result of PPG 16 (1990), watching briefs on gas pipelines in the early 1990s, a number of large scale pipe-boring operations such as 'Seaclean Wight' from the late 1990s and landscape surveys for the National Trust and other organisations. These have all contributed to a substantial increase in recorded sites. The increase in recorded finds (mainly metal work) has been even greater, particularly since the advent of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) on the Island in 2003. However, no up-to-date published synthesis of the Island's archaeology is available, the only survey having been published before recent developments (Basford 1980) and the 'raw' data from the Historic Environment Record (HER) is difficult to assess without such a synthesis. Furthermore, the many significant finds from the PAS have not yet been integrated with the HER and it has not been possible to map PAS data in this thesis.

ditches, trackways and field systems. Sites are classified mainly as of unknown date, although the majority probably fall within the later prehistoric period, but some field systems are attributed specifically to the Bronze Age, Iron Age or Roman periods or are thought to overlap all three periods. The mapped distribution of linear and polygon features shows marked concentrations within the *West-Central Chalk Downland* and the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley 1790s HLC Areas*, particularly in the case of polygon features. These concentrations probably do represent genuine distributional patterns to some extent but also correspond largely with areas where sites have been plotted from air photographs under the 'National Mapping Programme'. The features within the *West-Central Chalk Downland* include surviving earthworks but those within the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley* comprise mainly sub-surface features since this is a lowland area where much land has been heavily ploughed. Many features known from air photographs occur outside these two areas but have not been plotted and are therefore recorded only as point data, as for instance in the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley 1790s HLC Area* (Figure 9.7). The relationship between archaeological data and areas devoid of Old English place-names is shown in Figures 9.7 and 9.8. The *West-Central Chalk Downland* and the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley 1790s HLC Areas* are almost completely devoid of Old English place-names yet both have marked concentrations of archaeological material. In the *West-Central Chalk Downland Area* this concentration is probably linked to changing patterns of arable agriculture. The Area contained prehistoric and Romano-British field systems but in the medieval period the high downland was used mainly as common pasture for sheep. Changing patterns of occupation and land use within the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley 1790s HLC Area* are more difficult to explain but will be discussed further below.

### **Patterns of Settlement and Land Use within 1790s HLC Areas**

No settlement system 'results from the simple deterministic operation of natural forces' (Roberts & Wrathmell 1998, 106). However, terrain seem to have been particularly influential in shaping settlement patterns within certain

1790s HLC Areas, notably in *The Undercliff* (Figure 5.9) which constitutes a distinct physiographic region. This Area is unique, not just on the Island but in England, for whilst 'undercliffs' exist elsewhere the Isle of Wight Undercliff is the largest inhabited landslip in the country. Here, the broken landslipped ground offers very limited opportunities for agriculture and early use of the area focussed on the exploitation of coastal resources. Neolithic and Early Bronze Age occupation sites are known from Binnel Bay and St Catherine's Point whilst more Iron Age material (other than coins) has been recorded from the Undercliff than from any other part of the Island. Collections of Iron Age and Romano-British material from the coastal cliff may represent domestic rubbish from undiscovered occupation sites although an Iron Age hut excavated at Gills Cliff is the only such occupation site to have been recorded (Isle of Wight Council 2008a, 8-10). Access to the coastal resources of the Undercliff remained important in the medieval period when the parishes of Niton, Whitwell, Godshell, St Lawrence, Newchurch and Bonchurch all included land within the Area although only St Lawrence and Bonchurch held substantial portions of their territories and their parish *foci* below the inner cliff. The agriculturally peripheral nature of the Undercliff meant that parts of it remained as rough unenclosed land in medieval and later times. John Speed's 1611 map (Figure 1.1) depicts 'St Lawrence Park' as occupying most of The Undercliff although it may actually have occupied a much smaller area that became known as 'Old Park' (Basford 1989, 14-15). The chain of hamlets and dispersed settlements shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings within the narrow strip of land below the inner cliff (Figure 9.2) represents a largely medieval settlement pattern although by the late eighteenth century the Undercliff was becoming popular with wealthy tourists. From that date local farmsteads were developed into picturesque 'cottages' although Ventnor remained a scattered coastal hamlet until the 1830s.

The *South-West Wight 1790s HLC Area* (Figure 5.9) has much greater agricultural potential than the *Undercliff* and is varied both in its geology and topography. Nevertheless, its differing natural characteristics appear to have

been incorporated within an integrated system of medieval land use. The village of Brighstone, several hamlets and a number of farmsteads were established in a *preferred settlement zone* on or close to Atherfield Clay at the interface between the rough grazing of the Ferruginous Sandstone and the arable open-field land on Wealden beds to the south (Figures 2.3, 9.1 and 9.2).<sup>280</sup> Much of the rough grazing on the Ferruginous Sandstone was probably common land although only Mottistone Common has retained its identity into the twenty-first century as National Trust property (Currie 1999). Above the Ferruginous Sands there was another area of common grazing on the Chalk downland ridge, shared between parishes which had their *foci* to the south of the ridge and those which had their *foci* to the north. Indeed, the *South-West Wight 1790s HLC Area* corresponds substantially with the medieval parishes of Brighstone, Mottistone and Brook (Figure 5.2) although also including small parts of Shorwell, Shalfleet and Freshwater. The parishes of Brighstone, Mottistone, Brook and Shorwell were formed after the break-up of larger Middle Saxon estates but each had access to the varied resources stretching from the Chalk downs southward to the coast. Geological diversity within this *1790s HLC Area* may have encouraged a mixed settlement pattern. Hamlets and dispersed settlements occur between the main chain of settlements and the coast, sited beside areas of rough grazing at Fernfield and Hoxall and on or near valley-floor land at Brook Green, Chilton Green, Marshgreen and Yafford (Figure 9.1). In the eastern part of the *South-West Wight Area* there is a wider band of good arable land than in the west of the Area (Figure 5.18). Here, to the south of Brighstone, Limerstone and Yafford there are a number of dispersed settlements. Two of these, Sutton and Thorncross are on the borderline between nucleation and dispersion (each having five dwellings in the 1790s) and may have declined from larger hamlets.

Physical terrain played an important role in ensuring that the *Bowcombe, Carisbrooke & Medina Valley Area* (Figure 5.9) was a *preferred settlement*

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<sup>280</sup> Shorwell, at the edge of this *1790s HLC Area*, is the only nucleated settlement that does not lie directly below the Ferruginous Sandstone, being positioned immediately beneath the Chalk downland.

area from the prehistoric period onwards, as described in Chapter 8, but the location of this Area near the centre of the Island was also a very significant factor. Antecedent settlement patterns, strategic considerations and the availability of a site with natural advantages must all have played a part in the decision to construct a defensive fortification on the hilltop later occupied by Carisbrooke Castle, whether the original fortification was of late Roman or late Saxon date (Young & Mephram 2000; Tomalin 2002). This fortification dominated the eastern end of the Bowcombe Valley and lay close to its junction with the Medina Valley (Figure 8.16). The Island's most significant Domesday manor lay in the Bowcombe Valley and although the Middle Saxon manorial centre may have been at Bowcombe Farm the centre of the eleventh century estate was probably lower down the valley at Carisbrooke, below the late Saxon and Norman fortification. Here lay the village of Carisbrooke, a forerunner to the planned twelfth-century borough of Newport and perhaps another statement of social domination by the Island's new Norman rulers who may have imposed a planned form on an existing settlement. The settlement pattern shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings higher up the Bowcombe Valley appears to have been influenced by the natural terrain but also subject to some degree of planning. Some 400 metres to the south-west of Carisbrooke is the double-row hamlet of Clatterford. Further to the south-west there is a chain of hamlets at Bowcombe, Plaish and Clatterford (Figures 9.1 and 9.2). All are of some antiquity, having Old English place-names. In each of these hamlets, a farmstead lies to the south of the other dwellings close to a source of water<sup>281</sup>. At Plaish and Clatterford the fairly regular double row settlements lie at ninety degrees to the Lukely Brook. At Bowcombe the settlement comprises an irregular row on slightly higher ground parallel to the Lukely Brook. This chain of hamlets seems to be a textbook example of locational analysis<sup>282</sup>, reflecting a desire to be close to the valley-floor land of the Lukely Brook which also flowed through Carisbrooke, powering several mills

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<sup>281</sup> The water sources are the Lukely Brook at Bowcombe and Plaish whilst at Froglands Farm near Clatterford there is a spring feeding into a subsidiary of the Lukely Brook.

<sup>282</sup> See Roberts (1977, figure 20 after Haggett 1965) and Roberts 1996 (56-57 and figure 2.1).

in the medieval and post-medieval periods. On the western side of the Medina Valley, also within this 1790s HLC Area, the natural terrain certainly appears to have influenced the choice of settlement sites and forms at Gatcombe and Chillerton Street, two hamlets lying in combes on the edge of the Upper Greensand. In this part of the HLC Area there seems to be a tendency for clusters of dispersed farmsteads to occupy the higher ground on both sides of the Medina Valley.<sup>283</sup> However, this dispersed pattern of settlement was not due to poor soil quality. In the late eighteenth century Marshall (1798, 258) described Gatcombe as 'the finest township of land' he had seen on the Island. In the medieval period the dispersed farmsteads in this HLC Area, like the nucleated settlements on the valley floor, were associated with medieval open fields. In fact the *Bowcombe, Carisbrooke & Medina Valley Area*, in common with the *South-West Wight Area*, had a very high percentage of arable open-field land in the Middle Ages by comparison with other areas (Table 5.4).

The *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley 1790s HLC Area* contains a concentration of archaeological features recorded from air photographs which are potentially of prehistoric date, including field systems, field boundaries, enclosures, banks and ditches (Figure 9.8). This concentration of sub-surface features does suggest that the Area was a settlement zone of some significance before the Roman period. However, similar concentrations of sub-surface features may exist in other lowland parts of the Island but have not yet been plotted as linear and polygon features within the HER, as is known to be the case in the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley Area*. Moreover, local soil conditions may also make sites in the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley* more clearly visible from the air than in some other areas. Curiously, the one known Roman villa sited close to this Area is at Combley on the north side of Arreton Down, separated by the downs from the land of the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley* (Figure 5.12). Anglo-Saxon burials are recorded within the Bronze

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<sup>283</sup> Going up the Medina Valley on the west side these farms include Little Whitcombe, Great Whitcombe, Vayres, Lake, Sheat, Loverston, Upper Rill, Lower Rill, Ramsdown, Roslin and Cridmore. Coming back down the valley on the east side the farms include Rookley, Sibdown and Champion.

Age round barrows on Arreton Down (Arnold 1982, 75-77) and early Anglo-Saxon activity may have been mainly around the edge of the downs. The parish focus of Arreton lies beneath Arreton Down and appears to have been the centre of an estate belonging to King Alfred in the late ninth century. In 1086 this Area contained a good number of Domesday manorial centres. A sign of post-medieval agricultural prosperity is provided by the high concentration of Tudor and Jacobean manor houses and today the Arreton Valley is highly productive with many crops under glass. Thus, a variety of indicators suggest that the *Arreton and Middle Yar Valley* has been an important region at certain times from the later prehistoric period onwards. However, the distribution of settlements shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings is uneven with large gaps between settlement clusters (Figure 9.2). Moreover, a surprisingly low proportion of the field patterns shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings (Figure 5.12) are thought to derive from open-field, as discussed in Chapter 5. The unusual settlement and land use profile of this Area is closely linked to the physical terrain. Archaeological evidence of possible prehistoric field systems implies that much of the locality was cleared of trees in prehistory but there may have been considerably more woodland in the Anglo-Saxon period than in the 1790s as suggested by the place-names Heasley, Kennerley and Munsley (Figures 9.4 and 9.9). Additionally, the south-west of the Area may have been heathland unsuitable for arable agriculture. There would have been much low-lying marshy land in the eastern part of the Area, which is dissected by the valleys of the River Yar, and its tributary streams and in the western part where there is a tributary stream of the River Medina. This is reflected in the Old English place-names of Merston ('the farmstead by the marsh') and Moor Farm (Mills 1996, 71-72) labelled in Figure 9.4. Margham (2012, 277) has suggested that much of his 'Southern Vale' region away from the Chalk downs was a 'landscape of colonisation' in the Anglo-Saxon period (Figure 3.17). Nevertheless, the damp valley-floor land (Figures 5.12 and 9.1) within the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley* would have been quite attractive for farmers, providing pasture and meadow land. Thus, early settlement is generally adjacent to this land although dispersed settlements at Heasley, Horryngford, and Hale are on or adjacent to gravel 'islands'.

Like the *Arreton & Middle Yar 1790s HLC Area*, the *Lower Yar Valley* (Figure 5.9) was characterised in the 1790s by a large amount of valley-floor pasture or meadow beside the River Yar. However, a clear distinction between the two Areas can be seen on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings. In the *Lower Yar Valley* enclosures were generally of smaller size and more irregular shape than in the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley 1790s HLC Area*. The *Lower Yar Valley* was also distinguishable by the presence of two substantial blocks of woodland and by the survival of a significant amount of unenclosed rough grazing whereas there was virtually no woodland within the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley* and rough grazing survived only on St Georges Down (Figures 9.1 and 9.9). Prehistoric sub-surface features have not been recorded within the *Lower Yar Valley* as they have been in the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley* (Figure 9.8) but there are other indications that the *Lower Yar Valley* may have been a significant settlement zone from the prehistoric period. Bronze Age material has been recorded throughout the Area but evidence of Iron Age and Roman activity occurs mainly in three locations: on the Chalk ridge, on the sloping ground between the Chalk ridge and the River Yar and in the Lake area to the south of Sandown. Some of the Iron Age/Romano-British field systems and settlement sites recorded in the Mersley Down/Ashey Down area, including a possible villa site, lie to the north of the road that runs along the ridge and therefore fall within the *North-East Wight 1790s HLC Area*. However, field systems have also been recorded to the south of the road within the *Lower Yar Valley Area* at Knighton Down and Brading Down. Furthermore, concentrations of metal-detected finds and sub-surface features suggestive of ritual activity have been recorded at one site on the Chalk ridge within this Area. On the Lower Greensand slopes to the south of the Chalk ridge the most notable sites are an Iron Age enclosure at Knighton (Basford 1980, 29) and a corn-drying kiln of the mid-fourth century AD at Packway near Mersley Farm, suggesting the nearby presence of a Romano-British building (Tomalin 1988, 51-53). In addition to the corn-drier site, considerable quantities of prehistoric and Roman-British material have been recorded elsewhere on the land of Mersley Farm and it is possible that there may have been continuous occupation here since prehistory. Mersley Farm is not recorded in Domesday

Book but has a name containing the Old English name-element *lēah*. There are also farmsteads at Knighton and Kern on the Lower Greensand slope to the east of Mersley, both bearing Old English place-names and recorded in Domesday Book. The small hamlet of Alverstone, shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and recorded in Domesday Book, is on the north bank of the River Yar. Causeways have been discovered at Alverstone on low-lying marshy ground to the south of the river (CBA 2007), perhaps indicating the exploitation of wetland resources. Preliminary analysis suggests a range of dates for the causeways from the sixth to the ninth centuries AD. The section of the *Lower Yar Valley* Area to the south of the river contained much heathland and some woodland in the medieval period. Here, the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings shows mainly dispersed settlements but there were green-edge hamlets at Branston and Lake. Sandham, the head of an eponymous tithing, was a double-row hamlet, although irregular in form. The only nucleated village within the *Lower Yar Valley 1790s HLC Area* is Newchurch, a medieval parish focus on the western edge of this Area where the larger, more regular fields of the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley* shown on the 1790s drawings give way to generally smaller and more irregular fields. Field patterns suggestive of former open-field occur to the east and south-east of Newchurch. Like Newchurch, the hamlets of Alverstone, and Lower Adgestone were sited close to valley-floor land as well as being close to field patterns thought to derive from medieval open-field (Figure 5.20). Adgestone was also close to former open-field but occupied higher ground below the Chalk ridge. The open-field land associated with Alverstone, Adgestone and Lower Adgestone lay on sloping ground and was not in a regular block as in a classic Midlands township, perhaps because of the terrain. This terrain may also have inhibited the growth of large nucleated settlements but the relatively modest size of Alverstone, Adgestone and Lower Adgestone could also reflect their status as satellite settlements within Brading Parish, fairly close to the parish focus and small market town of Brading. At present, the relationship between settlements within individual Isle of Wight parishes is not understood, nor is that of open fields to individual manors and settlements. There may be a relationship between tithings and settlement forms since each tithing seems

to contain at least one nucleated village or hamlet (Figure 4.1). Such relationships are modelled in the work of Christaller (Roberts 1996, 54-56) but if such relationships exist on the Isle of Wight they elude easy definition.<sup>284</sup>

Zones of uneven ground and/or poorer quality soils on the Island frequently support dispersed rather than nucleated settlements and these are sometimes of late origin. These 'zones' of dispersed settlement can be relatively small pockets of land within 1790s HLC Areas (Figure 5.9), particularly in the centre and the south of the Island. For instance, at the north-western edge of the *Arreton & Middle Yar Valley Area*, north of St Georges Down, there are field patterns suggestive of medieval enclosure from waste associated with minor farmsteads and cottages at Sullens, Little Sullens and Garretts. The *Apse, Shanklin & Luccombe Area*, dominated by enclosures from waste, had a settlement pattern that was almost entirely dispersed in the 1790s. Shanklin was the only nucleated settlement, occupying land around Shanklin Chine and having a composite form. Enclosure from waste seems to have occurred extensively within the *Shorwell, Kingston & Atherfield Sandstone Area*. The northern part of this Area has varied relief. In the 1790s there was heathland around Presford and Bucks Barn on relatively high ground and on locally prominent heights such as Gun Hill and Warren Hill. The valleys of the southward-flowing streams dissecting the higher ground contained rough grazing and withy beds. Further south, the better arable land was situated on low-lying ground close to the south-west coast. Atherfield, the only nucleated hamlet in this Area, lies at the interface between the higher ground and the coastal plain. This Area is atypical of the southern half of the Island in that nearly all settlement is dispersed. The marked contrast between the settlement pattern of the *Shorwell, Kingston & Atherfield Sandstone Area* and that of the adjacent *South-West Wight Area* may be attributable to the presence of Wealden deposits on the lower coastal land in the latter area.

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<sup>284</sup> The relationship between parishes, tithings, settlements and land use is discussed in Chapters 5 and 7. See Figure 8.3 which maps parishes and settlements.

To the east of the *Shorwell, Kingston & Atherfield Sandstone Area* the land rises towards the higher downland within the *South Wight Downland & Downland Edge 1790s HLC Area* (Figure 5.9). In the 1790s there was a high density of both nucleated and dispersed settlement within the *South Wight Downland & Downland Edge Area* relative to other Areas, with the larger villages at Niton, Whitwell and Godshill being situated close to the Yar Valley (Figure 9.1). Other settlements mostly lay around the base of the hill slopes whilst the arable land occupied the more even ground within the Upper Yar and Wroxall Valleys. Even the broken, land-slipped ground surrounding St Catherine's Down and Appuldurcombe Down was occupied by dispersed homesteads, some perhaps of post-medieval date but including the Domesday manors of Gotten and Duncourt. The pattern of settlement around the base of hill slopes can be seen even more clearly in the distribution of Old English place-names (Figure 9.10). On either side of the Wroxall Valley (which contained a tributary stream flowing northward into the River Yar) there were large blocks of downland devoid of Old English place-names. Other settlement-free areas were occupied by the large medieval open fields of Niton and Whitwell (Figure 5.14), perhaps already laid out in the later Anglo-Saxon period. Appuldurcombe may have been another settlement-free area in the Anglo-Saxon period, possibly used for extensive grazing.<sup>285</sup> The density of Domesday manorial centres is much sparser than that of Old English place-names, particularly in the east of the 1790s HLC Area, but there is a clustering of these manorial centres around St Catherine's Down and St Catherine's Hill in the west of the Area (Figure 9.9). A reconstruction of the territory belonging to Wroxall, an important late Anglo-Saxon estate Margham (2007, 151), indicates that it occupied the south-east part of the *South Wight Downland & Downland Edge Area* (Figure 7.3). The estate may have survived intact until 1086 rather than having been split up among lesser landholders and this may account for the fact that it is the only Domesday manor recorded in this part of the *1790s HLC Area*. In 1086

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<sup>285</sup> In the late eighteenth century Appuldurcombe was a landscape park recently remodelled by Sir Richard Worsley but it may have originated as a deer park in the sixteenth century or later (Masters 2005, 27-28). Before the Reformation Appuldurcombe was owned by the religious houses of Montebourg and Aldgate (Hockey 1982, 30-36) but there is little evidence for medieval arable farming within the park.

certain places within the *South Wight Downland & Downland Edge Area* appear to have retained links with more centrally-placed manorial centres, perhaps going back to the Middle Saxon period when there may have been a multiple estate/mother parish of Arreton/Goshill/Newchurch (Figure 9.11). Thus, in Domesday Book the manors of 'Knighton and Ladone' were recorded together as were the manors of 'Sandford and Week'. Knighton lies close to the central Chalk ridge (in the medieval parish of Newchurch) whilst 'Ladone' is thought to equate with Duncourt Farm which lies about twelve kilometres to the south on the eastern side of St Catherine's Down in Whitwell Parish. Sandford lies to the east of Godshill (which was not recorded in Domesday Book) whilst Week Down lies about four kilometres to the south. Although Duncourt and Week were apparently peripheral locations in 1086, supplying downland grazing for more central manorial centres, Margham (2012, 276-277) has argued that the western and northern margins of his 'Southern Massif' (Figure 3.17) were 'landscapes of continuity' and has suggested that a Roman villa may have existed to the north of Wroxall, based on the evidence of coin hoards.

The foregoing analysis of the *South Wight Downland & Downland Edge 1790s HLC Area* has shown how difficult it is to disentangle terrain, cultural factors and antecedent patterns as influences on settlement and land use patterns. This difficulty is perhaps even more acute in the case of the *Freshwater Area* (Figure 5.9) which has a polyfocal settlement pattern described in Chapter 8. Within 'Freshwater Isle', there are fourteen hamlets including the eponymous parish focus and a possible planned nucleation at Freshwater Green (Figure 8.13).<sup>286</sup> Many of these hamlets are associated with green or former greens and those at More Green (Norton Green), Middleton Green Pound Green and Freshwater Green are distinguished by 'Green' affixes. There appears to have been little woodland within the *Freshwater 1790s HLC Area* by the medieval period but field pattern morphology and field names suggest that there were large areas of lowland

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<sup>286</sup> There is also a scatter of dispersed farmsteads.

rough grazing land as well as common pasture on the downs. Approximately 50% of the Area may have been open-field arable in the medieval period (Table 5.4). However, when comparisons are made between the *Freshwater* Area and other 1790s *HLC Areas* with comparable amounts of open-field in the medieval period there are marked differences both in settlement patterns and enclosure methods. Terrain may be partly responsible for the differences between *Freshwater* and the adjacent *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley Area* (although cultural and antecedent factors are also involved in the latter area) but how can one account for differences between *Freshwater* and *Bembridge Isle & Yaverland*? In the 1790s *Freshwater* had a settlement pattern of polyfocal hamlets and field patterns indicative of piecemeal enclosure over a long period of time with some open-field still extant (Figure 5.15) whereas there was a much more regular enclosure pattern at the north-eastern end of the 'Bembridge Isle' peninsula within the *Bembridge Isle & Yaverland Area*. Here, the former open-field land lay within a loose grid of lanes and tracks along which farmsteads occurred at regular intervals (Figure 5.19). This field pattern morphology has similarities to that of the *South-West Wight Area* but the grid of lanes and tracks with associated farmsteads is unparalleled elsewhere in the Island. Given the regularity of the open-field system one might have expected the farmsteads to have all been situated within the double row settlement of Bembridge Street. No explanation can be offered for this particular arrangement of farmsteads although the regularity of the Bembridge field system may be related to the relatively flat terrain in this area. The morphology of field patterns within 'Freshwater Isle' indicates that the open fields in this area must have been much more irregular than those of 'Bembridge Isle' even before piecemeal enclosure commenced. If Freshwater's settlement pattern of hamlets and the winding lanes connecting them was in existence before the open fields were laid out this may have caused these fields to be irregular. There is certainly evidence, in the *-tūn* place-name elements at Norton, Weston, Middleton and Easton, for the relative antiquity of at least some of the hamlets and farmsteads within 'Freshwater Isle' even though the green-edge settlements so typical of Freshwater are often interpreted as being of relatively late origin in a mainland context, possibly dating from between the late eleventh and the

thirteenth centuries in East Anglia (Williamson 2003, 174; Martin 2012, 245). Perhaps late Saxon Freshwater was still a predominantly pastoral area into which the open fields were fitted at a relatively late date. The piecemeal process of later open-field enclosure (commencing by the sixteenth century but still incomplete in the nineteenth century) suggests relatively weak manorial control. If such weak control did exist it may have been a product of the polyfocal settlement pattern, resulting in a complicated pattern of tenancies that were difficult to regulate. However, no detailed work has been done concerning manorial regulation on the Isle of Wight so this is merely a hypothetical suggestion.

The *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley 1790s HLC Area* (Figure 5.9) lies to the north of the central Chalk ridge and constitutes a discrete physiographic region (Figure 2.6) with light soils above limestone. Old English place-names are completely absent within this Area except on its periphery (Figure 9.12). This requires explanation since *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley* was identified in Chapter 8 as a zone of settlement continuity from the later prehistoric period to the Pagan Anglo-Saxon period. Much of the Area lies on easily worked soils above a deposit of Bembridge Limestone and an abundance of crop marks are visible from the air. These comprise circular, linear and sub-rectangular features, including Bronze Age ring ditches which indicate tree clearance and settlement by the second millennium B.C. Other than the ring ditches, most features are undated but are thought to be mainly prehistoric. Bronze Age and undated sites recorded in the Historic Environment Record (HER) show a bias towards the north of the Area (Figure 9.7) whilst Roman coins recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) occur around the periphery of the Area close to its northern, eastern and southern boundaries (Walton 2011, figure 100). High levels of Roman activity are indicated by these coin finds and Walton (2011, 260-261) has drawn attention to the potential significance of the limestone deposit on which the finds occur. PAS and other metal-detected finds of Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon have been recorded from the eastern and southern parts of this 1790s HLC Area (Salter 2010, 61-77) including Anglo-Saxon metalwork. A pagan Anglo-Saxon grave

with associated goods has also been recorded (O'Rourke 2006, 4.17) and an early Christian skilnet thought to be a baptismal vessel of the seventh or eighth century AD has recently been discovered (Basford 2007, 204). This Anglo-Saxon material must be considered in conjunction with Chessell Cemetery, a major Pagan Anglo-Saxon burial ground that was excavated in the nineteenth century and lies just outside the south-east corner of the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley 1790s HLC Area* (Figure 9.13). The burial ground is located to the east of Shalcombe Manor, a Domesday manorial centre which lies close to the source of a stream that flows northward for 2.5 kilometres before joining the Caul Bourne. Nearby, a possible Roman villa site has recently been recorded by the PAS at Chessell Plantation. Recent PAS finds also indicate the presence of a possible Roman building about 700 metres west of Shalcombe Manor just within the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley 1790s HLC Area* beneath Shalcombe Down. Secondary Anglo-Saxon burials in Bronze Age barrows were recorded on Shalcombe Down in the nineteenth century. These various sites and finds suggest that a significant Roman and early Anglo-Saxon settlement zone straddled the boundary between the 1790s HLC Areas of *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley* and *Shalfleet & Calbourne*. This settlement zone appears to have extended northward along the stream rising beside Shalcombe Manor and to have included land as far west as the present Churchills Farm. Eighth-century coin finds in the north-east part of the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley Area* suggest the presence of a Middle Saxon 'productive site' (Salter 2010, 73).

During the middle to late Saxon period there appears to have been a shift in the focus of settlement within the postulated estate and mother parish of Shalfleet/Calbourne (Figure 9.13) and Shalfleet may have been the focus for a large Shalfleet/Calbourne mother parish which may perhaps included the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley Area* (see Chapter 8). However, there is no immediately obvious reason for the absence of Old English place-names within the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley Area*. Prehistoric activity noted above must have removed the woodland cover from the Area at an early date and none is shown in the 1790s except on the western boundary near

Wilmington. Furthermore, the terrain seems suited to arable agriculture and intensive arable production certainly dominated the Area in the late twentieth century. One might therefore suppose that the entire landscape was occupied by open-field in the medieval period with settlement concentrated in nucleated villages, a pattern familiar in Roberts & Wrathmell's *Central Province*. Indeed, Thorley and Wellow (recorded as estate centres in Domesday Book) were nucleated settlements in the 1790s, although not of a compact or regular form. The only medieval dispersed settlements within the Area were at Shalcombe Manor, which was recorded in Domesday Book and Churchills Farm, first recorded in 1295.<sup>287</sup> A very limited number of roads and tracks are shown on the 1790s drawings, probably attributable to the lack of settlement. Such a paucity of tracks might be expected within an area entirely devoted to arable cultivation but in fact arable land seems to have occupied no more than 40% - 45% of the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley Area* in the medieval period (Table 5.4) and even this figure may be an over-estimate. Open-field arable certainly occupied the land to the south of both Thorley Street and Wellow. However, a survey of 1648 indicated that Thorley's arable fields accounted for only 156 acres out of a total parish size of 1610 acres (Margham 1990, 124). Even allowing for a shift to pastoral activity in the late medieval period the small amount of arable is striking. The tithe maps for Thorley and Shalfleet indicate that the two settlements of Thorley Street and Wellow shared a common which occupied land to the south of the open-field land (Figure 5.23) although it was enclosed between 1680 and the 1790s. On the western edge of the Area there is evidence for two areas of non-arable land use in the medieval and post medieval periods. One lay close to 'North Park Copse' (within Freshwater Parish) where large pasture enclosures shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings are suggestive of a medieval deer park although no documentary evidence is known. The other zone lies in Thorley Parish and was known in the nineteenth century as 'Tapnell Furze'. It is tempting to associate Tapnell Furze and perhaps the area of Thorley/Wellow Common with the warren which Isabella de Fortibus is said to have possessed at Thorley in the

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<sup>287</sup> Three dispersed dwellings shown within this Area on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings, at Tapnell Farm, Newbarn and Dogtail Cottage, are of post-medieval origin.

thirteenth century (Worsley 1781). Shalcombe Grange, coterminous with a detached portion of St Nicholas' Parish, lay in the south-east corner of the *Shalcombe, Thorley & Wellow Area* and was owned by Quarr Abbey during the Middle Ages, accounting for the lack of settlement here. The grange at Shalcombe may have been used as a sheep walk at least in the later medieval period. Having reviewed the evidence for the evolution of the *Shalcombe, Thorley & Wellow Area* in the medieval and post-medieval periods there is still no clear reason for its unusually empty landscape. Could we possibly be seeing here a late Saxon hunting territory, partially settled and farmed in the medieval period but still retaining clues to its earlier land use? Detailed analysis of available documentary sources, particularly the records of the de Redvers family (Bearman 1994) would be necessary to add weight to this speculative hypothesis. What this Area does clearly demonstrate is how patterns of settlement of land use within a given zone can change over time and that the ostensible suitability of land for extensive arable agriculture does not necessarily denote that it was given over to that use in the past.

The *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley 1790s HLC Area* with its light limestone soils is atypical of Northern Wight in general which has heavy soils and is more heavily wooded than south Wight. However northern Wight can by no means be considered as a homogeneous area. There are very clear variations both in geology and in woodland cover within the discrete Areas of *Shalfleet & Calbourne, Parkhust & Northwood, Whippingham, Fairlee & Staplers* and *North-East Wight* (Figure 5.9). This raises the large question as to whether the woodland in the north part of the Island represents remnants surviving from prehistory or whether it was subject to clearance in later prehistory and the Romano-British period before regenerating in the early Anglo-Saxon period. It would certainly be a mistake to see the north of the Island as being devoid of settlement in later prehistory or in the Romano-British period. The archaeological record does not support such a conclusion particularly since the advent of the Portable Antiquities Scheme. This Scheme has led to an exponential growth in finds of all periods within most

parts of the Island and on land of varying agricultural potential, distributions of PAS finds seemingly being influenced more by the preferences of metal detectorists and the availability of land for detecting than by historically significant settlement patterns. However, conspicuous monuments such as Bronze Age round barrows and Roman villas do tend to occur on and around the central belt of Chalk downland and this is probably not simply the result of differential preservation (Williamson 1998, 5). One may perhaps envisage a Romano-British landscape where the main estate centres were close to the central Chalk ridge but where subsidiary settlements existed to the north and south of the ridge. This pattern probably continued into the Anglo-Saxon period but there were other considerations beside those of agriculture. Within the *Shalfleet & Calbourne 1790s HLC Area* (Figure 9.13) the parish focus at Calbourne certainly lay close to the Chalk downland but that at Shalfleet (possibly the original focus for an early Shalfleet/Calbourne mother parish) occupied a position close to the tidal inlet of 'Shalfleet Lake'. This may have been due to strategic considerations or perhaps to antecedent settlement since Roman building material has been recorded near Shalfleet Church. Salter (2010, 117) has drawn attention to the similarity between the site of Shalfleet village and that of the pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Finglesham in Kent, both sites being located close to the head of a creek which leads off a larger inlet from the sea, ideal locations for controlling possible trade routes from the continent. The land between Shalfleet and Calbourne lies mainly on heavy Hamstead clay yet a site at Heathfield on this geology has yielded Roman building material, pottery, coins and brooches. Other Roman sites have been recorded on the coast to the north-east of Newtown at Brickfields and Saltmead. A recently recorded Roman site at Five Houses (near Calbourne) lies on lighter soil as do the sites of the Roman buildings near Chessell and Shalcombe discussed above in connection with the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley 1790s HLC Area*. A zone straddling the boundary between the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley Area* and the *Shalfleet & Calbourne Area* may have been particularly significant for Roman and early Anglo-Saxon settlement but the focus of settlement appears to have shifted further to the north in the Middle Saxon period. Old English place-names lie mainly in the centre of the Area, many on the Hamstead clays and the same is true for

settlements shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings. The two parish *foci* of Calbourne and Shalfleet, the failed medieval borough of Newtown and Ningwood Green on the western edge of the Area all displayed some degree of nucleation in the 1790s. Elsewhere, settlement consisted mainly of a moderately dense scatter of dispersed farmsteads (Figure 9.13). Land devoid of settlements to the north of Calbourne and the east of Shalfleet may have contained the arable land of these two parish *foci* in the medieval period whilst another such zone to the north of Swainston was occupied by Calbourne Heathfield, common grazing land until it was enclosed from 1577. The hamlet of Five Houses may have developed in the late medieval or early post-medieval period as a common-edge settlement beside Calbourne Heathfield. Woodland in this central part of the *Shalfleet & Calbourne Area* does not consist of extensive blocks, nor are very many of the field patterns suggestive of assarts from woodland. However, woodland products were important, at least on the Swainston estate, in the seventeenth century. Numerous small woods and copses are shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and the tree-lined hedgerows in much of the Area give it a well-wooded appearance at the present day. Old English place-names and settlements shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings are sparse to the south-west of Calbourne and to the east of the Newtown estuary. Both these areas had distinctive enclosure patterns in the 1790s. The land to the south-west of Calbourne is of reasonable quality and may perhaps have been the demesne of Westover Manor in the Middle Ages although documentary evidence has not been examined. Land to the east of the Newtown estuary lies over Bembridge Marls and may have been of relatively good agricultural quality. The main holding in this area was Elmsworth Farm<sup>288</sup>, which had formed part of the demesne belonging to Swainston Manor in the medieval period (Webster nd). There were very large pasture large closes here in 1630 (Jones 2003, 76). On the other side of the Newtown estuary from Elmsworth, within the *Hamstead & Cranmore 1790s HLC Area*, settlement was much sparser than in much of the *Shalfleet & Calbourne Area*. No villages or hamlets existed here in the 1790s. Much of

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<sup>288</sup> The name Elmsworth, first recorded in 1213, means 'the shore of the em-tree' and the second element is not Old English *worth* (Mills 1996, 48).

the land may have been waste or rough grazing in the medieval period, particularly to the north of the Shalfleet-Yarmouth road where the scatter of farmsteads is only of moderate density, including a tiny farmstead cluster at Lower Hamstead. Land to the south of the road may have had more mixed uses and here the farmsteads all lie close to the boundary with the *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley Area*.

In the late eighteenth century Parkhurst Forest was the largest surviving area of uncultivated land away from the downs .This prompts the question why such an extensive block of woodland and waste should survive at Parkhurst within the *Parkhurst & Northwood 1790s HLC Area* (Figure 5.9) and not in other parts of northern Wight. Although the exact legal status of Parkhurst Forest in the medieval period is unclear (Chatters 1991, 43-44) there is no doubt that it was a hunting ground for the use of the king and the lords of the Island although it also functioned as ‘a large common’, at least in the late medieval and early post-medieval period. Short (2006, 52) describes the ‘old hunting grounds of south-east England as ‘purely cultural products’. In other words, their survival and management as large tracts of woodland and waste was dependent upon the seigniorial will of the Crown and the aristocracy rather than simply on the fact that the land was unsuitable for cultivation. However, the differentiation between Parkhurst and other parts of northern Wight must predate the Norman Conquest since both the forest and some surrounding land is devoid of Old English place-names (Figure 9.3). This may suggest that Parkhurst was deliberately preserved as a hunting ground when other parts of northern Wight were being at least partially cleared for agriculture, perhaps in the Middle Saxon period. It is even possible that the area which became Parkhurst Forest after the Norman Conquest had been a grazing and woodland resource for several millennia and had never been subject to extensive clearance for cultivation. Parkhurst was situated within the multiple estate and mother parish of Carisbrooke and the core of this estate lay in the easily-worked and long-cultivated Bowcombe and Medina valleys. It may therefore have been unnecessary to reclaim the poor soils of Parkhurst for agriculture whereas within the neighbouring estate and mother

parish of Calbourne land on the Hamstead clays may have been required for that purpose. The area devoid of Old English place-names in and around Parkhurst was considerably larger than the extent of the forest as shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings (Figure 9.4). This settlement-free area may delineate the extent of wood pasture and clay/gravel heath that was in existence at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, covering a larger area than the 'legal' forest which was probably created after the Norman Conquest. The settlement-free area included the 'King's Park' at Watchingwell adjoining Parkhurst Forest, first recorded in Domesday Book in 1086 and partly taken out of the tenth-century Watchingwell estate (Margham 2005, 86-91).<sup>289</sup> Parkhurst Forest itself was not recorded in Domesday Book as it was a crown possession and therefore not liable to tax. Figure 9.14 shows Parkhurst and its environs, including the King's Park and the adjacent tenth century estate of Watchingwell. The woodland and waste around Parkhurst appears to have been assarted from the later Anglo-Saxon period as attested by farmsteads with Old-English place-names on the edge of the forest at 'Youngwoods', 'Vittlefield', 'Cockleton' and 'Kitbridge'. The second element in 'Vittlefield' is Old-English *feld* which has the meaning 'open or cultivated land' (Watts 2004, xliv) and this may have been used as a descriptive term, differentiating the assarted land at Vittlefield from the nearby waste of Parkhurst. Youngwoods and Vittlefield lie on the western edge of the forest within Carisbrooke Parish. It is noticeable that beyond the western boundary of the forest there are no place-names of definite Old English origin in much of the detached part of Shalfleet Parish which corresponds with the Late-Saxon Watchingwell estate. Here, Anglo-Saxon settlement may have been confined to the estate centre at Upper Watchingwell. The name of a farmstead at Porchfield lying within the Watchingwell estate contains the Old English element *feld*. However, the first element of the name refers to a family not mentioned until the thirteenth century and the place-name was not recorded until 1599 (Mills 1996, 83) so this name may not indicate early settlement within the central part of the estate. Nonetheless, the eastern edge of the Watchingwell estate, recorded in a charter of AD 969, marks the

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<sup>289</sup> Watchingwell Park remained settlement-free until the early eighteenth century (Basford 1989, 13-15).

western boundary of Parkhurst Forest, implying that by this date the Watchingwell estate had already been cleared for agricultural use, possibly in the form of extensive grazing.

Land to the north of Parkhurst Forest may have been partly cleared of woodland by the Roman period. A Roman 'villa' recorded on the coast at Gurnard (Motkin1990) in this part of the *Parkhurst & Northwood 1790s HLC Area* could be connected with the export of Bembridge Limestone. Roman building material has also been reported from a coastal location to the west of Sticelett Farm and from an inland site to the east of Northwood Church, close to the River Medina. In the Anglo-Saxon period there was some early settlement to the north of Parkhurst Forest as shown by the distribution of Old English place-names (Figure 9.14) and the existence of Domesday manors at Luton. However, the place-name 'Somerton' suggests seasonal occupation (Mills 1996, 96), implying that at least some of the zone to the north of Parkhurst Forest was marginal land in the Middle Saxon period. In the medieval period open-field arable was very limited in this Area although it was recorded at Somerton (Gray 1915, 467). By the late twelfth century a church had been built to the north of the forest, hence the name 'Northwood' (Mills 1996, 78), but this was only a chapelry of Carisbrooke until 1545 (Lloyd 2006, 197). A small hamlet existed beside the church by the 1790s but settlement shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings mainly took the form of dispersed farmsteads, many apparently associated with small greens and set within a landscape of modestly sized woods and copses (Figure 9.14).

The *Whippingham, Fairlee & Staplers 1790s Area* (Figure 5.9), lying opposite the *Parkhurst & Northwood Area* on the other side of the Medina Estuary, includes a zone devoid of Old English place-names which is almost comparable in extent to that in and around Parkhurst Forest. This zone survived into the eighteenth century as a block of settlement-free unenclosed grazing land (with some woodland) that was divided between Fairlee

Common and Alverstone Common in Whippingham Parish and Staplers Heath, Standen Heath and Lynn Common in Arreton Parish. Confusingly, Wootton Common also lay in Arreton Parish (Figure 9.15) and may have first been defined when Wootton Parish was taken out of a mother parish including Whippingham, Arreton and Godshill (Figure 9.16). Originally, all the heaths and commons in Arreton, Whippingham and Wootton could have formed a single expanse of open grazing within the Middle Saxon estate and mother parish. This may have had very ancient origins, possibly originating as a clay heath in the prehistoric period, although without clear palaeoenvironmental evidence we cannot be certain when this land was first cleared of woodland.<sup>290</sup> Oosthuizen (2013, 43) has written of early 'collective pastures', identifiable as 'empty zones' devoid of prehistoric or Romano-British fields and settlement. Some archaeological material *has* been found within the zone devoid of Old English place-names but this has been mainly prehistoric flint and artefact scatters with a few sub-surface features. Wootton Parish lay to the north of the settlement-free area but contained only one settlement with an Old-English place name, this being the parish focus which comprised a church and manor house. Wootton Manor was recorded in Domesday Book. The manor House and church were surrounded by a medieval deer park (Figure 9.15), apparently first recorded in 1298.<sup>291</sup> This deer park may previously have been part of the large area of settlement-free commons and heaths. The heavy Hamstead clay on which the heaths and commons in Whippingham, Wootton and Arreton were situated gives way to gravel deposits closer to the coast, partially overlying the Osborne and Headon Beds and Bembridge Marls (Figures 2.3 and 2.4). Here, substantial blocks of woodland existed in the 1790s. The gravel area attracted settlement from the Middle Saxon period, notably at Whippingham which was recorded as a large estate of twenty-two hides between AD 740 and AD 756 in a now-lost charter (Margham 2012, 14). The estate centre may not have been at the site of the church, which in the 1790s stood alone apart from the

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<sup>290</sup> Environmental samples were taken from a small-scale excavation at the Standen Heath landfill site (Hayes 2012) but these contained only a few identifiable plant macrofossil remains, possibly indicative of a heathland environment.

<sup>291</sup> There is a reference to 'free warren' in 1298 (CAL PR Ed.I, 1292-1300).

rectory and a modest farmhouse, but could possibly have been at Alverstone.<sup>292</sup> By the time of Domesday Book there were three manors named 'Whippingham'. The 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings show hamlets at Alverstone and at Wootton Bridge as well as a moderate density of dispersed settlements (Figure 9.2). On the southern fringe of the *Whippingham, Fairlee & Staplers Area* the heavy Hamstead clay once more gives way to slightly less intractable soil lying over Bembridge Marls and the Bagshot Beds to the east of Newport. Here the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings show a scatter of dispersed farmsteads, some of which have Old English Place-names, but only Great Pan and Durton are recorded in Domesday Book.

There are some fairly large blocks of woodlands in the *Whippingham, Fairlee & Staplers 1790s HLC Area* but the woods in the adjacent *North-East Wight Area* (Figure 5.9) are different in character, often having sinuous, indented or concave boundaries suggestive of medieval assarting. *North-East Wight* is the most heavily-wooded of all the *1790s HLC Areas*, with most woods being fairly large by Island standards (Figure 9.9) although less woodland exists on the eastern fringe of the Area, particularly within St Helens Parish which lies on Bembridge Marls, overlain in places with Marine Gravel. Elsewhere in the Area soils are derived from the heavy Hamstead clays. There were no villages in the interior of the Area in the 1790s (Figure 9.2) although settlements on the coast at Ryde and Lower Ryde, probably hamlets in the medieval period, were rapidly expanding. The small town of Brading, a medieval foundation, lay on the periphery of this Area, as did the green village of St Helens. Elsewhere, hamlets at Havenstreet and to the south of Binstead were irregular, common-edge settlements. Binstead, a hamlet-sized parish focus, was a formless, irregular cluster as were the hamlets of Kite Hill beside Wootton Creek and Fairy Hill in the east of the Area. A reasonably

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<sup>292</sup> 'Certain land at Whippingham, which afterwards became known as the manor, was granted about the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Henry de Clavill to the abbey of Quarr' (Page 1912, 198). This is the holding referred to by Webster (nd) as the 'Manor of Clavells *alias* Alverstone. It was probably associated with the settlement named as Alverstone on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and as 'Whippingham Street' on the 1810 Ordnance Survey map.

high density of dispersed settlement was spread fairly evenly throughout most much of the Area although gaps existed to the south of Quarr Abbey, to the east of Havenstreet, to the south of Great Briddlesford, to the east of Rowlands Farm, to the north of Barnsley Farm and to the north of St Helens. Land to the south of Quarr and the north of St Helens was occupied by the home farms of Quarr Abbey and St Helens Priory in the medieval period, accounting for the lack of other settlement.<sup>293</sup> The western half of the *North-East Wight Area* contained only two Domesday manorial centres, one of these being at the medieval parish focus of Binstead and the other within the most densely wooded part of the Area at Briddlesford. (Figure 9.9) This lack of Domesday manorial centres was not confined to those localities where heavy woodland existed in the 1790s. There was also a lack of such centres to the south and east of Binstead, around Havenstreet and to the north of Ashe where less woodland is shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings. Enclosure patterns on the 1793/4 Ordnance Survey drawings suggest that the land to the south of Binstead and around Havenstreet may have been heathland or waste in the medieval period whereas that to the east of Binstead may have been open-field arable. Ashe Common still occupied the land to the north of Ashe in the 1790s. The density of Old English place-names within the *North-East Wight Area* is similar to that of other Areas but some settlements with these place-names may have been founded after the Norman Conquest, taking their names from nearby natural features. Dispersed settlement was interspersed among the woodland (Figure 9.1) in contrast with the *Whippingham, Fairlee & Staplers Area* where the extensive area of open grazing land, possibly long-cleared of woodland, was totally devoid of settlement. Geology cannot have been the decisive factor in the creation of these contrasting landscapes since both the settlement-free heathland zone of the *Whippingham, Fairlee & Staplers Area* and much of the *North-East Wight Area* lie on the heavy clays of the Hamstead Beds. Furthermore, the contrasts between the two landscapes cannot be explained in terms of different cultural patterns between parishes

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<sup>293</sup> Quarr Abbey, founded in 1132 (Hockey 1970, 1-14) may have been deliberately sited within the *North East Wight Area* because it contained relatively few settlements and little cultivated land, since Cistercian monks specialised in reclaiming land for agriculture.

or townships since the cleared heathland of the *Whippingham, Fairlee & Staplers* Area and the most densely wooded part of the *North-East Wight* Area lie beside each other within the same medieval parish of Arreton (Figure 9.17) and both heathland and wooded zones are included in the seventeenth century tithings of Wootton and Combley (Figure 7.20).

The wooded character of much of *North-East Wight* does not mean that no prehistoric or Romano-British activity occurred within the Area. There is certainly less Bronze Age material in all parts of northern Wight than has been recorded around the central Chalk ridge, in the valleys of the Medina and Eastern Yar, and along the south-west coast (Figure 9.7). Nevertheless, such material does exist and watching briefs in connection with the 'Seaclean Wight' pipe-laying operation of the 1990s revealed several artefact scatters, ditches, pits and gullies of this period within the inland part of the *North-East Wight* Area. Few Iron Age coin finds have been recorded in *North-East Wight* through the Portable Antiquities Scheme although there has been an exponential growth in the number of known Iron Age coins island-wide since the advent of the PAS. However, the distribution of coin finds reflects the sites available to metal-detectorists rather than patterns of occupation and therefore the scarcity of coins in *North-East Wight* is not significant. The density of Romano-British sites and finds recorded in the HER for *North-East Wight* is comparable with that of all other Areas except that of the *Bowcombe, Carisbrooke & Medina Valley* where an exceptionally high density exists. Recorded sites and finds occur in three localities: close to the Chalk ridge, fairly close to the northern coastline and on the western edge of the Area in the most heavily-wooded part of *North-East Wight*. Here, a number of possible Romano-British occupation sites were recorded during the 'Seaclean Wight' watching briefs. However, it is the coastal zone that has revealed a great wealth of archaeological activity from prehistory onwards at Fishbourne Beach, Quarr Beach and Binstead Beach. The Wootton-Quarr Project (Tomalin *et al*, 2012) has shown the importance of coastal resources trapped, fished and gathered by communities from the Neolithic period onwards. Just over one kilometre inland from Quarr Beach late Neolithic

artefacts and a small Bronze-Age round barrow cemetery have been recorded at Puck House Hill (Tomalin *et al* 2012, 144-146). Environmental evidence from close to the barrow cemetery suggested that a major phase of woodland clearance and an increase in cereal cultivation took place in the late Bronze Age. Fishbourne Beach was used by maritime traders in the Roman period and in the Middle Saxon period a possible fish weir capable of feeding a growing coastal community was constructed in the intertidal zone between Quarr and Binstead.<sup>294</sup> Shortly before the Norman Conquest a large V-shaped fishtrap was erected across the creek at Binstead, possibly to serve the needs of a workforce labouring in the Binstead limestone pits. This local limestone industry had been in operation from the Roman period but was in its heyday immediately before and after the Norman Conquest (*ibid*, 21-23).

### **Domesday Manorial Centres, Preferred Settlement Areas and Cultural Zones**

The archaeological record of coastal activity within the *North-East Wight Area* demonstrates that in the past certain areas were attractive for reasons other than having fertile or easily worked soils. Nevertheless, assuming that Domesday manorial centres can be equated with places bearing the same names in the 1790s (or identified by various authorities in Appendix H), the distribution of Domesday manorial centres (Figures 7.5 and 9.9) does suggest that the western part of *North-East Wight* was not a preferred settlement area in the late Anglo-Saxon period and that other areas may have had greater attractions. However, there are problems both with the use of Domesday manorial centres as indicators of 'preferred settlement areas' and with interpreting the significance of distributional patterns. It has been demonstrated that Domesday Book by no means provides a complete record of all manorial centres (Weldon Finn 1962, 288-293). Figures 7.5 and 9.9 should therefore not be assumed to give a complete picture of their

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<sup>294</sup> Similar large structures of comparable date have also been recorded at Springvale to the east of Ryde.

distribution. Moreover, even if the manors recorded on the Isle of Wight correlate reasonably well with the numbers of such manors actually existing in 1086, the manorial centres certainly do not represent the totality of settlements at that date since the manorial tenants may have been dispersed throughout individual estates. This being the case, varying densities of Domesday manorial centres in different parts of the Island cannot be used to argue that some areas had a greater density of 'early settlement' than others. Indeed, the map of Old English place-names, although problematic, does appear to demonstrate the ubiquity of settlement across the Island by the late Anglo-Saxon period apart from the specific gaps described above. However, areas containing greater densities of Domesday manorial centres may have been 'preferred settlement areas' in 1086. Distributional patterns can be viewed within the frameworks of physiographic regions (Figure 7.5) and 1790s HLC Areas (Figure 9.9). In terms of physiographic regions, northern Wight in general had a low density of Domesday manorial centres, including much of north-east Wight although a notable concentration existed in the north-east corner of the Island. The *North-East Wight 1790s HLC Area*, like all the 1790s HLC Areas, was originally delineated to reflect variations in late eighteenth century enclosure patterns and does not correlate completely with the zone of low-density Domesday manorial centres. A much higher density of these manorial centres exists to the east of Ryde, within the medieval parishes of St Helens and Brading, where 1790s woodland cover was more broken than in the rest of *North-East Wight* although heavier than in south Wight. In fact, the presumed Anglo-Saxon mother parish of Brading, embracing the later medieval parishes of St Helens, Yaverland, Shanklin and Bonchurch, has a generally higher density of Domesday manorial centres relative to its area than the Island's other presumed mother parishes (Figure 9.16). The cluster of Domesday manorial centres within the Brading mother parish could indicate biased recording, possibly based on more accurate returns available for this area. It should also be noted that some of the Domesday manorial centres plotted within the Brading mother parish cannot be equated with modern places bearing the same names and have only recently been identified by Webster (nd) as detailed in Appendix H. However, the differential density of Domesday manorial centres within different parts of

the Island could relate to differences in the way land was held. Thus some large Anglo-Saxon estates, such as that of Wroxall, may have been remained in the ownership of a single landholder (the king, in the case of Wroxall) whereas other estates had become fragmented into smaller landholdings by 1086, as may have been the case within Brading Parish.

In the southern half of the Island the distribution of Domesday manorial centres presents particular problems of interpretation. There is a higher concentration of these centres within the *Greensand Vale* physiographic region than elsewhere (Figure 7.5) yet the HLC model of land use at Domesday (Figure 7.15) suggests that this region contained only a relatively small amount of *arable core* land. Problems associated with the Domesday land use model have been discussed in Chapter 7. Nevertheless, the contradiction between apparent early land uses and settlement patterns within the *Greensand Vale* deserves further study although it cannot be resolved here. A particular contradiction is apparent between the high numbers of Domesday manorial centres shown within the *Apse, Shanklin & Luccombe 1790s HLC Area* and the apparent lack of core arable. In other Areas and physiographic regions, large areas of core arable land shown in the Domesday land use model correspond with high densities of Domesday manorial centres, notably within *South-West Wight* and the *Bowcombe, Carisbrooke & Medina Valley Area*. Relatively few Domesday manorial centres occur on the high ground within the *Southern Chalk & Greensand* physiographic region. However, in the somewhat larger *South Wight Downland & Downland Edge 1790s HLC Area*, covering much of the same territory as the physiographic region but including lower-lying land, there is a high concentration of Domesday manorial centres in the western part of the Area. This can perhaps be interpreted as a 'preferred settlement zone' occurring at the interface between different types of terrain. In seeking to identify more broadly-defined 'preferred settlement areas' throughout the Island it would appear that the distribution of Domesday manorial centres can provide some clues, sometimes coinciding with patterns derived from other data, although many questions and problems remain. Furthermore, to a

certain extent the 1790s HLC Areas, although drawn up to define discrete enclosure patterns of the late eighteenth century, do relate to settlement patterns going back beyond Domesday. This relationship is only approximate and it is clear that cultural boundaries have shifted through time. However, the 1790s HLC Areas can at the very least be regarded as a useful model of the Island's cultural variety.

## **Maps and Models**

This chapter has been based on a series of maps employing data from a variety of sources within a wide date range. These have opened a window into the Island's past landscape although some of the inferences drawn from the maps are highly speculative and will no doubt need to be amended in the light of further work. Nonetheless, it is by the construction and use of such maps that insights can be gained into the Island's historic landscape and issues of interpretation can be addressed. One such issue is the interrelationship between physical, cultural and antecedent factors in moulding the landscape. There are some parts of the Island where physical factors appear predominant, such as the Undercliff and the south-west coast. However, the picture is never simple and in most cases cultural influences are also apparent as within 'Freshwater Isle' although exact causative factors can hardly ever be demonstrated, given that documentary evidence will never provide a complete explanation of the medieval landscape. Patterns predating the Norman Conquest have been clearly established in certain of the 1790s HLC Areas including *Shalcombe, Wellow & Thorley, Parkhurst & Northwood* and *Whippingham, Fairlee & Staplers*. The concept of 'preferred settlement areas' has been found to have some value when applied to the Island. Some of these areas appear to have changed through time but others have remained stable over many centuries. Perhaps the greatest significance of this chapter has been to reveal the ancient origins not just of individual settlements but also of wider cultural patterns which still contribute to the landscape of the Isle of Wight in the twenty-first century.

## **Chapter 10**

### **Placing the Isle of Wight in the English Landscape**

Starting with Camden's birds-eye view of the Island in the late sixteenth century, this thesis has sought to capture the distinctiveness and variety of the Isle of Wight landscape and to place it in a national context, drawing on and critically examining the provincial-scale and regional-scale models of Rackham (1986), Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 2002) and other scholars. Local models have also been developed in an attempt to gain a detailed understanding of the Island's patterns of settlement and land use. This chapter will recapitulate the main themes addressed in the thesis, presenting a synoptic view of the Island's historic landscape character and its relationship to the broader historic landscapes zones of the English mainland. It will also attempt to summarise the gains in knowledge and understanding made as a result of this thesis and to assess the significance of the Isle of Wight for understanding the landscape history of England as a whole.

#### **Physical and Cultural Character**

Strong natural and historical influences have been identified which have a bearing on the development of the Isle of Wight's cultural landscape. Clear physiographic zones can be defined and indeed a remarkable geological variety is compressed into a very small area. The Island's geographical location in relation to the British mainland has played an important role in shaping development. However, far from being inward-looking and impoverished, as can be the case with insular areas, the Island was trading with the Continent from the late Iron Age and appears to have been involved in long-distance networks of trade and exchange during the Roman period. In the post-Roman period the Island enjoyed a separate political identity as a 'Jutish' kingdom (Yorke 1995, 36-39) and archaeological material has provided ample evidence for the close links of the Isle of Wight not only with Kent, but also with the Continent (Ulmschneider 1999, 25). By the eighth century the Island, now under West Saxon control, possessed productive

sites at Carisbrooke and Shalfleet that constitute the two largest such sites identified in the southern region (Ulmschneider 2010, 98). The Domesday Survey indicated that much of the Island was more populous and wealthy than Hampshire and this situation continued into the fourteenth century. However, from this period the Island's fortunes declined, possibly as a result of the insecurity and threat of invasion caused by wars with France, so that by the late fifteenth and sixteenth century 'Wight Island' could be considered the poor relation of mainland Hampshire although it was a place in which the Crown took great interest because of its strategic importance. In fact, its military significance had been appreciated from the Anglo-Saxon period if not earlier. Immediately after the Norman Conquest the Island became a quasi-independent fiefdom of William's trusted supporter, William Fitz Osbern, in the same fashion as other places of high strategic value such as the rapes of Sussex. Subsequently, it was entrusted to another lordly family, the de Redvers, before being ruled by Captains and Governors on behalf of the Crown, these positions emphasising its military value. For most of its recorded history the Isle of Wight has not enjoyed the same degree of political independence as the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. However, its patterns of settlement and land use, whilst not strikingly different from those of the mainland, nevertheless exhibit distinctive idiosyncratic characteristics.

### **A Synoptic Assessment of Models**

This thesis has been concerned with models at various scales. One existing local model of historic landscape character was the Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation (Basford 2008). This divided the Island into *HLC Areas* which were critically assessed in Chapter 3. It has been concluded that the HLC Areas, as originally defined, do not provide an entirely satisfactory basis for examining the Island's past landscape. There are various reasons for this, the main one being that the Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation was designed primarily to interpret present-day landscape character. A new model of *1790s HLC Areas* has therefore been constructed

in this thesis, based on the British Library 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings and defined by identifying variations in enclosure patterns. A rigorous analysis of the Ordnance Survey drawings has confirmed that the Island's character is as diverse as suggested by the original HLC Areas. Furthermore, the creation of the *1790s HLC Areas* model has proved to be pivotal in understanding the true nature of the Island landscape in the medieval and post-medieval periods, reinforcing an investigation of documentary sources, including the royal surveys, undertaken in Chapter 4. It has been demonstrated for the first time that open fields existed within most tithings on the Island during the medieval period (although occurring infrequently on the northern clays) and although most of these were enclosed early in the post-medieval period a small number survived into the eighteenth and even nineteenth centuries. This raises the question as to how far the Island can be considered to fit within the zone of *Ancient Countryside* in which it was placed by Rackham (1986, Chapter 1 and figure 3.1). According to Rackham, one important characteristic of *Ancient Countryside* is that, historically, open-field was 'either absent or of modest extent' and was abolished before c. 1700 (Table 3.1). Despite this assumption, Williamson (2003, 5) has stated that in the medieval period open fields were often extensive in areas of *Ancient Countryside* although they were usually less regular, smaller, more numerous and less tightly regulated than in *Planned Countryside*. The 'ancient enclosures' of Cornwall and Devon (within Rackham's *Highland Zone*) have long been assumed to be fields enclosed directly from open waste. However, our understanding of these enclosures has now been changed by the work of Herring (1998; 2006) and Turner (2007, 32-56). They have demonstrated that for much of the medieval period most of the farmed land in medieval Cornwall and Devon was divided into strips which generally lay within common open fields, although these were organised and farmed in a different manner from open fields in *Planned Countryside*. Strip fields in the two counties were enclosed during the later Middle Ages (often in 'bundles' of several strips) to form the characteristic patterns of small irregular fields that can be observed today.

The work in Cornwall and Devon has implications for our understanding of *Ancient Countryside* elsewhere in England. Characterisation of the Isle of Wight landscape for this thesis, based on historical sources, has reinforced this understanding. It has demonstrated that the Island possessed fairly extensive areas of waste, common and open downland at the time of Domesday Book. In certain areas, waste and woodland was undoubtedly cleared and enclosed directly into individual fields both in the medieval and post-medieval periods. Nevertheless, open-field existed in many parts of the Island in the Middle Ages (Figure 4.1) and dominated the landscape in a few areas (Table 5.4). The enclosure of the open fields started relatively early although later than in Devon. It appears to have been underway by the sixteenth century and was substantially complete by the late eighteenth century although remnants of open-field survived into the nineteenth century. Crucially, however, much of this enclosure appears to have been piecemeal or the result of fairly small-scale agreements or amalgamations of land. Moreover, there appears to have been a considerable extent of lowland heath and other rough grazing in the Middle Ages, much of which may have remained unenclosed until the eighteenth century. The Island also retained a significant area of open downland grazing in the medieval and early post-medieval periods. The relatively late enclosure of some rough ground, coupled with a long-drawn-out process of open-field enclosure and the re-organisation of field patterns in the nineteenth century, means that many of the Island's field boundaries are post-medieval in date although older enclosures do exist to the north of the Chalk ridge. As a result, irregular, sinuous, species-rich and well-wooded hedgerows typical of *Ancient Countryside* are largely confined to the north of the Island although hedges beside roads and tracks may be of some antiquity in other areas. Compared with an area such as the Weald, the Island as a whole does not have the classic appearance of *Ancient Countryside*. However, various factors distinguish the Isle of Wight from Rackham's *Planned Countryside*: it appears not to have experienced a 'Great Replanning' of its settlements and common open fields in the late Anglo-Saxon period (Brown and Foard 1998) and it was only marginally affected by parliamentary enclosure of its open fields and common pasture. The medieval open field systems appear to have been

diverse and irregular rather than being relatively uniform as the field systems of the *Planned Countryside* generally were. It is also suspected that the Island's field systems were less highly regulated than those typical of *Planned Countryside* but this is a topic that requires further research. Nevertheless, it is clear that the *processes* involved in the creation of the Island's field patterns were different from those in *Planned Countryside* and have created a much more diverse fieldscape. Downland was a significant component of the Island's landscape, usually providing manorial common pasture in the Middle Ages and sometimes until the nineteenth century. Rackham's model of *Ancient Countryside* and *Planned Countryside* does not really take downland landscapes into account although Williamson (2007a, 95) sees them as a distinctive landscape type. Chalk and Upper Greensand downland does not cover such a large percentage of the Island as of mainland Hampshire and is different in character, much of it consisting of steep scarp slopes and narrow summit plateaus although the dissected plateau to the south of the Bowcombe Valley includes broad expanses of relatively flat ground. This difference in the character and extent of the Chalk downland partly explains the differences between enclosure patterns in mainland Hampshire and the Island.

Rackham defines *Ancient Countryside* as a landscape of hamlets and isolated farms, of sinuous and botanically rich hedgerows, of many winding roads and tracks, often sunken, and of many small woods (Table 3.1). Most parts of the Island contain a fairly dense pattern of roads and tracks which contribute significantly to its historic landscape character. This thesis has not examined roads and tracks in any detail but has briefly defined their characteristics within the 1790s *HLC Areas* (Appendix E). The pattern of routeways within these different Areas is varied but their density and character in most parts of the Island is certainly typical of *Ancient Countryside*. These routes cannot be dated absolutely but clearly relate to patterns of settlement and land use that in many cases predate Domesday, in contrast with the roads and tracks of *Planned Countryside* which are generally of fairly recent date. Old woodland is very firmly associated with

*Ancient Countryside* but Rackham indicates that it is the number and character of woods, rather than their size or the area covered, that are the significant factors. In fact, *Ancient Countryside* does not generally contain large woods although it gives the impression of a well-wooded landscape. This impression is based to a considerable extent on the existence of mature hedgerow trees and Rackham (1986, 5) points out that in referring to woodland countryside, early writers were referring not to 'woodland' in the ordinary sense but to land that yielded wood from hedges. Some parts of the Island have very little woodland (other than twentieth century Forestry Commission plantations) but old woodland and hedgerow trees contribute to the Island's historic landscape character in the north of the Island. The woodland in north-east Wight has a characteristic indented profile suggestive of medieval assarting and this profile also existed along the edges of Parkhurst Forest until the early nineteenth century. Parkhurst Forest, historically a mixture of wood pasture, clay heath and grass 'lawns', occupied 2,551 acres in the late eighteenth century although north-west Wight was in general somewhat less wooded than north-east Wight. Nevertheless, tree-lined hedgerows give this part of the Island a well-wooded character even today and Jones (2003) has shown the economic importance of trees to this area in the seventeenth century. An interesting characteristic of the Island's 1790s HLC Areas, and one that would repay further research, is the variation in tree and shrub species within hedgerows in the different areas.

In discussing *Ancient Countryside* Turner (2007, 6) reminds us that we should not apply the epithet 'ancient' too literally and that 'no landscape that has been inhabited for a thousand years is just the same as it was a thousand years ago, even in the most conservative societies'. Furthermore, Roberts & Wrathmell (2002; 147-148, 169, 171) have shown that the term *Ancient Countryside* is in one sense a misnomer since the small irregular fields within this zone are, in fact, likely to be later than the 'core arable' lands which were often laid out as open fields before the Norman Conquest in both *Ancient Countryside* and *Planned Countryside*. In addition, the work of Herring (1998; 2006) and Turner (2007) has now made it clear that, in

Cornwall and Devon at least, many 'small irregular fields' did not originate as assarts from woodland or waste but derived from strips within common open fields that were enclosed (often in 'bundles' of several strips) during the later Middle Ages. This process also seems to have occurred on the Island although at a slightly later date. As a result of the recent work summarised above, Rackham's model of *Ancient Countryside* and *Planned Countryside* may be in need of some revision. Nevertheless, insofar as the concept of *Ancient Countryside* is still valid, the Island's landscape does seem to have many, although not all, of the attributes one might associate with this countryside zone.

Rackham's model of historic landscape character placed more emphasis on fields, woodland and routeways than on the nature and size of settlements although it did include these factors. However, two studies by Roberts & Wrathmell (2000, 2002) deliberately set out to model settlement patterns at a national scale and to relate these to land use patterns. Much of this thesis has been concerned with examining the Isle of Wight within the framework of Roberts & Wrathmell's provincial model and comparing the provincial model with local-scale models of the Island's historic landscape character. It has been found that land use and enclosure patterns on the Isle of Wight correlate reasonably well with patterns characteristic of Roberts & Wrathmell's *South Eastern Province*, particularly as regards the relatively early enclosure of much open-field by agreement and the existence of considerable areas of open grazing land in the medieval period. Medieval parishes on the Island, which appear to derive from territorial units existing by the Middle Saxon period if not earlier, often contain several settlements and more than one tithing, a characteristic of the *Outer Provinces*. However, much more work is needed to gain an understanding of how different communities shared out the land within manors, tithings and parishes. Work in this thesis has included a detailed study of settlement types and densities. It has demonstrated that the Island has a low density of nucleations and a medium density of dispersed settlements, thereby justifying its inclusion within Roberts & Wrathmell's *South Eastern Province*. Dispersed settlements

on the Isle of Wight have been subjected to detailed analysis for the first time although the dispersed nature of the Island's medieval settlement pattern had previously been recognised by Lewis and Fox (1995, 9-10). At *sub-provincial level*, it has been shown that the historic landscape character of the Island can be clearly differentiated from that of *East Wessex* and the *Weald*, the two constituent *sub-provinces* to which it is physically closest.

### **Distinctiveness and Diversity: The Special Identity of the Isle of Wight**

If the focus of enquiry is narrowed still further it can clearly be demonstrated that the Isle of Wight is not just a severed piece of the Hampshire mainland but has a very distinctive identity. Moreover, *within* the Island there is a great diversity of cultural landscapes within a very small space, closely linked to differences in terrain but also influenced by antecedent patterns and changing land uses, and possibly intensified by insularity. Most of these landscapes have particular patterns of settlement and combinations of historic landscape components which appear to be of ancient origin. In some cases the existence of these cultural landscapes by the time of Domesday or earlier can be demonstrated, as is the case with the unpopulated area between Thorley, Wellow and Shalcombe, the large expanse of wood pasture and heathland within Parkhurst Forest and the extensive unsettled conjoined commons of Whippingham, Fairlee, Staplers, Wootton and Lyn. There is evidence that the nature of settlement on the Island differed from that of Hampshire by the time of Domesday since there were proportionately more manors, each with a smaller number of inhabitants. In the post-medieval period the Island certainly had a lower density of nucleations than Hampshire as can be demonstrated from Ordnance Survey maps. Distinctive settlement types occur on the Island. Nucleations are generally small and are located mainly on the better soils in the south of the Island. Some nucleations are aggregations around parish *foci*, mostly on a very small and unplanned scale. In addition to the parish *foci* there are other barely-nucleated settlement elements. These are mainly irregular in form and of small size, comprising interrupted rows and 'streets', clusters and green-edge/common-

edge hamlets which often appear to be later in origin than the parish *foci*. The nucleation of settlements seems to have happened gradually and only in a few cases is there specific evidence that individual settlements may have been nucleated by 1086. Dispersed settlement occurs across all physiographic zones and the pattern of dispersion is clearly not dictated simply by terrain. This suggests that dispersion may be the oldest 'layer' in the Island's settlement pattern, perhaps dating from the post-Roman period or even earlier, although the actual settlement sites may not be the same. Small nucleations may have evolved gradually in the later Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. Dispersion certainly seems to have been a feature of Domesday settlement, judging by the small sizes of manors recorded on the Island. Late eighteenth and nineteenth century Ordnance Survey drawings and maps reveal a clear distinction between the generally very low density of dispersed settlement in Hampshire and a higher density on the Island (although Isle of Wight dispersion is only of medium density in national terms). However, the settlement history of the Island, as of any locality, is complex. Some of the dispersed settlements shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings may have been medieval hamlets which declined into dispersed settlements of less than five dwellings in the late medieval or post-medieval period, a phenomenon which also occurred in Devon (Overton 2006, 113) and Cornwall (Herring 2006, 47-51). A further complicating factor is that a considerable number of the Island's dispersed settlements shown on the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings date from the later medieval or post-medieval periods and are associated with the colonisation of marginal landscapes, such as the various 'Heathfield Farms' and 'Newbarn Farms'.

The generally small size and irregular form of most Isle of Wight settlements suggest that the 'Great Replanning' of the late Anglo-Saxon period identified in the Midlands (Brown and Foard 1998) did not occur locally. The reason for this could be a lack of the particular economic and political pressures facing the *Central Province* or the distance of the Island from areas where change was taking place. Peripherality could well have been a factor since the Island shares certain settlement characteristics with Devon and East Anglia, both

equally peripheral. These characteristics include 'linked farmsteads', also common in Devon, and 'streets' and green-edge settlements which can be found in East Anglia. It is possible that the lack of a 'Great Replanning' can be equated with the social conservatism sometimes associated with insular and peripheral localities. However, areas outside the *Central Province*, including the Island, may have developed different and equally valid responses to the economic and social challenges of the Middle and Later Saxon periods as suggested by Rippon (2008). A specific factor affecting the evolution of the landscape on the Island after the Norman Conquest and into the post-medieval period may have been different patterns of lordship and land ownership. During the medieval period the proportion of land devoted to arable agriculture on the Island appears to have been less than in the Midlands and there was much rough downland and heathland grazing although open-field arable agriculture was practised. In this respect, the Island was not dissimilar to Hampshire but enclosure processes affecting both open fields and rough pasture were different from those in Hampshire with more early piecemeal enclosure and very little parliamentary enclosure. These different processes, as well as underlying differences in topography, have resulted in a landscape character which is distinct from that of mainland Hampshire. The Island's distinctiveness bears out the observation by Mackinder (1915, 15) that 'insular' or 'peninsular' provinces are inherently different in character from other areas.<sup>295</sup> We have seen that insularity was no impediment to contact and trade with the outside world in the Island's early history. Nevertheless, the short stretch of the Solent separating the Island from the mainland may have had an influence greatly in excess of the actual distance, forming a cultural boundary equivalent to that of the Blackdown-Quantock Hills in the West Country and the Gipping-Lark valleys in East Anglia, these being two 'natural' boundaries which had profound effects on local cultural landscapes (Rippon 2008, 267).

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<sup>295</sup> Even though the tiny area of the Island cannot be considered a 'province' in the normal use of this term.

## Conclusions

As a result of the detailed investigation into Isle of Wight land use and settlement pursued in this thesis it is now possible to provide some answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The assessment of the Island's diversity made by Camden (1610) was undoubtedly correct and indeed many more distinctive landscapes than those described by Camden have now been identified. It has been demonstrated that the technique of historic landscape characterisation can illuminate past landscape patterns but to do so successfully the characterisation must be based on historical sources (in this case primarily the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings) rather than simply on morphological assessments made from modern maps. It is now clear that the Isle of Wight *does* possess 'idiosyncratic features'. These may derive not so much from the quality of 'islandness' *per se* as from 'peripherality', an attribute shared by islands and peninsulas which do generally appear to have more distinctive *pays* than central and inland areas. The Island does not simply echo local regional contrasts on the adjacent mainland although its settlement pattern shares certain characteristics with that of the nearby Isle of Purbeck (which is in fact a peninsula). Distinctive Isle of Wight features include the sheer variety of its cultural landscapes, enclosure patterns which bear more similarity to those of Devon than to those of neighbouring Hampshire and a settlement pattern composed of diverse elements. Physical factors have been important in shaping the Isle of Wight's diverse settlement landscapes but antecedent patterns and cultural influences have nearly always played an equally important part. Significant 'Jutish' influence in the shaping of these landscapes can probably be discounted, given the short period of Jutish political control and the fact that it preceded the period when settlement types and patterns shown on nineteenth century maps appear to have first emerged in mainland England. The large estates detectable in the Middle Saxon landscape may have established by the West Saxons following their conquest of the Island in AD 686 but it is possible that the basic territorial organisation of the Island may have roots going back to late prehistory or the Roman period.

This thesis has demonstrated the Island's very distinctive place in the English landscape and has contributed to longstanding enquiries into the reasons for regional variation in historic landscape character throughout England. It adds to the limited number of studies dealing with local regions outside the *Central Province* and emphasises the variety that can result from the interplay of political, economic, antecedent and geographical factors. It has also explored the relationship between local territorial and cultural landscapes and may provide a model for examining such relationships elsewhere. The thesis has shown that distinct cultural zones or *pays* can exist within a very small area and that study of a local region can pick up subtle differentiation in cultural responses that would not register at provincial or sub-provincial level but which nevertheless feed into the larger picture and enhance our understanding of the English landscape in general. In addition, the detailed study of the Island's historic landscape and its comparison with other areas may have contributed to a more nuanced understanding of Rackham's model of *Ancient Countryside*. Features of this thesis which could be usefully adopted in future local studies include the employment of historic landscape characterisation techniques, use of digital mapping and the emphasis placed on graphic analysis. In terms of future Isle of Wight studies this thesis has demonstrated the very great potential of the royal and manorial surveys (Webster nd) as a source for understanding medieval and early post-medieval land use and settlement. Much more work could be undertaken using these sources than has been possible here. Nevertheless, the limited work that has been undertaken, combined with the extensive use of the 1790s Ordnance Survey drawings, has led to a greatly improved understanding of Isle of Wight settlement patterns and historical land use. In particular, this thesis has created a much clearer understanding of the extent and distribution of medieval open fields on the Island and of the enclosure processes affecting fields and open grazing lands from the sixteenth century onwards. A comparable increase has also been achieved in our understanding of the origins and evolution of Isle of Wight settlement. Additional insights have been gained into the question of medieval depopulation although much more work remains to be done in this field and indeed there are still many gaps in our knowledge relating to all aspects of

past settlement and land use. However, the basic research now exists from which a 'Landscape History of the Isle of Wight' could be written.



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