

Since each Domesday entry provided the total acreage under cultivation and the manpower available, simple comparisons can be made between the numbers of families in Butley and surrounding settlements:

Boyton (plus Laneburh 6)	45
Capel	43
Gedgrave	24
Butley	20
Chillesford	8

Note that Butley is about half as populous as Capel or Boyton.

The acreages of what later became possessions of Butley Priory:

Boyton (plus Laneburh 36; ½ plough)	489; 8 ploughs
Capel	311; 7 ploughs
Gedgrave	135; 3 ploughs
Butley	112; 2 ½ ploughs
Chillesford	105; 3 ploughs

Note that Butley has the least ploughland.

The low figures for Chillesford and Gedgrave are consistent with medieval evidence, but those for Butley, fertile and relatively populous, are at variance and indicate that something is seriously amiss. The conclusion has to be:

a) the surveyors overlooked a major part of Butley;

or

b) the major part was correctly entered under Plomesgate Hundred, but with a place-name which subsequently fell out of use and which historians have hitherto been unable to recognize.

Plomesgate Hundred

The bulk of Plomesgate is located east of the Butley River where it includes Chillesford, Sudbourne and Orford, but two loops extend westwards across the river to fill those northern and southern portions of Butley not occupied by Loes Hundred. Thus the northern portion includes Haughfen Street (later Mill Lane) and Butley Street, whilst the southern portion skirts Reilie Green (later High Corner), and takes in a fragment of Capel near Stonebridge, the Priory itself, and a significant portion of Boyton. The other Survey entries for Boyton are under Wilford Hundred, showing that the surveyors recognized that this settlement lay in two hundreds. Both the entries for Capel St Andrew to the south and south-west of Butley are listed under Wilford, which occupies the bulk of the peninsula.

Nearly all of Butley was granted to the Priory shortly after its foundation. At its dissolution in 1538 the demesne included Capel and Boyton and the estate continued in single ownership until 1632. As a result the hundred boundaries within this block of land are elusive as they were hardly ever mentioned in estate documents. On the other hand, they were required for taxation purposes, such as Butley's Hearth Tax returns for 1663 and 1674 which are listed under both hundreds. Eighteenth-century maps of Suffolk's hundreds also make the boundaries clear, but by the 19th century for administrative purposes, such as the census and tithe apportionments, Butley's Plomesgate portion had been subsumed under Loes, and Boyton's Plomesgate portion under Wilford.

Defining the missing lands

That the 'missing' larger portion of Butley was valuable in Norman times and not marginal is evident. It included the farm of Roger de Ermingestone which formed the dowry bestowed by the wealthy Theobald de Valognes on his daughter's marriage to Ranulf de Glanville². In succeeding centuries documentary records confirm that this, the land on which Bertha and Ranulph in 1171