QUEEN EDITH

The story of a Saxon king,
his lover
and a
Cambridge suburb

A short paper

by

JEREMY LANDER

October 2009

FOREWORD

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This short paper on the Queen Edith area of Cambridge comes with a health warning: I am not a historian. Consequently it is bitty, anecdotal and scandalously short of references. I cannot read Anglo Saxon and in any case there is very little primary evidence from the 11th century - the principal focus of my study. My main sources have been the Domesday Book or, to be more accurate, the Victoria County History and British History Online which contain the information in more digestible form, together with various bits and pieces gleaned from books and websites on the Saxon period, of which there are many. Most of the published material on the 1066 story has, in some shape or form, been derived from either the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', a patchy series of accounts by various anonymous scribes of the time, usually with axes to grind, or the Bayeux tapestry, almost certainly a piece of Norman propaganda; neither are to be fully trusted. The full, true picture of this fascinating period of British history remains tantalisingly out of reach.

My interest in the subject began when I moved to Nightingale Avenue in the Queen Edith area, a south-eastern suburb of Cambridge. At the time I had no idea of the connection between the area where we lived, the 'Queen Edith' school in Godwin Way (where my children went), and Harold II king of England in 1066; let alone an obscure Saxon noblewoman named Edith, or how our house came to be built on land that belonged to St Thomas' Hospital in London. But I wondered about the naming of the area and why it was called Queen Edith's. Left unsatisfied by the explanation that it was named after Queen Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor (especially when I found that there was no connection between her and the area) I dug a little deeper.

I owe my 'eureka' moment to novelist Julian Rathbone and his book 'The Last English King'. In his fictionalised account of the life of Harold II he describes the love affair between Harold and the beautiful Saxon princess Edith Swan-Neck and it was while I read the paperback on holiday that the scales fell from my eyes. Could this have been the Edith that lived in 11th century Cambridgeshire, and the naming of the area be just a case of mistaken identity? A quick delve into the Victoria County History and all was revealed: the name Edith Swan-Neck, or 'Eddeva the Fair' as she was often called, landowner in and around Cambridge in 1066 and common-law wife of Harold II, was everywhere.

My thanks also go to the Cambridgeshire Collection and its fabulous store of local history, and to the rather less reliable but wonderful websites that are now available to both enlighten and befuddle the casual historian.

Jeremy Lander
October 2009

1.
EDITH AND HAROLD

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It is often said that the Queen Edith area in Cambridge was named after Edith the wife of Edward the Confessor and Queen of England from 1045 until 1066. In one respect this is true; the developers of the 1950s suburb believed there was a strong connection between the area and the Saxon Queen, her family and associates, so road names like Queen Edith's Way, Godwin Way and Wulfstan Way appeared. But what was the basis for this assumption? Did the wife of King Edward really have a connection with this part of Cambridge? To try and answer this question requires some research into one of the most fascinating periods of English history - the middle of the 11th century, and the leading family of the day; the Godwins.

Earl Godwin was a Wessex magnate who lived in the Chichester area of Saxon England from the late 10th century until 1053. He and his wife Gytha had eight children; Edith was the eldest and had a younger sister called Aelgifu. Their six sons were called Swegen, Harold, Tostig, Gyrth, Leofwine and Wulfnoth (*see fig. 1 Godwin family tree*). They were a close family but extremely ambitious, and often schemed against one another, as well as with and against everyone around them. Godwin was the chief power-broker in the Saxon Witan (or court) and was able to secure two of England's Earldoms for his eldest sons Swegen and Harold. He also persuaded King Edward, the very religious and somewhat austere king crowned in 1042, to marry his daughter Edith and she became Queen in 1045.

Harold's Earldom was East Anglia and there he would have soon met a local noblewoman who was known by several names: Edith (or Eddeva) the Fair, Edith the Beautiful, Edith the Rich but most commonly, presumably because of her long graceful neck, Edith 'Swan-Neck'. She was born in about 1025, possibly a Norfolk princess of Danish stock, but little is known about her. From the many entries in the Domesday Book however we do know that she owned a huge amount of land around Cambridge, including Hinton Manor in present day Cherry Hinton, which being close to the thriving Saxon town of Cambridge was probably her main home. (*See Map 1*)

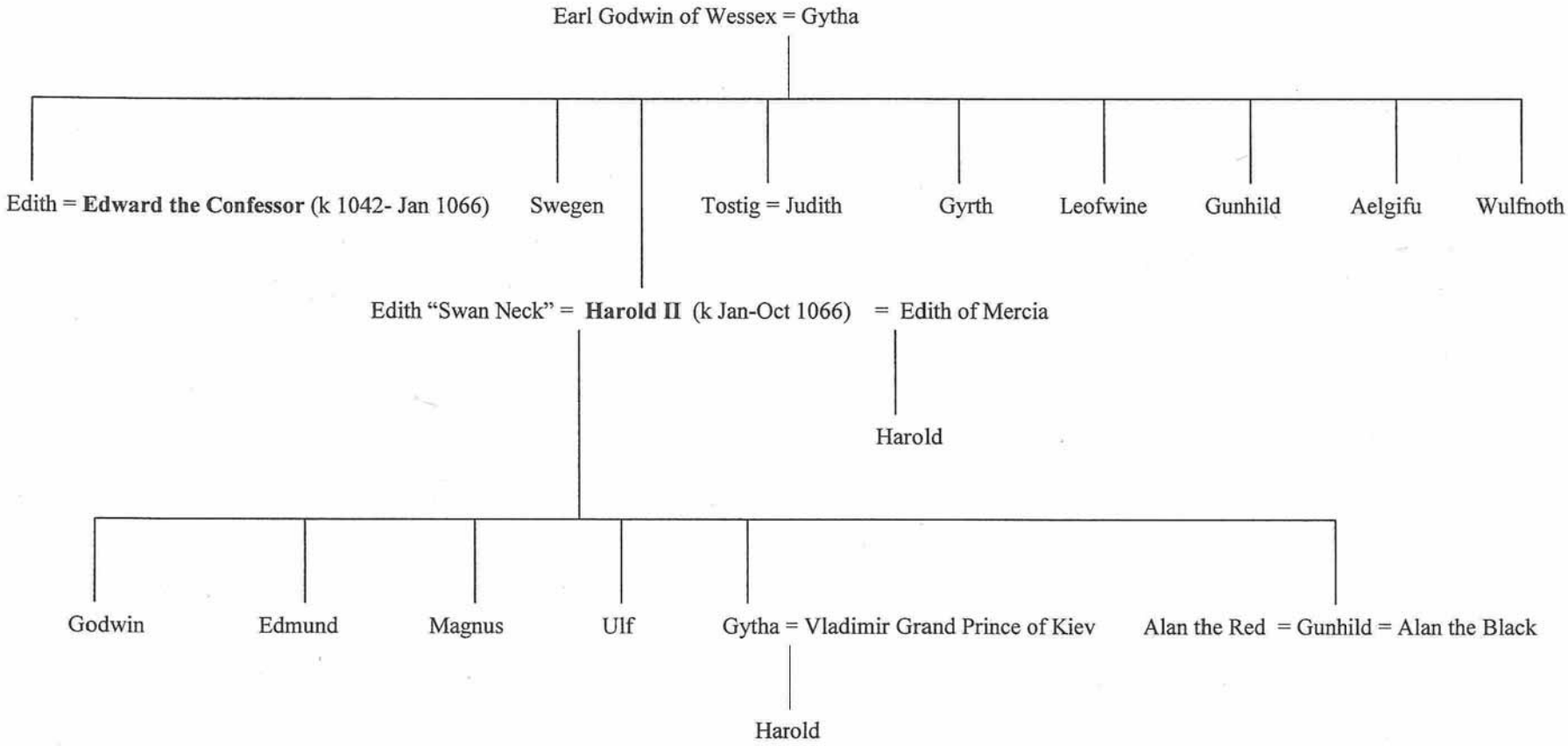
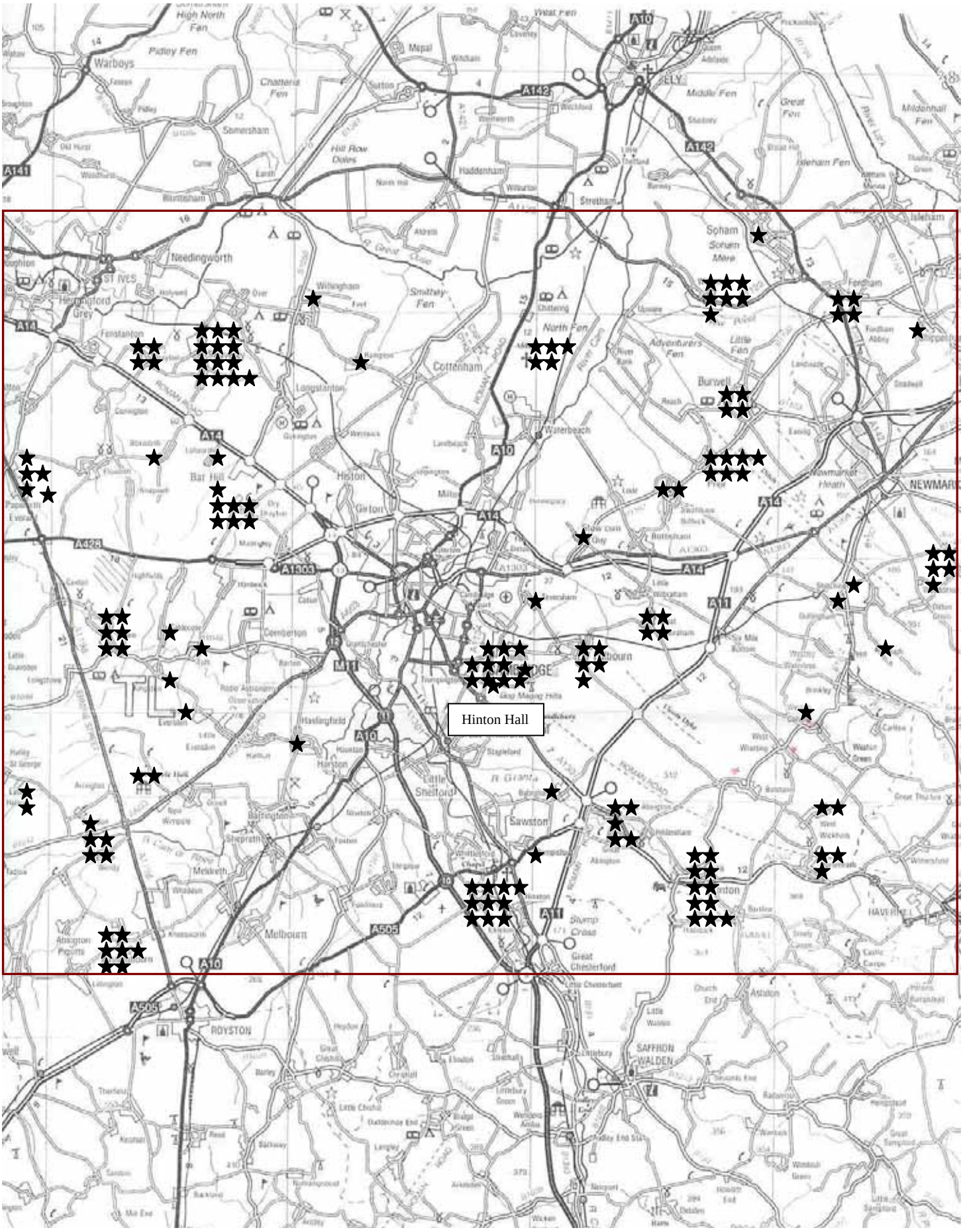


Fig 1. THE GODWIN FAMILY TREE



Map 1: Edith Swan-Neck's lands around Cambridge in 1066. Each star represents one hide, a variable quantity of land needed to support one household but thought to be between 100 and 120 acres (information taken Victoria County History, Cambridgeshire)

Harold and Edith Swan-Neck were not married legally but *in more Danico* (in the Danish manner), sometimes called a 'handfast' marriage, a practice frowned on by the church but common amongst Saxon nobility. Although there is little in the way of hard evidence it seems that they had a long and successful union producing six children: Godwin, Edmund, Magnus, Ulf, Gytha and Gunhild, born between 1047 and about 1055. They may have been based in the Cambridge area or further south in Waltham where Harold and Edith established the Abbey. Harold, as he became more involved in the politics of the day, would in any case have divided his time between his family, the court in Winchester, and various forays abroad, notably to Normandy.

Edward the Confessor

King Edward, the Confessor, had spent his childhood in exile in Normandy and had come to admire its customs and its people, especially its ruler Duke William. Once King he was often seen to favour the Norman court over the Saxon nobility and it was even suggested that he promised the throne to William following his death. This would have particularly aggravated the Godwins who were constantly challenging the King and his Norman faction. In 1051 matters came to a head when the Godwins refused to punish the people of Dover for mistreating a Norman delegation and in retaliation the King exiled the whole male Godwin family while his wife and queen, Earl Godwin's daughter Edith, was dispatched to a nunnery in Wilton.[1]

The Godwins were all pardoned shortly afterwards, following which Harold may have spent more of his time in East Anglia keeping out of Edward's way. A quiet life in East Anglia would have become less possible however when Harold's father died in 1053 and he became head of the family[2], second in power only to the king. Edward was a weak king whose vow of celibacy also meant there was no clear succession and during his reign political ferment was rife. As a popular leader Harold was clearly in line for the throne but there were strong challenges to him from all sides. In this climate many political alliances were made and broken and it was probably in forming such an alliance that in 1064 Harold married, officially this time, another Edith, (sometimes named Aldith or Ealdgyth) sister of the Northumbrian nobles Edwin and Morcar. This brought Harold into conflict with his own brother Tostig, Earl of Northumbria, who after a local rebellion was forced into exile in Norway by Harold where he plotted his revenge.

Also in 1064 Harold made a mysterious trip to Normandy, possibly as part of a botched attempt to get some family members released from captivity. Fatefully during

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[1] *Queen Edith's connection with Wilton would remain strong and she was to spend most of the rest of her long life there. Noblewomen were in a much more equal position with their male counterparts in Saxon times and she became extremely wealthy owning a great deal of land. Although some of this land was held in East Anglia, particularly in Essex, there is little evidence of any strong connection with Cambridge.*

[2] *His elder brother Swegen had died in 1052 on the way back from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, an attempt to atone for his sins (of which there appear to have been many).*

this stay Harold was to swear, over some holy relics, his allegiance to Duke William. It may have been a trick, or carried out under duress, but the moral high ground that Duke William was able to claim from this was to play a significant part in the events that were to follow.

In 1065 Edward the Confessor fell seriously ill. He died in January 1066 and Harold Godwinson was proclaimed Harold II, the new King of England[3]. Hearing of this Duke William must have been enraged; had he not been promised the throne by Edward, even by Harold himself? Immediately he began to make plans for an invasion. Expecting this Harold ordered his army to stand in readiness on the south coast, but with bad weather in the English Channel keeping William in Normandy, the army was disbanded so they could bring in the harvest.

Meanwhile Harold's exiled brother Tostig had joined forces with the King of Norway Harald Hardrada. Seizing an opportunity they landed a large invasion army on the Yorkshire coast. Edwin and Morcar, Harold's brothers-in-law and allies, met the invaders at Fulford, just outside York, but they were defeated leaving Harold's northern flank exposed. With the weather in the Channel still rough, the new king decided to march his army north to meet Tostig and Hardrada's army. Astonishingly they managed to march 250 miles in four days and inflict a crushing defeat on the Norwegian force at Stamford Bridge, just south of York. But then the weather in the English Channel improved and William's Norman Army landed, unopposed, on the south coast at Pevensey, near Hastings.

Harold's army, exhausted and depleted from their battle at Stamford Bridge, marched all the way back south in a desperate attempt to see off this new and bigger threat. On October 14th 1066 the two armies met on a hillside a few miles north of Hastings. Harold's force tenaciously held the ridge while Duke William, the holy relics on which Harold had sworn allegiance, around his neck, rallied his army for one assault after another. It was a very even match and, in the days when battles usually took an hour or two, they fought from early morning until dusk. Either side could have won but Harold's forces began to break, then Harold himself was wounded, possibly by an arrow in the eye. His warriors believed their leader had been killed and their resolve finally crumbled. Harold, two of his brothers, and the few remaining Saxon soldiers around them were overcome by the Normans and hacked to pieces.

A day or so later Edith Swan-Neck arrived at the battle scene. She was the only one who could identify Harold's mangled headless body[4] and legend has it that she took it

[3] *In Saxon England the monarchy did not necessarily follow a strict hereditary line. Instead a new king would be chosen by a selected group of nobles known as the Witan*

[4] *The Victorian Romantic novelist Edward Lytton imagined Harold's distinguishing marks to be the words 'Edith' and 'England' tattooed around his heart but, if there is any truth in the story, it seems more likely that it was some sort of blemish only a lover would recognise.*

back to Waltham Abbey for burial, though other versions include William refusing a proper interment for the 'oath-breaker' as he called him, ordering the body to be left under a pile of stones on the beach at Hastings.

It is unlikely that Edith Swan-Neck survived for very long after the invasion. A column of Norman cavalry swept into the Cambridge area in late 1066 and built a castle on the hill just north of the river crossing, from which they subdued the local population[5], as they did in similar fashion all over the country. The Saxons were driven remorselessly from their lands, all confiscations, including Edith's, being carefully logged in the Domesday Book by William's scribes[6].

It appears that all of Edith's land, including Hinton manor, was given to Alan Rufus 'the Red', one of the Counts of Brittany (later known as the Dukes of Richmond) who fought beside William at Hastings. In a bizarre twist Harold and Edith's youngest daughter Gunhild ended up marrying Count Alan so it is possible that the Godwin family retained connections in the Cambridge area for a short while[7]. There are also various records in Domesday of an "Ulf" and a "Godwin Child" - possibly Harold and Edith's youngest son - still holding lands around Cambridge after 1066, but in effect the Godwin line was finished.

After Hastings Harold's official wife Edith, fearing for her life, hurried north to seek safety with her brothers, Edwin and Morcar. But Alan the Red was soon to descend on them too and she was forced to flee, with her son Harold, to the continent where they both died in relative obscurity.

King Edward's widow, Harold's sister Edith, fared rather better than the other two Ediths. It is possible that William wanted to make amends with the woman whose husband had promised him the crown (she may also have had a hand in Tostig's invasion that so devastatingly depleted Harold's defences) and she was allowed to keep most of her land around Winchester. She died a rich, well-respected woman in 1075 and was buried next to Edward in Westminster Abbey.

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[5] *The Sheriff of Cambridge was the infamous William Picot, one of William's most enthusiastic followers and scourge of Saxons. He was called by the Abbot of Ely a ' hungry lion, a ravening wolf, a cunning fox, a dirty pig and an impudent dog'.*

[6] *Many Saxons escaped across the fens to the Island of Ely and it is possible that Edith Swan-Neck did the same, joining the rebellion that was to be led from there by Hereward the Wake. Godwin, Edmund and Magnus escaped to Ireland from where they launched various unsuccessful rebellions. Gytha, "Princess of England", took refuge in Denmark and ended her days in Russia as the wife of Vladimir II of Kiev.*

[7] *The story of Gunhild is an enchanting one. After Hastings she was given refuge at Wilton Nunnery, possibly by her aunt, the ex-Queen Edith, one of its patrons. She developed an eye tumour, but was miraculously cured by Bishop Wulfstan who waved a crucifix over it. One of the nuns (yet another Edith) was the daughter of King Malcolm III of Scotland and he wanted to marry her off to Alan the Red, who by now was quite old but fabulously wealthy. Alan was evidently not impressed with Malcolm's daughter and fell instead for Gunhild, stealing her away to be his wife. He died soon after (in 1089) and Gunhild then married his younger brother Alan the Black - though whether she was officially married to either Alan is a matter of some dispute.*

2.
SAXON CAMBRIDGE

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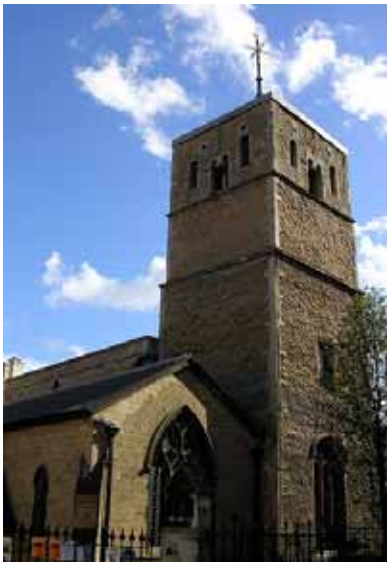
In 2003 in Cherry Hinton, just off Coldham's Lane, 664 skeletons were found; the largest cemetery to be excavated in Cambridgeshire. Some of the graves had 'pillow' burials in which the head rests on a stone, and although some of the carvings on the stones could be dated to the 9th and 10th centuries, the sheer density of burials, sometimes four deep, implies that the site was used over a long period. At the centre of the cemetery a small wooden structure, possibly a church, was found and in a nearby pit a cross (pictured above) thought to date from the 8th century and probably put aside to make way for the building.

Skeletons of new-born babies found around the wall-lines of the church was evidence of the Saxon practice of burying infants under the eaves of churches so that their un-christened souls could receive 'constant baptism' from rain dripping off the consecrated structure. At that time many believed that un-baptised babies went straight to hell and Harold and Edith had gained some notoriety from the clergy for burying an un-baptised child of theirs next to St Dunstan's church in Canterbury.

Clearly there was a substantial Saxon settlement in Cherry Hinton, and this is unsurprising. Here on the drier ground above the fens there were springs for fresh water, chalk pits and woodland for building materials, and rich supplies of eel, fish and fowl in the meres and watercourses that stretched to the north and west. In fact it had been a site of settlement since the Bronze Age - a converging point of ancient

trackways, with tumulii, hill forts and tribal meeting places on the nearby Gog Magog Hills. [8]



The Saxon tower of St Benet's

A short way from Cherry Hinton lay Cambridge (or Grantabrycge as it was then known); a town established by the Romans at the key crossing point over the River Cam where Magdalene Bridge is now. The Romans had a walled garrison on Castle Hill overlooking the bridge and Roman farms and settlements spread extensively over a large area. After the Romans had left Grantabyrycge continued as a Saxon town and several churches were built including one named after St Benedict known as St Bene'ts. Saxon churches were usually made of wood and did not survive, but Cambridge must have been important and wealthy enough to warrant a stone church so the tower of St Bene'ts, dating from around 1025, remains today as one of England's oldest structures.

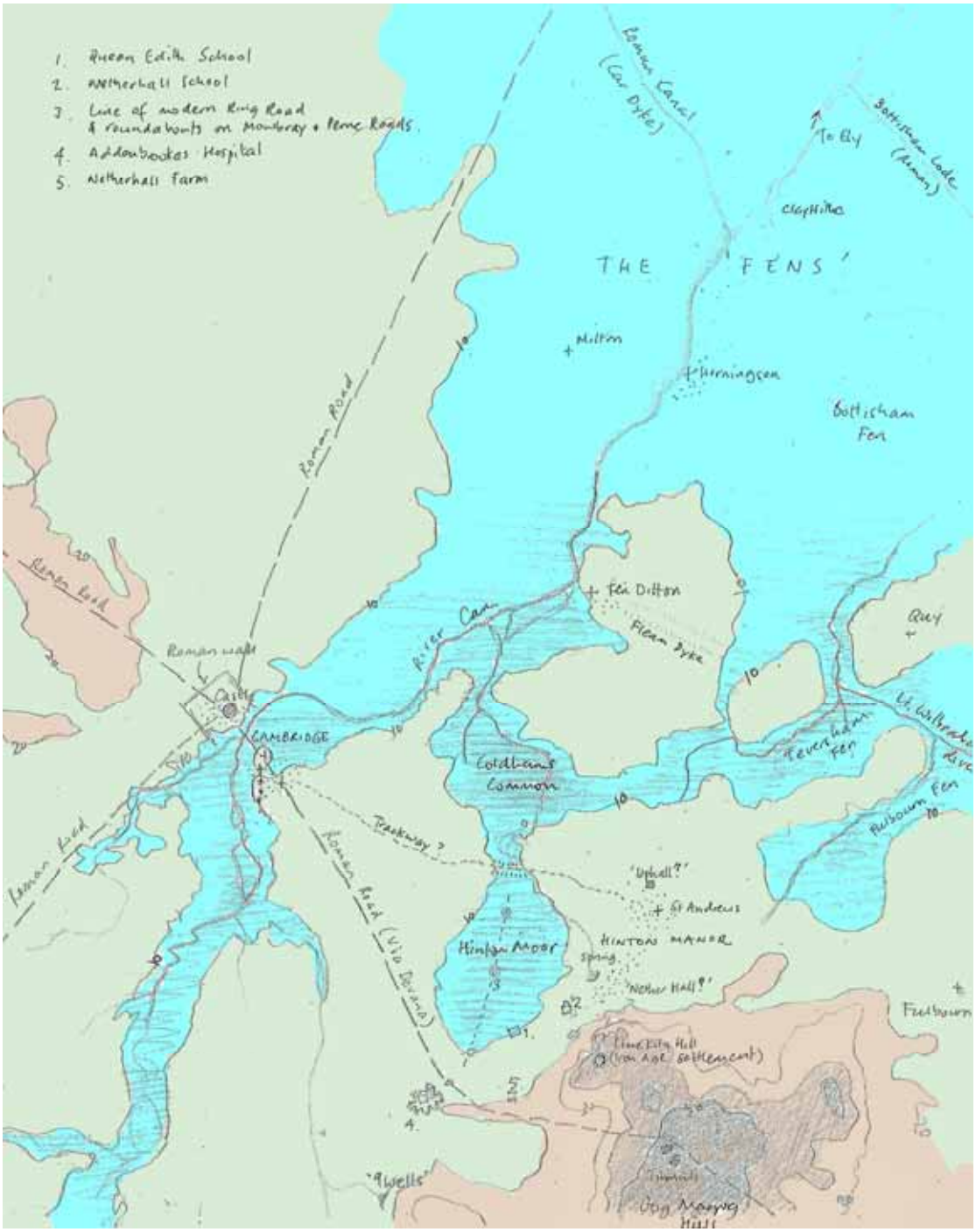
The map of the area around Cambridge (*see Map 2*) gives an idea of the medieval landscape around the city in the days before the big drainage schemes that began in the 17th century but were not complete until the early19th century. The blue tone represents all the land that lies below the 10m above sea level contour. It would not have all been underwater by any means, but much of it would have been 'fen'; boggy marshland unsuitable for agriculture or settlement and very difficult to traverse except by boat or punt.

The land between the fen and the higher, densely-wooded ground to the east was immensely important, providing a trade route and strategic corridor between London and the central parts of England and the prosperous wool and wheat-producing areas of Norfolk[9]. During the Iron Age huge earthworks called dykes were built to defend and control this route, and these were heavily reinforced in the early Saxon period. The best known of these earthworks is Devil's Dyke but Fleam Dyke, running from near Cherry Hinton to Burwell, is an equally impressive structure.

Fleam Dyke (from the Wuffings website)

[8] *For information on pre-Roman settlement at the 'War Ditches' see Appendix 2*

[9] *The trackways that ran from south west to north east across this corridor were known collectively as the 'Icknield Way' the actual route varying depending on the season.*

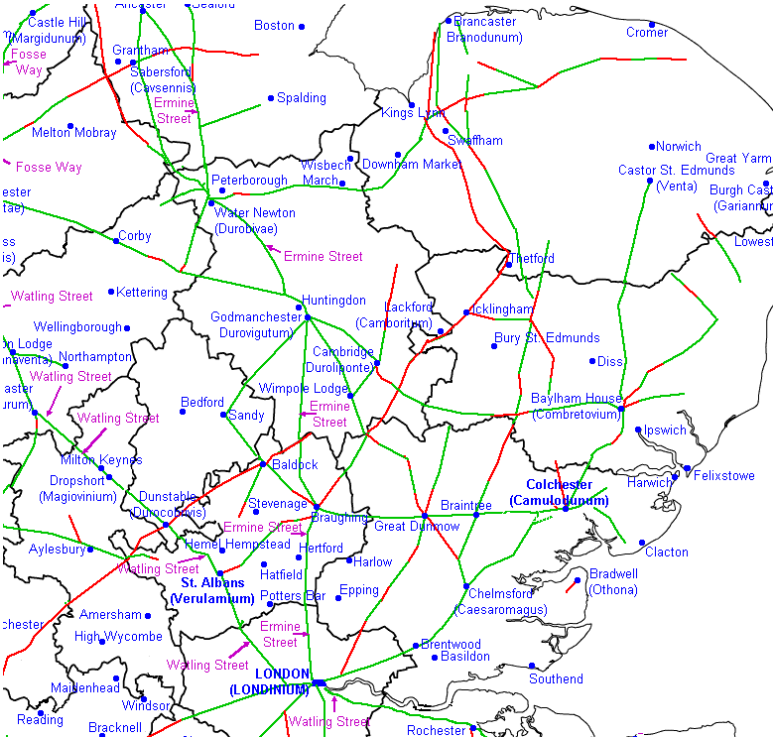


Map 2 : Areas of fen and early settlement around Cambridge based on the 10m contour

The Saxons probably continued to use the several Roman roads that converged on Cambridge and the road that came in from the east, called the Via Devana by the Victorian historians (*see Map 3*), came over the Gog Magog Hills next to the old Iron Age fort at Wandlebury before descending towards the Cam. As the Roman surveyors crested the escarpment, by the tumuli known as the Two-penny Loaves[10] , they would have seen in front of them Hinton Moor, an area of boggy low-lying land draining northwards toward Coldham's Common. To avoid it they diverted their new road left towards a ridge of higher ground that led roughly from where Addenbrooke's

[10] *Now indistinguishable among the bumps and hollows of the Gog Magog golf course*

Hospital is now to the bridge below Castle Hill. This is the line of Worts Causeway and Hills Road and if you stand at the Addenbrookes roundabout and look north east down Fendon Road, or at the top of Cherry Hinton Road or Mill Road, you will get an impression of how the land dips down towards what was, until the mid 19th century, fenny marsh. Indeed gardens in the Perne Road area are still known to flood following periods of exceptionally wet weather.



Map 3: The Roman Road network

The lands of Alan the Red and the Dukes of Richmond that had been confiscated from Edith Swan-Neck eventually passed away from their successors and by the 14th century the estate of Hinton Hall had been divided into two. The upper part, now Cherry Hinton village, was called "Uphall" and the lower part "Nether-Hall". The prefix 'Cherry', first recorded in 1576, may have arisen from the large number of cherry trees in the area. For a time it was also known as 'Saffron' Hinton as in the 17th and early 18th centuries the saffron crocus was grown in great abundance between the village and Saffron Walden both for medicinal and culinary purposes.

The lands passed on through the generations by a complicated path (*see Appendix 1*) eventually being confiscated in 1543 by Henry VIII and given a few years later by his young son Edward VI to St Thomas' Hospital on London's south bank, to provide income for his new foundation[11].

[11] *The hospital was in fact described as 'ancient' in 1215 and was named after Thomas Becket suggesting it may have been founded after 1173 when Becket was canonised. Originally it was run by a mixed order of Augustinian monks and nuns. It provided shelter and treatment for the poor, sick, and homeless and later, being handy for Southwark's booming red-light district, prostitutes and their clients. This may have led to its reputation as a 'bawdy house' and its closure by Henry VIII in 1540 before being re-founded by Edward VI in 1553 just before his death at the age of 15. The hospital was also the site of the printing of the first English Bible in 1537.*

3.
SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

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It is difficult to tell how much land was owned by St Thomas' or how it was distributed but after Enclosure in the early part of the 19th century the land was consolidated into one main area (see Map 5). By roughly calculating Edith's lands in hides we can see that by 1847 the area owned by St Thomas' was probably a lot smaller, but it was still a substantial estate.

Cambridge grew rapidly in the late 19th century and early 20th century and the pressure for suburban development became irresistible. Map 6 shows the spread of this development between Cherry Hinton village and Cambridge[12] and how the St Thomas' Hospital land, being further out, remained as farm and orchard land until the 1950s. Some road names bear testament to the St Thomas' Hospital connection, including Nightingale Avenue, named after the famous Florence who established her nursing school at the hospital, and the adjoining Kinnaird Way after the less well-known founder of the YWCA which began as a hostel for Florence's nurses returning from the Crimea.

To provide land for the expanding developments the draining of Hinton Fen was essential. H. Gunning, writing in 1786, painted a picture of what the area must have been like since Saxon times:

> "If you started from the other corner of Parker's Piece you came to Cherry Hinton Fen, from thence to Teversham, Quy, Bottisham and Swaffham Fens. In taking this beat you met with great varieties of wild fowl, bitterns, plovers of every description, ruffs and reeves and, not infrequently, pheasants. If you did not go very near the mansions of the few country gentleman who reside in this neighbourhood you met with no interruption. You scarcely ever saw the gamekeeper but met with a great number of young lads who were on the lookout for sportsmen from the University whose game they carried and to whom they furnished long poles to enable them to leap those very wide ditches which intersected the Fens in every direction".[13]

As well as being good for sport the ditches and ponds could be extremely hazardous and were the site of not infrequent drownings, including one tragic case recorded by the Cambridge Chronicle on Sept 24th 1813:

> "We are much concerned in stating that..Mrs Ventress...was found drowned in a ditch in the Parish of Cherry Hinton. She had left Cambridge on the preceding day and took one of her children with her,

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[12] *Between 1801 and 1811 the population of Hinton parish declined from 319 to 234 but it doubled to 474 by 1821. By 1901 it was 2,597, and by 1921 4,269. In 1981 there were 7,000 inhabitants in Cherry Hinton and 14,000 in Coleridge and Queen Edith's wards.*

[13] *From 'Reminiscences of the University, Town & County of Cambridge from the year 1780', pub. 1854*

> a girl of about sixteen months old, who we regret to say was also found drowned...within a few feet of her mother." [14].

Whether the incident was purely accidental or resulted from some Hardy-esque scandal we can only guess but finding a way across the fen was clearly not that straightforward. There were no proper roads and the tracks from Cherry Hinton into Cambridge varied according to the weather. When Long Drove, now Cherry Hinton Road, came into being at Enclosure a ploughman drove his straightest furrow across common fields as a guide to the road makers and it was remarked that it used to be a 'pretty footpath across the fenny ground' until about 1850[15]. Mill Road was a similar footpath known as Hinton Way and this crossed the fen at a narrow point called White Bridge, where the Brookfields/Perne Road junction is today. [16]

Wicken fen- Until the 1800s Hinton fen would have looked much like this in places

The programme of drainage began in 1825 when fifty men were employed in a scheme to improve the land owned by St. Thomas' Hospital and over the subsequent twenty years or so more drainage schemes were carried out and several streams were covered over to make way for housing and roads. One such stream ran along the north western edge of Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground, crossed Queen Edith's Way

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[14] *From Cambridge Chronicle ed E. Filby*

[15] *From 'Over the Hills to Cherry Hinton' H.C. Coppock 1984.*

[16] *Another hazard for local people was the 'ague' or 'Fenlanders' Disease'. Initially thought to be caused by the 'miasmas' coming off the marshes it was, in fact, malaria and was still prevalent in the early 19th century. Laudanum, which is tincture of opium, was used by many to stave off the effects and it was still being sold in the Cambridge area in 1827. Many fen gardens also had a crop of white poppies for home production.*

and ran parallel to Mowbray and Perne Roads. Another ran through the site of present-day Queen Edith's School where there was also a large pond.

The only visible watercourse remaining is Cherry Hinton Brook. Springing from the chalk downland at the bottom of Lime Kiln Hill as it has done for many centuries the brook flows north-westwards around the grounds of Cherry Hinton Hall joining the Nightingale Avenue watercourse at the Brookfields junction and flowing north past Sainsbury's supermarket, around Coldhams Common, past the Abbey swimming pool and football stadium to Stourbridge Common where it joins the Cam.

In 1885 the higher ground adjoining Hills Road began to be developed. The Rock Company laid out the new roads and by 1892 the Rock and Cavendish estates were completed.[17] Between the 1890s and the 1930s the area grew with large detached houses being built at the western ends of Blinco Grove, Glebe, and Hills Roads, and on Cavendish Avenue as far as Baldock Way. After World War 1, following the drive initiated by the Tudor Walters 'Homes for Heroes' Report of 1918, a small enclave of council houses was built here, around some allotments.

After World War Two the trend for local authority housing continued with the construction of a large council estate north of Queen Edith's Way, complete with a local shopping centre, pub and parish church in Wulfstan Way, and two schools: one named Queen Edith's and the other Netherhall[18]. South of Queen Edith's Way the houses were built by private developers in various packages between the late 1950s and the 1970s. It is these two areas, either side of Queen Ediths Way and mainly on St Thomas' Hospital land, that became known as 'Queen Ediths'. (See map 7 for an early layout of the estate)

The Cambridge-Newmarket railway line opened in 1848 and passed through Cherry Hinton Village. It crossed Cherry Hinton Brook close to 'White Bridge' in Brookfields but kept on a westerly course toward Cambridge station rather than swinging in a northwards loop across Coldham's Common as it does today. By 1928 the tracks of the old line had been removed making the way for new developments in Romsey Town. The line it took can be traced today along Marmora Road and the rear gardens of Greville Road.

Peterhouse College was a major land-owner in the area and they sold off all the land along what was to become Mowbray and Perne Roads (Andrew Perne was a Master of the College) to private developers who between 1932 and 1938 built the semi-detached houses typical of the so-called 'ribbon' development of 1930s suburbs, the road being improved with wide verges to form part of the city's new ring road.

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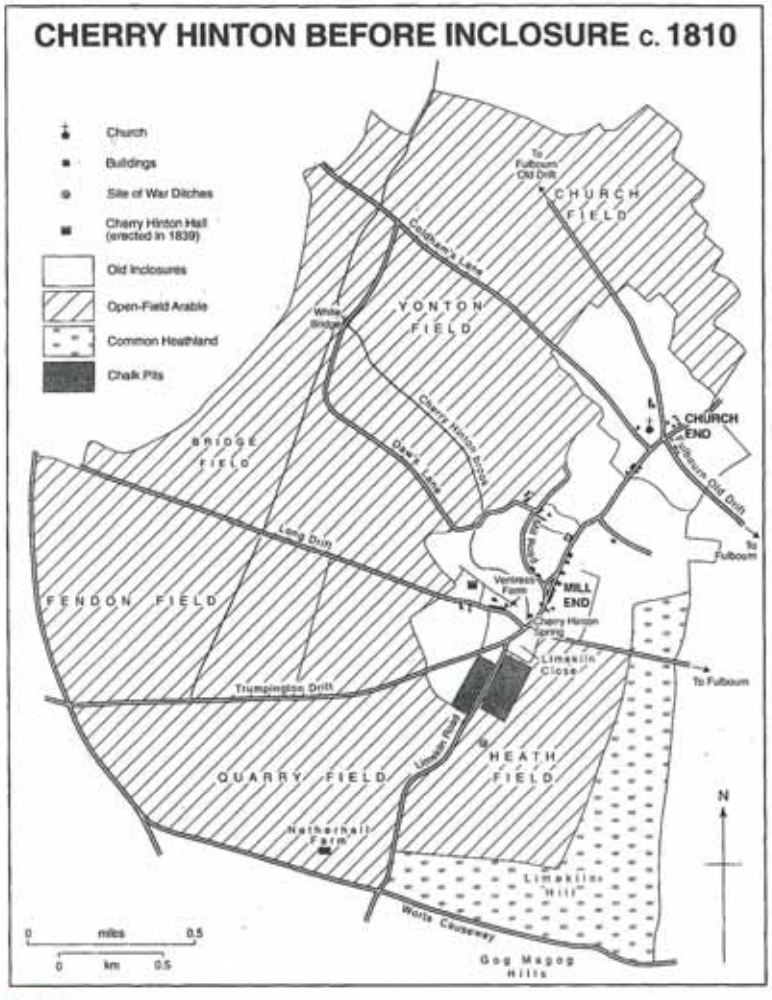
[17] *Before then just a few houses and Cavendish College existed along Hills Road. Cavendish College (named after the then-Chancellor of the university) was a failed attempt at allowing poorer students to sit Cambridge tripos exams without the expense of joining a Cambridge college. In 1894 the Congregational Board of Education purchased the estate and it became Homerton College, moving from London to become a women-only teacher training college.*

[18] *In 1952 two schools were established on Godwin Way for infants and juniors and amalgamated in 1989 into Queen Edith's County Primary School. The Netherhall School off Queen Edith's Way was created in 1974 through the amalgamation of the Grammar School for Boys formerly in Parkside in central Cambridgebuilt in 1959 and the two Secondary Modern Schools built in Gunhild Way in 1957.*

In 1945 Peterhouse sold off the land to the east of Perne Road and initially 100 prefabricated houses were built there, replaced in the 1950s by more substantial semi-detached council houses around St. Thomas' Square[19] and along Walpole Road, set back from the road, with wide tree-lined verges. In 1983 the college sold its remaining holdings, with some low-cost houses built at St. Bede's Gardens and in 1993 a further 100 houses were built off Daws Lane.

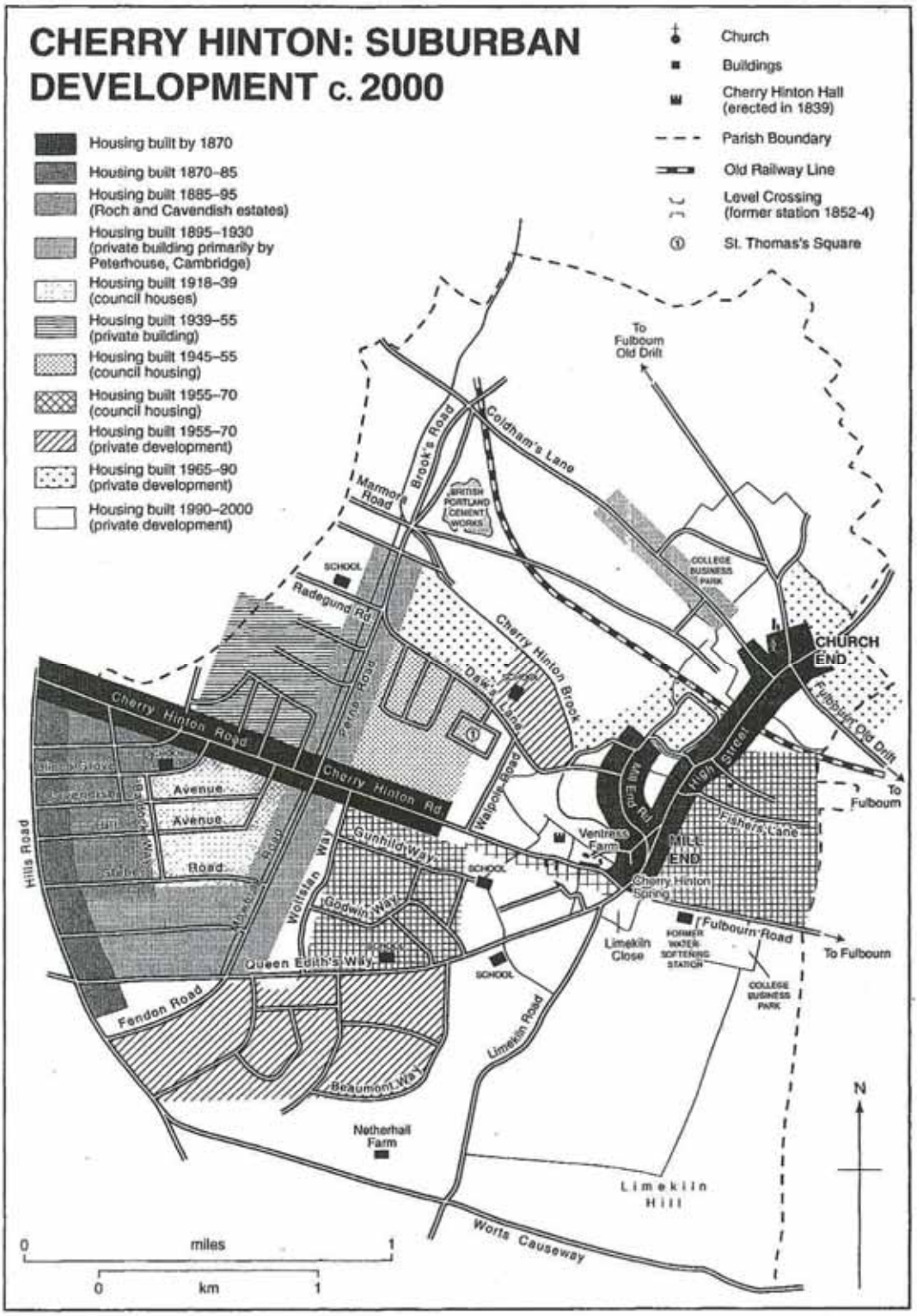
As well as good drainage all this suburban expansion needed improvements to sanitation and water supplies and in 1852 the Cambridge University and Town Water Company obtained permission for water to be piped from the spring-head at Cherry Hinton. The project was completed in 1855, with a reservoir being built on Lime Kiln Hill and pumping stations on Cherry Hinton and Fulbourn Roads. In fact there was so much water coming from the Wandlebury aquifier that it was able to serve most of Cambridge and water was pumped to a high-level reservoir at Madingley. Following a typhoid scare in 1907 however these were replaced by the Fleam Dyke pumping station further out into the countryside.



Map 4 Cherry Hinton before Enclosures of the early 19th century

[19] *It would seem logical that St Thomas Square was also on Hospital land but the evidence I have gathered seems to contradict this, more research of landholdings prior to council development would be interesting.*

Map 5 St Thomas' Hospital land after Enclosure



Map 6 Pattern of development from 1870

Map 7 Preliminary proposals for the estate layout (From Cambridge 2000 website)

POSTSCRIPT

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Today the Queen Edith area is a quiet suburb with not much to distinguish itself from any other suburban area of Cambridge, probably being most famous for Addenbrookes, the huge teaching hospital built at its western edge in the 1960s and for the Cambridge Folk Festival held every year in the grounds of Cherry Hinton Hall. Of Harold and his beautiful mistress Edith, there is no sign. No plaque or statue exists to commemorate them and, although their names live on in the street names, they are misrepresented, or simply unrecognised.

Perhaps this is as it should be. Why would we need to be reminded that a Saxon princess once owned this land, or that much of the area was marshland criss-crossed by paths and causeways along which she may have wandered on horseback surveying her property, reflecting on the extraordinary and beguiling family whose fate had become inextricably intertwined with her own? It does enrich our experience though, knowing that the bones of such an amazing story lie just beneath the streets and gardens which on the surface appear so very ordinary. It serves as a reminder that in our landscape nothing just 'appears' – in fact if you look hard enough there is a story behind everything.

Further Reading

The Godwins - Frank Barlow
Emma & Edith – Pauline Stafford
The Last English King - Julian Rathbone
Hastings 1066 – M.K. Lawson
1066 - Frank McLynn
Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia - Andrew Wareham
Conquest & Civilisation - Brian Golding
Harold II; The doomed Saxon King – Peter Rex

Appendix

1. Land in Cherry Hinton, Cambridge

Date	Owned by	Remarks
Before 1066	'Eddeva The Fair'	Also known as Edith Swan Neck, Mistress of Harold II
By 1089	Alan of Richmond	Alan the Red (Rufus) d. 1089 Then Alan the Black (Niger) d.1093
	Heirs of Duke of Richmond	
13th Century	Passed to Henry III's servant Neville	
1241	Peter de Savoy	
	Sir Bertram De Cryol of Kent d.1256	
1265	Temporarily seized by supporter of Henry III	Battle of Evesham
13th/14th Century	Successors De Cryols	
1341	Will Clinton 1st Earl of Huntingdon	
1343	Lord Mowbray	
	Successors to Mowbrays	
1476	Richard Duke of York (son of Edward IV)	Anne Mowbray (aged 5!) married Richard 1st Duke of York (then aged 4 and later one of the Princes in the Tower)
1483	Recovered by Mowbrays and assigned to William (Lord) Berkeley	
1504	Maurice (Lord) Berkley then to son: Thomas Berkeley	
1508	Sold to Robert Fenrother	Alderman Robert Fenrother, a goldsmith, who by will of 1524 estate to his son-in-law Henry White, whose son Robert in 1543 was forced to give to Henry VIII
1553	Lands transferred to **St Thomas' Hospital** by Edward VI	Combined with Savoy Hospital (founded in 1512)
1592	Leased to William Catlyn	
1774-1877	Tenants: Hedley family	
1931	**Sold by St Thomas' Hospital**	North of Cherry Hinton Rd and east and west of Perne Rd
Up to 1940s	**Sold by St Thomas' Hospital**	Last land between QE Way and Worts Causeway sold piecemeal 1962-1979

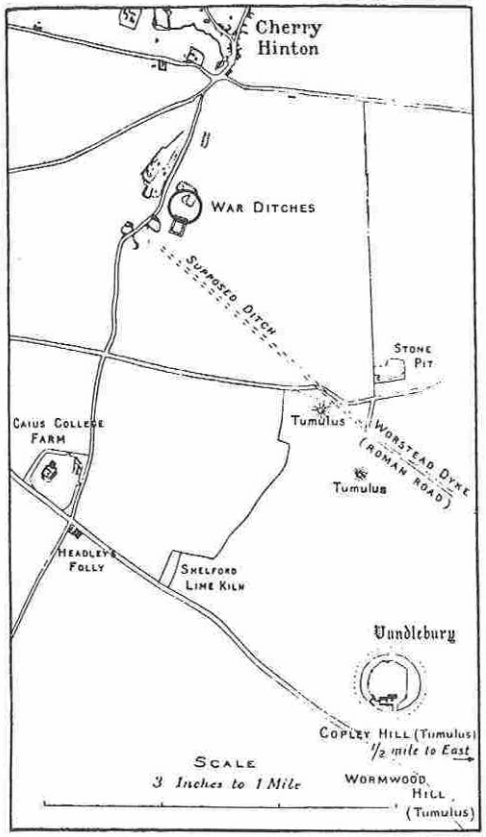
From Victoria County History

2. The War Ditches & Worts Causeway

The top of Lime Kiln Hill has been a site of settlement since the late Bronze Age. In the Iron Age it was made into a hill fort (similar to Wandlebury) consisting of a circular rampart 165m diameter and a ditch 3m deep. In 1894 archaeologists excavated the area in advance of it being destroyed by quarrying. They called it the 'War ditches' hill fort and found Bronze Age barrows and early Iron-Age pottery sherds in the lower levels of the ditch. Round huts had stood within the enclosure, and the ditches were deliberately filled in on at least two occasions.

By 110 A.D. the hill was occupied by a Roman farm. Four buildings, possibly five, indicated two periods of occupation. A large rectangular building, thought to have been a thatched farmhouse, and a smaller one, probably a barn, were both burnt down in the 2nd century AD. Other post holes on a slightly different axis marked out the largest rectangular building, occupied in the 3rd and 4th centuries. North-west of the complex there was a 2nd-century well which had been deliberately filled in. There were no traces of occupation in the 5th and 6th centuries, but in the 7th century the Bronze-Age barrows were reused for burial, one on a wooden bed with iron fittings had grave goods including a crystal ball, sling, and spear head.

The Iron-Age hill fort was probably built in order to control the prehistoric trackway which ran between Haverhill and Cambridge. In the Roman period its surface was paved over. In the 13th century it was called Wulves Street (known by 19th century antiquarians as Via Devana). In 1709 William Wort gave money to improve the route and the new road was renamed Worts Causeway.



Map 8: The area today