

Simpson's Fromus Valley and Kelsale Park

A brief history of the medieval park

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1. About this guide.

This publication is intended for those who wish to know a little more about the reserve site and the medieval park of which it was once a small but significant part. The absence, in the main, of intensive agricultural use, which has led to the reserve being a potential haven for plant life, has also helped preserve at least some of its landscape features that are many hundreds of years old.

This is not an academic publication and as more information comes to light its content will change. However, it is hoped it casts some light both on the Reserve and on Kelsale Park, and teases out a little of the lives of those who lived and worked there during the Middle Ages.

2. Introduction.

Simpson's Fromus Valley, close to today's busy A12 yet still with a strong sense of rural isolation, sits at the centre of the site of Kelsale Park, a 500 acre landscaped historical feature that probably dates to the 12th century. The park was one of many across Suffolk held by the Earls and Dukes of Norfolk and which were created and used during the 12th to 16th centuries.

The medieval park was not a concept confined to Suffolk and was distinct from what we consider a park to be today. Such parks were common throughout the country in the Middle Ages and they occupied a significant percentage of available land. Their owners were the aristocracy of their day - the largely Norman nobility and those who rose to power through royal patronage and astute political management. Parks were both expensive to construct, requiring major landscape works, and they were exclusive, containing deer for hunting. Venison was a food barred by law to most of the population. Parks, in enclosing deer within them, added a physical barrier to a legal one.

Typically, parks would have had, in addition to deer and hunting facilities, a number of more practical rural economic activities. There may have been dovecotes, fishponds, grazing livestock, managed woodland for timber and firewood production, salting facilities for preservation of venison and fish, plus other rural industries. Some of these products would have been traded, generating substantial income. Others, both venison and to some extent fish, would have been exclusively for the owners to use or to present as gifts to individuals and religious institutions.

Just what was in a medieval park landscape? The park would have been surrounded by a high barrier to prevent deer escaping, usually using various combinations of ditches, banks, hedging and fencing. This was the park pale. Within it, there would have been a lodge or more substantial building, in some cases the owner's main residence, to provide hospitality for family, friends and key figures whose patronage they would wish to cultivate.

The park landscape may have been modified through earth movement and river control to provide pleasing vistas, with water features being common elements of them. Such vistas would not have been like those of later country house parks. The view would not be largely open, with trees, cropped grassland and grazing deer but a denser one where rural industry, such as firewood production and charcoal burning, existed alongside managed livestock areas and woodland in fenced enclosures.

Nevertheless, there was something in common with today's parks. It would have been an idealised landscape to match the very different ideals of the people of its time and it was not truly representative of the reality of rural life outside the park. With deer being seen as having their own innate nobility and therefore their hunting and consumption being for the nobility alone (not a view that was shared by others) a strongly romanticised element was present in their use.

Medieval parks created a statement to those of more humble means living around them, one of power, ostentation and affluence. There was the display of wealth in their creation and use, the provision of landscape features that were built for show and not through necessity and the keeping of deer that were excluded from the rest of the population. Finally, to those outside it, the park's high hedging and fencing only served to emphasise the social exclusion that the park represented. In short, part of why the park was there was to impress the locals and help maintain the social order.

As we shall see in this guide, Kelsale Park had many and perhaps all of the features described so far. Before we go to look at its history and landscape in more detail, a brief description of just one feature in Simpson's Fromus Valley will help to set the scene.

The Reserve contains what is probably the park's most interesting remaining earthwork, a large medieval earth dam. This dam held back a huge area of water, several hundred metres long. It was used for the production of freshwater fish as food but its size gave it something more than just a practical use.

The fishpond was part of a deliberately created vista to be seen and appreciated from the park lodge, probably situated where Kelsale Lodge is now. Looking down a small hill to the lake, to the left the dam would have been visible, with the River Fromus flowing over it at the far end. Beyond the lake would have been gently rising ground with grazing deer, woodland, pasture and fenced coppices. The pond may well have been stepped, with a second pond reaching up to the edge of Coe Wood.

The parkland view would have seemed somewhat cluttered by today's landscape standards and it was very maintenance-intensive, requiring constant management and repair. Nevertheless, the sight would have been something of wonder to those privileged to see it.

The fishpond was a key part of Kelsale Park's power statement, being a luxury item for both practical and aesthetic purposes. How long its impact lasted is another matter but at the time of its creation, the park and its features must have made a huge impression on the local population, in more ways than one. Beyond the pale, they would have been all too well aware of the months of back-breaking labour involved in its construction.

What follows is the known history of Kelsale Park from its construction to the time it fell out of use as a fully enclosed formal park and deer hunting area. This would have been a gradual process, perhaps accelerating during the 16th century, as its woods, fields and meadows were taken out of exclusive use by the owners and increasingly made available for others to rent. The park's sale in 1611 was probably a defining moment in its 'disparkment'. It passed from the hands of powerful aristocrats to landowners who, while still wealthy, would not have regarded or used the park as a statement of power and nobility.

3. The History of the Park.

Kelsale Park is well-endowed with historical references compared to other parks of a similar age. We know a few aspects in surprising detail, such as the names and wages of some of its 13th century workers. The park ownership is known or deduced throughout much of its working life.

Nevertheless, there are large gaps, such that an overview of park operation throughout the Middle Ages has to be deduced from traces or compared to known histories elsewhere.

We have an earliest known date for Kelsale Park's existence, which may or may not tie in with the date it was built. There are references to its day to day management, particularly in its early days. There are also detailed plans of the park after it was 'disparked', when it lost its use as a single managed parkland area some 400 years later. However, how the park was run throughout this period is not yet known in full detail and this may remain so.

4. The Park's origins.

The earliest known reference to the park is in relation to a land exchange involving the park's owner, Roger Bigod II, and Sibton Abbey for some time between 1189 and 1217. 21 acres of land, mainly from Wrabton (a nearby parish whose location is not known for sure), together with just over an acre of land from Kelsale were exchanged for an equal sized area of Sibton Abbey-owned land in Kelsale Park - "that which is enclosed within my park of Kelsale". It is possible that this related to part of Coe Wood at the north-western end of the park as this extended into Sibton Parish.

The Bigods were major land holders in East Anglia at that time and it is worth looking at their family background in more detail.

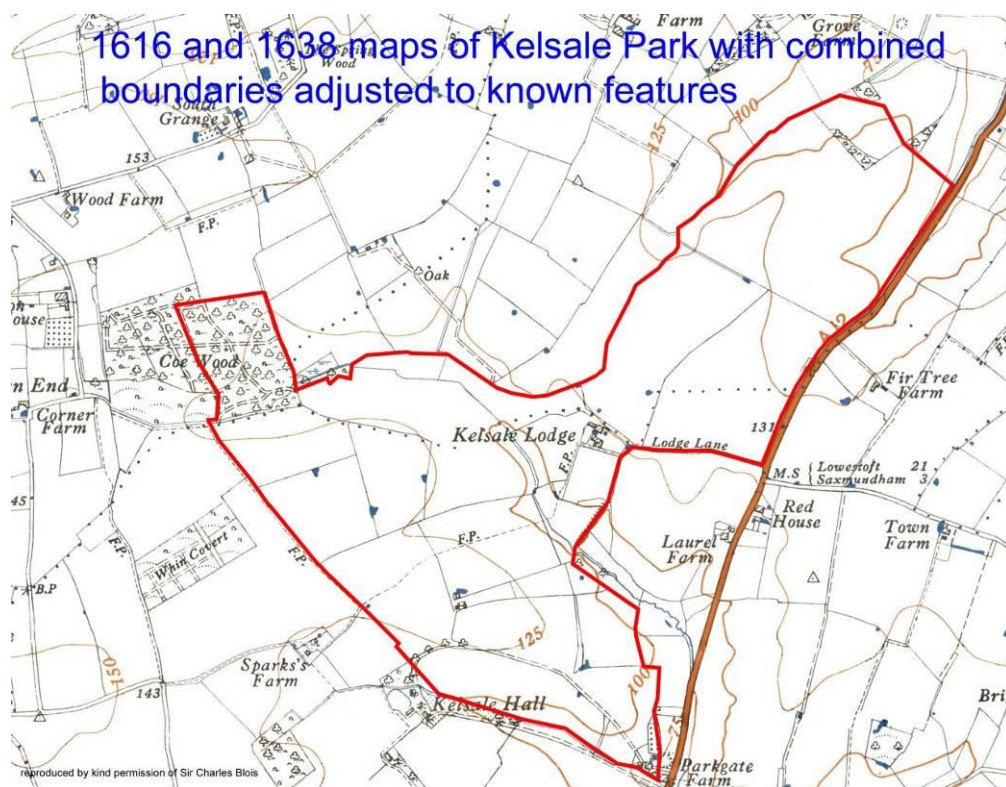
Roger Bigod I, originally from Normandy, controlled large areas of East Anglia by 1086. His son, William, succeeded him in 1107 and in turn was succeeded by Roger's second son, Hugh I, in 1120. It was a family on the rise and, amidst family rebellion and royal strife, it was Hugh I who brought them into real power. He became the Earl of Norfolk in 1141, thereby commencing a process of building up the family's influence in East Anglia and beyond. This ambition brought him into conflict with Henry II and resulted in the loss of his castles at Framlingham, Bungay and Walton but the next Earl of Norfolk, Roger II, played a more politically astute line. From then on, the family steadily expanded its power and landholdings through select marriages and, in the main, avoidance of controversy. By the end of the thirteenth century, the family controlled land across England, Wales and Ireland, including significant inheritances in Yorkshire.

Roger Bigod IV died in 1306. With surviving relatives disinherited by a deal of Roger's with the King, Bigod lands went to Edward I in 1307 and were later passed on to the next creation of the Earldom of Norfolk. The fate of the park, including its ultimate demise, remained bound to the fates of successive Earls and Dukes of Norfolk for years to come.

Roger Bigod II was therefore known to be using and enhancing Kelsale Park at a time when the Bigods were reaching the peak of their power and influence. He was also rebuilding Framlingham Castle, along with creating its deer park and two major ponds, at around the same time and this was a much grander scheme. The date of creation of the Framlingham ponds is, however, still a matter of some dispute.

Whether Kelsale Park was created in the late 12th century or earlier is uncertain. Its features are not on the same scale as those at Framlingham and they could be seen as a precursor to them. The Bigods had held Kelsale since at least 1086 and may have been granted it shortly after 1066. This means that an earlier date for the park is at least possible. However, it may still have been created as part of the general expansionist approach of Roger II to his estates around the time of rebuilding Framlingham Castle. The Bigods had many parks across Suffolk and Norfolk, so Kelsale may have been developed as one of several secondary parks supporting the primary regional residence at Framlingham.

Where was the Bigods' Park? While there are no contemporary maps or records, the park was subject to two detailed surveys in 1616 and 1638, when the park itself had become 'disparked' and managed as a set of fields, meadows and pastures. The survey maps show remarkable alignment with modern field features, something that has been tested by extracting the boundary with computer software and overlaying it onto modern maps. Adjustments of only a few metres are needed to align it with today's field systems.



The park boundary, as it was in 1616, is therefore known on modern maps with a high degree of confidence. The question then is how far the 17th century boundary tallies with the park when it was created several hundred years earlier.

The boundary length of the park in 1306, almost at the end of Bigod ownership, is known to have been two leagues, or around 5 miles. This is very close to the length of the 17th century boundary. While not conclusive, it is possible that the later map reflects the earlier layout, a view that is reinforced by the boundary having features identifiable today that could be of considerable age. It

does, however have an unusual layout and it is possible that the north-eastern section was an addition to the original layout at some time before 1306.

5. The Park's historical record.

After its founding, the park's landscaping and status-imposing role would have lost its initial impact as years went by and other residences and parks surpassed it. It may well have settled down to a rather more mundane existence as a provider of venison, fish and woodland products to the main household at Framlingham, perhaps being also used for hunting by guests there. In this later role it could have been very active and even a lucrative source of income.

There are several medieval sources that mention the park, deer and its pond, or "stews". A stew or vivarium were both terms used to describe a pond or holding pond for keeping fish for human consumption. Kelsale probably had both; the large pond for fishing and stews for the holding of catches from which individual fish could be easily netted on demand. More information can be found on this in the Reserve's separate Earthworks Guide.

The written details that follow are from a range of sources. They include accounts for the manor of Kelsale, the Patent Rolls (a series of Crown letters on administration issues that run from early medieval times to the present day) and other documents and books.

The records for Kelsale Park are set out below year by year. Also listed are key family changes that would have changed the ownership of the park in its main years of operation. The list of ownership changes is greatly simplified.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1189 to 1217 | A charter for land exchange involving the park's owner, Roger Bigod II, and Sibton Abbey. This is the exchange referred to in more detail in the park origins section above. |
| 1230 to 1240 | A land transaction was recorded for granting to Sibton Abbey an acre of land in Kelsale in two parcels, described as 'abutting towards the south on the way that goes from the house of Fulk up to the park'. There is also mention of the "Valley of Flithageswelle", which may be an early reference to the Fromus Valley. |
| 1268 | An Account Roll of Kelsale manor records that a kennel was being roofed, at a cost of 2d for the two days work of one man. Two men worked for three days, mending the paling around the park. Salt was bought for salting venison. |
| 1281 (June) | From the Patent Rolls, "to enquire who hunted in the parks and warrens of Roger le Bygot, earl of Norfolk and marshal of England, at Lopham, Ersham, Fremlingham, Keleshale and Stouhe in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, and fished in his stews of Bungay, Framelingham, Keleshale and Stowe". |
| 1281 (Dec.) | From the Patent Rolls, concerning "the persons who broke the park of Roger le Bygod, earl of Norfolk and marshal of England, at Framelingham, Keleshal and Stowe, co. Suffolk, hunted therein and carried away deer, and fished in his stews in the said towns and at Bungeye". |

- 1293 Patent Rolls, concerning “the persons who entered the parks of Roger le Bygod, earl of Norfolk and marshal of England, of Framelyngham, Keleshale, Stowe, Ersham, and Lopham, hunted deer therein and carried them away”.
- 1293 Account Roll records for the erection of 300 perches (about 2000 yards) of new palings around the park at a cost of £2/17/0d. The length matches that of the northern half of the north-eastern lobe of the park and may have been part of work to enlarge it. The wages of Geoffrey the fisherman were 5/11d while Henry of Todenham took 2/7½d for coming to catch fish. This suggests he came in from another manor to do this.
- 1301 From the Patent Rolls, concerning “the persons who entered the parks of Roger le Bigod, earl of Norfolk, marshal of England, of Lopham and Ersham, co. Norfolk, Framelingham, Saham, Sacstede, Keleshale and Stowe, co. Suffolk, hunted therein, and carried away deer”.
- 1302 Roger Bigod, 5th Earl of Norfolk, surrendered all his lands and titles to the king and was granted them back for life. The reasons for this action are not known for sure but may have been due to debt and to disinherit relatives.
- 1305 Patent Rolls.....confirmation, at the request of Roger Le Bygod, earl of Norfolk and Marshal of England, of a charter of the earl..., confirming to John De Uffeton, his Chamberlain for life, the custody of all his parks and woods of Framelyngham, Killeshale (*Kelsale*) and Saham (*Earl Soham*), co. Suffolk, with 4s a week for the custody, 20s a year for his robe, hay and oats for one horse, to wit, every night half a bushel, all trees blown down by the wind, and escheats of timber given or felled to the earl’s use.
- 1306 An 'Extent of the Manor' records a park ‘with deer’ and a fishpond worth 2/-. Robert Wafre is recorded as the park keeper (also keeper of other parks held by the Bigods).

The boundary of the park is described as two leagues long.
- 1306 Roger Bigod dies in December, with no male heir. Alice, his wife, still occupies her dower lands but the Bigod estates as a whole, including the park, pass to the Crown, in effect under the control of Edward I.
- 1312 Thomas Brotherton, son of Edward I, becomes the first of the next line of Earls of Norfolk. The Bigod lands become his, although the widowed Alice remains in Suffolk, as we see by the next item.
- 1313 Patent Rolls, concerning “The persons who forcibly broke the parks of Alice, late the wife of Robert le Bygod, earl of Norfolk and marshal of England, at Ersham and Lopham, co. Norfolk, and at Keleshale and Stowe by Boug’, co. Suffolk, hunted therein and carried away her deer”

1321 Patent Rolls, concerning “the persons who broke and entered his (Thomas, earl of Norfolk) park at Keleshale, co. Suffolk, and his free warrens at Doningworth, Staverton, Holesle and Carleton by Keleshale, co. Suffolk”.

Clearly, keeping the park and fishpond secure was a major problem, with apparently no lack of people prepared to break into it and steal fish and deer.

1327 to 1329 A statement of accounts for Kelsale that mention various people working within the manor including Hugh Aylnoth, parker and John Wilkin, keeper of the pond.

1330 From the Court Rolls of the Manor of Kelsale: “Thomas, son to the noble King of England, Earl of Norfolk and Marshall of England, to Nicholas Bond, Seneschall of our lands situate in the county of Suffolk. For that complaint is made, that the cattle belonging to various divers poor persons are stolen from out our park at Kelsale, owing to the negligence of our park keepers there, to their great loss and damage. We command you at our next court to cause inquiry to be made in whom the fault lies, and having done this, to distrain our aforesaid park keepers; and we further command you to keep such distresses in safe custody, until a restitution, equal to the value of the said cattle, is divided amongst the aforesaid poor people. Dated at Framelyngham the 24th March, under our privy seal and in the 4th year”.

The “divers poor persons” may have been an exaggeration for effect, as owning cattle was a sign that the owners were not truly poor compared to other rural dwellers. However, the account does show that the park had become an economic unit accessible to those with means to pay for grazing. It was no longer the exclusive domain of the nobility, a change that would have happened long before this incident. Thomas Brotherton was clearly unhappy with his park keepers.

1330-1334 Patent Rolls. Confirmation of a grant, for life, by Thomas Earl of Norfolk, marshal of England, the king’s uncle, to Geoffrey Quyncey of the office of constable of Framelyngham Castle, as well as custody of the parks of Framelyngham, Saham (*Earl Soham*) Barres and Keleshal, and of the foreign woods and warrens pertaining to the castle and to the manors of Saham and Keleshal; with one robe yearly of the suit of the earl’s esquires, 5s weekly for wages, and hay for two horses and half a bushel of oats every night.

1338 The park’s owner, Thomas Brotherton, dies. His daughter, Margaret, becomes the Countess of Norfolk and Margaret’s daughter, Elizabeth, goes on to marry the 4th Baron Mowbray, John De Mowbray.

This marks the start of the De Mowbrays’ involvement with the former Bigod estates. The son of Margaret and John, Thomas, becomes the Duke of Norfolk in 1397.

1356 to 1357 Accounts detail works for the roofing of the park lodge with rushes.

1384 Patent Rolls....a grant to her (*countess of Norfolk*) servant, Thomas Stoke, of the office of parker of the park belonging to her manor of Kelshale, oc. Suffolk, with clothing and 2d daily....

- 1384 Patent Rolls. Confirmation.....of William atte Lee...of letters patent of Margaret Mareschall, countess of Norfolk,....being a grant for life....of the offices of constable of (*Framlingham*) castle, chief parker of the great park of Framlingham and the parks of Saham and Kellehale....and that he have four under-servants of his own choosing, viz. a porter of the castle, an under parker of the great park, another of Saham and another of Kellehale, each with 2d daily wages and clothing yearly of the suit of her yeomen, but Thomas Stok' to keep the park of Kellehale for life as granted to him by her.
- 1385 Thomas Stoke was granted keepership by Letters Patent (Royal appointment).
- 1399 Confirmation to Simon Felbrigge...of the king having grantedthe keepership of the parks of Framelyngham, Saham and Kelshale and of all foreign woods there late of Margaret Duchess of Norfolk.
- 1399 “notwithstanding any right or title of the king by the death of Thomas de Moubray” Thomas Stok(e) was granted for life the office of parker of the park pertaining to the manor of Kelshale and a vesture or 10s.yearly at Christmas and 2d.daily from the issues of the manor. This appears to have been a confirmation of his 1385 appointment continuing, despite any reversion of land to the king.
- 1485 John Martyndale was granted the keepership for life. This was probably a similar title and income role to that of Thomas Erpyngham in 1399.
- 1400 Patent Rolls. Grant to the king’s knight, Thomas Erpyngham of the keeping of the castle and manor of Framelyngham, with the members thereof, and of the manors of Soham Comitis, Kelyshale and Hoo..... Moreover, he is to have from year to year....40l a year for the office of constable of the castle of Framelyngham and for the keeping of the parks of Framlyngeham, Soham and Kelyshale.

The person given this by now largely honorary role was a man of substance who was part of King Henry V’s retinue at the Battle of Agincourt. The grant of the position would have been partly for status but probably primarily for its income. What it does show is that Kelsale had an economic value and was by now not a subsidised show piece. The 'keeping of the castle' may have had a more practical function. The Duke and Duchess of Norfolk had died and their son, Thomas De Mowbray, was not old enough to inherit. The lands went into the king’s hands until the heir was of age.

The known park records now decline, with little to show during the 15th century.

- 1523 Payment made to the parkers at Kelsale by Thomas 3rd duke of Norfolk.
- 1534 From Sibton Abbey records: "Grant in the form of an indenture by Henry, abbot of the monastery of all the Abbot's parcel of wood, 20 acres more or less, in Sibton near the Duke's park in Kelsale and now within the ambit of the park enclosed with hedges and ditches, to the held by the grantees to the use of the Duke”.

1549 Patent Rolls. An entry showing that Lord Grey of Wilton and John Bannaster of Spaunton, for services in battle and payment of over £1,000, were granted *"the lordship and manor of Kelsall, alias Kelshall, Suff.,.....the park of Kelsall with the lodge and pond there....."*

This is one of several changes and reversions of ownership during the 16th century and has been included here as it has the first reference to a pond since 1329. It may not be the same pond, though. At some unknown date, the original pond was drained and left behind a much smaller (but still substantial) body of water 200m long, shallow and marshy for much of its area. This smaller pond was drained to create Mere Meadow and it is possibly this feature that the 1549 reference relates to. It is not described as a fish pond.

"Services in battle" and a payment of £1,000 secured the park - which counted more in the King's eyes?

A list of dates is not enough to tell the whole story of the succession of land ownership in the 15th and 16th centuries. The De Mowbrays would have held the park as part of their lands but their family history was a turbulent one. One Earl was beheaded by Henry IV, first losing both titles and land. The estates were restored to his brother, John, on coming of age in 1413. Such drastic ownership changes would not have helped the running of a small park in Suffolk and it is a theme that continues through to the park's demise.

Two more De Mowbrays after John, the male line ended. The Duke of Norfolk title was recreated in first 1481 and then in 1483 for John Howard. The Howard's land ownership was just as troubled as the De Mowbrays. Two dukes later, Thomas Howard fell out with Henry VIII in 1546, lost his titles and land and narrowly escaped execution in 1547. Under Queen Mary he had a partial restoration of land and titles. The next Duke was executed for treason in 1572, promptly losing them all over again. However, his sons were in favour with the monarch and some lands were restored to them. This becomes evident in the closing phase of the park's history.

For those working in and for the park, the constant changes of control and no doubt long periods of unmanaged use must have been very difficult to deal with. The park is likely to have had periods of dereliction and decay.

There is another, connected factor that would have contributed to the park's decline. The De Mowbrays used Framlingham Castle as their major residence in the 15th century and it remained in active use by the Howards until the fall-out by Thomas Howard with Henry VIII in 1546.

The demands of the castle's population for food and goods, which was prodigious, may have helped keep Kelsale Park in operation as an active producer of aristocratic provisions. However, after Thomas Howard had his restoration of land given by Queen Mary, he lived at Kenninghall and Framlingham castle went into decline. Its park went out of use as a deer park by 1580. Kelsale, without a major household and its guests to support in the immediate area, may have suffered a similar fate.

6. The Park moves out of the control of the family of the Dukes of Norfolk.

In 1611, the Park was sold, separately from Kelsale Manor, by the sons of the executed Duke of Norfolk. They had some lands restored to them by Elizabeth I (and later by James I) but they clearly did not wish to retain Kelsale Park. In the deed these sons are referred to as “Lord William Howard, youngest son of Thomas Howard, late Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, Lord Chamberlain and Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey”. It was the first proof for some years that the park was still under the control of the Howard family but it also marked the time that they lost it.

The Earl of Suffolk, as Lord Chamberlain, was always in some kind of financial crisis during his life and this was not helped by his lavish building programmes, including that of Audley End from 1603 to 1616. In 1611 he sold his London house. The sale of Kelsale Park that year was probably part of the same need to raise money.

The park was sold for £5,000 to John Wakeman of Beckford in Gloucestershire and (his son) Richard Wakeman of Godlesford, a farm forming most of a decaying parish situated by Belstead at Ipswich. The Wakemans were a wealthy and influential family, barristers at the Inner Temple, one of the Inns of Court, and with later royal connections. However, they were not in the same league as the Dukes of Norfolk.

This sale is a turning point for the park. Probably already no longer functioning as a managed park or for use of any purely aristocratic pursuit, it passes from the control of the rich and privileged to a more mundane existence as an agricultural estate, albeit still a possession of the wealthy. In 1616 it is surveyed and while a park in name, it is merely describing a collection of meadows, pastures and fields, a condition in which it remains for many years to come. There is no fishpond, just a Mere Meadow to mark its last traces on the landscape.

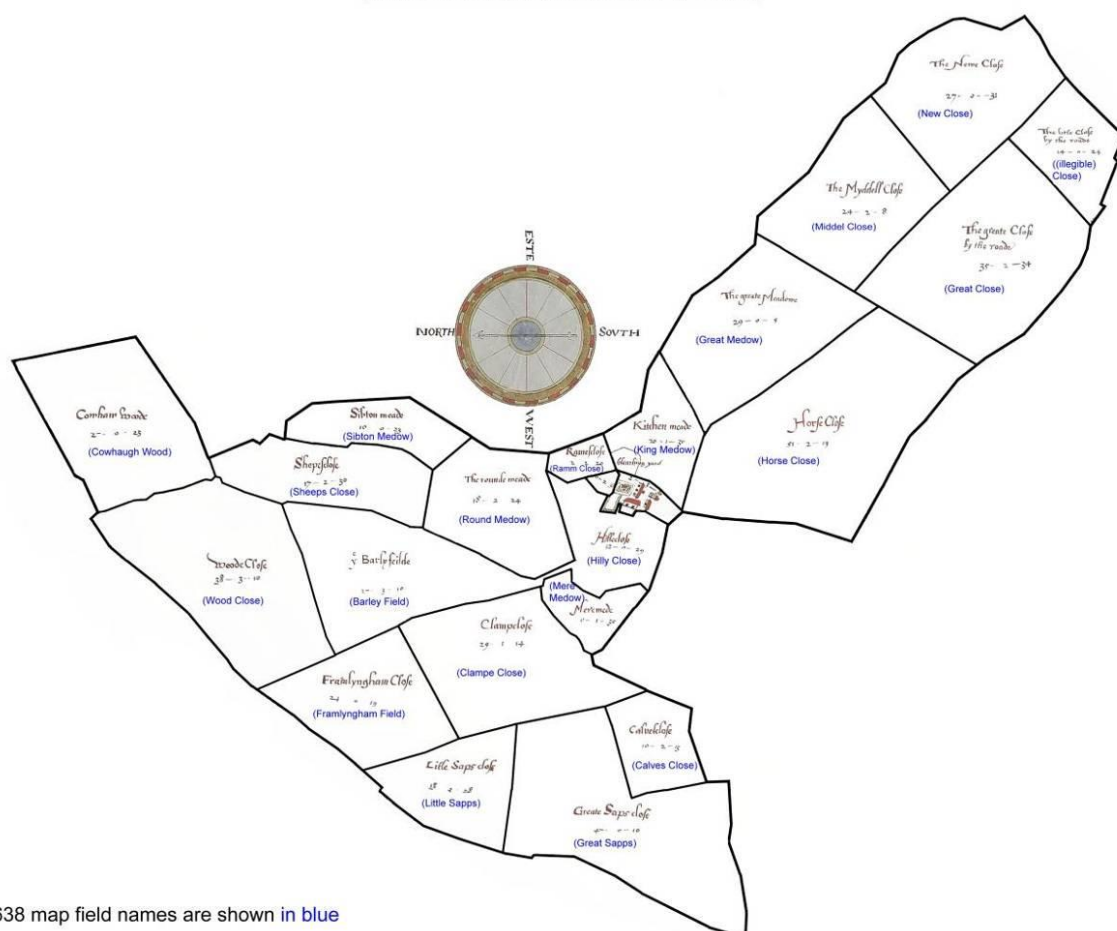
Richard Wakeman of Godlesford becomes known as Richard of Kelsale so he must have moved from Ipswich to the manor that he jointly bought with his father.

It is probable that the Wakemans lived in Kelsale Lodge. From Kirby’s “The Suffolk Traveller”, a book of 1735, there are the following lines, “Kelsale Lodge did also formerly belong to the Dukes of Norfolk and passed from them to the Family of Weaken-ham and from them to the Hobarts. It is now Sir John Blois’s”.

While a barn is still there, complete with terracotta rampant lion inserts or cartouches, the lodge of that time is not the current building and a new building altogether was there by 1786.

Richard Wakeman’s son, Henry, was known as Henry of Kelsale and is referred to as a former owner of the park in a second survey of 1638, which largely confirms the field names of 1616. The names are presented here, combined from the two surveys.

The Description Of The Late Disparked Park Called Keleshall Park In Keleshall And Yoxford 1616



1638 map field names are shown in blue

Map compass is as per original map orientation (90 degrees out)

reproduced by kind permission of Sir Charles Blois

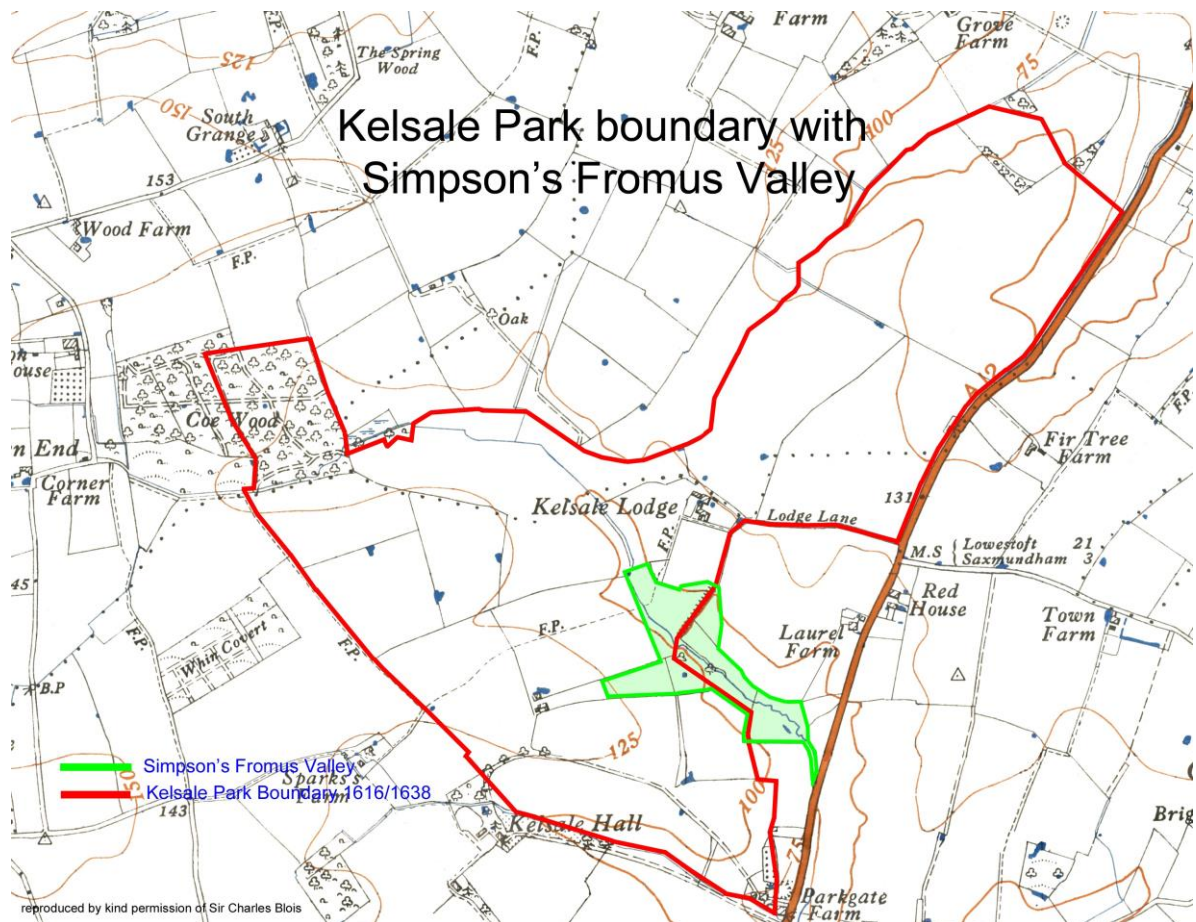
7. Summary of the historical record.

Looking back, the written record is extensive but fragmented. There are details and hints for the operation of the park but little to indicate how it may have changed over the years. The instability in control in its later history and the general decline in deer park use nationally mean that it is not known just when the park was disparked from a single managed feature to a collection of fields, meadows and pastures. However, the most likely period is the late 16th century.

Furthermore, the fishpond may have gone out of use at a separate time from the rest of the park functions. There is no reference to fishpond use after 1329 but this does not mean that it ended then. A pond was present in 1549 but it may not have been a fishpond. Perhaps some answers lie with the landscape features we can see on the ground today. If these can be tied in with the park history and with known uses of similar sites elsewhere, we can start to get a picture of park life. The Trust's Earthworks guide has an insight on key features of the park and today's Reserve.

8. Kelsale Park and the Reserve today.

The park no longer exists as any kind of separate estate or managed area. However, its 1638 boundary, likely to be close to its medieval position, can still be traced today almost in its entirety along existing hedge and ditch lines. By Coe Wood to the north west of the Reserve, ditches and decayed banks associated with the park are still present and, close by, a length of substantial escarpment that was once part of the park boundary. The Reserve straddles the centre of the park.



9. A Victorian footnote

Large numbers of lead balls or bullets have been metal detected along the rear of the dam earthwork. It is evident that the site was being used as a firing range. Fortunately, they can tell us a small story about late activity in Mere Meadow.

The bullets are all of a particular type and calibre known colloquially as Minnies or Minies, derived from the name of a gunsmith, Minié. Their 0.57inch-measured calibre indicates they were the 0.568inch bullets fired from one gun type of calibre 0.577inch – the Long (Pattern) Enfield, the last muzzle-loading rifle of the British Army. Its Army use was phased out altogether by 1867 and many of these rifles were transferred for use by local militias.

In the case of Kelsale, the best candidate is the 8th Suffolk Rifles, commanded by Captain Long of Hurts Hall at Saxmundham. Newspaper articles of the 1860s refer to the use of the Long Enfield in the militia's annual shooting competitions, at least one of which took place on Sizewell beach. Although there were butts at Hurts Hall, it seems likely that Kelsale was being used as a companion range.

10. Reference and acknowledgements.

The author thanks Dr Rosemary Hoppitt for her support and patience during the compilation of this historical record.

Sources for this section include:

Calendar of the Patent Rolls (available online from the University of Iowa <http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/patentrolls>).

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The park's landscape features.

Available on the Trust's website at suffolkflora.org is a companion guide to the earthworks of the Reserve.