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CLARE CAMP, CLARE, SUFFOLK

An Earthwork Survey
by
The Royal Commission on the
Historical Monuments of England

REQUEST SURVEY

October 1993



**CLARE CAMP, CLARE, SUFFOLK; AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY BY
THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND
SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 1993**

INTRODUCTION

In September to October 1993, the RCHME carried out an earthwork survey of Clare Camp (NGR TL 76854585) at Clare, in Suffolk. The survey was requested by Edward Martin, the Suffolk County Archaeologist, and is intended to inform future management of the scheduled area. In addition to the polygonal bi-vallate enclosure, which is relatively well-preserved and generally agreed to be Iron Age in origin, traces of buildings and other earthworks interpreted as a manorial complex and the remains of a Post-Medieval smallpox house were recorded in the interior. In an area of pasture immediately to the south-west of the enclosure, a possible Medieval droveway was recorded, together with a number of later features.

Clare Camp is situated on the northern outskirts of the town of Clare, on land now known as the Lower Common. The enclosure lies on a south-east facing slope overlooking the valley of the Chilton Stream, a tributary of the Stour. The ground falls gently across the enclosure from c.60m OD to c.48m OD (see profile 1). The tops of surrounding hills range from 75m to 95m OD. The surface geology of the immediate area comprises a glacial wash of chalky loam of variable depth overlying flint-bearing London Clay deposits (BGS 1991), and the enclosure is located approximately on the spring line.

Most of the area lies under lightly grazed pasture, but dense hawthorn scrub presently obscures much of the northern and western perimeter of the enclosure; the majority of this is likely to be removed over the coming years as part of the management of the site. In the pasture south-west of the enclosure, a number of individual specimen trees have been planted (see plan). The enclosure is fairly complete, except that there has been limited encroachment by sixteenth to seventeenth century and later buildings and their gardens on the eastern side and the nineteenth century vicarage on the south-east.

Apart from the interpretive survey carried out by the Ordnance Survey in 1975 at 1:2500 scale (published 1976), and the additions to this plan made by Edward Martin (Martin 1991, figure 5), no intensive archaeological fieldwork has been carried out on the site previously. Stray finds, including two sherds of late twelfth-century/early thirteenth-century coarse wares and four undiagnostic flint flakes found during the course of the RCHME survey, are held in Bury St. Edmunds museum.

DESCRIPTION

(For letters and names used in the text see plan at 1:1000)

The enclosure

The enclosure as a whole describes approximately a 'D' shape, with its straightest side on the south, aligned roughly west to east. Its south-west and south-east corners turn sharply to the north, and its north-east corner is somewhat less angular, while its north-west curves much more gently. The ramparts enclose an area of 2.8ha, with dimensions of approximately 190m east-west by 150m north-south. The best preserved sections of the ramparts are at the western end of the south side and the eastern end of the north side.

The inner rampart

There are four major breaches in the inner rampart, excluding the poorly preserved north-western section. The steep-sided breach in the rampart at a measures 10.5m wide with a 0.6m wide base which continues to be eroded by a footpath. A causeway 0.4m high and 11.0m wide overlies the ditch at this point. Material has been spread into the interior to form a mound 0.2m high, into which the footpath cuts, and a slight in-turn of the western terminal of the bank also appears to be a later addition. Some 12m to the south-east, an irregular spread of material overlies the foot of the rampart bank.

To the west of breach a, a well preserved straight section of the rampart bank extends straight roughly west to east for 105m, standing to a maximum height of 1.9m. On average, it measures 11.0m across the base and between 1.5m and 3.5m across its top. The external ditch measures between 0.6m and 1.2m deep and has an almost level base between 2.5m and 3.5m wide, which is crossed at right angles by two later banks. The first, approximately 80m west of a, measures 8.6m across the base and 0.6m high. The second, some 27m west of a, measures 5.2m across the base and 0.3m high.

East of breach a, the rampart bank bends to the south, but the external ditch has been erased along the eastern and southern sides as far as the breaks in the rampart at c. Directly to the east of a, a 32m long section of the bank measures 1.8m high internally, with an outer face 3.2m high. South of this, the bank extends in a straight line for some 85m as far as breach b. This stretch is much less massive, standing to a maximum internal height of 0.8m, with an average width of 7.5m. The outer face stands 1.8m high, and is further reveted to a depth of between 0.4m and 0.8m by the boundary walls of properties on Bridewell Street. A number of these buildings are of seventeenth century date, although the existing wall along the property boundaries is of nineteenth century construction. The bank has been damaged by numerous cattle scrapes and other minor

erosion (see plan for details). There are also three deliberate breaches. One lies some 70m north of breach **b**, where a section of the bank 4.6m long has been levelled to a height of 0.2m and the material spread into the interior. On the exterior, an adjoining hollow relates primarily to the erosion around the doorway of a timber structure at the rear of 20, Bridewell Street. A smaller breach lies some 24m further south; this has maximum dimensions of 2.0m wide and 0.4m deep. The rampart has been levelled completely some 17m further south and worn to a hollow 0.3m deep. This wear extends up to 1.8m inside the rampart and the breach has an overall width of 11.0m.

Immediately north of **b**, a possible right-angled in-turn of the bank, some 10m long, is possibly overlain by the upcast bank of feature **m**, which cuts through the rampart (see below). Feature **o** also cuts the rampart some 12m to the south, so that breach **b** is 27.0m wide overall. Between the cuts of features **m** and **o**, a scarp 1.2m high remains, but it does not correspond to the general alignment of the outer face of the bank, nor is there any trace of a back-scarp or of deposition of spoil on the interior. An alley gives access onto Bridewell Street at this point, and pedestrians have further eroded the mouths of both features. A minimal linear depression extending north-west parallel to feature **j** represents the course of a fairly recent footpath.

South of **b**, the terminal of the bank is off-set by some 5m east of the northern section. Resuming more massive proportions, it continues southward for 41m to the south-east corner of the enclosure. The bank has a basal width of 14.0m and an external face 2.6m high, further reveted to a depth of 1.4m by the boundary wall of the Bridewell Street properties. The internal height is reduced to 1.0m by an irregular disturbed mound 0.5m high, which overlies the angle of the bank. Two low spurs of material, which project eastwards away from the exterior of the rampart bank as far as the property boundary wall, may be associated with the internal disturbance.

The rampart turns through a right angle at the south-east corner and extends straight to the west for 115m. From a point some 5m west of the corner the bank is again heavily disturbed for a distance of 40.0m, reaching a maximum internal height of 0.7m. The outer face is reveted to an average depth of 0.4m by the nineteenth century boundary wall of 'The Old Vicarage'. South of this, in the garden of the property, the rampart has been landscaped to form a gently sloping flowerbed, producing a total fall of 1.2m across the outer face of the bank and an overall width of 20.5m. On the interior of this disturbed section, a scoop with dimensions of 5.5m north to south by 6.5m and 0.2m deep cuts into the northern foot of the rampart and is slightly embanked downhill. West of the disturbance, the enclosure earthwork stands to a height of 1.6m for 36.5m. A secondary bank 48m long, which clearly overlies the rampart bank on a slightly different alignment, contributes 0.8m to the overall height. The overlying bank ends

some 11m east of the breach and the rampart bank continues for a further 20m as far as c, standing to a maximum height of 0.6m high with a basal width of 10.0m and a level top 4.2m wide.

At c, two breaches 17m apart occur where the rampart makes a slight but distinct angle change of 15° towards the west-north-west. The eastern breach measures 8.2m wide and 0.8m deep. A low spread of material, which projects 4m into the interior, forms the beginning of an abraded bank 0.2m high and 4.0m wide on average, which projects 25.0m north-eastwards towards feature o. The alignment of this bank is continued to the south-west of the breach by a scarp extending for 16m along the edge of a broad footpath, which runs to the extreme south-west corner of the Lower Common. Two slight irregular scarps approximately continue the line of the outer face of the rampart bank across the breach.

The western breach at c measures 6.5m wide and 0.8m deep and there is a slight spread of material projecting 2.2m into the interior. A causeway of material 0.2m high extends for 9.5m south-west away from the breach; this forms the terminal of the ditch, which resumes to the west.

West of c, as far as breach d, a 94m long stretch of both the bank and ditch is relatively well-preserved. The western end of the bank stands to a height of 1.9m, with a basal width of 11.5m. Immediately west of c, the inner scarp of the bank is cut by a Second World War air-raid shelter, in the form of a straight slit trench 24.0m long, 1.3m wide and 0.2m deep (see profile 3). Two short trenches, respectively 4.0m and 2.8m long, project northwards at right angles from the main trench. The outer face of the bank is severely damaged by three large cattle-scrapes in close proximity (see plan for details).

To the west, the remaining 55m of the bank has been deliberately levelled to 0.3m high, with three interconnected hollows cut into the remnant. The eastern hollow is roughly rectangular, measuring 12.5m west to east, 5.1m wide and 0.2m to 0.3m deep; its northern side is formed by a substantial remnant of the rampart, a bank 5.4m wide and 1.0m high. The central hollow is less rectilinear, measuring 19.0m west to east by 7.0m wide and 0.5m deep at its maximum. The western hollow is a shallow bulbous scoop, measuring 10.0m west to east by 6.2m wide and 0.2m deep at its centre, the widest point of which corresponds to an inward bulge in the base of the remnant of the bank. Immediately to the west of this hollow, a 0.9m high remnant of the rampart bank is preserved.

The external ditch is well preserved for the whole 94m of this stretch, and maintains a depth of 1.7m (see profiles 3 and 4). Its base is fairly level, and varies between 1.8m

and 3.0m wide.

At **d** there is no trace of the rampart for 15m, after which it resumes on a south-west to north-east alignment as a much reduced and distorted feature for 180m. The angle change is slightly more acute than a right angle, but the subsequent course of the rampart curves gently. The bank resumes after a distance of 30m, and continues with average dimensions of 17.5m wide and 0.7m high for a further 45m before the first complete interruption. The north-eastern end of this section is overlain by a steep-sided oval mound, measuring 11.5m south-west to north-east by 7.5m wide and 0.7m high, which accentuates the north-western scarp of the bank. North-east of the mound, after an interruption of 6.0m, a section of the bank approximately 40m long has been very heavily disturbed, varying in width between 14m and 17m, but maintaining the same general alignment. Its outer scarp, which is abraded to 0.2m high, turns north at the north-eastern end and merges with a low bank which blocks the ditch. Its inner scarp is relatively strong, up to 1.0m high, and also forms the side of a shallow oval depression, situated adjacent to the bank on the south-east. The depression measures 32.0m long by 11.0m wide, with gently sloping sides falling to a maximum depth of 0.3m. The stratigraphic relationship of this feature to the rampart bank is unclear.

The inner scarp of the bank continues for 8m before it is buried by an irregular quadrangular platform **e**, a modification of the rampart bank, aligned south-west to north-east. It has a level top, 0.7m high, north-west and south-east sides measuring 25.5m and 19.5m respectively, and basal widths of 11.0m and 16.0m at its south-west and north-east ends respectively. Two distinct scarps form the north-east end of the platform, of which the lower turns through 90° to become the back of a 0.6m high bank with steep sides and an average basal width of 5.6m. This extends in a straight line eastwards from the eastern corner of platform **e** for 17m, terminating abruptly 5.2m from the end of the subsequent well-preserved section of the rampart bank. The short bank and the north-east end of platform **e** define two sides of a level rectangular area, measuring 18m west to east by 9m wide, where the original bank and ditch have been completely levelled.

The course of the ditch north-east of **d** is equally discontinuous, comprising three sub-rectangular hollows, the first of which resumes some 15m from **d**. It measures 22.0m from south-west to north-east, from 9.5m to 13.0m wide and has moderately steep sides falling to a level bottom 0.7m deep. Mid-way along its north-west side, a 3.8m wide breach in the outer bank leads into the eastern of two embanked parallel ditches (see below).

The second sub-rectangular hollow is separated from the first by an overlying causeway

of material f, 0.5m high with a basal width of some 17m. To the west this feature also interrupts both parallel ditches; its northern side continues as a 0.3m high scarp which cuts into the rampart. The hollow measures 30m south-west to north-east by 13m wide, its sides falling gently to a level bottom 0.5m deep. Its north-east end is blocked by a transverse bank, 0.7m high, 5.5m wide and 11.0m long, somewhat eroded at its north-western end. Surface exposures suggest it to be formed entirely of clay. The north-east face of the blocking bank is accentuated by a 0.8m deep disturbance, which cuts diagonally across the rampart and into the line of the ditch from the east for approximately 20m. The western edge of this disturbance is defined by a strong scarp 0.8m high with a slighter back, which extends for 18.0m to the north-west of the clay bank.

The third sub-rectangular hollow, measures approximately 40m south-west to north-east by 14m wide, with a level base up to 0.4m deep. Its south-west end is distorted by the later disturbance and its north-east end is blocked by a low bank, which links the inner and outer ramparts. This measures between 8.0m and 11.0m wide, and its stronger eastern scarp 0.6m high. Beyond it as far as feature h, the ditch has been in-filled and its course is defined by the level ground between the inner and outer ramparts.

The outer rampart

The outer rampart runs parallel to the course of the inner at a distance of between 17m and 22m and is best preserved in the same areas, at the eastern end of the north side and the western end of the south side. West of a, the outer bank is well-preserved for 118m as far as feature h, but unlike the inner bank, curves slightly over this distance. The height of this section is at first deceptively large, due to the depth of Sheepgate Lane (see below), which runs parallel to the northern side of the enclosure and cuts away the base and northern side of the outer ditch. This means that the real level of the natural ground surface is unclear, and the following heights are approximate. Profile 2 was surveyed by the Ordnance Survey in 1975 (NAR TL 74 NE 10) and not resurveyed by the RCHME due to the present density of the scrub. Both the bank and the remnant of the ditch gradually increase in size from west to east. The basal width of the bank increases from 6.0m to 8.5m and its height from 0.5m to 1.2m; the depth of the ditch increases from 0.4m to 1.4m, the remnant of its base surviving as a step between 1.2m and 2.8m wide between Sheepgate Lane and the rampart. The size of the bank diminishes slightly towards the terminal west of a.

The terminal of the well-preserved section of the outer bank is off-set 7m to the west of the breach in the inner rampart at a. South-east of this, the bank continues, almost levelled, for a further 24m to the east. It is visible in the garden of a modern bungalow located behind Bridewell Street as a bank 0.2m high and 13.0m wide, mostly used as a

vegetable patch; a brief examination produced two sherds of late twelfth century/early thirteenth century pottery.

No further trace of the outer rampart is visible along the east side or the south side of the enclosure as far as c, west of which it runs for 90m directly to d. The bank is almost a negative feature, largely defined by the ditches on either side of it, standing a maximum of 0.3m above the ground surface to the south (see profile 3). Some damage has been caused by erosion (see plan for details).

The outer ditch on average measures 5.2m wide and 0.9m deep, with a level base 1.0m wide. Slight traces of upcast along the outer edge of the ditch increase towards the western end to form a bank up to 0.2m high and 4.0m wide (see profile 4). The southern scarp of the ditch extends for 4.0m further west than the end of the outer bank, and suggests the beginning of a curve to the north before it fades away. Beyond this point, the ditch has been re-cut with a less regular profile and alignment, meandering slightly for 25m to the north-west to cut into the eastern parallel ditch. The re-cut measures a maximum of 0.3m deep, and varies between 3.2m and 4.8m wide.

From d as far as the breach at g, the line of the outer ditch and the eastern parallel ditch appear in plan to form a smooth curve. Though the eastern parallel ditch clearly bends slightly to respect the enclosure, the point at which it joins the enclosed ditch is slightly confused by a causeway f, which interrupts their course for a distance of 12.5m. To the south-west of f, the possible remains of the outer rampart are much slighter. The interrupted bank, which forms the north-western side of the first sub-rectangular hollow of the inner ditch, has a maximum height of 0.2m and is defined mainly by the rectangular hollow on one side and the eastern parallel ditch on the other. The ditch at this point measures 3.0m wide and has a maximum depth of 0.4m. 15.0m south of f, the ditch dog-legs by 1.5m to the east. This corresponds to a slight angle change in the bank, which may be the real intersection between the outer rampart ditch and the eastern parallel ditch.

North-east of f, a 45m long section of the outer rampart is well-preserved (see profile 1). The bank has an average basal width of 7.0m and height of 0.7m. The ditch has an average width of 4.0m and a maximum depth of 0.5m. For a further 52m, the remains are much slighter; the bank has average dimensions of 0.1m high and 3.0m wide and the ditch 0.2m deep and 4.0m wide.

At g, where the ditch converges with the side of Sheepgate Lane, the rampart is cut by a linear hollow. Its north-west end, which measures 3.3m wide and 0.2m deep, is in turn cut by the Common boundary ditch. To the south-east it deepens to 0.4m and

broadens suddenly to 8.0m. At the southern end of the hollow, an oval mound 0.3m high overlies the remnant of the rampart bank.

East of **g**, a 66m long section of the outer rampart as far as feature **h** is well-preserved. The bank has a basal width of between 6.0m and 9.0m, and a height of between 1.6m and 1.9m. The step between the bank and Sheepgate Lane, the remnant of the base of the outer ditch, measures from 0.2m to 2.8m wide.

At **h** a sub-rectangular terraced platform measuring 8m north to south by 6m wide, cuts 2m into the inner scarp of the bank and projects 6m south from it. The east and west sides of the platform are defined by low banks which project 8.0m and 9.0m respectively from the rampart, describing an irregular quadrangle. The eastern bank projects 8.0m and stands 0.2m high. The eastern bank coincides with the terminal of the well-preserved section of the inner ditch. The platform faces onto a level area adjacent to platform **e**.

The interior

The earthworks on the interior are mainly concentrated in the western half of the enclosure. All are clearly visible on an excellent series of aerial photographs (CUCAP 1955 PQ 30-34).

Manor complex i

A compact group of well-preserved buildings survives in the south-western corner of the enclosure. The evidence for interpreting this as a manor is detailed below, and this term will be used throughout for convenience. The group occupies a roughly rectangular area, approximately 60m south-east to north-west by 48m. Its south-western side is aligned precisely parallel to the inner rampart, separated by a regular level strip 4.5m wide (see profile 4); this section of the rampart also underwent extensive modification.

Two rectangular buildings within the complex are particularly well-preserved. Structure 1, which measures 32.0m long and 12.0m wide, is aligned parallel to the rampart (see profile 4), its south-western side defined by a 0.6m high scarp which forms the edge of the level strip at the base of the rampart. The other three sides are formed by a bank 0.3m high on average, with a slightly stronger internal scarp. The north-eastern side is interrupted mid-way by a 3.4m wide opening. A slight in-turn of the terminal to the south-east of this suggests an original cross division.

The space between the two structures is almost filled by an irregular oval mound, which abuts the south-east end of structure 1. It measures 11.5m south-east to north-west by

9.0m transversely and has an overall height of 0.3m.

Structure 2 is aligned south-west to north-east at roughly a right angle to Structure 1, defining the south-eastern side of the group. It consists of a platform 40.0m long and 14.5m wide, increasing in height from 0.3m at its south-west end to 0.5m at its north-east. The level top of the platform contains a rectangular depression, 25.5m long by 8.0m wide with a maximum depth of 0.2m. This depression is contiguous with two apparent openings on the north-western side of the platform, one 3.9m wide located centrally, and the second poorly-defined located 13m to the south-west.

The remaining features of the manor complex are less prominent, but suggest that two quadrangular areas, each surrounded by low banks or building platforms, made up the north-western corner of the group. The first, adjoining structure 1, measures approximately 14m north-west to south-east by 10m wide, and is enclosed by earthworks up to 0.3m high. The second, adjoining the north-west side of structure 2, measures some 14m square and is separated from the first by a broad bank 7.0m wide and 0.3m high, which extends north-eastwards from the eastern corner of structure 1. After 12.0m, it turns to the south-east along the north-eastern side of the second quadrangle, forming a possible platform 0.5m high and 10.5m wide, with a square-ended terminal 3.9m short of the platform of structure 2.

The resulting steep-sided opening coincides with the beginning of a slight linear hollow **j**, which extends for 50m to the north-east towards feature **l**, continuing the alignment of the long axis of structure 2. It has an average depth of 0.1m and varies between 3.9m and 5.6m in width, with a bank on its south-east side representing a continuation of the platform of structure 2. This decreases in size towards the north-east, from 12.0m to 5.0m in width and 0.4m to 0.2m in height; a slighter bank along the opposite side of the hollow up to 2.4m wide and 0.1m high, extends for 13.5m before fading away. Hollow **j** is blocked by a well-defined perpendicular bank, 22.0m long, 3.8m wide 0.3m high, which marks the north-east side of the manor complex. Immediately south of the blocking, hollow **j** is joined by another linear hollow 3.0m wide and 0.2m deep, which effectively diverts it at right angles to the south-east, so that it cuts through the platform structure 2 to form the beginning of feature **o**.

Associated features

Immediately to the north-west of the manor complex lies an irregular bulbous hollow **k**, aligned south-west to north-east, with maximum dimensions of 32.0m long, 16.0m wide and 1.4m deep. It respects the north-west end of structure 1, leaving a 0.4m wide ledge between them, but its south-western end cuts the rear scarp of the complex, and its

north-west side cuts the flattened inner rampart. To the north-east, slight amorphous spreads of material partly overlies the northern corner of the manor complex, and may be associated with the hollow.

On the northern side of the enclosure, a steep-sided oval hollow **l** with dimensions of 26.0m north-west to south-east, 16.5m wide, and up to 1.6m deep, abuts the inner rampart. Its south-east end becomes a broad channel **m**, 10.0m to 13.0m wide and 0.8m deep, which runs for 60m straight to the south-south-west. Until c. 1987 the hollow and the northernmost 10m to 20m of the channel contained a permanent spring-fed pond approximately 0.6m deep, which is now usually only visible as a vegetation difference. A low upcast bank, which may be contemporary with bank **n**, runs along the eastern edge of the features for 24.0m, increasing gradually in size from north to south. 8m south of hollow **l**, the west scarp of channel **m** is worn to a height of 0.3m, while the main scarp turns to the south-west and extends for c. 15m towards hollow **j**, before being cut away by the linear hollow associated with feature **q**. Immediately to the south, an oval mound overlies the side of channel **m** and slightly constricts its width. The mound has maximum dimensions of 16.5m south-west to north-east by 14.0m wide and of 0.3m high; its north-eastern side is formed by two separate scarps, suggesting that it may comprise more than one phase of deposition.

Some 12m to the south of this mound, channel **m** turns abruptly through an angle of 110° to the south-east, running for 105m directly towards the breach in the rampart at **b**. The regular profile of this section decreases gradually eastward from 11.0m to 5.4m in width and from 1.1m to 0.2m in depth, so that its base maintains a constant slight fall along its whole length across the slightly convex natural slope. An upcast bank, 0.3m high and from 3.9m to 5.2m wide, lies on the northern side of the channel, and overlies the possible in-turn of the rampart at **b**.

Bank **n** extends for 120m in a straight line, almost precisely bi-secting the whole interior from south-south-west to north-north-east. Its alignment is continued to the north of the inner rampart by a short segment of bank (see above). The stratigraphic relationship between the northern end of bank **n** and the upcast bank east of hollow **l** is unclear. As far as the angle change in channel **m**, bank **n** has average dimensions of 4.5m wide and 0.3m high, its course at first diverging slightly from the side of the channel. The point at which it converges again with channel **m** and its upcast bank is obscured by an overlying mound, 7.4m north to south by 7.9m wide and 0.3m high. However, the banks have similar dimensions and in plan appear to join smoothly, suggesting that they may be contemporary.

A fragmented section of bank **n**, with a shallow ditch along its western side, continues

for a further 41m to the south of channel **m**. The bank has maximum dimensions of 5.5m wide and 0.5m high, but is heavily disturbed throughout, with three larger deliberate breaches, the widest of which is 5.8m wide. Although the northernmost fragment seems to overlie channel **m**, slumping down its side and partly blocking it, the apparent relationship may be a result of the re-deposition of spoil from the adjacent breach. The ditch on the west of bank **n**, which measures 2.9m wide and a maximum of 0.2m deep, fades out 26.0m south of channel **m**. The southern end of the bank overlies feature **o**, before coming to a well-defined rounded terminal some 7.0m further south.

Feature **o** is a linear hollow which turns at right angles away from the manor complex and extends as far as the breach in the rampart at **b**. Its north-west end cuts through the platform of structure 2 to a depth of 0.2m, and thus defines its rectangular form. Beyond this, hollow **o** continues on a similar alignment for a further 40m, bending slightly to the north, measuring from 2.9m to 4.0m wide and up to 0.2m deep, with a stronger scarp up to 0.4m high along its southern side. A slight embankment on its northern side, which measures 2.2m wide and 0.1m high, extends for 7.5m south-east from the platform before fading away. The linear hollow is overlain by bank **n**, 16m beyond which it turns at right angles, first to the south and then back to the east 15m further on, before running straight towards breach **b**. This section increases to an average width of 5.5m and depth of 0.7m, before it is cut by a quarry hollow **p**, beyond which it decreases again to a slighter hollow 0.1m deep.

The smallpox house

The site of a smallpox house adjacent to hollow **l** is known from documentary and cartographic sources, discussed in more detail below. The angle at the junction between hollow **l** and channel **m** has been re-cut to a more rectilinear corner and used to form two sides of a small sub-rectangular enclosure, completed on its south and west sides by a ditch with an average width of 2.6m and a maximum depth of 0.4m, cut into the earlier feature at both ends. The enclosed area measures approximately 21m north-west to south-east by 14m wide, and its eastern and northern sides have been raised by 0.4m to form a platform, on which traces of the building survive. A slight but well-defined scarp, extending for a total of 9.0m, probably represents the north-east corner of the main rectangular structure.

Quarry hollows

Two substantial sub-rectangular depressions were interpreted as quarry hollows. Quarry **p**, measuring 23.0m west to east by 18.0m wide and 1.2m deep, cuts the eastern stretch of feature **o**. Like hollow **l**, this held a pond approximately 0.3m deep until recent years, now usually only visible as a vegetation change.

Feature q is a steep-sided sub-rectangular depression, with maximum dimensions of 23.0m south-west to north-east by 17.4m wide and 0.8m deep. A linear hollow aligned west to east, 5.0m wide and 0.2m deep on average, adjoins the northern side of the quarry hollow. It extends straight to the east of quarry q for some 10m, possibly cutting the hollow j, and curves gently to its north-west for some 19m before it fades away.

The exterior

Sheepgate Lane

The abraded trackway known as Sheepgate Lane leaves Bridewell Street 50m north-east of Clare Camp and follows the perimeter of the outer rampart for approximately 350m, before turning a right angle and continuing as a green lane for 1.7kms to the west. Approximately 270m from its Bridewell Street End, it forms a 'Y'-shaped junction with Cat's Tail Lane, which continues to the north-west. From its eastern end, Sheepgate Lane increases gradually in size to 2.9m deep and 13.5m wide, with an average basal width of 3.0m, maintains these dimensions for some 230m, and then diminishes to a depth of 0.5m at the junction with Cat's Tail Lane. The western and northern sides of the green lane are defined by a field boundary ditch 0.7m deep, and its opposite side by the Common boundary ditch (see below).

The parallel embanked ditches

Two almost parallel ditches, 20m apart on average, extend north to south for c.200m, between the corner of Sheepgate Lane and the south-west corner of the Lower Common. Both are embanked on their outer sides and feed into an irregular depression at the south. They are heavily disturbed throughout their length by a series of paths, including causeway f, and minor erosion by livestock. Both are overlain roughly mid-way along their length by an embanked track, which continues the line of Common Street and provides vehicular access to the Upper Common.

The eastern ditch bends slightly to the west to respect Clare camp and joins its outer ditch at some point close to d, forming a smooth curve into the southern side of Sheepgate Lane. The eastern ditch has average dimensions of 4.0m wide and 0.4m deep, embanked on the east to a maximum height of 0.3m.

The western ditch has similar dimensions, but is entirely straight and embanked on its west side. A very slight linear depression, which extends for c.4m north to south across the green lane, may indicate that it once continued, its line preserved by the field boundary as far as Cat's Tail Lane, mirroring the curve of the eastern parallel ditch into Sheepgate Lane.

For a distance of 19.0m immediately south of the Common boundary ditch, the western ditch is slightly embanked on its east side to an average height of 0.2m. 50m from its southern end, a re-cut ditch diverges obliquely and extends straight to the south-east for 240m to cut the eastern ditch. The re-cut is 3.5m wide and 0.4m deep on average, slightly embanked on its north side. This oblique cross-ditch is itself cut into by a broad, shallow channel which fades out 21.0m to the north. 19m from its southern end, the western parallel ditch is cut into by another re-cut, 4.0m wide and 0.3m deep on average, which runs obliquely for 38m straight to the north-west, before it is overlain by upcast from the Common boundary ditch.

Aerial photographs suggest that the parallel ditches did not continue further than the depression adjacent to the Common boundary. The depression is an irregular 'B' shape, its southern side cut away by the Common boundary ditch; it measures 23.0m west to east and 11.0m and 17.0m wide across its eastern and western halves respectively, with a maximum depth of 0.6m. An upcast bank up to 0.3m high on its east extends for 12m to the north of the boundary fence. This overlies a long abraded scarp up to 0.3m high, which extends for 76m to the east, weakening gradually. Roughly mid-way along its length, it is cut by a trackway abraded to a maximum depth of 0.2m, slightly embanked on its eastern side, which extends for 19.0m on a north to south alignment. The ground surface to the north of the long scarp as far as the enclosure rampart is extremely regular and level.

Miscellaneous features

Common Street runs along the middle of a substantial sub-rectangular quarry, cut into the side of the natural slope, whose edges define later property boundaries. It measures 41m south-west to north-east by at least 40m transversely, with a maximum depth of c.4m at its north-western end. The lower part of this north-west scarp is partly reveted by walls along the property boundaries, to depths of from 1.2m to 3.0m, while the north-east and north-west sides of the quarry are sheer. The earliest houses in the base of the quarry on the north side of Common Street are of seventeenth century construction.

From the end of Common Street, a track continues on the same alignment to the west-north-west for 175m, giving vehicular access to the allotments on the Upper Common. This passes through a 47m long cutting with maximum dimensions of 25.0m wide and 2.9m deep, onto an extremely regular 117m long embankment 5.6m wide and 0.4m high.

The northern side of the Common is bounded by a ditch with average dimensions of 2.8m wide and 0.7m deep, intermittently embanked on its north side. It extends along the entire southern edge of Sheepgate Lane, steepening the southern scarp of the

hollow-way. A ditch of similar dimensions used to extend along the opposite side of the track between Cat's Tail Lane and Bridewell Street; most of this has been backfilled within the last 20 years (Mr P Ennis personal communication), leaving a 72m long remnant. Both ditches were re-cut to improve drainage shortly after the RCHME survey; probable features were observed cut into the base of the hollow-way, but no adequate section was obtained to clarify the dimensions and composition of the outer rampart.

The Lower Common is divided from the Upper Common by a regular V-shaped ditch, 3.0m wide and 1.0m deep, which extends north to south in a straight line for 200m. At its northern end, intersecting at right angles with the northern Common boundary ditch (see above). An upcast bank on its east side, from 2.0m to 4.0m wide, and 0.2m high overlies the end of the ditch which cuts the western parallel ditch at an oblique angle.

A smallpox house, discussed in more detail below, survived in the extreme south-west corner of the Lower Common until its demolition in the 1960's. A well-defined bank, 3.0m wide and 0.2m high, extending for 13.5m parallel to the boundary fence, represents the former property boundary.

To the south-east, the boundary of the Common is defined for 125m by a broader and less regular ditch. This contains a south-easterly flowing stream, fed by drainage runoff from the Common boundary ditch and a brick-lined spring located in its base, close to the site of the smallpox house. The ditch varies between 5.0m and 11.0m in width and is 1.1m deep on average; although some sections of its sides have been re-cut artificially, natural erosion has contributed to its irregular profile and slightly meandering course. Some 25m from the southern corner of the Lower Common, the ditch deviates some 10m to the north-east, and its northern side has been cut back to form a roughly circular pond c.14m in diameter, its base silted to a depth of 0.6m. At the southern corner of the Lower Common, the watercourse intersects at right angles with a more regular dry ditch, which extends for 40m to the north-east, with dimensions of 7.0m wide and 0.8m deep. These features form three sides of a rectangular enclosure, known to have been a plantation (see below); the area measures 14m west to east by 10m wide, and is defined on the north side by a slight scarp.

A 10.5m long section of the dry ditch has been back-filled, but is still visible as a slight scarp, the end of which corresponds to the terminal of a broad low bank, which continues for 37m to the quarry edge. A depression adjacent to the eastern side of this bank is known to have been a pond (see below); it lies within a private garden and has largely been back-filled, the remnant surviving to a maximum width of 7.0m and depth of 0.5m.

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The enclosure

The earliest certain reference to Clare Camp is a sketch map of the 'Ancient Encampment at Clare' drawn in 1790 by S. Harris and included in a manuscript history by Thomas Walford (Walford nineteenth century). Writing in the early part of the nineteenth century, Walford believed the earthworks to be Roman and this interpretation was followed by most later work (Plan of the Town of Clare 1809 (Suffolk CRO a), PSIA 1850, Ordnance Survey First Edition surveyed 1884, published 1886, VCH 1907). Fox first argued that the irregular form of the enclosure suggested a prehistoric origin (Fox 1900, 109); this was supported by Rainbird Clarke, who commented on the proximity of the majority of Norfolk and Suffolk Iron Age enclosures, including Clare Camp, to streams and inlets (Rainbird Clarke 1940, 49). Thornton, who was mainly concerned with the medieval history of Clare, later used the term 'Romano-British' (Thornton 1928, 14), a compromise presumably based on the partly rectilinear form of the enclosure. The Iron Age date has been questioned on the grounds of its location on a sloping hillside, and a later, possibly medieval date suggested (Hogg 1975, 178; DOE scheduling information 1981). However, Martin's study of all known and supposed Iron Age enclosures in Suffolk (Martin 1991) points out that the place-name 'Erbury' (OE 'earthen fort') supports a prehistoric origin. It is now generally accepted that Clare Camp is Iron Age in origin.

The relatively low hillside location of the enclosure is unusual, seen in the context of 'conventional hillforts'. The Victorian County History attempts to describe it more stereotypically as '...occupying an eminence overlooking the country' (VCH 1907, 590), but this is misleading; the location is, on the contrary, overlooked by many of the surrounding hills. Iron Age sites which are comparable in this respect exist only occasionally in the rest of the country (Bowden and McOmish 1987), but Clare Camp fits well into the local East Anglian context. Martin concludes that Suffolk '...possesses few earthworks that could be termed hillforts' (Martin 1991, 51) and that the east of England lies within a very different regional tradition of enclosure architecture. Warham Camp in Norfolk, which is known to be Middle to Late Iron Age, is located on a steep hillside overlooking the River Stiffkey; Thetford and Narborough also occupy sloping sites overlooked by higher ground (Davies et al 1992, figures 49-50).

Despite the lack of artefactual dating evidence, the stratigraphy of the earthworks confirms the likelihood of a prehistoric origin. The enclosure certainly appears to be the earliest phase of activity on the site; it is adapted by the manor complex and respected by Sheepgate Lane (contrary to early DOE Scheduling Information 1981) and the parallel ditches. These features provide a broad *terminus ante quem*, which is

discussed below.

The form of Clare Camp has been compared to the Royal Hunting Lodge at Feckenham, Hereford and Worcester (NGR SP 008616) and King's Court Palace at Gillingham, Dorset (NGR ST 818263) (DOE Scheduling Information 1981), but the similarity is only superficial. Both these sub-rectangular enclosures are much more regular in form and represent the only phase of activity on the site; they are also well-documented, in contrast to the almost complete absence of Medieval references to Clare Camp. The irregular form of Clare is better suited to an Iron Age context. It appears to be composed of four or more distinct straight sections of rampart, one on the north-west of breach a, one on the east, north of breach b, two on the south side to either side of the breaches at c, and possibly two more on the disturbed north-west side. This may suggest that the enclosure was constructed by separate 'teams' or possibly in phases, though the design may reflect more complex influences, such as other features in the landscape or the intended function of the enclosure. The closest regional parallel in form is the Late Pre-Roman and Sub-Roman Iron Age sub-rectangular enclosure at Burgh, Suffolk, interpreted on the evidence of both the finds and the form as a possible ritual site (Martin 1988; 1991, 47). The ramparts at Burgh enclosed a larger area (some 3ha) than Clare Camp, and were bivallate and rectilinear on three sides, but curving and interrupted on the south-west. Comparisons with 'D'-shaped enclosures elsewhere in the country may be inappropriate given the regional independence noted by Martin (1991), but the form of Clare Camp is not unusual seen in a wider context (see for example Palmer 1984, figures 7-8).

The difference in size between the massive inner bank and ditch and the much less substantial outer rampart is clearest between c and d, where the outer bank is almost a negative feature defined by the ditches on either side of it. The Victoria County History suggests that this difference is due mainly to erosion and that Sheepgate Lane represents the original form of the outer rampart, even depicting a third bank on the north side of the western end of the trackway (VCH 1907, 590, and plan). This is certainly not the case, although the great depth of the hollow-way may be due to the initial constricting effect of the pre-existing outer ditch (see below). The difference in scale and general appearance between the two ramparts is sufficiently marked to suggest the possibility that the outer dates to a later phase of construction or even a later period, for example a Dark Age or Medieval re-occupation.

The smaller size of the inner rampart along most of the eastern side of the enclosure probably results from deliberate levelling. Since more massive stretches survive south-east of a and south of b, the difference cannot be explained by natural silting or simple erosion, but there is no evidence for redeposited material in the interior. It seems likely,

since the lowered section of the bank corresponds to the greatest encroachment by the properties on Bridewell Street, that the material was used to fill in the ditch, probably in the same episode as the construction of the properties in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries.

The breaches at **a** and **b** have been regarded as likely original entrances due to the increase in the size of the rampart either side of **a** and south of **b** (VCH 1907; DOE Scheduling Information 1981). However, in both cases, the increase is partly a result of the deliberate levelling between breaches **a** and **b** described above. At breach **a**, spoil has clearly been pushed outwards to form the causeway across the ditch and inwards to form the mound into which the footpath cuts. The deposit overlying the western terminal and the low spread on the interior to the south-east may also represent dumps of spoil. Given the presence of so much re-deposited material and the evidence that both the ditch and the outer bank continue, breach **a** is almost certainly a later modification of the rampart. At breach **b**, the significant offset of c.5m between the north and south terminals of the rampart suggests that the opening may be an original gateway (Hogg 1975, 178). The possible inturn of the northern terminal and the lack of obvious re-deposited spoil in the vicinity may support this, but the extensive disturbance by features **m** and **o** means that this evidence is less reliable. These later features have certainly produced the strong scarp which extends between the terminals and obscures any evidence which may have existed for an original causeway across the ditch.

In other 'D'-shaped enclosures, for example Rowbury Copse, Hampshire (NGR SU 344392), a position mid-way along the straightest side, flanked by well-defined corners, has sometimes been favoured for a gateway (for other comparisons see Palmer 1984, figures 7-8). On these criteria, either of the breaches at **c**, which also correspond to a slight change of angle in the rampart, may be an original entrance. However, the eastern breach is unlikely, since a considerable quantity of spoil has been pushed away from it into the interior, and the outer face of the bank is partially continued by two scarps. The western breach is a slightly stronger possibility, although here too spoil has been re-deposited in the interior. It is uncertain whether the causeway across the ditch is original; the western terminals of the ditch and outer bank appear fairly convincing in plan, but the area has clearly been heavily disturbed. This question might be addressed by geophysical survey.

Although there is no trace of the bank and ditch at **d** for some 15m, it appears probable that the ramparts originally continued; it is unlikely that there was an original entrance at this point, given the acute angle of the corner.

The interior

Manor complex i and associated features

Attention was first drawn to the earthwork remains of building complex i by Martin (1991, 48 and Figure 5), who interpreted it as an outlying compound for the Manor of Clare alias Erbury. This followed the assertion by Thornton (1928, 17) that Erbury was both a subsidiary of, and a synonym for, the manor of the great de Clare family. The documentary evidence for this argument is complex and inconclusive. In summary, Thornton suggested that during the two centuries after the Conquest, there was a single manor, which included what was later known as Erbury, known simply as 'Clare Manor', and that subsequently, in the Court Rolls commencing 1308-9 (PRO a), it took its name from the hamlet of Chilton to the north-west, later in the century becoming the Manor of Chilton and Stoke (PRO b). In the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, the name Erbury was used to denote certain manorial lands around Clare, and in 1336, according to Thornton, as a synonym for the main manor house (PRO c). By 1295, the house, curtilage and garden of Erbury, thought by Thornton to belong to an official of Clare Manor, were said to be worth eight shillings (PRO d). In 1309-10, repairs were carried out on barns, the dove house, the granary and servants' houses '...apud Erdebir' (PRO e). After 1368, the house was said to be of no value, even after repairs. Thornton argues that a reference in 1598-9 to 'Erbury alias Stoke cum Chilton' (BM), is conclusive proof that the manors remained unified throughout, but there is no doubt that by this stage Erbury was included within the Honor of Clare, which had devolved to the Crown (PRO f).

On this evidence it is possible that the de Clare family sub-divided and renamed a single manor during the thirteenth century as Thornton argues, but equally possible that her premise that there was only ever a single manor is incorrect, and that there was an attempt to unify two separate manors, which was initially unsuccessful (Mr D Ridley personal communication). Walford's account (Walford nineteenth century) suggests that the original Manor of Erbury may have been partially subsumed by the Manor of Clare. He refers to the Manor of Erbury alias Earbury Hall and the Manor of Chilton with Erbury Garden; the former held land west of Bridewell Street, including the area of the Lower Common, and the latter the land and properties east of Bridewell Street and north of the Manor of Erbury alias Earbury Hall. Erbury Garden is described as an area of some 60 acres, or almost 25ha, and the fact that it was later referred to as part of the Common in the grant by Katherine of Aragon (PRO f), implies either that Erbury Garden extended across Bridewell Street to the east, or more plausibly that part of the demesne lands of the Manor of Erbury west of the road had come to be included in the Manor of Clare. In this context, it is worth noting that the borough boundary as shown on the Tithe Map of 1846 (Suffolk CRO b) follows the northern perimeter of the enclosure, while Thornton suggests that in the fourteenth century it approximately

followed the southern perimeter. Perhaps this change reflects an addition to the Manor of Clare, since elsewhere, property belonging to the Manor of Clare is generally found within the borough, while Erbury lands generally lie scattered around the area outside it (a division not thought significant by Thornton). Coppinger distinguished the Manor of Clare (Coppinger 1908, V, 200-1) as separate from the Manor of Erbury (ibid. 289-90), but assumed that Erbury was always part of the Honor of Clare; he did not address the question of the location of either manor.

The scattered distribution of Erbury's possessions, together with its name, may suggest a Late Saxon origin for the manor, but there is no mention of the name in Domesday Book. Though the earthwork remains almost certainly do not date from that period, Clare was a major market centre in the Pre-Conquest period (Thornton 1928, 15) and there is a possibility of Late Saxon re-occupation of the enclosure. The stray finds of late twelfth to early thirteenth century sherds in the garden on the north-east side of the enclosure attest to some activity on the site before the earliest documentary evidence. Scarfe has tentatively suggested a Late Saxon phase of occupation (Scarfe 1972, plate 2), but there is as yet no documentary or archaeological evidence to support his assertion that the enclosure may have been the site of the Collegiate Church of St John. It is known that in the Pre-Conquest period, most of the Honor of Clare was held by Wisgar son of Aluric (Domesday Book), but since the evidence for including Erbury within the Honor is disputable, the enclosure is unlikely to have been the seat of Wisgar.

Though evidence for the origin of the Manor of Erbury and its relationship with the Manor of Clare is confused, the circumstantial evidence linking the earthwork remains to Erbury is relatively strong. In the early seventeenth century, the tenants of the Manor of Erbury paid their dues at a barn adjacent to Sheepgate Lane (Suffolk CRO c). Thornton inferred from this that the manor complex lay immediately to the north of the Common (Thornton 1928, 19) and suggested that the buildings had probably been destroyed. However, Erbury Garden, which was presumably located close to or around the manor house, was named in the grant of Katherine of Aragon as part of the Common itself (PRO f). The grant, made at some point between 1515 and 1534, comprised all the demesne lands of the Manor of Erbury. Therefore the earthwork remains certainly lie within the demesne lands, possibly within the part known as Erbury Garden, and must pre-date the land becoming common in the early sixteenth century. In addition, a reference of 1309-10 (PRO e) mentions a ditch between the gates of Erbury and the High Street towards Chilton (ie Bridewell Street). Since this is singled out for special mention, it seems to have been more significant than a simple field ditch. It may have been the enclosure ditch, since the outer rampart on the east probably survived until the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, when the enclosure of the Common and development of the western side of Bridewell Street began (Suffolk CRO d). The

size and lay-out of the main building complex, its location within the enclosure, and the likelihood that other features are contemporary with it, are consistent with a moderately important manor.

The design of the manor complex is unusual, suggesting a house and ancillary buildings laid out around a courtyard or pair of courtyards. The exceptional preservation of structures 1 and 2 may suggest that they used sleeper walls with wooden superstructures, since the robbing or collapse of stone structures of this size might be expected to confuse their outlines to a much greater extent. This would fit well into the local context; almost all the surviving fifteenth and sixteenth century houses in Clare are timber framed. Structure 1 had approximate dimensions of 32m long by 12m wide, considerably larger than an average peasant house. An opening in the northern side probably indicates a main central doorway, and the possible internal division may have been a cross passage, such as would be found dividing the upper or lower end of a hall house. The doorway possibly opened onto a small courtyard, with approximate dimensions of 18m by 13m. The less well-preserved features to the north-west and north-east of this courtyard may have been platforms supporting smaller structures laid out around it. The broad bank extending north-east of structure 1 may also have supported a structure, and seems to separate this courtyard from a larger one to the south-east, onto which the second structure faces. This larger yard measures approximately 22m by 15m; the platform at its north-eastern end may have supported a small structure, and the mound at its south-western end is possibly a structure within the yard, or a dump of debris from one of the other structures. Structure 2 measures approximately 40m long by 14m wide, assuming that it occupied the whole of the platform. These dimensions, together with the suggestion of two doors, positioned symmetrically in the north-western side, suggest a large barn or byre, though other functions are possible. The arrangement of the complex around a pair of courtyards implies a functional division; it seems likely that the smaller one was more private, perhaps a garden for the house itself (structure 1), while the larger one perhaps had an agricultural function.

The steep-sided opening at the north-east corner of the yard appears to be an entrance to the manor complex; feature j seems to be a hollow-way extending away from it straight towards feature l. At some stage, this was deliberately blocked by the well-defined bank; a second trackway o either remained in use or succeeded it (see below).

Hollow k is possibly evidence for a third major building aligned at right angles to structure 1, giving general symmetry to the overall plan of the complex. Its steep sides and relatively great depth differ from quarry hollows p and q, perhaps suggesting that the putative building had a stone undercroft or cellar. Robbing or collapse could

account for the irregular outline of the depression. However, an undercroft dug so deep into the ground would not be typical of the region, and the theory must remain speculative.

At the rear of the manor complex, the three contiguous hollows cut into the rampart appear by their proximity and orientation to be approximately contemporary with the rest of the complex. The most easterly is sufficiently rectilinear to suggest a structure, measuring approximately 13m long and 7m wide. The central hollow is less regular, but deliberately preserves a remnant of the rampart along its south-western and north-eastern sides; though unconvincing as a permanent structure, it clearly results from a more carefully planned activity than quarrying or straightforward destruction. Profile 4 demonstrates the depth of rampart material removed; the total quantity amounts to approximately 260m³, implying considerable effort. The third hollow is the most irregular and does not suggest a structure, but still adapts the rampart as a sort of platform.

The level strip along the foot of the rampart divides the three hollows from the main group of buildings. It has the regular appearance of a track, terminating at the eastern end of the complex, and to the west possibly providing access to the rest of the enclosure, or the exterior via breach b. However, there is no evidence for access into the main building complex, and the area may simply have been open.

Between breaches d and g the inner ditch is composed of a succession of three contiguous sub-rectangular depressions, and the inner rampart bank has been spread and levelled. This disturbance may be a more purposeful modification of the enclosure ditch than it first appears and could be contemporary with the main manor complex. It is not clear whether causeway f represents a later stage in the development of the manor or post-dates it completely. In either case, it seems probable that the first two depressions were at some stage one single longer depression measuring approximately 63m long by 12m to 15m wide. The solid clay bank at the north-eastern end of this depression, given prominence on the VCH plan (VCH 1907), appears to have acted as a deliberate dam - suggesting a possible manorial fishpond. The partial levelling of the adjacent rampart bank might have been necessary to allow access to the ponds. If causeway f represents a later phase the development of the manor, its intention may have been to create two smaller ponds, as well as to provide a new point of access to the enclosure. This change may have coincided with the abandonment of another pond contained within the third, most northerly, depression. This is less convincing, being shallower (possibly through silting) and truncated at the south-west end, but also appears to have been deliberately dammed by a low bank at its north-east end. The only possible evidence for a water supply for the ponds is a well-defined breach mid-way along the north-west side of the

first depression, linking it to the easternmost parallel ditch. This may suggest that the parallel ditches are contemporary with the manor, but the breach could be later, so the relationship is not reliable.

North-east of the possible fish-ponds lies another small group of buildings, comprising platforms **e** and **h**, which, in common with the manor complex, are located on the periphery of the enclosure and re-use its rampart. If we accept the *terminus ante quem* provided by Katherine of Aragon's grant in 1515-34, it is possible that **e** and **h** were also components of the manor. Platform **e** could have supported a rectangular structure, with maximum dimensions of 21m long by 6.5m wide. The north-eastern end of the platform and the bank which projects eastwards from it define a small level rectangular compound, measuring approximately 18m by 9m; a level quadrangle to its north-west may be a separate functional area. The bank projecting from platform **e** may be the remains of an enclosing wall or hedge. Platform **h** faced onto the northern side of this compound. It is possible that the banks on its eastern and western edges represent original wall-lines, but more likely that they simply defined the edges of the platform itself, which measures approximately 5m by 7m. There is a reference to a dovecote within the Manor of Erbury (PRO **e**), which would typically be a roughly square structure of comparable dimensions, though this interpretation must remain speculative. Access into the rest of the enclosure could have been possible through an opening between the projecting bank bank and the inner rampart, and onto Sheepgate Lane through linear hollow **g**, although this feature may post-date the manor.

Feature **l** is portrayed as a pond on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan of 1975 (published 1976) and survived as a spring-fed pool c.0.6m deep until recent years. It is indicated on the sketch plan of 1790 (Walford nineteenth century) and can be dated to before 1723 by its relationship with the adjacent small ditched enclosure surrounding the site of the smallpox house (see below). More importantly, the erosion which affects the western side of channel **m** appears to correspond to the intersection with trackway **j**, suggesting that the pond was in use at some point during the existence of the manor complex. The depression may result from the repeated cleaning and excavation of a hollow deliberately dug to improve a natural spring, and possibly pre-dates both channel **m** and the manor.

The relationship between channel **m** and trackway **j** is unclear; it seems likely that the channel is a later addition to pond **l**, but that the trackway continued in use after its disruption by the channel. Hogg (1975, 178) suggested that the channel was an abraded trackway, but this is unlikely given its extremely regular form and the clear evidence for deliberate excavation. The regular profile of the lower part of the channel, and its constant slight fall from west to east, suggests that it may have been a leat carrying

water away from the enclosure. As such, it more than fulfills the requirements of a simple drain, so it is possible that there was an ornamental aspect to its design, or that it was intended to supply water to some feature on the eastern side of the enclosure. Documentary evidence sheds no light on the original purpose of the channel, but suggests that there were subsequent developments in its form; the plan of 1790 (Walford nineteenth century) accurately portrays the pond, but adds a contiguous approximately square feature to the south, from which a linear feature, presumably channel j, runs towards breach b. However, the plan is schematic in places, and inaccuracies elsewhere imply that its evidence should be used cautiously. The 1809 Plan of the Town of Clare (Suffolk CRO a), which may in part derive from the earlier plan, shows a similar roughly square feature, possibly the pond, at the centre of the enclosure, but no associated details. Alternatively, either square feature may represent the roughly quadrangular depression p.

Bank n bisects the enclosure from north to south and is continued by a bank which crosses between the ramparts west of breach a. Its alignment is probably determined by the shape of the enclosure as a whole, and that of the manor complex by the south-western section of rampart, so that the difference between the two need not necessarily imply a direct conflict. The stratigraphic relationship between bank n and channel l is uncertain, but the northern part of the bank may be contemporary or earlier, while the section south of channel l differs in form and size, and may be a later addition. Both features seem to be aligned so as to define the boundary of the area of greatest activity contemporary with the manor complex, but are probably a late development. No evidence remains on the surface to suggest whether the original feature was a wall, or an earthen bank supporting a palisade or hedge. The aerial photograph (CUCAP 1955 aerial photograph) suggests that the southern section of bank n is precisely divided by the breaches, and is planned as such on Martin's sketch plan (Martin 1991, figure 5), giving it the appearance of three inter-connected pillow mounds. This is not the case on the ground, and the breaches probably represent erosion by livestock of an originally continuous feature. The northern section of bank n, together with the upcast of channel l, may also have enclosed the open area in the north-eastern corner of the enclosure to form a paddock.

Linear depression o is interpreted by Hogg (Hogg 1975, 178) as a trackway, and appears to link the entrance to the manor complex to the breach in the rampart at b. While broadly contemporary with the manor complex, it continued in use after trackway j, and cuts through the end of the original platform of structure 2, but predates the southern extension of bank n. The two abrupt angle changes suggest that the trackway respected pre-existing features, which have left no trace on the surface, for example paddocks enclosed by fences; this perhaps seems unlikely if it was used as a major access route

to the manor, as its depth implies. Although the profile of the feature is not entirely consistent with a typical hollow-way, and it is remarkable that the angle changes have remained so sharp and well-defined if the feature were produced by erosion, on balance Hogg's interpretation is likely to be correct.

Quarry hollows

Three substantial sub-rectangular depressions, which stratigraphically post-date the manor complex or its associated features, probably represent a phase of quarrying as the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 depiction of 1975. (published 1976) suggests. The underlying clay contains flint, which is the only locally available building stone, and there are numerous 'gravel pits' in the area.

The irregular bulbous depression **k** may be the remains of an undercroft or cellar as described above, but may alternatively result from quarrying soon after the abandonment of the manor. It cuts the level strip at the rear of the manor complex, but the undisturbed ledge adjacent to structure **l** perhaps indicates that some remnant of the building still stood, and that the quarry deliberately avoided it.

Quarries **p** and **q** are relatively shallow and much more regular in form. The trackway which adjoins the north-east side of quarry **p** appears to disrupt trackway **j**, and quarry **q** clearly cuts trackway **o**, implying that the activity post-dates the manor. The level base and steep sides of both quarries indicate that they have been eroded by water.

It has been argued that the quarries broadly post-date the manor complex. A more specific chronological context is provided by the documentary sources, which are discussed more fully by Ridley (Ridley 1986). In 1495, the entire manor of Erbury was leased to Robert Turnebull by the Crown, which then held possession of the Manor and Honor of Clare. At some point between 1515 and 1534, Katherine of Aragon granted all the demesne lands, comprising the Common Pasture, Houndewall and Erbury Garden to three townsmen, on behalf of those inhabitants of Clare who held less than fifteen acres, for a period of ninety-nine years (PRO f). This grant was subsequently confirmed by Philip and Mary to George Whatlock, William Gilbert and another, and in 1554 Ambrose Gilbert, William Fryer and John Fenne paid one hundred marks for the confirmation. In 1605, James I granted the freehold of the land to his friend Henry Bromley, who agreed to sell the land back to the town. This resulted in general outrage, a chancery suit against him supported by one hundred and fifty-three residents (quoted in PRO g; Suffolk CRO c; e; f) and several instances of direct action (Suffolk CRO g; h). The eventual conclusion of this dispute in 1609 led to the subsequent fair administration of the land, under which the Lower Common was available to the poor and the Upper Common was leased and the proceeds donated to charity and the upkeep

of the land by a bailiff (Suffolk CRO i). From 1585 to 1599 and again from 1609 onwards, documents formerly held in the parish chest (Suffolk CRO j) record that between thirty and forty people were granted cow 'walks' on the Common during the winter months, and as many as fifty-six in summer. Ridley calculates that 80% of these were genuinely needy as defined by the charity distributions for the period (Ridley 1986, 10-11). Although the 'soil' of the Common was specifically included in all the grants, the Headboroughs of Clare, which administered the land after 1609, seem to have maintained strict control over all activity on it and to have allowed only the pasturing of livestock. It would therefore seem likely that the quarrying dates from the periods when the land was either unadministered or effectively in private hands, ie from the abandonment of the probable manor until c.1515-34 and in the years 1605-9.

Some of the minor breaches in the enclosure rampart, particularly those on the east side which appear to have been abraded by use, may also date to this period. In 1620, the Court Leets (Suffolk CRO d) record an order that Richard Lansell and Barnaby Warren should nail up the private gates which they had constructed in the fencing of the common pasture. It seems likely that these gates may correspond to the breaches on the east side of the enclosure, which certainly pre-date the nineteenth century construction of the property boundary wall and post-date the partial levelling of this section of rampart, which it has been argued may have taken place in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. Other minor breaches, produced by gradual erosion, may date to this period, when the Lower Common was relatively heavily grazed.

The pest houses

According to the Churchwardens' Account Book for 1723 (Suffolk CRO k), the vestry ordered that two of the cottages it owned in the town should be pulled down and re-erected on the Lower Common as pest houses for bubonic plague and smallpox. While neither disease was rife, the houses were available for rent, but during an outbreak, the tenant was moved elsewhere and his rent paid by the church (Ridley 1988, 23). Both buildings are shown as 'smallpox houses' on the Tithe Map of 1846 (Suffolk CRO b), and the plan of 1790 (Walford nineteenth century), and appear to have been deliberately sited close to springs.

The first is located within the small quadrangular ditched enclosure on the west side of hollow 1, corresponding precisely to the position of the surviving platform and wall lines. The surrounding ditch itself is shown on the plan of 1790, and the implication of the description 'cottage and garden' in the Tithe Awards of 1846 is that the ditch still functioned as a boundary at that time. The destruction of the building must have occurred before 1884, since it is not shown on the Ordnance Survey First Edition 25" map (surveyed 1884, published 1886).

The second building was located in the south-west corner of the common, immediately to the south of the present boundary fence. The low bank and scarp, which extend along the boundary for a total of 25m mark the edge of the garden of the property. The Glebe Terrier (CRO l) for 1841 refers to the building as a '... cottage of double tenements' and a postcard of 1916 in the private collection of Mr F Hickford shows the building. It is two storeys high, of typical seventeenth to eighteenth century timber framed construction with a central brick chimney stack. The window pattern implies that there were two rooms on each storey, possibly reached by a single central staircase, an arrangement typical of East Anglian pest-houses. The main building was demolished c. 1960, but a brick built wash house, which was a nineteenth century addition to the main structure, survives and continues in use as a chicken shed.

Miscellaneous features

The encroachment of 'The Old Vicarage', on the southern side of the enclosure must have taken place before 1790, since it is shown with the same boundaries on the plan of that date (Walford nineteenth century). However, the brick wall which revets the bulk of the rampart is of nineteenth century construction, and most of the damage to the rampart at this point may be contemporary with its building. A possible date for this work is provided by the Glebe Terrier for 1841 (Suffolk CRO l), which refers to the vicarage croft '...now made part of the garden'. The present use of the western end of the property as an orchard suggests that this area was probably the croft. The secondary bank which overlies the rampart bank probably represents the spoil from the construction of the wall, and accounts for the difference in levels to the north and south of the wall. The spread of material overlying the south-eastern corner of the enclosure probably results from the partial levelling of the adjacent section of rampart, and may also relate to the construction of the Vicarage. A mid to late nineteenth century large scale plan shows the present boundaries of the vicarage garden and highlights an area to the north extending as far as the southern edge of feature o (Suffolk CRO m). This probably relates to the grant of one and three-quarter acres of pasture to the Vicar in 1872 (Suffolk CRO n). It is possible that it was intended to enclose this area and incorporate it into the main garden, but this was never carried out.

The design of the air-raid shelter west of c is slightly unusual, comprising a simple open trench with shored sides cut into the rampart at ground level, probably with three points of access; it was dug in the early part of the Second World War (Mr F. Hickford, personal communication, and was possibly never subsequently roofed. No other wartime or later activity is known of on the Lower Common.

The exterior

Sheepgate Lane and the parallel embanked ditches

These two features have previously been regarded as completely separate features, and were therefore described as such above. In plan, however, the massively abraded northern end of Sheepgate Lane has a much more convincing linear relationship with the parallel embanked ditches than with the green lane which extends to the west. The greater depth of the northern section indicates that erosion was greater here, due in part to the high water table, but also suggesting that the course of the trackway may initially have been constricted by the pre-existing outer ditch of the enclosure, whose base and northern side it cuts away. The continuity between the hollow-way and the embanked ditches has been confused by the digging of the common boundary ditch 1871-6 (see below), which extends obliquely across the middle of the original trackway, so that only slight evidence that the western parallel ditch formerly continued to the north survives.

The purpose of this single linear feature is unclear. Sheepgate Lane is shown on the plan of 1790 (Walford nineteenth century) as 'Sheep Cott Lane' and the parallel ditches are annotated 'Lines suppos'd for fetching water', an interpretation which appears to be a piece of antiquarian guesswork, and disregards the fact that the ditches cross the watershed of the hillside. It is likely, however, that the ditches were frequently wet, given the underlying clay; the re-cut at d seems to be a short term measure to drain the eastern parallel ditch into the deeper outer ditch of the enclosure, possibly contemporary with the construction of causeway f. This may also explain the breach linking the ditch with the first of the possible fish-ponds, in which case their water supply remains uncertain.

A more plausible interpretation is that Sheepgate Lane and the parallel ditches together form a droveway, with the exterior embankments containing the livestock as the great depth of Sheepgate Lane effectively did. The relationship of the ditches to the possible fish-ponds is inconclusive, so the question of the date of the droveway depends on whether it was a local stock route serving the Common after the abandonment of the manor, or skirted around the extant manor and continued beyond it, for which there is some evidence. It may have been the boundary of the demesne lands of the manor which necessitated the initial abrupt deviation from Bridewell Street around the perimeter of Clare Camp. Aspects of the plan of Clare, particularly around the parish church, suggest systematic planning, probably contemporary with the early development of Clare Castle. This reorganization perhaps made earlier routes redundant, and Sheepgate Lane may have been one of these. Although there is no surviving evidence that the droveway continued straight to the south-west, hedges or fencing may have been used elsewhere, with the addition of embanked ditches only necessary close to the manor, possibly for ornamental as much as for functional reasons. Alternatively, it is

possible that the droveway turned to the south-east along the common boundary before continuing along the same alignment, since the plot of land which extends south-westwards from the southernmost corner of the lower common is called a 'droveway' in the Tithe Awards of 1846 (CRO b). This course would correspond to a series of field boundaries which extend for 380m due south. A linear feature referred to in the later Medieval period as The Hawedych, which also followed this alignment, has been assumed to be a major drainage ditch (Thornton 1928, 234), but may also have related to the course of the putative droveway. A section 120m long survived in 1884 and was portrayed on the Ordnance Survey First Edition 25" map (surveyed 1884, published 1886), but has now mostly been backfilled.

Miscellaneous features

The depression at the south-western end of the parallel ditches was shown as a pond on the plan of 1790 (Walford nineteenth century), the Tithe Map of 1846 (CRO b) and the Ordnance Survey First Edition 25" map (surveyed 1884, published 1886). It is probable that the two oblique re-cut ditches supplied the pond and drained the south-western ends of the parallel ditches. A *terminus ante quem* for their digging of 1871-6 is provided by the upcast of the common boundary ditch (see below), which overlies the westernmost of the two.

Upcast material from the pond overlies, and so post-dates, the abraded linear scarp which extends to the east for some 76m. The very slight nature of the scarp, and its alignment, which conflicts with most other surviving features, suggests that it is considerably earlier. It may be a field boundary, perhaps associated with a very regular area to the north, which may have been levelled by ploughing.

Two more ponds on the common boundary are shown on the Tithe Map of 1846 (CRO b), but are not shown on earlier depictions. The first lay adjacent to the extreme southern corner of the common and continues in use to the present. The adjacent plantation is shown on the Tithe Awards of 1846 (CRO b) and the Ordnance Survey First Edition of 1884 (published 1886). The second pond was located some 70m to the north of the corner, and is shown on the same maps. It is likely that the back-filled dry ditch originally extended as far as the pond.

The architecture of the houses built in the base of the former quarry at the western end of Common Street indicates that it was excavated before the seventeenth century. The size of the quarry suggests either that it was carried out over a considerable period, or in order to obtain flint for building a major structure, such as the parish church, Clare Castle or the unlocated Late Saxon Collegiate Church of St John.

The digging of the cutting and construction of the embankment for Common Street track is dated to 1871-6 by a consultant's report on the management of the Common (CRO o) and the payments for the completion of this work (CRO p).

The present boundaries of the Upper and Lower Commons are shown on the plan of 1790 (Walford nineteenth century), and although it is uncertain whether they were ditched at this period, it is certain that all existing ditches were re-cut following the 1871 report (CRO o), and that the ditch and 'quick fences' along the northern side of the common were added at this time.

METHOD

The survey was carried out by Alastair Oswald and Jane Kenney of the RCHME. Control points, hard detail, and earthwork profiles were surveyed using a Wild TC1610 Electronic Theodolite with integral EDM. Data were captured on a Wild GRM 10 Rec Module and plotted via computer on a Calcomp 3024 plotter. The details of the earthwork plan were supplied at 1:1000 scale with Fibron tapes using normal graphical methods. The report was researched and written by Alastair Oswald and edited by Paul Pattison. The site archive has been deposited in the National Monuments Record in Swindon (TL 74 NE 10, 41, 42, 43). Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.

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