

**Barrows, beheading and bankruptcy:
Clarendon Park, Wiltshire, England's largest deer park. a 'castle for
deer'?**

by

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Abstract²

This short paper is a condensed text from a Powerpoint presentation at the "Herrschaft und Burgenlandschaften – Fränkische und internationale Forschung im Vergleich"³ conference, delivered at Würzburg on 20 February 2010. The paper focuses on long-term land use at Clarendon in the 1800 ha area which was delineated by a 16 km bank and ditch in the Middle Ages. This boundary, the outer pale,⁴ is seen on an estate map, still at Clarendon, of c. 1650 (see Fig. 1, Figs. 3, 4 etc. below). Study of the landscape in the long-term suggests that the medieval boundaries had origins in the prehistoric period. In the Middle Ages, especially in the period c. 1100 to 1500, Clarendon was the major western palace of the kings of England. At least by 1400 the buildings stood at the centre of a landscape developed as a deer park from c. 1100 and which continued as a deer park after the palace fell into decay c. 1500. One way in which a palace is distinguished from a castle is that a

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² This paper is a development of work published in more detail in TOM BEAUMONT JAMES, CHRISTOPHER GERRARD, Clarendon: landscape of kings, 2007. I am much indebted to Professor Christopher Gerrard who led the fieldwork at Clarendon in recent years and who has established much of what we know and can surmise about the development of the park at Clarendon and to Alejandra Gutiérrez who prepared the map of the estate which appears as Figure 1. Amanda Richardson has generously made available her detailed knowledge of Clarendon Forest and Park.

³ Lordship and Castle landscapes – Franconian and international studies in comparison.

⁴ A 'pale' is an upright stake, driven into the ground or a vertical bar attached to horizontal rails to make a 'paling' fence (Oxford English Dictionary). Hence the term 'pale' comes to mean the fencing set on top of the bank round a park. See the representation of the pale in Fig. 4, below.

palace, by contrast to a castle, is undefend-ed.⁵ However, a deer park had to be secure to keep deer in and predators out and Clarendon contained as many as 7,000 fallow deer at one time.⁶ In this sense it was a ‘castle for deer’. Deer continued to be managed in the park until the disposal of royal lands following the execution of King Charles I in 1649. Thereafter, in private hands from c. 1660, deer were no longer the reason for the existence of the park. Clarendon Park estate has occupied almost exactly the same footprint as the medieval deer park down to the present day. Ancient and medieval landscapes are visible today within the medieval park boundaries.

Location and size

Clarendon Park lies in central southern England, in Wiltshire, immediately east of the medieval new town of Salisbury. Following the relocation of the cathedral of Salisbury from Old Sarum a small distance to the north, ‘New Sarum’, as Salisbury was known, sprang up near the gates of the Clarendon deer park at the height of the glory of Clarendon Palace and its exceptionally large park (Fig. 1). This move was planned from the late twelfth century with Salisbury cathedral, uniquely in England, being built in one style in a great building campaign between c. 1220 and c. 1260. Documentary sources confirm that the creators of the cathedral also worked on the palace which, although now ruined, may still be matched through architectural detail.⁷ The scale of the park is uniquely large at 1800 hectares.

⁵ TOM BEAUMONT JAMES, *The Palaces of Medieval England c 1050–1550. Royalty, nobility, the episcopate and their residences from Edward the Confessor to Henry VIII*, London 1990, p. 18.

⁶ JAMES, GERRARD, *Clarendon* (as note 2) pp. 62, 113.

⁷ J. ASHURST and TOM BEAUMONT JAMES, *Stonework and Plasterwork*, in: TOM BEAUMONT JAMES and A. M. ROBINSON with ELIZABETH EAMES, *Clarendon Palace. The History and Archaeology of a Medieval Palace and Hunting Lodge near Salisbury, Wiltshire* (The Society of Antiquaries of London and Thames and Hudson, London, Research Report of the Society of Antiquaries, XLV) 1988, pp. 234–258.

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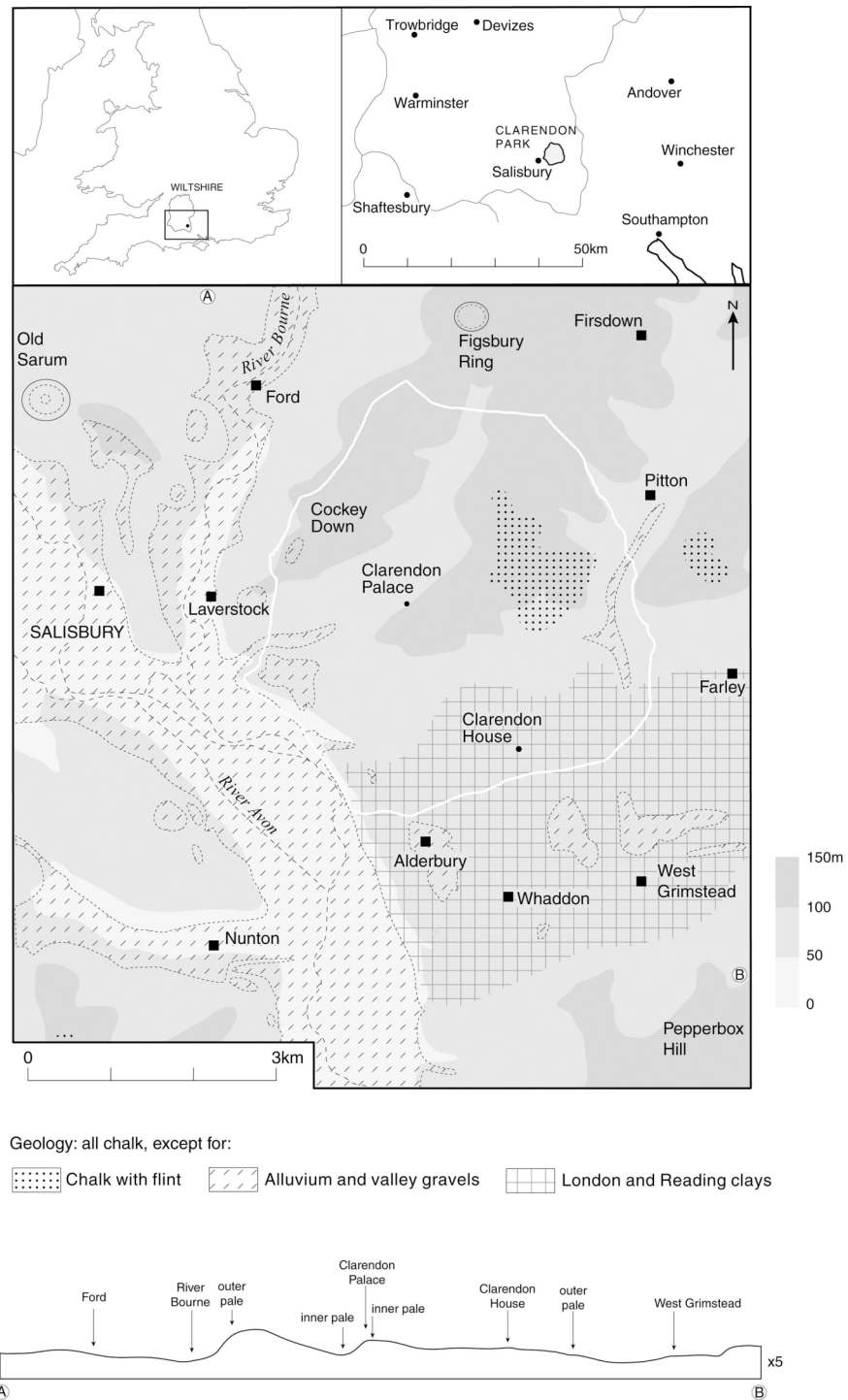


Figure 1: Location map of Clarendon. The park with its characteristic ‘teardrop’ shape is seen east of Salisbury (New Sarum). The transect A–B shows the hills and valleys and how the founders of the park used natural contours in creating the park boundaries (Drawing by Alejandra Gutiérrez. Copyright).

From Neolithic to Bronze Age (c. 4000 BC to c. 800 BC)

A clear feature of the medieval park boundaries is the prehistoric siting of barrows round the northern perimeter where a succession of Neolithic long barrows is found. On and adjacent to the north-west and east perimeters of the park there are also a number of Bronze Age barrows of various dates, some of which, notably the great barrow at Pitton beside the Pitton gate, actually lie on the perimeter itself (Fig. 2, see also Fig. 1. Fig. 3 etc). It seems likely that all these great earthworks derive from early settlements located within the area of the later medieval park and that they are also likely to



Figure 2: A great Bronze Age Barrow on the outer perimeter pale of the park near Pitton Gate (see Fig. 1, Fig. 3 etc for Pitton and the gate). The boundaries of the park incorporated many ancient features and it has been said that, although there is no Anglo-Saxon boundary charter for Clarendon, surviving landscape features would make it easy to write one. The barrow may have been heightened in the eighteenth century to make it a more impressive landscape feature (Photograph by Tom Beaumont James. Copyright).

be liminal disposals of the dead related in some way to ancient boundaries which may, around the northern half of the park, have been prehistoric boundaries. Recent fieldwalking has produced lithics and pottery which, related to these long-established barrows, indicates a more dense pattern of activity.⁸

Iron Age and Roman (c. 800 BC to c. AD 450)

In the Early and Late Iron Age occupation is visible in the park, both revealed in excavation and in field walking. Middle Iron Age data is either less visible or – perhaps due to a change to pastoral farming – invisible at Clarendon. In the Late period there was a significant growth in occupation within the park, especially in the centre and north. All these developments are representative of other sites in the locality and across Wessex.⁹ The Inner Park at Clarendon certainly predated the medieval palace which is located within it, and this inner enclosure's earthworks are certainly pre-medieval.¹⁰

In the Roman period Clarendon Park was probably more highly populated than ever before or since. In 1993 there was only one Roman settlement acknowledged at Clarendon: since then a further six have been identified including villas on the sunny slopes south of the palace. These developments provide new data in particular on the more southerly area of the park. It may have been the developing boundaries of these units of land which gave, or began to give, shape to the southern boundary of the park.

⁸ JAMES, GERRARD, Clarendon (as note 2) pp. 14–15 and Fig. 8.

⁹ 'Wessex' is a term (ie West Saxon) which has been applied to the West-Saxon kingdoms of the post-Roman period. It has come to be associated with a wide, ill-defined area of central-southern and south-western England and is a term widely used not only by archaeologists and historians of the Saxon period, but also by prehistorians and has remained current in recent centuries for example in the 'Wessex novels' of Thomas Hardy (d. 1928).

¹⁰ JAMES, GERRARD, Clarendon (as note 2) pp. 22–30 and Fig. 14.

Anglo-Saxon Clarendon (c. AD 450 to AD 1066)

Clarendon lay towards the western edge of the area of England occupied by the Anglo-Saxons. Its chief Anglo-Saxon archaeological site, an extensive cemetery, lies at Petersfinger, at the western extremity of the park. Clarendon's name has the Anglo-Saxon origins and may be interpreted as the 'clover-covered hill'. It also has an Old English name 'Panshett' or 'Penchet' (see Fig. 3 and caption) comparable to *pen coed* – the 'end of the wood' – a name still used in document-tary sources as late as the eighteenth century. There are a number of '-ley' names suggestive of areas cleared of trees in this Anglo-Saxon period. Thus it is reasonable to imagine an area of mixed open, cleared and woodland. However, apart from the cemetery, there is almost no other Anglo-Saxon evidence. This suggests a radical change in land-use in the post-Roman period from the fifth to the eleventh centuries. This could have been hunting country.¹¹

The Anglo-Saxon minster site and settlement at Alderbury, just to the south of the park, may be interpreted as the 'old borough' (ie ald- = old, -bury = burh, or borough) opening the possibility that Clarendon Park was the hunting park of Anglo-Saxon kings. Little evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation has so far come to light at Clarendon mainly perhaps due to the depth of deposits at the palace site which have never been excavated down to natural level. However, a baptismal ring of King Aethelwulf (d. 858) father of King Alfred the Great (d. 899) was found adjacent to the park in the eighteenth century. North of the park there was possibly an Anglo-Saxon minster at Idmiston (marked on Fig. 4 'Idmerston' to the north), while Ivychurch (also on Fig. 4) on the southern boundary of the park may also have begun as a Saxon minster before being re-founded as an Augustinian house in the early twelfth century. Moreover, the adjacent parishes of Farley and Pitton, east of Clarendon, were both chapels of Alderbury.¹² The shape of the park and the development of the adjacent parishes which butt on to it cart-wheel fashion, suggest a special and early substantial status for Clarendon Park.

¹¹ JAMES, GERRARD, Clarendon (as note 2) pp. 37–43 and Figs. 18 and 19.

¹² J. M. A. PITT, Wiltshire Minster Parochiae and West Saxon Ecclesiastical Organisation. Unpublished PhD thesis, Southampton University 1999, pp. 26–29.

The Medieval Park (c. 1066 to c. 1660)

The palace was located towards the centre of the park which extended to some 1800 hectares as is shown on the map of c. 1650. This map captures the medieval layout just at the time when it was about to disappear in the chaos which followed the beheading of King Charles I in 1649. There were three clear areas within the medieval park. To the north were 'launds' (lawns) where deer grazed and which were overlooked by the palace. South of the palace lay a series of coppices in the centre of the park, and south of that again was an area of wood pasture (Fig. 3).

The development of the medieval park may have taken place in one or more stages. In any case it seems most likely that it was established soon after the Norman Conquest of 1066 – Clarendon is first mentioned in 1070 by William I. Henry I (reigned 1100–1135) seems to be the most likely creator of the park. His acknowledged enthusiasm for hunting which led to his nick-name 'Stagfoot'¹³, together with the giant scale of various Norman projects in the half-century after the Norman Conquest – the New Forest (Hampshire), Westminster Hall (London) and Winchester Cathedral (much of the work carried out during Henry I's reign) exemplify these grandiose schemes, and the creation of the exceptional park at Clarendon may have been another of them. Henry I was the first king recorded as visiting Clarendon through his reign. The existence of significant quantities of Caen stone from France identified in recent years at Clarendon tallies with other early and high status use of this material elsewhere in England.¹⁴

However, it has been argued from documentary evidence that the palace and the launds, with the demesne wood (the coppices and wood pasture) to the south of the palace were originally the whole extent of Clarendon Park and that it was not until the early fourteenth century in the reign of Edward II that additional south-eastern areas were included in the park to increase it by over 10 % in size.¹⁵

¹³ 'Stagfoot' because he believed he could tell the number of points on a stag's antlers from seeing its foot print, H. M. MAYR-HARTING, R. I. MOORE, *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. H. C. Davis*, 1985; see also J. M. STEANE, *The Archaeology of the Medieval English Monarchy*, 1999, p. 146.

¹⁴ TOM BEAUMONT JAMES, G. GREEN, T. TATTON-BROWN, *Clarendon Palace. Stonework from Site and Spoil*, unpublished typescript report 2005, forthcoming.

¹⁵ A. RICHARDSON, *The Forest, Park and Palace of Clarendon c. 1200–c. 1650: reconstructing an actual, conceptual and documented Wiltshire landscape*, unpublished PhD thesis Southampton University, 2003, pp. 245ff, 266. See also her *The Forest, Park and Palace of*

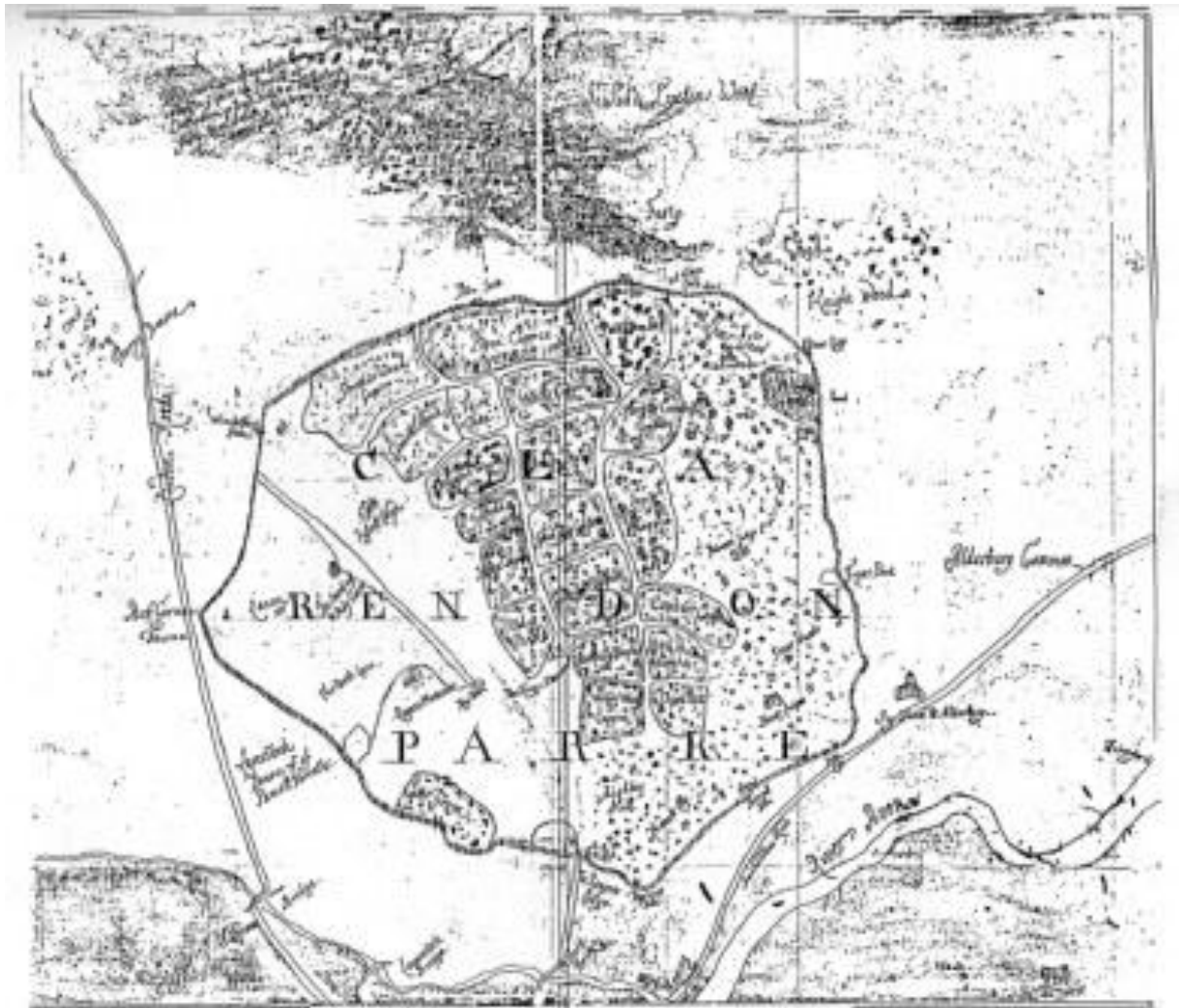


Figure 3: The estate map of c. 1650 (north is to the left, the 'Becket Cross' is visible towards the northernmost extremity of the park, by 'Parke Corner Downe'). This remarkable map shows in the centre within the park pale the 'twenty groves [coppices] enclosed' as they were described before 1598 by Michael Maschertus. The launds lay to the north of the coppices and the woodpasture (sheer wood) to the south. The pale enclosing the park along the top of the outer pale bank is clearly seen together with the deer leaps (allowing deer in but not out), the gates etc. The 'Standing & Pady Course' are seen on the north launds running south-west from north-east of the Winchester Gate. Note the reference to 'Pancett' in the text at the top (Image from transcript held at the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office of the estate map at Clarendon Park. Reproduced by kind permission of Andrew Christie-Miller. Copyright).

Whatever the chronology, the park and palace were key sites for the English monarchy from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. The park continued in royal hands until the end of the Middle Ages with evidence of large

Clarendon c. 1200–c. 1650: reconstructing an actual, conceptual and documented Wiltshire landscape (British Archaeological Reports British Series 387) pp. 114–117.

gatherings there – on one estimate 1,800 people at the time of the Constitutions of Clarendon crisis between Henry II and Archbishop Thomas Becket in 1164. Recent work has expanded our knowledge of the faunal assemblages there, the range of deer (fallow, red, roe) and what appear to be hunting dogs as well as domestic animals not to mention a range of high-status ceramics including French and Spanish pottery of the thirteenth century.¹⁶

There is no doubt that palace and park were part of a scheme which provided a grand location for business and recreation and in which phenomenological perspectives were paramount for royalty, courtiers and visitors alike – the size of the park, the location of the palace, the quality and quantity of the deer and other animals and birds there etc. Beyond the park lay the forest which has been the subject of a separate study but which provided a large and enveloping landscape surrounding both the park and palace and, as shown in Amanda Richardson's paper published here and in some of her other work, also the adjacent city of Salisbury which was hemmed in by the development of forests by Henry III.¹⁷

The Post-Medieval Period (from c. 1660)

After the inter-regnum, which followed the defeat and execution of Charles I in 1649, the park was taken back in to royal ownership by Charles II in 1660 at the restoration of the monarchy. He almost immediately handed it out to the architect of his restoration, the duke of Albemarle (General George Monck) who sold it on to the earl of Clarendon (Edward Hyde). Clarendon deerpark was disparked in 1664. There were probably few if any deer by then: they had disappeared almost immediately after Charles I's execution in 1649. Thus the 'castle for deer' aspect of Clarendon changed for ever (Compare Figs. 4 and 5). Eighteenth-century owners the Bathursts (Fig. 5), who built a new mansion house towards the south of the park (Fig. 6), followed George I's enthusiasm for duck and other bird-shooting rather than deer hunting.¹⁸ When

¹⁶ JAMES, GERRARD, Clarendon (as note 2) p. 92.

¹⁷ A. RICHARDSON, 'Putting the 'royal' back into forests: the role of medieval hunting landscapes in constructions of kingship – and queenship' (Würzburg 20.02.2010). See also note 15 above.

¹⁸ R. LIDDIARD, 'The Afterlife of Medieval Parks: adaptation and decline' (in preparation). I am very grateful to Dr Liddiard for allowing me to cite this work in progress.

Peter Bathurst (junior) of Clarendon made his will in 1796 he especially left his guns, along with his dogs, to his gamekeeper.¹⁹



Figure 4: On the Norden/Speed map of c. 1610 Clarendon Park is shown with its outer pale and two buildings King's Manor and Que[e]n's Lodge. Although the palace was ruined by then, the park is clearly illustrated as an enclosure. Contemporary documentation shows James I (reigned 1603–1625) took a close interest in the park and kept in enclosed and supplied with deer throughout his reign. The local context in which it existed, of Old Sarum (Sorbiodunum), Salisbury, adjacent forest areas and settlements, is depicted in detail. Reproduced from: Clarendon Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. Archaeology, History and Ecology (unpublished Report by the Archaeological Consultancy [KAC], 1996, Fig.KAC 4.2. Copyright).

¹⁹ JAMES, GERRARD, Clarendon (as note 2) p. 113.



Figure 5: The estate map prepared for Peter Bathurst in 1713. Many of the deerpark features have disappeared. The outer pale is not illustrated as a pale. The 'Pady Course' has gone, a relict feature being 'Paddock C Feild' where part of the deer-course formerly ran north-eastwards to the north of Winchester Gate field. The grazing 'launds' have been turned over to arable farming. There is no major residence in the park at this date. The palace is a ruin, scarcely noticed by the surveyor, and the new mansion house was not begun for some years after 1713 towards the south-east corner of the estate. The 'Becket Cross' is marked near the north point of the park. Reproduced by kind permission of Andrew Christie-Miller (Copyright).

By 1900, driven towards bankruptcy by the agricultural depression of the 1870s, the Hervey-Bathurst successors of the eighteenth-century Bathursts, disposed of the Clarendon Park estate, advertising it as ‘absolutely within a ring fence and forms an exceptionally fine sporting property, affording excellent partridge and cover shooting ...’ although reference was made to the developing sport of foxhunting and to deer hounds in the New Forest close by.²⁰ In the early years of the twentieth century although hunts met outside the Clarendon mansion house, the landscape was developed for shooting with belts of trees planted across the northern launds and hedges reduced to one side of the road (to force birds to fly upwards) beside the estate roads as they are today. If the agricultural crisis of the 1870s almost ruined the Hervey-Bathursts, it brought substantial benefits to the Garton family. Major James Garton who owned the estate from 1900 to 1919 came from a family which had made use of the cheap imports of maize from the United States in the late nineteenth century to establish the Anglo-Bavarian Brewery which flourished, until the second decade of the new century, at Shepton Mallet, Somerset.²¹

²⁰ JAMES, GERRARD, Clarendon (as note 2) p. 155.

²¹ The Gartons employed Bavarian brewers to create what was said to be the first lager beer to be made in England.



Figure 6: The Andrews and Dury map of 1773. By this time 'Clarindon Lodge' had been created in the south-east corner of the park. The woodland is no longer a series of separate coppices from which deer were excluded by banks and ditches as shown c 1650. However, the 'park' surrounding the Lodge does appear to be paled, the garden beds are enclosed, and water was available to deer at the lake. In the picture of the mansion in 1791, fewer than twenty years later three fallow deer are seen in the foreground, JAMES, GERRARD, Clarendon (as note 2) Frontispiece. Reproduced from: Clarendon Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. Archaeology, History and Ecology (unpublished Report by the Archaeological Consultancy [KAC], 1996, Fig. KAC 4.6. Copyright).

Conclusions

Evidence from archaeology suggests that boundaries of the Clarendon Park estate date back to prehistory, and the Roman period. The park itself was probably already delineated before 1066, but was developed in succeeding centuries into settled form within the 16 km bank, surmounted by its pale, and accompanied by its ditch. It was never an ecclesiastical parish, but became a civil parish in the nineteenth century. After the seven or so chapels in the palace disappeared with the residential palace accommodation around 1500, there was no church or chapel on the estate thereafter.

Only royalty possessed the resources to maintain such a very large deer park. Under the nobility comparative lack of resources coupled with changing sporting fashions in the landscape from hunting deer to shooting birds in particular led to the disappearance of the deer park – although fallow deer are still seen in the foreground of the picture of General Bathurst's Clarendon mansion in 1791. A succession of landscapes followed one another in the park from prehistoric hunting and settlement to a landscape 'of opportunity'²² under the Anglo-Saxons. This was succeeded in turn by the more formal Romanesque and Gothic landscapes of hunting, through to the Tory and military landscapes of the post-medieval period which are discussed in more detail elsewhere.²³

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²² D Hooke 'Medieval Forests and parks in southern and central England' in: *European Woods and Forests. Studies in Cultural History*, ed. C. WATKINS (CAB International, Wallingford) p. 25.

²³ JAMES, GERRARD, Clarendon (as note 2) p. 97ff.