

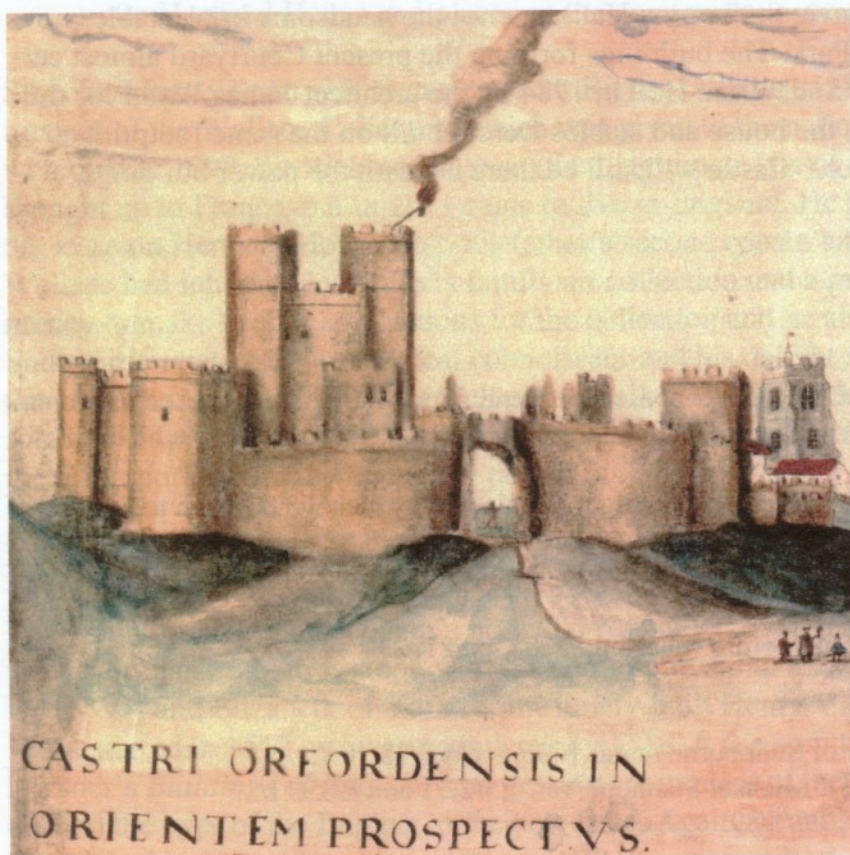
SIR MICHAEL STANHOPE'S MANOR HOUSE: THE NEW STABLES

Information about the life of Sir Michael Stanhope (birth date unknown; died 1621) is not easy to come by¹. In the late 15th century he amassed land holdings in this area so that by 1600 Sudbourne once again became the centre of a huge estate and resumed, albeit in a smaller way, an importance it had not had since the 10th century (see Sam Newton's article on pages 3 & 4, above). This lasted until 1918 when the estate was broken up. This article (a fuller version of which, entitled *Coralline Crag*, is to be found in the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History Vol XLI, Part 4 (2008) p 497*), and the following one, shed some light on just two aspects of Stanhope's activities at Sudbourne.

Stone from Orford Castle

The view of Orford Castle which appears on the estate map commissioned by Sir Michael Stanhope c1601 from John Norden, the cartographer and surveyor, is the clearest and most complete depiction of the castle which we have. It shows the stone-built curtain wall with towers which once surrounded the keep. The next pictures we have of the castle, engravings from the late 18th century (see for example Bulletin 13, p8), show that by then the curtain wall had almost completely disappeared. The final section fell in 1840. It has long been surmised that the walls, containing valuable dressed stone, were seen as a 'quarry' by Stanhope and subsequent owners, who sold it to people wanting building materials. Now we have documentary evidence that at least some of the stone from the castle was reused by Stanhope himself and that he exploited pits of the other building stone available on his estate, the corraline crag.

Sir Michael Stanhope's bailiff's accounts for Sudbourne in the year 1606 are to be found in the Suffolk Record Office. At this time new stables at his house named Chapmans were being built, using crag from Sudbourne, bricks from Chillesford, with the carpentry being supplied by Richard Brady of Butley. Thomas Hughes, the bailiff, also recorded that over 50 loads of stone were gathered within and about Orford Castle *'for the ramming of the foundations of the new stable'*. The gatherers were paid two pence a load, whereas the carriage to Chapmans cost eight pence. Reference to foundations *'from the cow house to the brewhouse'*, also made from gathered stone, appears later. Earlier entries, for digging crag, were for *'for the building of the new stable'*, and presumably not just for the foundations.



Emmeline Rope's watercolour copy of Norden's picture of Orford Castle.
New Orford Town Trust / Orford Museum

The bailiff was from Flintshire in north Wales, and his unfamiliarity with local speech is revealed