

## THE LOST MANOR OF REDWELL AT GREAT BARTON

by ROGER CURTIS

GREAT BARTON, A VILLAGE situated to the north-east of Bury St Edmunds (Fig. 87), is rich in surviving documents of historical interest. Most of these are to be found in the archive of the Bunbury family, now held at the Suffolk Record Office, Bury. The Bunburys were lords of the manor of Great Barton from 1746 until the sale of the estate following the destruction of Barton Hall by fire in 1914. However the archive contains many documents – particularly court rolls – dating back to the thirteenth century, when the manor was held by the Benedictine abbey at Bury St Edmunds. During the medieval period Great Barton was known as *Berton* or *Berton Magna*, the name changing to *Barton* with the redistribution of lands during the years following the dissolution of the abbey in 1539.<sup>1</sup> Documents relating to this manor from the medieval period and shortly after contain occasional references to a manor of Redwell,<sup>2</sup> but no such manor is described by Copinger in *The Manors of Suffolk* or is found in the Suffolk Manorial Documents Register.<sup>3</sup> This paper throws light upon the identity of the manor – if manor it was – and suggests a location for Redwell Hall.

An early reference to Redwell occurs in the hundred rolls of 1279–80 for Thedwastre Hundred, where two tenants of the manor of Great Barton have the surname *de Redewelle*.<sup>4</sup>

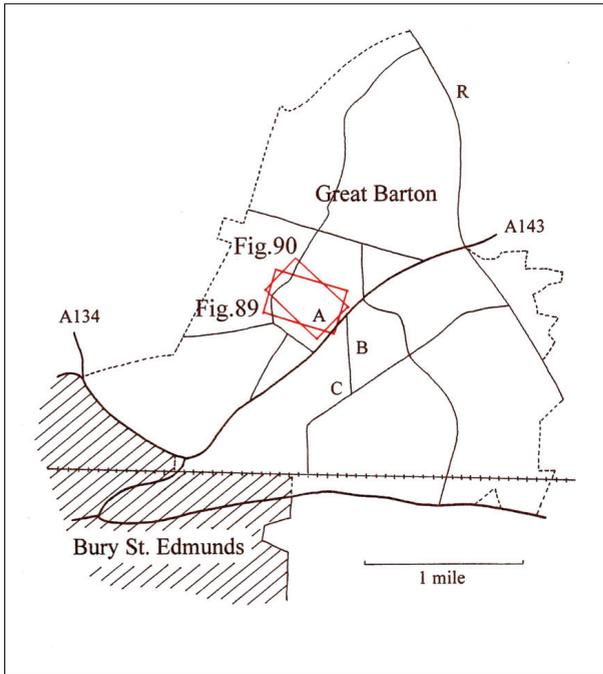


FIG. 87 – An outline of the present-day parish of Great Barton showing major and minor roads. The positions of FIGS 89 and 90 are indicated, along with the site of the former Hall Croft House (later Barton New House and ultimately Barton Hall) (A), the site of the original hall house of the manor of Great Barton (B), the parish church (C) and Red Castle Farm (R) in Pakenham parish. In the medieval period the boundary of the manor of Great Barton approximated to that of the parish.

Whilst this may have no significance in relation to the manor in question, it is probable that the name derived from a place or locality that previously existed. Eight individuals, over at least four generations, are recorded in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century surveys and charters copied into the fifteenth-century document compiled at the abbey and known as the *Cellarer's Register*.<sup>5</sup> The subsidy return for Great Barton of 1327 mentions one individual with this name and court rolls of 1349, the year of the Black Death, record the deaths of three individuals, and mention others, similarly named.<sup>6</sup> Related entries in the *Cellarer's Register* also refer to a field called *Reddewellecrofte*, common pasture at *Reddewell* and holdings lying on the king's highway leading from

Bury St Edmunds to *Reddewellgrene*. A late thirteenth-century charter in the register (Fig. 88) indicates that the convent and the chamberlain of the abbey held lands there. Taken together, these entries suggest that Redwell was a place of local significance lying in the north-west part of the manor of Great Barton.

The abbey at Bury St Edmunds and property on its surrounding estates suffered considerable damage during the civil unrest and riots of October 1327. A description of the depredations is included in the fifteenth-century *Hostiller's Register* compiled at the abbey and transcribed in Arnold's *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*.<sup>7</sup> Details of the damage sustained and the estimated costs are given for each of the affected manors and estates, including *Berton Magna* and *Reddewelle*. The losses at Redwell in terms of produce, stock and damage to several buildings and structures – amounting to £40 9s 4d, compared with £93 12s 0d for the manor of Great Barton – show it to have been a working agricultural estate not dissimilar to the known manors for which details are given.<sup>8</sup> Yates, in his *History and Antiquities of the Abbey of St Edmund's Bury*, suggests the status of a sub-manor in the following extract:

On Thursday [22 October 1327] they destroyed the remainder of the infirmary; the black hostellarium; the chapel of St. Andrew in the hostellaria; and the same day they burnt Fornham St. Martin's [sic]; and two manors in Great Barton, with all the corn.<sup>9</sup>

Redwell as a manor is mentioned in an indenture dated 1382, i.e. one year after the Peasants' Revolt and during a vacancy in the abbacy at the abbey of St Edmund.<sup>10</sup> It provides for the lease, by the prior (John de Gosford) and convent, of the *manor of Redewelle* and an adjacent holding called *le Cagehalle* to a John Overton of Moulton for a term of twenty years, with rents payable to the chamberlain of the abbey.<sup>11</sup> Detailed conditions relating to the tenure of the manor, and its return to the abbey on completion of the term, include mention of acreages devoted to the cultivation of specific crops.<sup>12</sup> These indicate a total acreage well in excess of sixty-five acres; however the relative contributions of Redwell and Cagehalle are unknown.

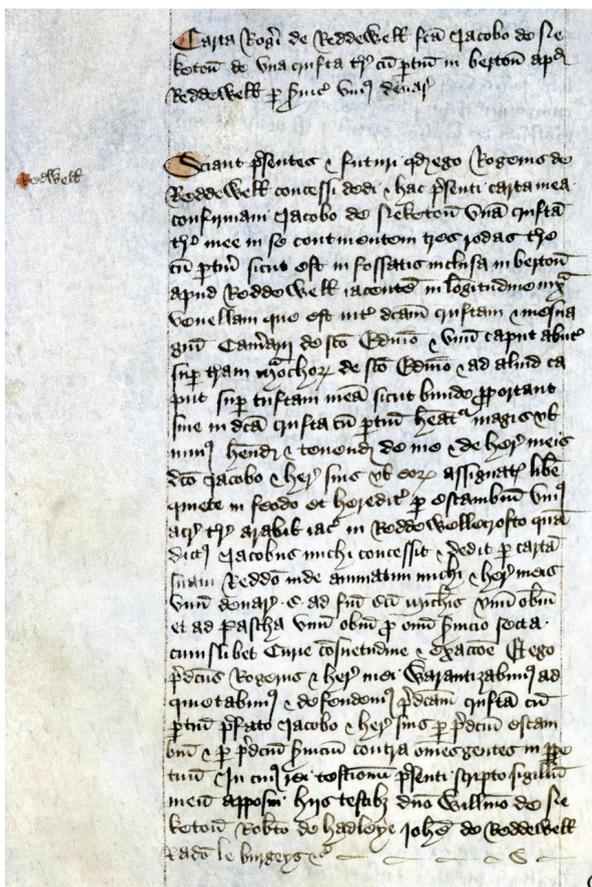


FIG. 88 – Copy of a late thirteenth-century charter included in the fifteenth-century Cellarer's Register, CUL, Gg.iv.4.

It concerns the transfer of a croft of land from Roger de Reddewell to James de Neketon and refers to Redwell as a specific location and to an area of land called Reddewellecrofte. The croft in question is near land belonging to the convent of the abbey and a message of the chamberlain (reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library).

A rental of 1458–59 listing the several holdings of Sir Robert Conyers in Great Barton includes the following (translated from the Latin):

Also he [Robert Conyers] holds one croft containing one and a half acres of land held by Robert Wrenne formerly [held by] William de Neketon lying between the land of the same Robert Conyers to the north and a tenement of the chamberlain of St Edmund called Redewell to the south.<sup>13</sup>

Court rolls of the manor of Great Barton for the years 1506 and 1507 describe the transfers between successive tenants of a tenement called *Redewell Hall* held from the chamberlain of the monastery of St Edmund with an adjacent pightle abutting on a grove called *Redewell Hall Grove* and with four acres of land.<sup>14</sup> Another roll, of 1562 (i.e. after the dissolution of the abbey), details the same holdings, with allegiance now to the lord of the manor, Thomas Awdeley.<sup>15</sup> A field terrier for Great Barton of 1566 reiterates the same details but elsewhere mentions what is obviously the same holding as a close of three acres and the site of the manor of Redwell [*scitus manerii de Redwell*] together with a messuage and croft of two acres.<sup>16</sup> A further court roll of 1585 refers to the same tenant holding a messuage called *Redwell Hall* with an adjacent pightle and four acres of land lying in the fields of Barton, at a rent of 6s 8d per annum.<sup>17</sup> In describing the location of other holdings the above terrier and court rolls of 1522 and 1532 mention two thoroughfares – *Redwell Strete* and *Redwell Lane* – associated with the Redwell site.<sup>18</sup>

Whilst it may be possible to deduce the location of the above holdings from close scrutiny of the many surviving court rolls, a clear identification of the site occurs in a survey of 1612 compiled by John Madison, steward.<sup>19</sup> This document provides a detailed account of the locations of free and copyhold lands within each of the thirty-seven precincts into which the manor of Great Barton was then divided. The twenty-nine holdings in Precinct 22 are described in anticlockwise order beginning with demesne land known as *Hall Croft*. The entry bearing the name Redwell in the margin – twenty-fifth in sequence – (translated from the Latin) reads:

One messuage with curtilage garden orchard and 4 crofts of land adjacent to/ between<sup>20</sup> the last and penultimate [holdings] to the north-east and demesne land of this manor [Great Barton] to the south and abutting on Chamberlane towards the north-west and on le Feldway towards the south-east – 7 acres copyhold land recently [held by] the prior of St Edmund.

The same document describes nine holdings in the adjacent Precinct 23 lying to the west. These include an entry with ‘Redwellhall’ in the margin (translated from the Latin) as follows:

One messuage with garden orchard and 3 parcels of land called Redwellhall between the aforesaid lands of Necton Hall to the west and Chamberlane to the east and abutting on Oxpasture towards the south and on Conyers Grene towards the north. 3 acres copyhold.

An accompanying rental of similar date and authorship describes essentially the same customary holdings as ‘one mes[suage] with a gardeyn an orchard and iij parcelles of land whereof ij peeces cont[ain] about iiij acres called Redwellhalle r[ent] vjs viijd.’<sup>21</sup>

A manorial map dated 1625 is unhelpful, but a mid seventeenth-century map shows this area in detail (Fig. 89).<sup>22</sup> The latter enables ‘Redwell’ to be identified as a group of small fields or crofts abutting land (formerly *Hallcroft*) on which the recently built precursor of Barton Hall – then called *Hall Croft House* – once stood.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately adhesive tape used to repair the map obscures some detail, but reference to a mid eighteenth-century map of the manor, which shows this area clearly, is still informative, as some of the field boundaries are identical

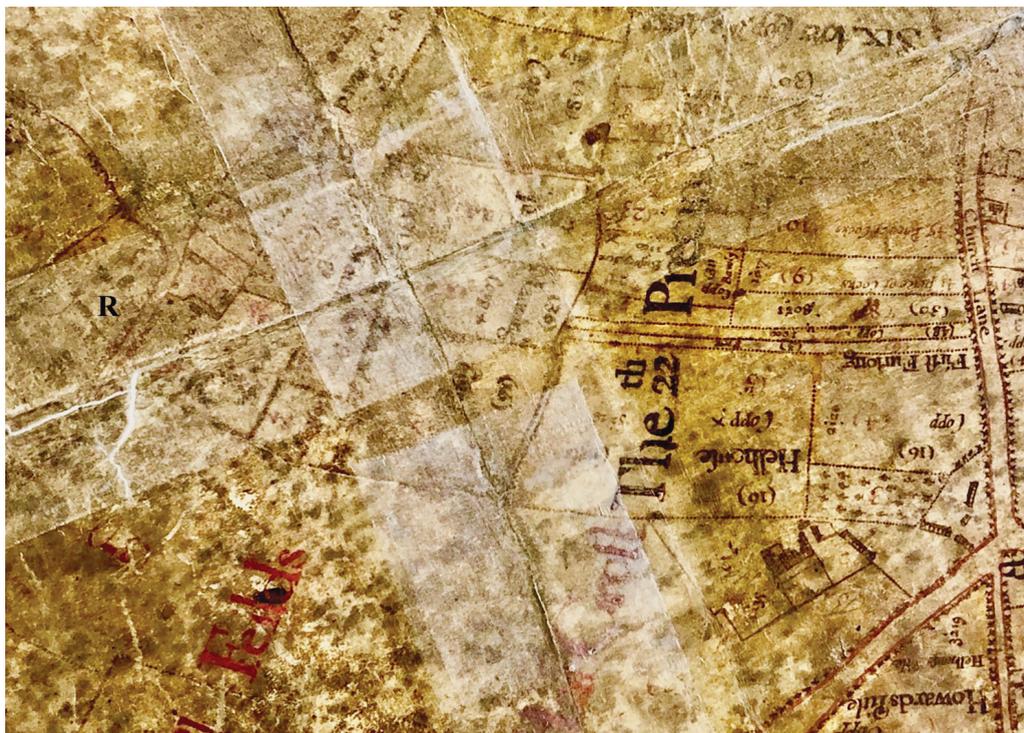


FIG. 89 – Mid seventeenth-century map of Great Barton, showing field boundaries to the north-west of Hall Croft House (bottom right), little changed since the field survey of 1612. In the latter document Redwell is described as adjoining the close called Helhouse to the east and the demesne land of Hall Croft to the south.

The track (centre of figure, vertically) between Redwell and Helhouse Close is presumably ‘Le Feldway’ referred to in the survey. Redwellhall is at the extreme left of the image (R), to the north-east of the road (Chamber Lane) leading to Conyers Green (*reproduced from SROB, 2146/1 by permission of the Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds*).

with those of the seventeenth-century map (Fig. 90).<sup>24</sup> ‘Redwellhall’ lies immediately to the north-west, across Chamberlane and close to the pond which is depicted on the eighteenth-century map.<sup>25</sup> It cannot be certain that the messuage described in the 1612 survey as Redwellhall was, or incorporated, the original medieval hall or was a later dwelling built on the same site. The geographical relationship between the few acres associated with the Redwell name in the survey and the much larger medieval estate is difficult to determine. It is likely that the latter incorporated additional lands within the area of the later Precinct 22, now developed for housing. After the time of the seventeenth-century map the name Redwell appears to be absent from all contemporary and later documents.

As a vill in Thedwastre Hundred, Great Barton fell within the Liberty of St Edmund – the ‘eight and a half hundreds’ – where the abbot of St Edmunds Abbey exercised the powers of vice-regent. Within the Liberty manors and estates were held by the abbey and by independent landowners. Those manors belonging to the abbey (together with others outside the Liberty) were known collectively as the barony of St Edmund, for which the abbot had feudal obligations to the king as tenant-in-chief.<sup>26</sup> The abbey’s manors were held either directly by the abbot or subinfeudated to the convent – the community of monks – in the inferior lordship of an obedientiary, usually the cellarer.<sup>27</sup> With royal consent the convent’s manors were



FIG. 90 – Mid eighteenth-century map of the manorial estate showing several field boundaries identical with those in FIG. 89, where the pattern is more complex. The area identified by blue-centred crosses (denoting common ownership) and encompassed by brown marks approximates to 'Redwell' in the 1612 survey. Le Feldway is the track to the south-east of the field marked 'arable.' Redwelhall lay to the south-west of the pond. Two of the buildings on the left of the map (L) are currently Grade 2 listed; they and the pond (existing until the second half of the twentieth century) allow comparisons with Ordnance Survey maps (see FIG. 91) (reproduced from SROB, 586/22 by permission of the Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds).

regarded as outside the barony during vacancies in the abbacy and were not, therefore, subject to reversion to the king.<sup>28</sup> Great Barton, a relatively rich manor, was one of a group of the convent's manors – sometimes known as 'food farms' – tasked with providing for the upkeep of the monastic community.<sup>29</sup> Of the abbot's manors many were leased as, or included, knights' fees in order to fulfil the obligation to provide the king with knights for military service (although the military demands associated with knights' fees and subinfeudation diminished in the twelfth century in the face of reduced need and changing economic circumstances).<sup>30</sup> As is clear from Jocelin of Brakelond's *Chronicle*, in Abbot Samson's day the manor of Great Barton included no knight's fee, but by the end of the thirteenth century part of the manor had been appropriated by the abbacy with many tenants now paying rent, directly or indirectly, to the abbot.<sup>31</sup> The hundred rolls of 1279–80 illustrate this division, giving details of tenants (and subtenants), acreages held and yearly rents.<sup>32</sup> Whilst in Great Barton almost all holders of land described as messuages paid rent to the abbot directly or indirectly through one of his tenants, only two of the generally larger holdings responsible to the convent through the office of cellarer were described as messuages.<sup>33</sup> This is in accordance with the function of the cellarer to provide the abbey with agricultural produce. Of the two messuages, one was rented to the reeve [*prepositus*].<sup>34</sup> It is possible that this holding – stated to be of eight acres – is identifiable with Redwell.

Since the abbey would have had a clear concept of what constituted a manor, the categorisation of Redwell as a manor [*manerium*] seems paradoxical. However, within the manor of Great Barton there was another ‘sub-manor’ – that of *Necton Hall* (*Nektonhall*) or *Conyers* – lying to the north-west of Redwell. Formerly in the tenure of William de Neketon, in the fourteenth century the land passed to members of the Conyers family, who were also lords of the manor of Finningham Hall.<sup>35</sup> There is no evidence that manorial courts were held at Necton Hall, but the association with the more dominant Finningham Hall, where court documents from Necton Hall might have been held, could explain this. Tenants of Necton Hall and associated lands – including Sir Robert Conyers – had an obligation to the abbot for knight’s service, along with suit of court and payment of a yearly rent. There is no direct evidence for a knight’s fee in relation to Redwell, although exemption from knight’s service is given as a specific exclusion in the standard wording applicable to demised lands used in the indenture of 1382. It could be that the factor justifying the use of the term *manerium* was the existence of an estate of significant size operating around an administrative hub, with inferior lordship and a feudal structure in relation to its tenants and workforce. Examples of other sub-manors occur in the Pinchbeck Register and in the hundred rolls.

Although lands were already held there by the chamberlain and convent, a focused involvement of the abbey at Redwell appears to have been lacking until after the Black Death. In the Cellarer’s Register a footnote to a copy of a quitclaim of 1356 concerning the transfer of thirty acres of land and foldage elsewhere in Great Barton identifies land held by the chamberlain with respect to Redwell.<sup>36</sup> During the later medieval period it is possible that Redwell Hall served as an occasional residence for officials or visitors associated with the abbey, being set at a discreet distance from the manor house and demesne centre of Great Barton.<sup>37</sup> It is possible also that a hall belonging to the convent [*aula monachorum de Berton*] mentioned in an early fifteenth-century rental was located at the Redwell site.<sup>38</sup> Such a function would have disappeared with the dissolution of the abbey in 1539, an event that may account for the demise of the Redwell name. A monastic hall could well have been a substantial building, something that might be taken into account if archaeological appraisals prior to the redevelopment of properties on the supposed site are ever undertaken.

The disposition and naming of roads and tracks in the vicinity of Redwell is of wider interest. Whilst it is difficult to place Redwell Strete (mentioned above) with certainty, it is possible to identify Redwell Lane with the thoroughfare that led from Newmarket Way (the main east–west route through the village) to Redwell, along the alignment of the present Livermere Road. This can be deduced from an entry in the 1566 terrier, where a piece of land of twenty-six acres – clearly the former demesne land to the south of Redwell and adjoining Hallcroft – is stated to have abutted on Redwell Lane to the west. With the demise of Redwell’s monastic connection it became Chamber Lane.<sup>39</sup> The eighteenth-century map shows the same lane appearing to stop at the Redwell site, becoming what was then the grassy eastern edge of Conyers Green. This is in accordance with the description in the survey of 1612 that tenements on the west side of Precinct 22 abutted upon the green [*viride*]. It suggests that Redwell Lane primarily served the monastic holding of Redwell, while also giving access to Necton Hall. It is possible also that here, in the vicinity of the pond, was the area called Redwellgrene. As is evident from the seventeenth-century map, a thoroughfare following the western (parish) boundary of Great Barton, known then as Chalton or Colton Lane, would have served as an alternative – and perhaps the main – route of access from Bury St Edmunds to Conyers Green and Necton Hall.<sup>40</sup>

The name Redwell invites comment. The prefix ‘red’ occurs in the names of Suffolk villages such as Redgrave and Redisham but there seems to be no consensus as to its origin. In the present instance reed or reed-bed (OE *hr̥ōd*) seems most likely, but the colour red (OE *rēad*),

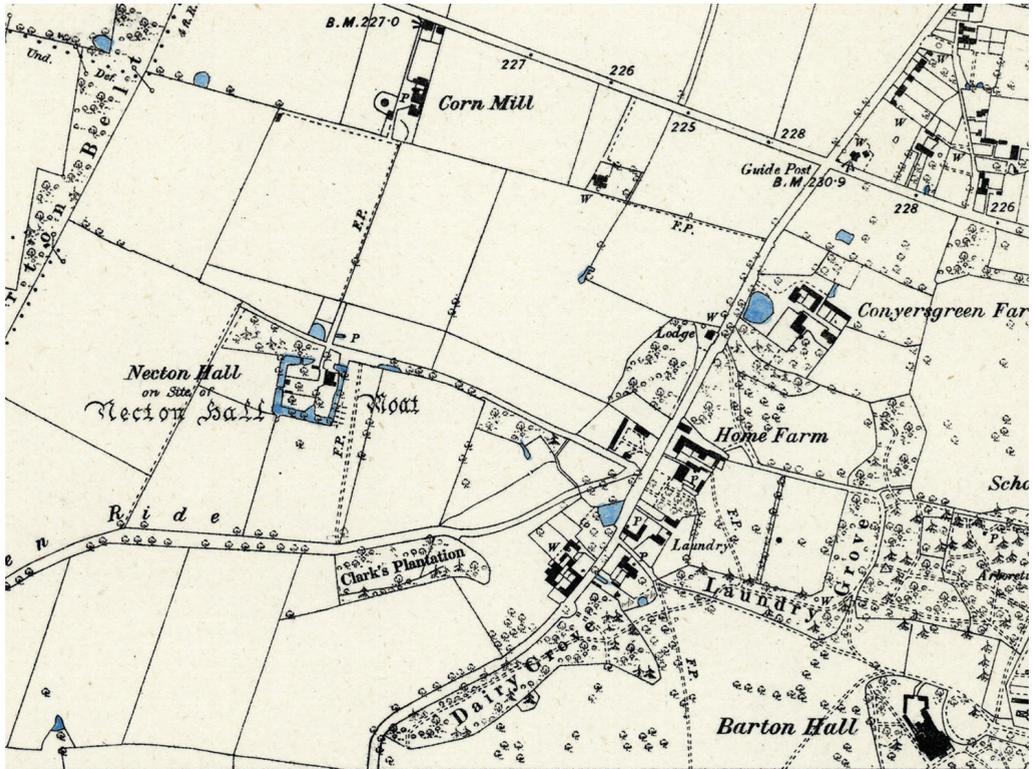


FIG. 91 – Part of the 1884 Ordnance Survey six-inch map XXXIII.SE, presented here for comparison with FIGS 89 and 90. Two currently listed buildings are present also on the eighteenth-century map (FIG. 90), as is the pond close to the former Redwell site. The land between what is now Livermere Road (diagonally across image) and Barton Hall (destroyed by fire in 1914) was re-landscaped in the nineteenth century with the loss of former field boundaries; this area has since undergone residential development. The Great Barton parish and manorial boundary, along which once ran a thoroughfare from Bury St Edmunds to Conyers Green and beyond, is just visible in the top left-hand corner of the image. Necton Hall was demolished and the features of the site obliterated by ploughing during the second half of the twentieth century (*reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland*).

a clearing (OE *rēod*) and the name of a person are possibilities.<sup>41</sup> The suffix ‘well’ is often taken to suggest a spring, stream or well (OE *welle*).<sup>42</sup> It may be relevant that a large pond, possibly fed by a spring and with outflow to the west, once existed close to Redwell (see Figs 90 and 91). Within two miles of the Redwell site lies Red Castle Farm, situated close to the site of a Roman villa from which the name was probably derived, but the common element may be coincidental.<sup>43</sup>

A final word might be said about the name of the croft – Hallcroft – upon which Hall Croft House (later to become Barton Hall) was built. It has been supposed that the name related to the original Barton Hall, located approximately half a mile to the south-east. It now seems as likely that the croft took its name from the much nearer Redwell Hall.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## NOTES

- 1 For consistency in this article the term ‘manor of Great Barton’ is used for all historical periods.
- 2 Alternative spellings include Radewell, Redwelle, Reddewell, Redewell and Redewelle. Variants of Redwell Hall, Redwell Strete and Redwell Lane include, respectively, Redewellhalle, Redwellstrete and Redewellelane, etc. In this article names relating to thoroughfares have been split, even though commonly written as single words.
- 3 Copinger 1910.
- 4 The hundred rolls 1279–80. The rolls for Thedwastre Hundred survive as copies in the Pinchbeck Register (CUL, MS Ee.3.60), the Cellarer’s Register (see below) and CUL, Add. MS 3395. A printed transcription of the Pinchbeck Register by Hervey (1925) mentions the two named individuals on pages 115 and 116. For a general description of the hundred rolls, see Raban 2004.
- 5 CUL, Gg.iv.4. The Cellarer’s Register, Part I. Probably dating from after 1425 (Thomson 1980), this volume contains a substantial section incorporating much earlier surveys and charters relating to Great Barton.
- 6 Hervey 1906, 172; SROB, E18/451/2. Court rolls, manor of Great Barton, 6 May and 15 July 1349.
- 7 BL, Cott. Claud. A. XII. Hostiller’s Register, ff. 119–129; Arnold 1892, 340 and 345.
- 8 The losses listed include corn (40 quarters), rye (30 quarters), barley (80 quarters), peas (10 quarters), oats (10 quarters), 4 horses (stots), 3 bullocks, 24 sheep and poultry; damage to property included burning of the hall, damage to other buildings and losses of doors, gates, windows, hurdles and dovecotes.
- 9 Yates 1843, 132.
- 10 Bod., MS. Ch. Suffolk a. 2, 109. 1382. This indenture is summarised briefly in Turner 1878, 423. It is also referenced in Thomson 1980, 55–56, where the name of the manor is wrongly interpreted as Wordwell, probably because of confusion with the medieval spelling *Wridewell*. Wordwell lies approximately six miles north-west of Great Barton. It is conceivable that the names Redwell and Wordwell have a common origin.
- 11 The name ‘Cage’ in association with land holdings in the north-west of Great Barton appears commonly in medieval and later documents. In the Cellarer’s Register a hall called Cagehalle is included in a rental of lands held by the chamberlain of the abbey, listed under the heading *Tymworth cum Berton* (as distinct from *Berton*) and datable to the final years of the reign of Edward III. Cagehalle presumably adjoined the manor of Redwell.
- 12 The indenture includes standard wording exempting the tenant from responsibilities or gains relating to knight’s service, wardships, marriage fines, reliefs, escheats, chattels of felons and fugitives, impounding of stray animals and other regalian rights and forfeitures. Other examples are to be found in *dimissiones maneriorum* included in Curteys Register, Part I, BL, Add. MS 14848, ff. 53–68. These are functions associated with manorial lordship, consistent with Redwell being regarded as a ‘manorial’ entity; the crops mentioned are rye (10 acres), barley (22 acres), oats (17¼ acres) and peas (16½ acres).
- 13 SROB, HA528/1. Rental, 1458–59. The contents of the larger document are listed in Thomson 1980, 80.
- 14 SROB, E18/151/3. Court rolls, manor of Great Barton, 26 May 1506 and 27 May 1507.
- 15 SROB, E18/151/4. Court roll, manor of Great Barton, 23 March 1562.
- 16 SROB, E18/154/1. Field terrier, Great Barton, 1566.
- 17 SROB, E18/151/5. Court roll, manor of Great Barton, 16 March 1585.
- 18 SROB, E18/151/3. Court rolls, manor of Great Barton, 5 June 1522 and 14 May 1532.
- 19 SROB, E18/154/2. Survey, Great Barton, 1612.
- 20 Forward slash denotes a page break.
- 21 SROB, E18/154/3. Rental, Great Barton, 1612–13.
- 22 SROB, 586/20. Manorial map (1625). This map centres on what in the 1566 terrier is described as the site of the manor of Great Barton (where the present day Manor House stands) and extends northwards only

- to the periphery of the demesne lands; SROB, 2146/1. Seventeenth-century manorial map of Great Barton. The date has been obliterated by damage and repair; however the names of copyholders listed, in conjunction with information from court rolls and other documents, suggest a mid-century date.
- 23 The building that would evolve into Barton Hall (destroyed by fire in 1914) had several previous names. Built sometime after 1613, it was first known as Hall Croft House, after the demesne croft of that name.
  - 24 SROB, 586/22. Mid eighteenth-century manorial map. The map is not dated, but the designation of lands as belonging to Sir Thomas Hanmer, who died in 1746, and inclusion of the name Bunbury suggest that it was prepared for the incoming lord of the manor, Revd Sir William Bunbury, who inherited the estate.
  - 25 Chamber Lane followed the alignment of the southern end of the present Livermere Road.
  - 26 Greenway and Sayers 1989, xvi.
  - 27 Gransden 2004, 373.
  - 28 One such vacancy occurred in 1279, coinciding with the hundred rolls enquiry. Firm legal protection of the convent's portion received royal confirmation in 1281: Gransden 2004, 381.
  - 29 Gransden 1964, 108; 2007, 281 and 283; 2015, 223.
  - 30 Bailey 2002, 15.
  - 31 Greenway and Sayers 1989, 106–108.
  - 32 Hundred rolls for Thedwastre Hundred, 1279–80.
  - 33 The messages are taken to mean substantial dwellings collectively equating with the 'village.'
  - 34 An alternative translation is 'prior,' but 'reeve' seems more likely in this context. However, the hundred rolls name the tenant as Robert, and Robert Russel (1258–80) was prior at the time: Young 2016, 174. The sacrist of the abbey is also recorded as holding land.
  - 35 Copinger 1909, 264; Copinger 1910, 252.
  - 36 CUL, Gg.iv.4. Quitclaim dated 17 April 1356. The footnote reads: *pertinet camerar' pro Redwell.*
  - 37 According to the 1566 field terrier and the 1625 map the centre of the manorial estate and the site of the former Barton Hall were located near where the present Manor House stands. Following the building of Hall Croft House the operational centre of the estate – and the focus of the village – shifted to its ultimate position.
  - 38 BL, Add. MS 7096. Curteys Register, Part II, f. 26.
  - 39 A connection with the office of chamberlain might be supposed, but it should be noted that following the death of Thomas Conyers the manor of Necton Hall was granted temporarily to Robert Chamberlyn, knight, for reasons of wardship.
  - 40 This track, which divided the parishes of Barton and Fornham St Martin, was functional at the time of the Inclosure Award for Great Barton 1805, and is mentioned in the account of the perambulation of the parish. It no longer exists as a public thoroughfare.
  - 41 Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 167 and 170.
  - 42 Briggs and Kilpatrick 2016, 172.
  - 43 In *Calendarium Inquisitionum Post Mortem sive Escaetarum*, 4 (21 Edward IV), 405, Redcastell, listed among the holdings of John Smith, armiger, includes tenements in Pakenham, Barton, Ixworth and Great Livermere. Jones mentions Red Castle as one of three manors in Pakenham but provides no further information: Jones 1899, 173.

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### *Abbreviations*

BL	British Library
Bod	Bodleian Library, Oxford
CUL	Cambridge University Library
OE	Old English
SROB	Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds