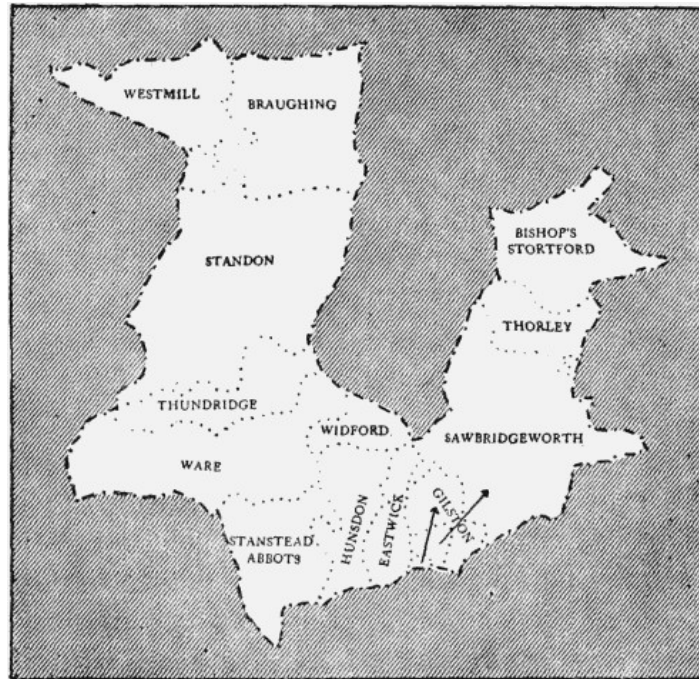


Comparing the Braughing Hundred



The Braughing Hundred consisted of 12 Parishes as shown in the map above. Three of the smaller areas shown (Gilston, Eia and Wickham) are not featured in Domesday and appear to have been included in Sawbridgeworth and Bishops Stortford¹.

The tables below undertake basic comparisons for all the parishes in the hundred to see if some simple conclusions can be reached.

All the figures have been taken from Open Domesday².

The parishes of Braughing, Westmill, Hunsdon, Eastwick, Sawbridgeworth and part of Widford. Some of these, such as Hunsdon and Eastwick were owned by 'Earl Harold', as Domesday refused to acknowledge his status as Harold II.

¹ VCH 1912: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/herts/vol3/pp289-291>

² <https://opendomesday.org/>

Ownership

Name	Households	1086 Lord	1066 Lord
Braughing	29	Count Eustace	King Edward
Westmill	80	Robert Gernon	Earl Harold
		Ralph of Tosney	King Edward
Standon	65	Rohais	Arch Stigand
Thundridge	9	Bishop Odo	Arch Stigand
Ware	125	Hugh de Grandmesnil	Eskil
Widford	25	Bishop of London	King Edward
		Bishop of London	Arch Stigand
Stanstead Abbots	30	Ranulf	Alwin
		G de Mandeville	Esger
		G of Bec	Wulfwin
		Guthmund	Guthmund
Hunsdon	19	Ralph Tallboy daughter	Earl Harold
Eastwick	12	G of Bec	Earl Harold
Sawbridgeworth	209	G de Mandeville	Esger the constable Earl Harold Alwin
Thorley	29	Bishop of London	Godgyth
		G de Mandeville	Esger
Bishop Stortford	29	Bishop of London	Edeva the fair

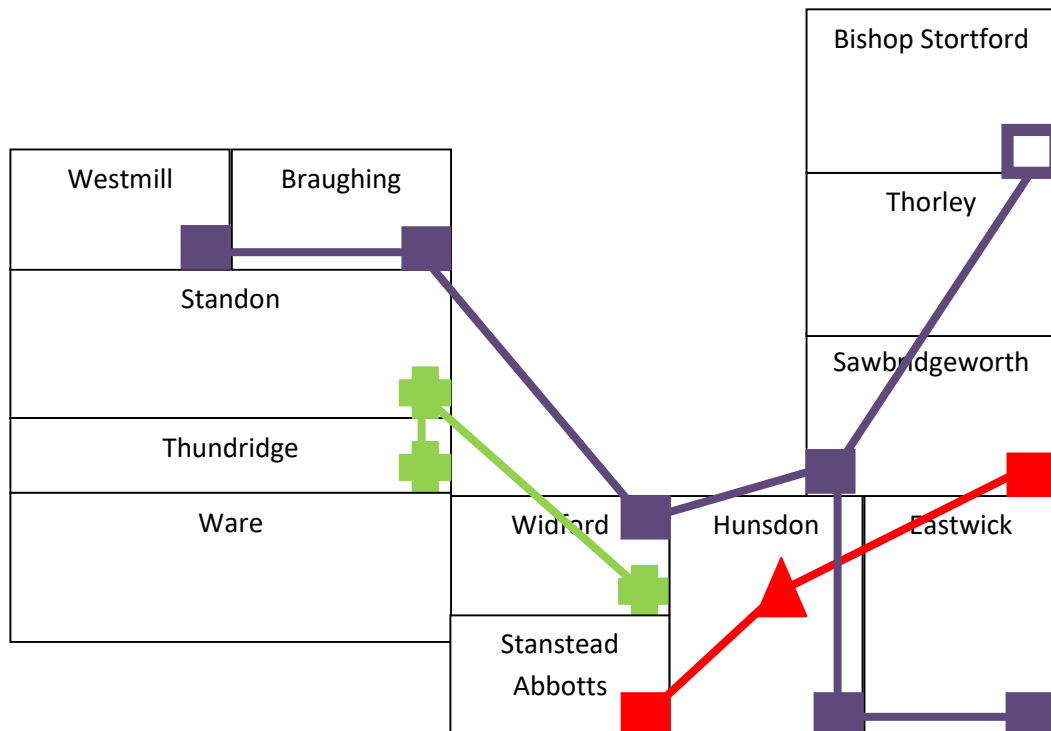
A simple web of power

The Overlords held many estates, some across the region hundred³

Alwine's Overlordships shown as red squares, Lordships as triangles.

Royal overlords in purple (Edeva or Edith Swan Neck) as the first wife of Harold II

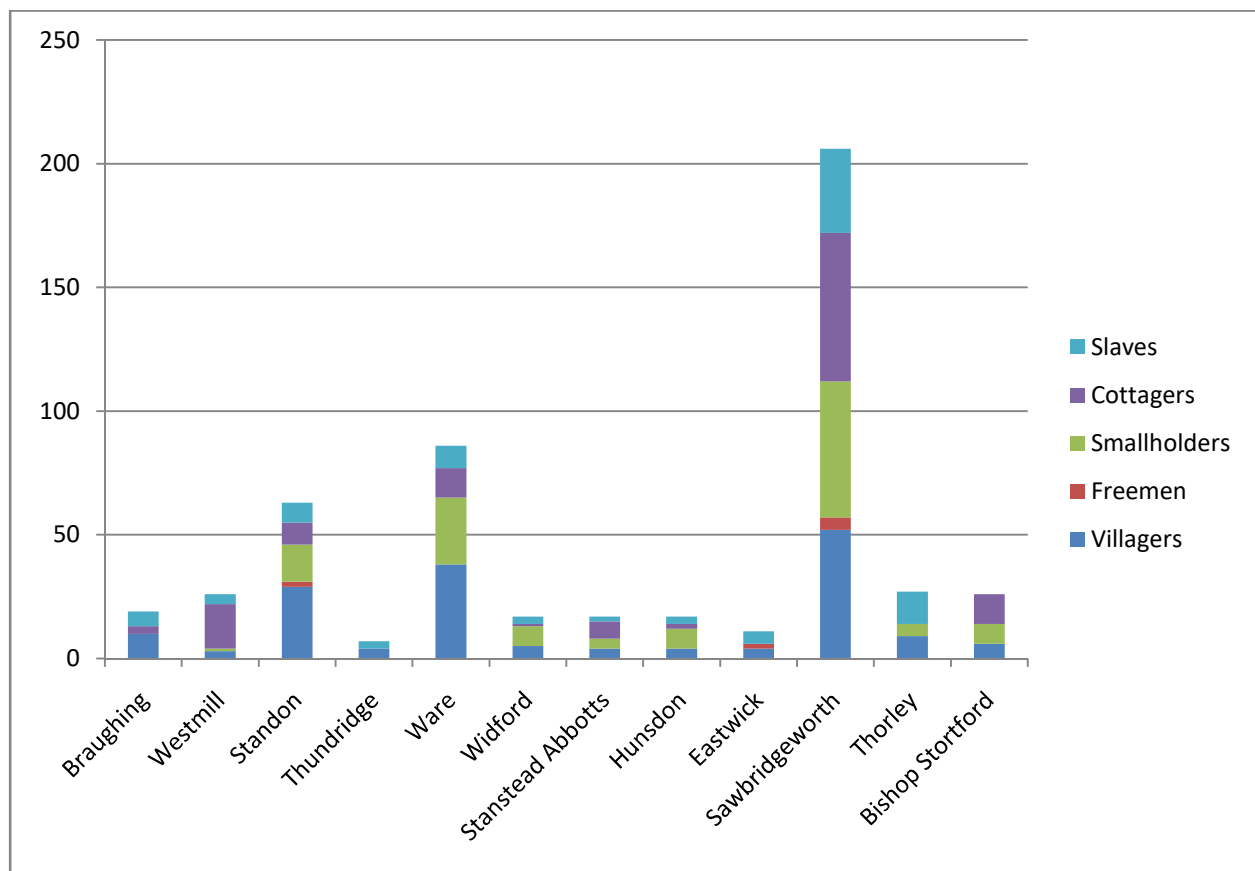
Green show properties of archbishop Stigand



³ For an easy search use: <https://opendomesday.org/>

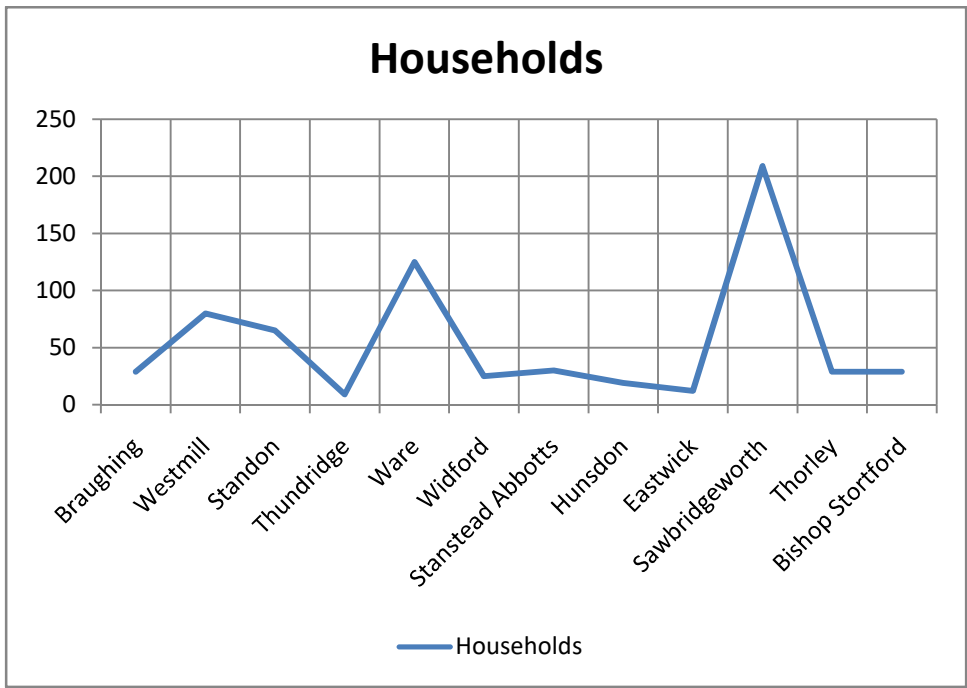
Who were the people?

The late Early Medieval Period was a highly structured society, with slaves at the bottom and then various tiers of society that owed work, rent or tithes to their lord. Whilst during this period economic growth did offer people some (limited) opportunities to rise through society. In terms of our hundred it has to be pointed out the low numbers of freemen (which as much higher in other areas such as Norfolk and Suffolk). It also has to be pointed out that the expectations of lordly service are known for Essex and are amongst the harshest for the period. It might be possible from this to conclude that the lack of Freemen was a reflection a harsh and controlled regime. The relatively low number of slaves in the population compared to estimations for earlier periods and places may also be reflecting that indentured work had been passed to other elements of society.



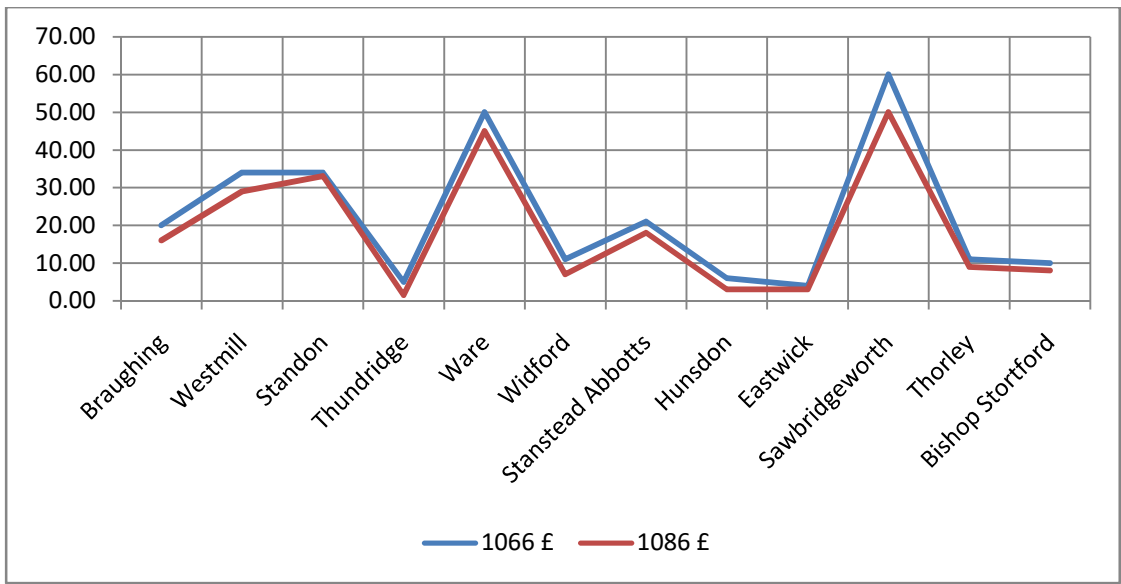
Relative Population by Household.

The two largest populations resided in Sawbridgeworth and Ware.



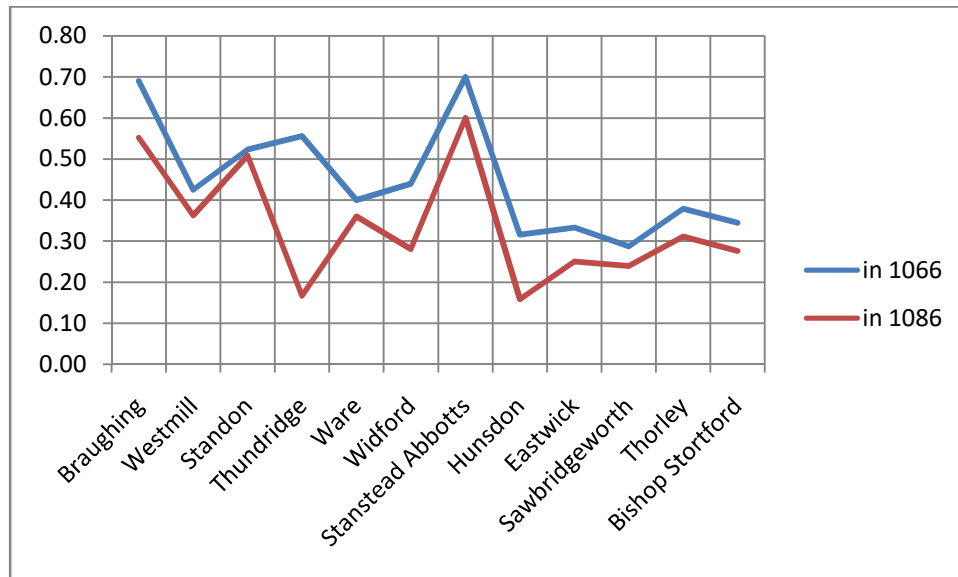
Worth in 1066 and 1086

All Parishes declined in value between 1066 and 1086, with Sawbridgeworth declining the most.



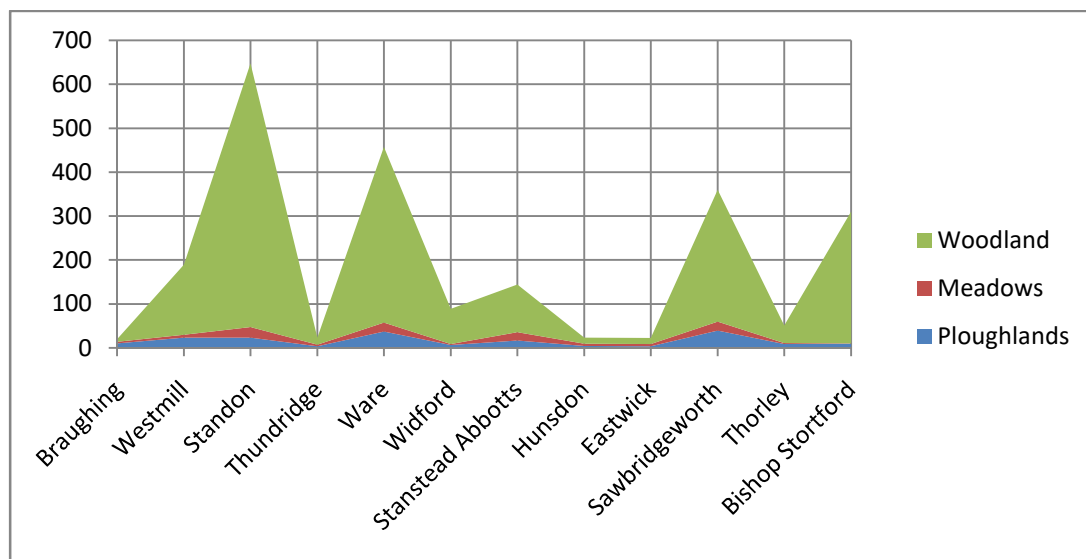
Worth per Household

In terms of value per household Stanstead Abbots is the most valuable closely following by Braughing. All parishes fall in value, however Standon loses almost no value.



Husbandry and Agriculture

Standon, Ware, Sawbridgeworth and Bishop Stortford had large areas where it was woodland where it was possible to raise pigs (are shown as Woodland with a pig allocation: Standon: Woodland for 600+ pigs)

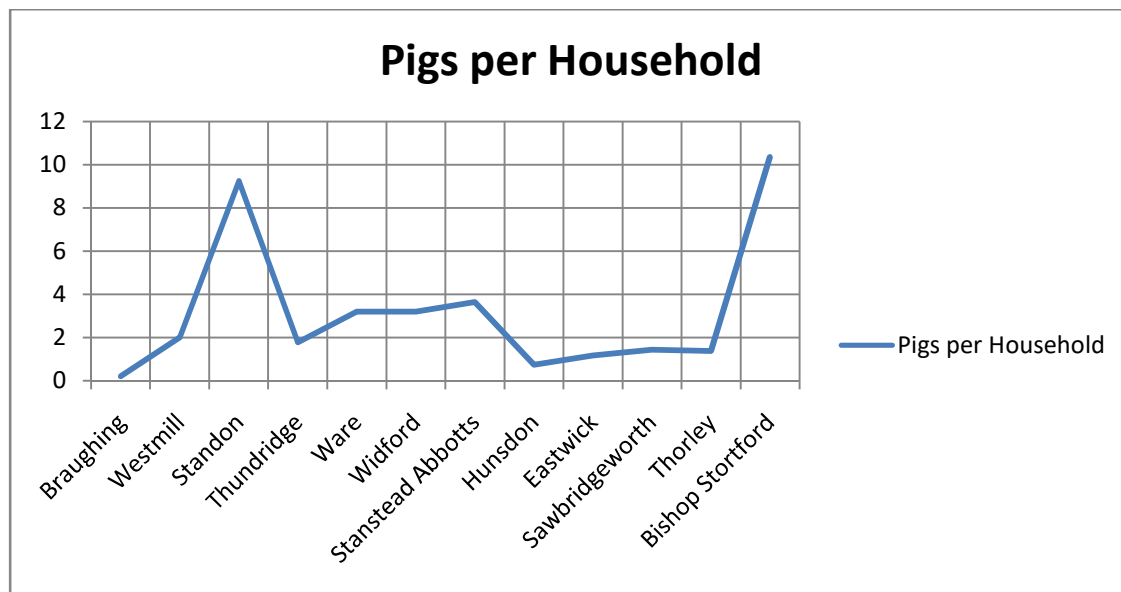


Pigs per Household

By averaging the number of pigs per household we may assume that this was a major activity within Standon and Bishop Stortford.

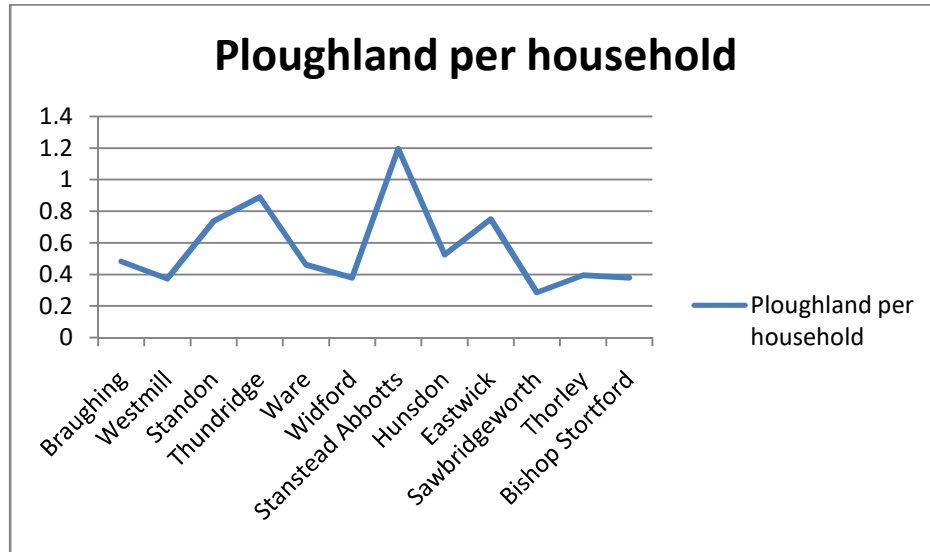
Important note:

It may be that the actual employment of swine herds (or other agricultural roles) was not limited to householders within the Parish and this must be remembered. We might in fact be looking at how communities worked across parishes or were 'rented out' or used across their various holdings by Lords, particularly where they are adjacent and that mills per ploughland might support this.



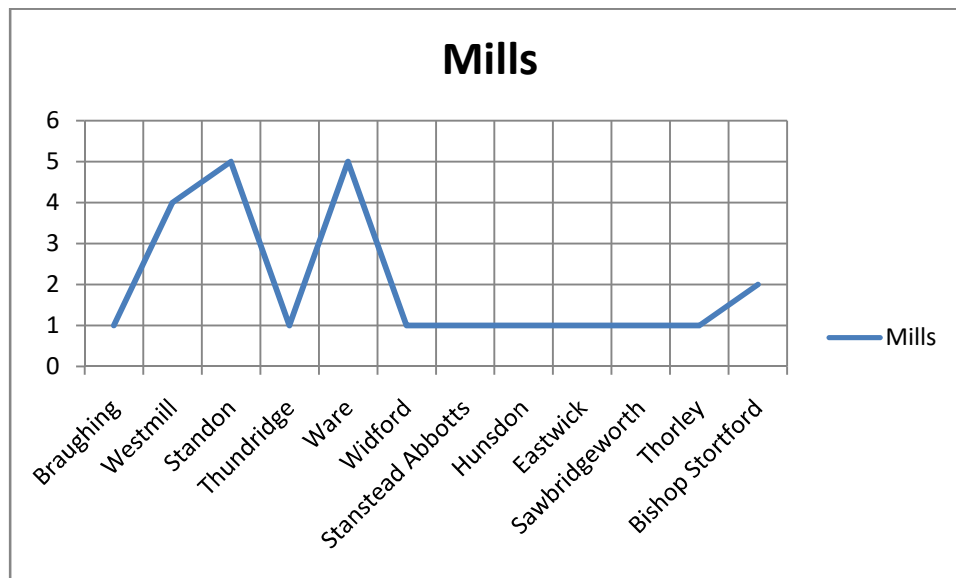
Ploughlands per Household

Stanstead Abbots has the greatest amount of ploughland per household than the other parishes (though only a single mill).



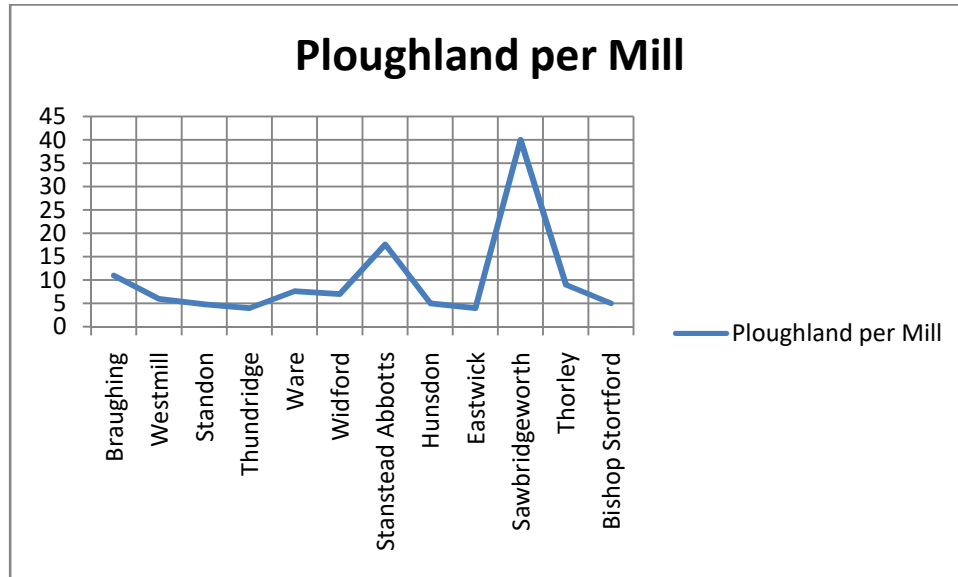
Mills

Both Standon and Ware had 5 mills. Were they milling for the nearby parishes?



Ploughland per Mill

Most parishes had less than 10 ploughlands served by a single mill. Sawbridgeworth and Stanstead Abbotts greatly exceed this. Were they selling to the mills of Ware, Standon and Westmill?

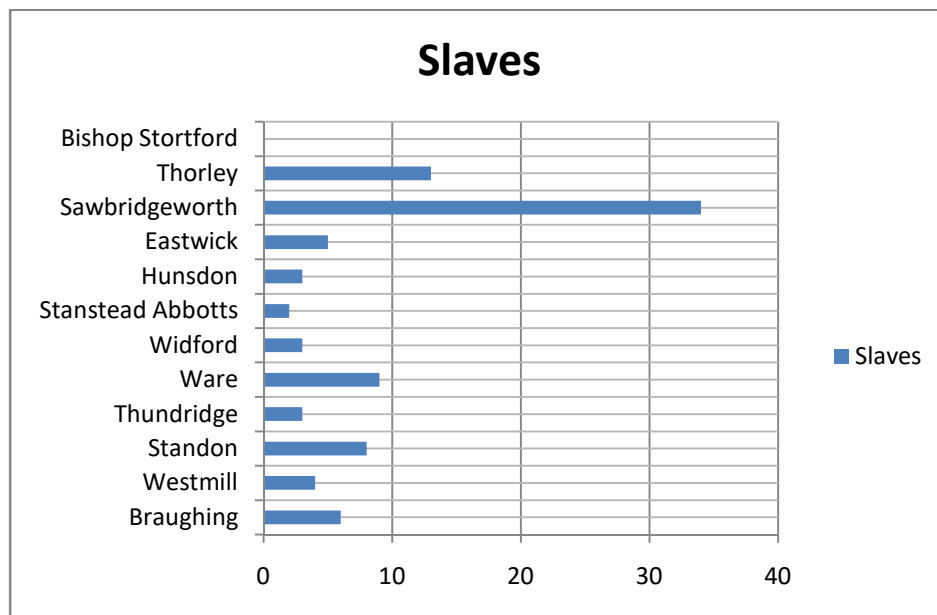


Slaves

There is some debate as to the meaning of 'slave' within the context of Domesday, they may have been ploughmen, dairymaids, servants or concubines; indeed a whole raft of menial servitude. Slaves in the classical sense were certainly sold in the Anglo-Saxon period and there was a 'slave trade' before 1066 (notably through the port of Bristol where Harold's mother Gytha was a key player). Raiding adjacent territories and taking slaves was widely practice and evidenced. However slavery was ended by William I. In consequence, where we have the figures it seems slavery had declined in the period between 1066 and Domesday (1086). In Essex, for instance the number of slaves declined 25% in this period and therefore the figures below should be seen as a declining level from pre-conquest levels.

They would purchase people from all over England and sell them off to Ireland in the hope of profit; and put up for sale maidservants after toying with them in bed and making them pregnant. You would have groaned to see the files of the wretches of people roped together, young people of both sexes, whose youth and beauty would have aroused the pity of barbarians, being put up for sale every day.

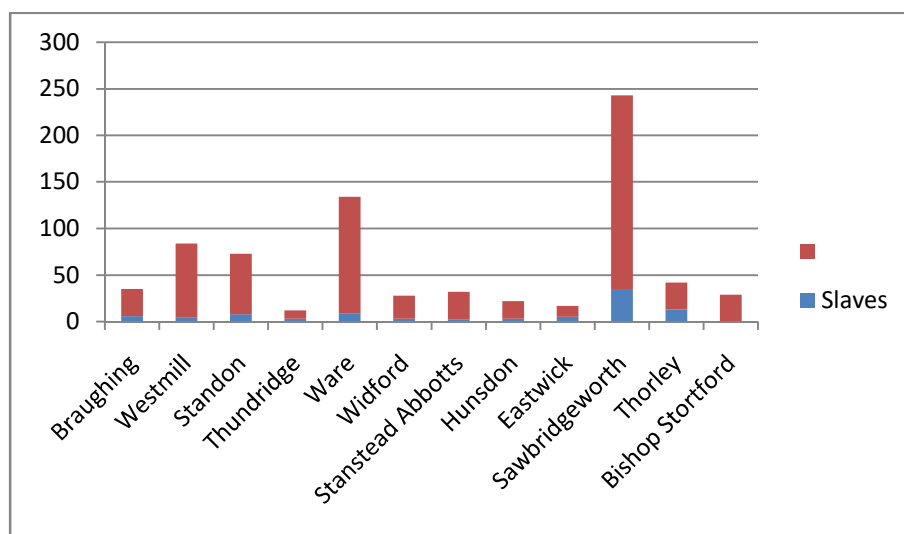
William of Malmesbury writing of the Saxon period in around 1120



Slaves as a Proportion of Households

Using slaves as a % of total households offers a distorted picture where household numbers are low, the graph therefore shows actual slave households. It is worth noting that only Sawbridgeworth (a royal estate in 1066) had significant numbers in 1086 and Bishop Stortford none at all.

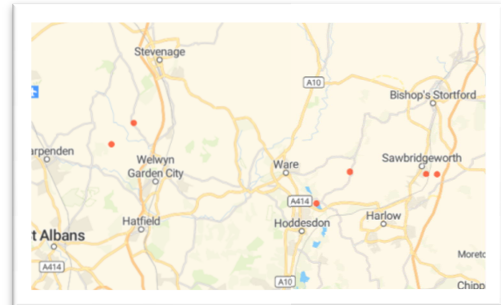
I go out at daybreak, goading the oxen to the field, and I join them to the plough; there is not a winter so harsh that I dare not lurk at home for fear of my master. Throughout the whole day I must plough a full acre or more ... I must fill the stall of the oxen with hay and supply them with water and carry their dung outside. Oh, oh, the work is hard. Yes, the work is hard, because I am not free
Abbott Aelfric of Eynsham writing of a slaves experience in the 10th century



Was Stanstead Abbots Alwine of Goton's main residence (his caput)

Alwine of Goton (various spellings such as Alwin of Gotton) was the overlord of the main estate in the parish of Stanstead Abbots in 1066. Other, much smaller estates were held by Esger, Guthmund and Geoffrey of Wulfwin. It has been suggested in the past that Alwine had his caput in Stanstead Abbots, probably at Stansteadbury⁴, but do the Domesday figures support this conclusion?

Alwine was listed as Lord of Ayot St Lawrence (where he was also an overlord), Codicote, Hunsdon, Oxwick and Quicksbury (in Harlow); he was overlord for Stanstead Abbots and part of Sawbridgeworth. He may well have maintained residences at all of these places and travelled between them, but which was the most valuable to him?



The figures would seem to support Stanstead Abbots as a main base or residence for Alwine. The smaller value Lordships may have been supervisory, certainly two of the Lordships were where the Overlord was a religious house, for instance Codicote was under the overlordship of the Abbey of St Albans.

The only real contender by looking at value and size would be the royal estate at Sawbridgeworth, however another of the overlords there was designated as a constable.

	1066 value	Households	Status	Notes
Stanstead Abbots	£20	30	Lord and shared overlord (with Eskil)	
Ayot St Lawrence	£5	36	Lordship for King Edward	
Sawbridgeworth	£60	209	Shared overlord with Esger & Harold	
Codicote	£12	12		Household estimated
Hunsdon	£6	19	Shared Lordship	
Oxwick	£12	12	Shared Lordship	Household estimated
Quicksbury	£5	14	Sole Lordship	Value 1986, 1066 unknown

⁴ See D Secker's 2005 study of the church of St James.