

STUDIES IN CHILTERN FIELD SYSTEMS

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by

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ABSTRACT

H.L.Gray, writing in 1915, stressed the fact that the Chiltern Hills lay in a transition area between Midland England, with its more regular open field arrangements, and the Southeast, with less regular systems. Basing his conclusions largely on sixteenth and early seventeenth century surveys, he showed that field systems within the Hills were different and distinctive from those on either side. The present study is the first comprehensive account of these distinctive systems. The medieval field arrangements of four parishes are examined in detail, and evidence for the whole region before 1850 is summarised.

The most important features of the Chiltern field systems were: (1) the high proportion of enclosed arable land, particularly in the southwest; and (2) the existence of numerous, relatively small, common fields within the individual township. A three-course rotation had appeared as early as the twelfth century, and was later widely followed; but this does not imply the presence of a simple two- or three-field system. Farm holdings were concentrated in one part of a township, while the individual common arable holding was distributed irregularly between only a few of the many common fields. There was little meadow or grassland pasture, apart from that in parks, but woods and wastes were important elements, except in the northeast. The settlement pattern combined elements of both nucleation and dispersal.

These features had appeared in the area by the mid-thirteenth century, when large-scale assarting was coming to an end. Their origins were, as Gray suggested, probably connected with the slow and piecemeal nature of colonisation in this hilly and heavily wooded region, and they survived largely unchanged until the mid-sixteenth century. After c.1550 the common field system began to disintegrate, with widespread piecemeal enclosure from the common arable, and almost all traces of the old arrangements had disappeared by 1850.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Among the abbreviations and short titles used the following may require elucidation:-

<u>AHR</u>	<u>Agricultural History Review.</u>
<u>Ant.</u>	<u>Antiquity.</u>
BdRO	Bedfordshire Record Office.
BHRS	Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society
BM	British Museum.
Bod.	Bodleian Library.
BRS	Publications of the Buckinghamshire Record Society.
BuCM	Buckinghamshire County Museum.
BuRO	Buckinghamshire Record Office.
CCA	Chichester Chapter Archives (West Sussex Record Office).
<u>EHR</u>	<u>Economic History Review.</u>
<u>Eng.HR</u>	<u>English Historical Review.</u>
<u>GA</u>	<u>Geografisker Annaler.</u>
<u>GJ</u>	<u>Geographical Journal.</u>
HaRO	Hampshire Record Office.
HRO	Hertfordshire Record Office.
LRO	Lincolnshire Record Office.
OHS	Publications of the Oxford Historical Society.
ORO	Oxfordshire Record Office.
ORS	Oxfordshire Record Series.
PRO	Public Record Office.
<u>RB</u>	<u>Records of Buckinghamshire.</u>
RBBAS	Publications of the Records Branch of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.
<u>Register</u>	<u>"Register of Edward the Black Prince".</u>
Sidney Sussex	Library of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.
St. Pauls	Library of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's.
<u>VCH</u>	<u>Victoria County History.</u>
Westm.	Westminster Abbey Library.

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the publication of H.L. Gray's survey of English field systems, in 1915,¹ the importance of the Chiltern Hills, and the distinctiveness of their field arrangements had been recognised, but has never been analysed in detail over the whole region. The Chalk escarpment of the Chilterns extends from the Goring gap in the southwest to the Hitchin gap in the northeast (Fig. 45). Its dip-slope descends from a steep northwestward-facing escarpment, which in parts rises more than 800 feet above sea-level, to the gravels of the Thames terraces and the Vale of St. Albans at about 350 feet. Gray considered that this area formed an important divide between the regular two and three-field systems of Midland England and the irregular systems of the Southeast, in particular of Kent.³ Subsequent studies have confirmed the significance of the Chilterns as a break in English field system types.⁴ The great open fields that characterised the lowlands to the north and west, extended in parts to the very crest of the Chalk outcrop, where they ended abruptly. South of the Hills, this pattern was repeated in only a few scattered areas.⁵

Gray also recognised that the Chiltern region possessed a distinctive field system of its own, the most marked feature of which

(1) H.L. Gray, "English Field Systems", (1915).

(2) Gray's definition of "field system" - namely "the manner in which the inhabitants of a township subdivided and tilled their arable meadow and pasture land" - has been accepted without modification, *ibid.*, 3.

(3) *Ibid.*, 63, 401, 418.

(4) e.g. M.W. Beresford, "Glebe terriers and open-field Buckinghamshire", *RB*, 15 (1951-2), 283-98 and 16 (1953-4), 5-28; and the parish studies in *VCH Oxon.*, 8, (1964).

(5) e.g. In a few townships in south Middlesex, G.B.G. Bull, "The changing landscape of rural Middlesex, 1500-1850", unpublished University of London Ph.D. thesis, (1957), 29.

was the predominance of enclosed arable land.¹ There were open field areas on the Hills, particularly in Hertfordshire, but, according to Gray, it was unlikely that there was ever a simple two or three-field system. The open fields were very irregular in character, and parcels were not evenly distributed among them.² Two more detailed studies, by A.E. Levett of the Hertfordshire manors of the Abbey of St. Albans³ and by E.C. Vollans of Missenden Abbey land in Buckinghamshire,⁴ have since confirmed and elaborated the general pattern outlined by Gray. They have also revealed two important differences from the earlier account. Levett has suggested that in Hertfordshire there was, in the grouping of fields into a rough three-field division for cropping purposes, "either the breakdown or the unsuccessful imitation of the orthodox three-field system;⁵ while in Buckinghamshire "open arable" was found to be more extensive on the Hills than Gray imagined.⁶

All three accounts have stressed the importance of the hilly and thickly wooded nature of the country as a factor influencing the development of field systems. Gray thought that most of the cultivated land had been enclosed into severalty direct from the waste.⁷ If a regular two or three-field system had once existed

(1) H.L. Gray, op. cit., 119-20.

(2) Ibid., 371-2, 381, 401, 417.

(3) A.E. Levett, "Studies in Manorial History", (1938), especially 179-90.

(4) E.C. Vollans, "The evolution of farmlands in the central Chilterns in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries", Transactions and Papers of the Institute of British Geographers, 26 (1959), 197-241.

(5) A.E. Levett, op. cit., 182-4.

(6) E.C. Vollans, op. cit., 222-32

(7) H.L. Gray, op. cit., 119, 120.

this was subsequently modified beyond all recognition by the addition of assart land.¹ He concluded that "the only thing that is clear is the development of arable fields through the assarting of waste in such a manner that the tenants' holdings came to comprise a certain amount of unenclosed land lying scattered strips".² The two detailed studies tend to support this suggestion. Both in Hertfordshire and in Buckinghamshire, direct enclosure from the waste was thought to be a significant feature. In the area around Missenden, there may even have been a sequence of development by which recently cleared land passed into severalty or became subdivided into strips.³ On the St. Albans manors, the early growth of the peasant land market was also a factor of some importance, leading to the break-up of customary holdings and compaction of farm lands.⁴

The scope of this study is essentially two-fold, first to describe field systems in the Chilterns, and then to show lines of development and suggest origins. In doing this, it has been found necessary to analyse features not normally included within an account of field arrangements. Woodland, for example, was so bound up with the field pattern that it is difficult to consider one without reference to the other. The nature of the field systems and associated features in the Hills between 1550 and 1850 is first described,⁵ and changes in this period are discussed, an account which forms a basis for the entire study. The period 1550-1850 was chosen for three reasons: namely that more detailed information is available for these three centuries than for any other time; by 1850 the traditional field systems had all but disappeared; and finally this was a period of rapid and remarkable change, with the disintegration of a medieval

(1) Ibid., 401.

(2) Ibid., 418.

(3) E.C. Vollans, op. cit., 220-2, 228-30, 232.

(4) A.E. Levett, op. cit., 184-5.

(5) This approach is similar to that followed by F. Seebohm, "The English Village Community", 2nd. ed. (1883).

pattern that had survived more or less intact well into the first half of the sixteenth century. The second part of the study is devoted to field systems between about 1200 and about 1600, first in four detailed accounts of individual parishes, and then with reference to the Chilterns as a whole. In each case various factors, such as the structure of society and customs of inheritance, which are often considered to have influenced medieval field patterns, are described, and their role in Chiltern field arrangements is assessed. Finally, some suggestions are made as to the origins and early development of the medieval field pattern, and changes up to 1850 are summarised.

CHAPTER I

FIELD SYSTEMS IN THE CHILTERNNS: c.1550 - c.1850

The Setting

The Land

The Chiltern dip-slope is a gently sloping plateau surface scored by numerous dry valleys and by troughs cut across the Hills, and now occupied by the principal streams (Fig.46). The major valleys divide the region into a series of blocks. From the central Chilterns (the area between the Wye and the Gade) the plateau surface descends to the southwest and the northeast, while the depth to which this surface has been dissected decreases from the southwest towards the northeast. East of the Gade valley in particular, slopes become gentler and surface remnants more extensive. Conversely, west of the Wye the plateau relicts are limited to the ridge-tops, and outcrops of Chalk on the steep valley slopes are relatively greater. The plateau is everywhere mantled by superficial deposits - mainly Clay-with-flints but also including Plateau Gravels and, in the northeast, Brickearths and glacial deposits - and by scattered outliers of Eocene sands and gravels, together providing a considerable variety of soils. Generally, the soils of the lower, eastern Chilterns are more loamy and less stony than those of the higher, more dissected west. Throughout the region some of the most easily worked soils are those that have accumulated along the lower slopes of the valleys. Large lowland embayments penetrate the scarp-face where this has been breached by the major valleys across the Hills. The scarp-face, too, is most prominent in the central Chilterns. It falls in height towards the southwest, becoming broader and more gently sloping, while at the other end of the Hills northeast of Totternhoe, the Lower Chalk forms a well-marked secondary escarpment, quite distinct from that of the Middle and Upper Chalk.¹

(1) This account is based on the One-Inch Sheets of the Geological Survey, nos. 238, 254, 267 and 268; and on S.W. Wooldridge, "The physiographic

Crops and Livestock

The Chilterns was an area of mixed farming where the emphasis was on arable production. Apart from parkland, amounts of meadow and pasture were small.¹ Sixteenth and seventeenth century terriers and surveys, the statements of eighteenth century agricultural writers and topographers,² and the nineteenth century Tithe Maps all confirm this.³

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries wheat, oats, barley, rye and pease were the main crops. Wheat was the chief winter-sown crop - on many farms it was the only winter crop - and land sown with wheat is mentioned in all but two of 33 sample inventories (Appendix A). Rye, the other winter crop, occurs in 15 of these inventories, and on some farms acreages of rye approximated to or even exceeded those of wheat. Of the spring-sown crops, oats was grown universally in the Hills, although acreages of barley were occasionally larger. Barley occurs in twenty of the 33 inventories. It seems that it was sometimes sown in autumn and sometimes in spring. Acreages of pease and vetch are difficult to arrive at, while beans are mentioned in only one inventory. These were the traditional Chiltern crops. They had been the staples of farming there for centuries, and during the sixteenth century, with the growth of London, there was increased demand for them, in particular for wheat.⁴ Produce from the south-

evolution of the London Basin", Geography, 17 (1932), 99-116, and S.W. Wooldridge and D.L. Linton, "Structure, Surface and Drainage in Southeast England", (1955).

(1) See below, p.87.

(2) This evidence has been summarised by F.D. Hartley, "The agricultural geography of the Chilterns, c.1840", unpub. University of London M.A. thesis, (1953).

(3) Ibid..

(4) F.J. Fisher "The development of the London/^{food}market, 1540-1640", EHR, 5 (1934-5), 504-11.

west was shipped down river from Henley,¹ while the High Wycombe market was an important centre for London grain buyers.² Turnips and clover, the main crops of the "new husbandry", were not introduced into the region until the last quarter of the seventeenth century. By the end of the following century they were widely grown.³

Compared with the average Leicestershire farm in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,⁴ livestock numbers in the Chilterns, especially sheep, were low. The emphasis in farming was on crop production. Sheep were kept on most farms - 92% of a sample number in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire had sheep (Appendix A). The largest flocks comprised more than 300 beasts and were to be found at Lilley⁵ and West Wycombe⁶, but the median flock contained no more than 16 sheep. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, sheep folding on the arable was a prominent feature of Chiltern farming, particularly in Hertfordshire.⁷ Cattle are mentioned in 80% of the Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire inventories for Chiltern parishes⁸, and in a similar proportion of those for Oxfordshire.⁹ The number of cattle on individual holdings varied from the single cow of the labourer, to 19 on a Lilley farm¹⁰ in the northeast, and 21 on a West Wycombe farm to the southwest.¹¹ The median herd consisted of four beasts. Livestock on about two-thirds of the farms included pigs, while horses were kept on slightly less than half the farms.

(1) M.A. Havinden, "The rural economy of Oxfordshire, 1580-1730", unpub. University of Oxford B.Litt. thesis, (1961), iii, 28, 133.

(2) L.J. Ashford, "The History of the Borough of High Wycombe from its Origins to 1880", (1960), 125.

(3) Pehr Kalm, on his visit to the Chilterns in 1748, noted that at Little Gaddesden sheep were grazed on turnips, rather than leaving land fallow, J.Lucas (ed.), "Kalm's Account of his Visit to England on his Way to America in 1748", (1892), 282.

(4) The number of animals on the median farm in Leicestershire during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was about nine head of cattle and 30 to 52 sheep, W.G. Hoskins, "The Leicestershire farmer in the sixteenth century", in W.G. Hoskins (ed.), "Studies in Leicestershire Agrarian History", (1949), 175.

(5) LRO Inv. 108/105

(6) LRO Inv. 108/81.

(7) e.g. A. Young, "General View of the Agriculture of Hertfordshire", (1804), 26.

(8) Op. cit.

(9) M.A. Havinden, op. cit., 145, Table 17.

(10) Op. cit.

(11) Op. cit.

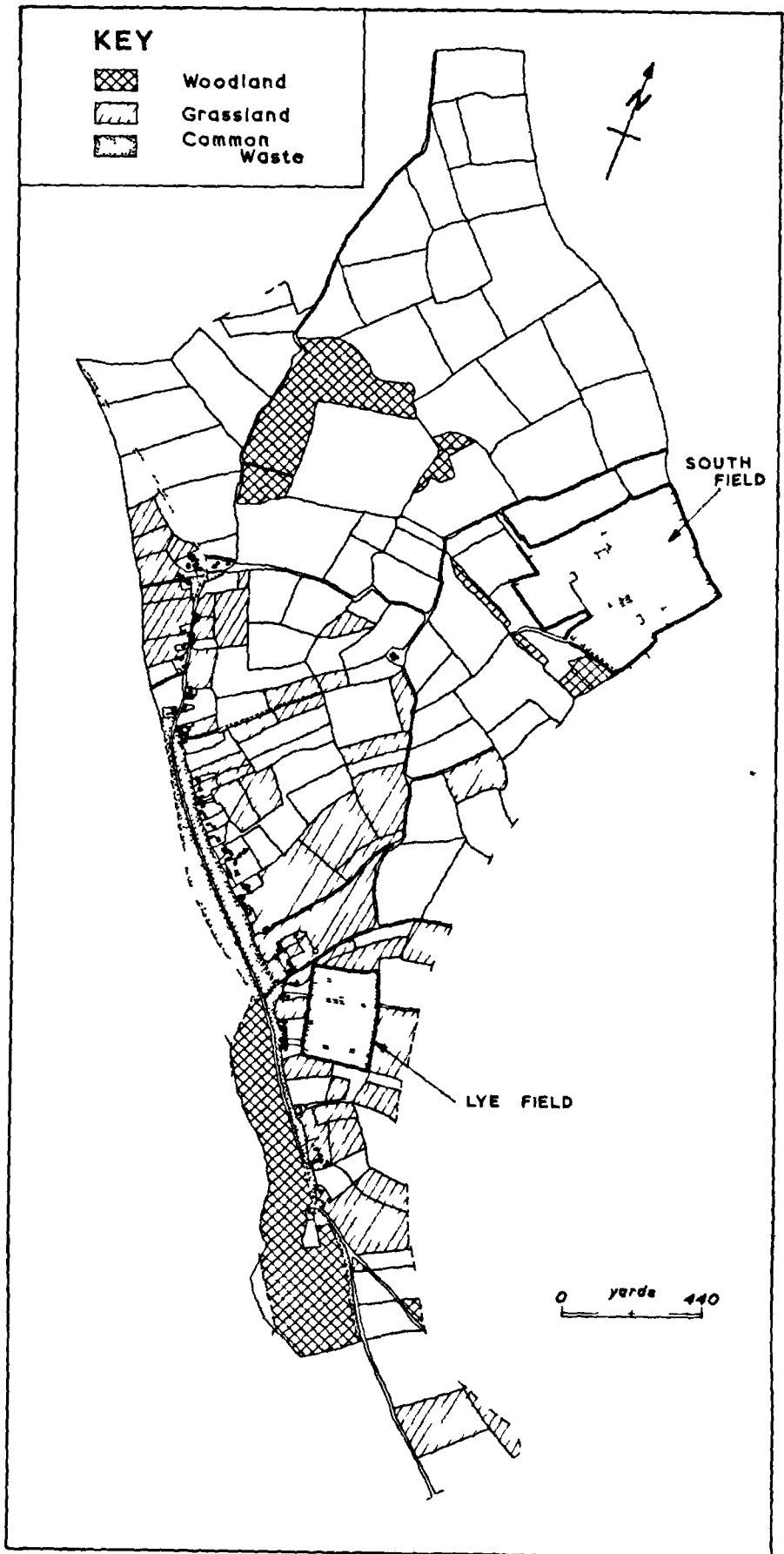


FIG. 1.
Little Gaddesden
c.1800.
Sources:-
HRO 57310, 2858.

The Arable Fields

Distribution of Enclosed and Common Arable

c.1800:- Throughout the Chilterns arable land was of two types. On the one hand, there were enclosed fields held in severalty, while on the other, there were the common arable fields that were divided into a large number of open strips over which rights of common grazing extended. Location of common arable land within and around the Chilterns about 1800 is summarised in Fig.2.¹ This is the only time for which a complete quantitative distribution can be reconstructed. Two features of the resulting pattern are particularly distinctive, namely the contrast between the Chiltern dip-slope and the lowlands to the north and south, and the contrast within the Chilterns between the northeast and the southwest.

The Vale at the foot of the Chalk escarpment was an area of extensive open fields.² In comparison, the area of common arable land on the Chalk dip-slope was small. Within the strip parishes which encompassed Vale and Chiltern land, and which extended along the northwestern edge of the Chalk, much of that part of the township in the Vale was usually divided between large open fields, while the arable on the Hills was almost always enclosed in fields held in severalty.³ At the end of the eighteenth century, only two strip parishes, Crowell⁴ and Ellesborough,⁵ included small common fields on the Chiltern dip-slope. Where lowland embayments penetrate the escarpment, there were

(1) Figure 2 is based on the Tithe Maps or, where enclosure preceded the Tithe Survey, on enclosure maps, supplemented by earlier estate maps. Most estate maps date from the eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

(2) The term "Vale" is used to describe all the lowland northwest of the chalk escarpment, both the Ickneild zone of loamy soils at the base of the scarp and the clay lands beyond.

(3) Pre-enclosure patterns in some Oxfordshire strip parishes have recently been summarised in map form, VCH Oxon., 7 (1962), 102; 8 (1964), 30, 67, 81, 215.

(4) Tithe Map (all Tithe Maps referred to are deposited in the Tithe Redemption Office).

(5) A map of 1692, BuRO AR 27/62.

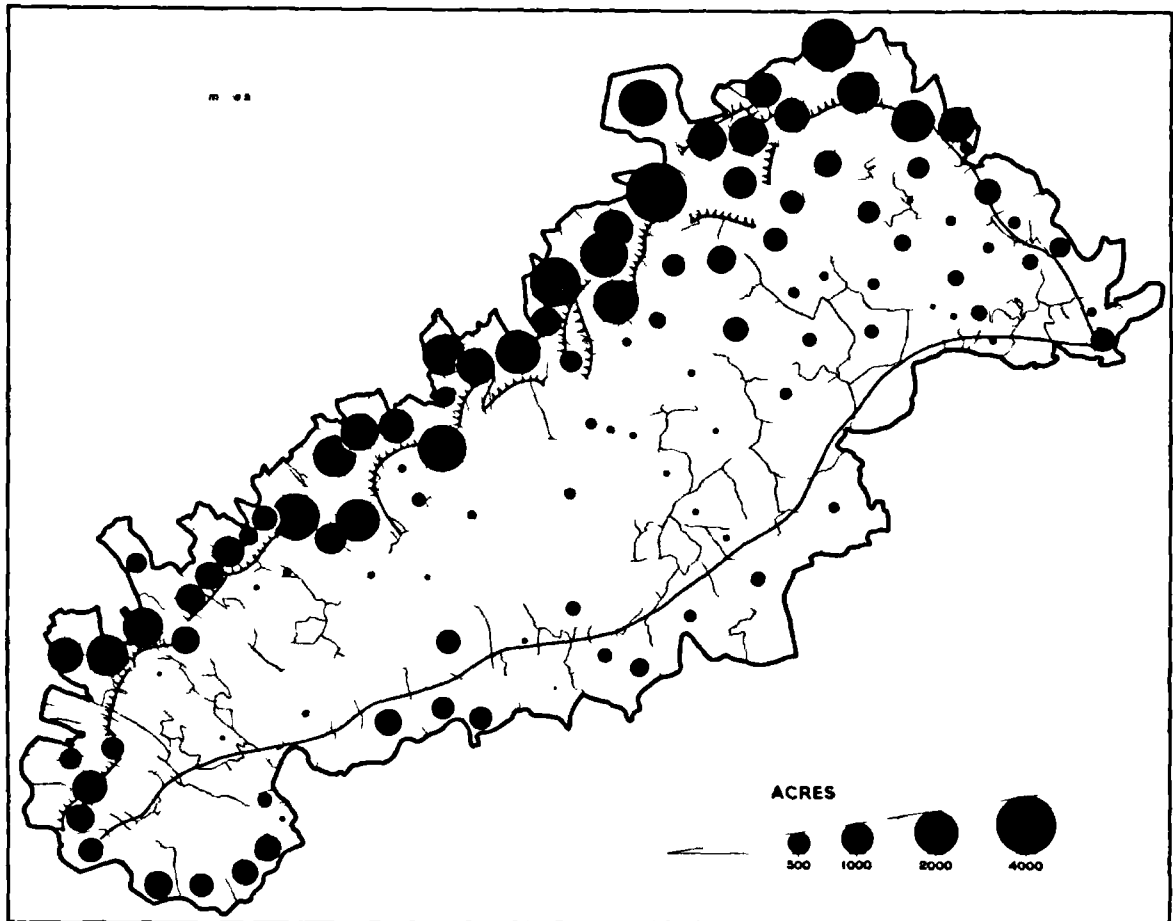


FIG. 2. Common arable land within and around the Chilterns c.1800.

Sources:- Estate maps, enclosure maps and tithe maps.

also large areas of open field land.¹ A few parishes in the northeast Chilterns which were mainly located on the dip-slope, but which also included the scarp face and a small area at the foot of the scarp, held common fields on the Ickneild zone there.² In the northeast, the dip-slope of the Lower Chalk cuesta was an area of great strip fields which differed little from those of the Vale.³ Here the important break in field system types was the escarpment formed by the Middle and Upper Chalk. Common arable land was also more extensive along the Thames terraces south of the Hills than within the Chilterns. There, most parishes combined the better soils of the river terraces with the more varied conditions of the lower edge of the dip-slope, the open arable land of the former contrasting with the predominantly enclosed arable of the latter.⁴

Within the Chilterns, the most significant difference was between the very small areas of common arable southwest of the Gade and the more extensive areas to the northeast. In general, the amount of common arable in the Hills about 1800, and the proportion of the arable land of the individual parish that lay in common fields, increased from southwest to northeast, a variation that corresponded with the topographical differences already noted. The greater area of common arable in the northeast reflected more favourable conditions for settlement and cultivation.

On a more detailed scale, eighteenth and early nineteenth century maps show that common fields were often situated on some of the best farming land in a township. To the southwest, where a local relief of more than 300 feet is not uncommon, this was on the drift-covered ridge-tops and on the downwash zone along the lower valley slopes and bottoms, where reasonable depths of the loamier soils are mostly found.

(1) e.g. Princes Risborough, BuCM uncatalogued; Saunderton, BuRO IR/61; Wendover, BuRO IR/26; Aldbury, HRO 56476-7; Edlesborough, BuRO Ma/69/1-2; and Luton, Tithe Map, BdRO MDD.1000, 1102, 1103.

(2) e.g. Studham, Tithe Maps, BdRO X303/1, X303/4, X303/6-7, MDD. BW 1028-9 MDD.BW 977B, MDD.BW 984; Kensworth, BdRO Enclosure Map; and Caddington, BdRO MA 46.

(3) e.g. Houghton Regis, BdRO Enclosure Map; and Streatley, Tithe Map.

(4) e.g. Great Marlow, Tithe Map; Hambleden, Tithe Map; Mapledurham, Bod. Ms. DD. Blount c.78; and Whitchurch, ORO @SD/A Vol.C facing p.54, F.XIV/3, F. XIV/10-18.

In Swyncombe and Stokenchurch,¹ two parishes that extend to the crest of the chalk outcrop and that include considerable areas over 500 feet above sea level, the common arable lay as single blocks on the gently sloping surfaces above 700 feet. In Bix parish,² at a lower general altitude but with an even more broken relief, the single common field was on a spur between two dry valleys. In contrast, at Hambleden³ and Bradenham⁴ common arable land was situated along the lower slopes of the main valleys.

One of the main features of the relief of the area between the valleys of the Wye and the Gade is the relatively large area of plateau surface that remains there. Heavier soils, developed from the mantle of Clay-with-flints, are therefore more extensive in this part of the Chilterns. Here common fields were mostly on the lighter soils of the Chalk outcrop along valley slopes below the plateau remnants. Such was the site of the common arable of Great and Little Hampden (Fig.5), of Horsemoor field in Penn⁵, and of the four common fields around Coleshill in Amersham parish.⁶ Some of the small common fields of the hamlets that made up Chesham parish were on ridge-tops between the valleys that converge at Chesham, but most were situated along the slopes.⁷ Another distinctive feature of the central Chilterns is the large overdeepened valleys which have been cut right across the-dip-slope. In all these troughs the location of common arable, and of other types of land use, followed the same basic pattern. As at Berkhamsted, common fields stretched from riverside meadows up the valley slopes, sometimes to the clays of the plateau surface above (Figs.36, 38, 41).⁸

East of the Gade there was no marked local pattern to the distribution of common arable land at the end of the eighteenth century. Relief becomes more subdued and the loamy Brickearth soils become more extensive. In some townships common fields were situated on the

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- (1) Tithe Maps.
 - (2) Tithe Maps.
 - (3) Tithe Maps.
 - (4) Tithe Map.
 - (5) BuRO IR/77.
 - (6) BuRO IR/12a.
 - (7) Tithe Map.
 - (8) This pattern was repeated at Great Missenden, Tithe Map; and at High Wycombe, CCA Cap. 1/29/7, ff. 2-60.

gentle slopes and low ridges of the lowest land in the parish - at Flamstead they stretched up both sides of the Ver valley onto two loam capped spurs between the main valley and two tributary dry valleys (Fig.4). At King's Walden, on the other hand, strip fields were located in all parts of the township, on ridges and valley bottoms alike (Figs. 24, 27, 29).

Local conditions of soil and relief were therefore reflected in the siting of common arable fields in the Chilterns about 1800. In the southwest, with its highly dissected topography, the main sites were on the downwash zone below the thin chalk soils of the valley slopes or on the gently sloping plateau surface above. Between the Wye and the Gade, on the other hand, the soils of the valley slopes were preferred to the heavier clays of the plateau, while east of the Gade there was no real limit to the location of the common fields.

c.1600:- Eighteenth and early nineteenth century maps are the only source on which a complete distribution of common arable land within and around the Chilterns can be based. But the maps portray a system in decay. Widespread piecemeal enclosure was taking place within the common fields, most of which were soon to disappear entirely. Throughout the Hills extensive areas of common arable land had already been enclosed by 1800. Sixteenth and seventeenth century rentals and surveys show that enclosure had been in progress for at least two and a half centuries. More than 700 acres of arable land lay in the common fields of Berkhamsted and Northchurch at the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹ By the early nineteenth century, there was not more than 100 acres of common arable in the two parishes (Fig.38)². Similarly, the common fields of Little Gaddesden contained at least 200 acres in 1609,³ but by 1802 only 44 acres of this remained unenclosed,⁴ while the 220 acres of common arable in Great Gaddesden at the beginning of the seventeenth century⁵ had been reduced to 45 acres by 1729.⁶

(1) BM Lansd. MS.905 ff.95-124d.

(2) Tithe Maps.

(3) HRO 851.

(4) HRO 2858, 57310.

(5) HRO 1162.

(6) HRO 13221.

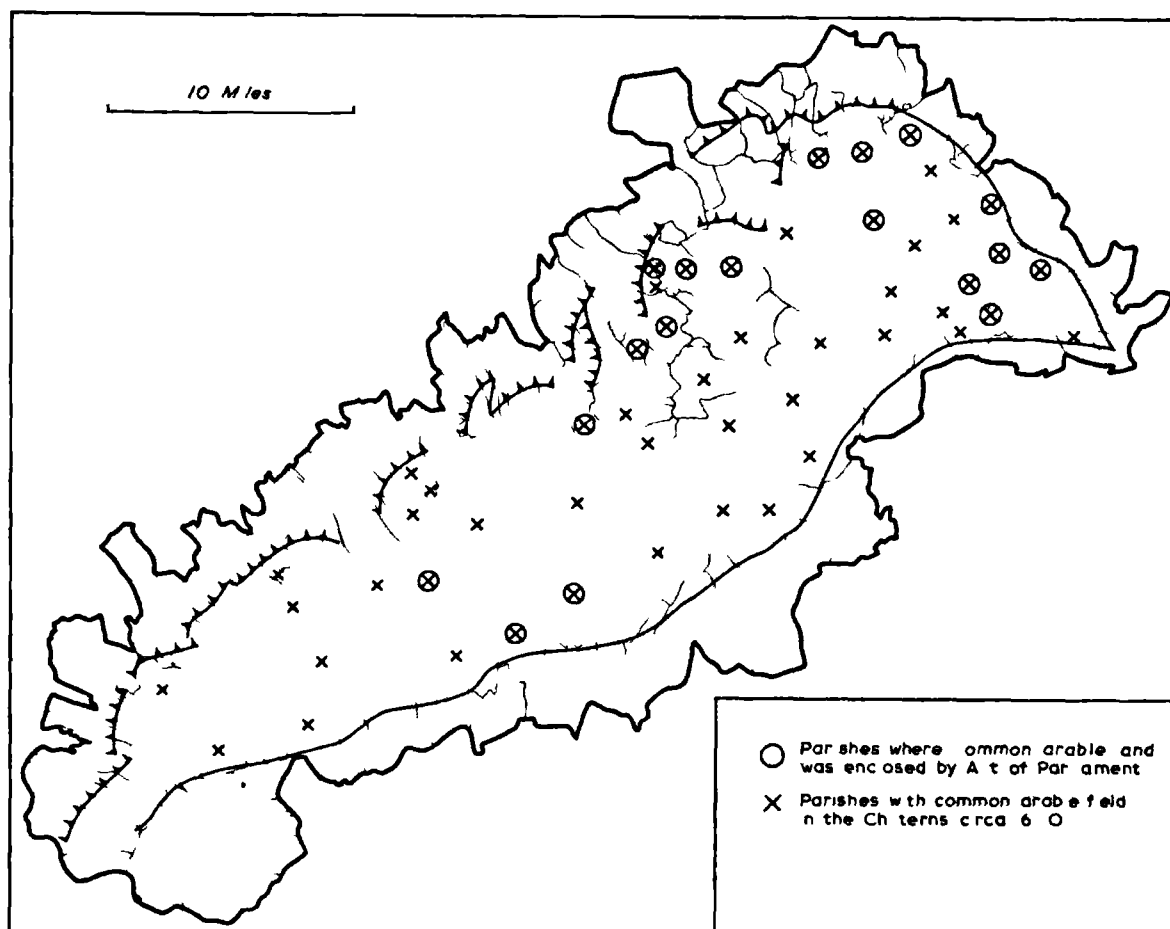


FIG. 3. Parishes with common fields c.1600 and parishes where common arable was enclosed by Act of Parliament.

Sources:- see Appendix B.

To the southwest, in Chesham where, as in many other parishes, even approximate acreages are difficult to arrive at, the greater number of common fields in the seventeenth century than in the nineteenth is sufficient to indicate the greater extent of common arable land there. Early seventeenth century manorial rentals name at least thirty common fields,¹ whereas only scattered common pieces² are shown on the nineteenth century Tithe Map, together totalling no more than 150 acres.³ The same pattern was repeated in the northeast. The manor of King's Langley included five or six common arable fields in 1555⁴ and again in 1619,⁵ which together contained at least forty acres. By 1840, there were none in the parish.⁶ The 160 acres of common arable in the manor of Redbourne in 1692⁷ was nearly 150 acres more than in the parish in 1841,⁸ while in Hemel Hempstead, Flaunden and Bovingdon, the combined evidence of a survey of 1623⁹ and various court documents and rentals for

(1) G. Eland, "The Shardeloes Muniments", RB, 14 (1941-46), 210-33; BuCM 76a/48, 13/60, 23/60.

(2) A "common piece" consisted of a small group of unenclosed strips, all that remained after piecemeal enclosure of a former common field.

(3) Similarly, Penn glebe terriers for the years between 1634 and 1706 include "an acre of land in West field" in addition to land in Horsemoor field, BuRO D/A/GT Box 7. By 1840, West field had been enclosed, Tithe Map. Again, only one of the ten or more common fields named in a Great Missenden survey of 1606 was still unenclosed by the early nineteenth century, cf. PRO LR2/210, ff.243-87 and the Tithe Map; seventeenth century Hambleton contained at least five strip fields (BuCM 85/21; 397/22, Nos. 13-17, 41) but the Tithe Map shows only isolated common pieces; and three seventeenth century common fields in Bix (PRO LR2/196, ff. 186-7) and a common field in Fingest (BuRO D/A/GT Box 4) were enclosed by the nineteenth century (Tithe Maps).

(4) HRO uncatalogued (1963).

(5) HRO 20108.

(6) Tithe Map.

(7) HRO 41333.

(8) Tithe Map.

(9) PRO LR2/216, ff. 39-70.

the manors of Westwick, Gorhambury and Pre, and Hemel Hempstead¹ suggests the existence in the early seventeenth century of at least nine common fields. Although the total area of these nine fields was not very large, it was certainly greater than the 22 acres of the few unenclosed strips shown on the Tithe Maps for these parishes. Similarly, Bramfield with at least seven common fields at the end of the sixteenth century² and none in 1838;³ Sandridge with probably four common fields at the beginning of the seventeenth century⁴ and none in 1844;⁵ and Welwyn with at least six common fields in the seventeenth century⁶ and only two at the time of enclosure in 1804,⁷ all show that the area of common arable had diminished considerably by the nineteenth century. Even in Flamstead and King's Walden, both parishes with a relatively high proportion of arable in common at the end of the eighteenth century, a number of sixteenth and seventeenth century fields had been enclosed entirely, while the areas of those that survived were often much smaller (Fig. 4 and 27).

Clearly, during the three centuries after 1550, the extent of common arable land in the Chilterns was greatly reduced. The distribution of land in common fields as shown on the eighteenth and nineteenth century maps was very different in amount to the distribution of common arable land at the end of the sixteenth century. Nonetheless the two main features apparent in the early nineteenth century pattern of distribution were just as distinct at the end of the sixteenth century. The area of common arable in Chilterns parishes was always much less than that in the Vale below the escarpment. This was so even in the northeast where amounts of common field land were greatest. Although common arable land was much more extensive about 1600, it never dominated the landscape in the same way as the great open fields of the Vale did. Again, an increase in the area of common arable land in the Hills from southwest to northeast was equally apparent in 1600 as in 1800. In fact the

(1) HRO 13602-3, 13999-14008, 14011, 14015.

(2) HRO 40750, 40768, 40774-5, 40821, 40824.

(3) Tithe Map.

(4) HRO 40967, 41211.

(5) Tithe Map.

(6) HRO 411332, 46655B, 49151, 49427, 59091, 59150, 59155, 60918, 60927.

(7) HRO 49427.

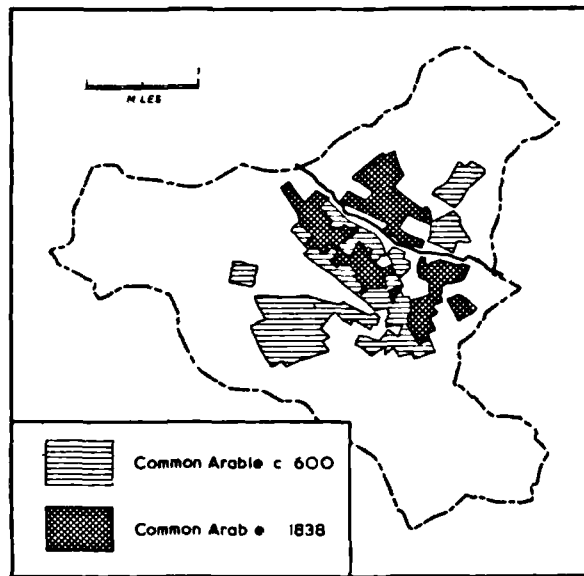
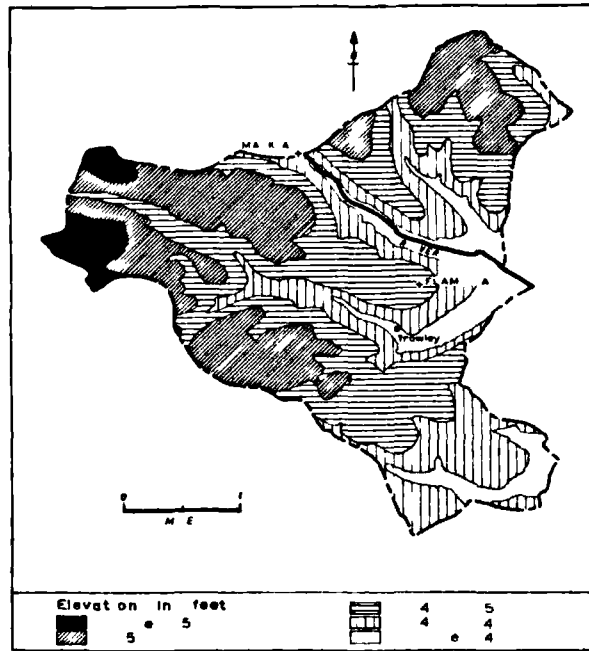


FIG. 4. Flamstead - relief and common arables c.1600 and in 1838.
 Sources:- BM Add. Ms. 6035 and the Tithe Map.

contrast was probably greater at the earlier date, because the effects of enclosure during the intervening two centuries were more marked in the northeast, where there was more arable to enclose. Even in the sixteenth century many townships west of the Wye valley contained little or no common arable land. But, although two main features of the distribution of common arable did not change between 1600 and 1800, the widespread enclosure that was taking place must have had a profound influence on the nature of field systems in the Chilterns during this period. The possible effects of enclosure is a recurring theme in the following discussion of field systems and, in fact, poses the important problem of how far field systems after 1550 were continuations of earlier features, and how far they represented degeneration of earlier forms under the impact of enclosure.

The Importance of Common Arable Land

Common arable land was much more extensive in the Chilterns at the end of the sixteenth century than at the end of the eighteenth century, and in the northeast Chilterns than it was in the southwest; but at all times and in every part of the Hills during the three centuries after 1550 a large part of the arable of every township was enclosed and held in severalty (Table 1 and Figs. 1, 5, 6, 29, 35, 41, 44). Even in townships of the northeast, where the common arable was at its most extensive, there were substantial amounts of enclosed arable land, while some townships in the southwest were enclosed entirely (Fig. 3). Local variations were often considerable (Table 1). At the beginning of the seventeenth century, 18% of the arable at Berkhamsted lay in common fields, compared with less than 1% in the neighbouring parishes of Hemel Hempstead, Bovington and Flaunden. Similarly, 9% of the arable in the manor of Great Gaddesden about 1600 was common, whereas 29% of the Little Gaddesden arable lay in common fields. To the southwest, the proportion of common arable in the manor of Great Hampden in

1653 was greater than that in the manors of Hyde and Holmer in the Missendens in 1606. In all Chiltern manors, except some in the far northeast, amounts of enclosed arable were greater than those of common arable land in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By the nineteenth century, proportions of arable in severalty had increased further in every township as common fields and common wastes were enclosed, and as private woods were grubbed-up for cultivation. There were still wide local variations, however, and the proportion of several arable still decreased towards the northeast.

T A B L E I

Proportions of enclosed and common field land in some sixteenth and seventeenth century surveys.

Location of area surveyed ¹	Date	I	II	III	IV
Bix Swyncombe & Nuffield	1609	768	122	14	45
Great Hampden	1653	1154	256	18	25
Gt. & Little Missenden	C1550 & 1606	1209	203	14	16
Chesham	1652	793	202	20	28
Berkhamsted	C1600	3382	716	18	56
Great Gaddesden	C1600	2116	220	9	60
Little Gaddesden	1609	570	227	29	47
Hemel Hempstead	1622	7212	70	1	7
King's Langley	1619	1252	59	5	22
Redbourne	1692	2382	170	7	46
King's Walden	1568	370	730	66	91
Codicote	1546 & 1594	469	266	36	85

I. Area of enclosed land in acres (enclosed wood excluded).

II. Area of common field land in acres.

III. Percentage of total land in common fields.

IV. Percentage of tenants with common field holdings.²

Sources:- Bix, Swyncombe and Nuffield, PRO E315/388 ff.5, 7, 47, 55-65; Great Hampden, BuRO D/MH 28/2; Great and Little Missenden, PRO E315/406 ff.9-13; LR2/210, ff.150-69, 243-87; Chesham, BuCM 76a/48; Berkhamsted, BM Lansd. Ms.905, ff.95-124d; Great Gaddesden, HRO 1162, 1434; Little Gaddesden, HRO 851; Hemel Hempstead, PRO LR2/216, ff.39-70; King's Langley, HRO 20108; Redbourne, HRO 41333; King's Walden, BM Add. R. 35853, 35996; Codicote, BM Add. Ms. 40735, PRO C142/236/97.

(1) The sequence is from southwest to northeast.

(2) Tenants of a house and garden alone, and tenants of 1a. or less are excluded.

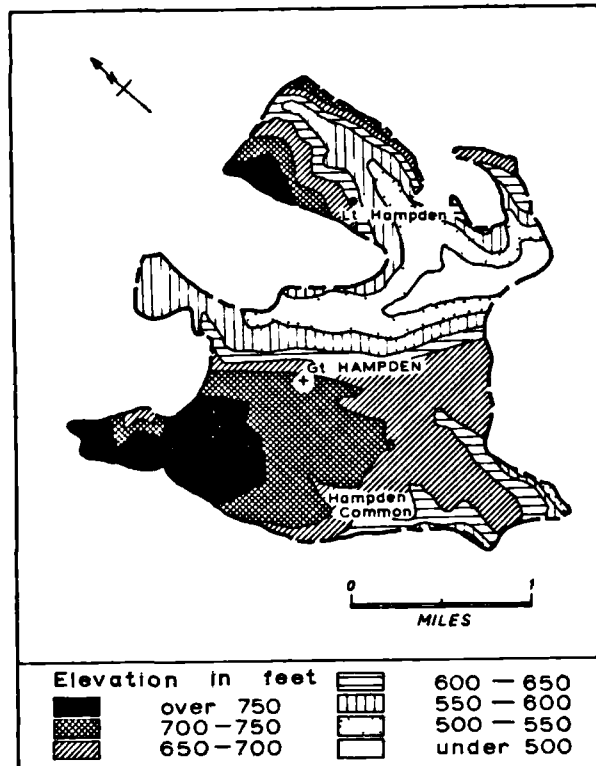
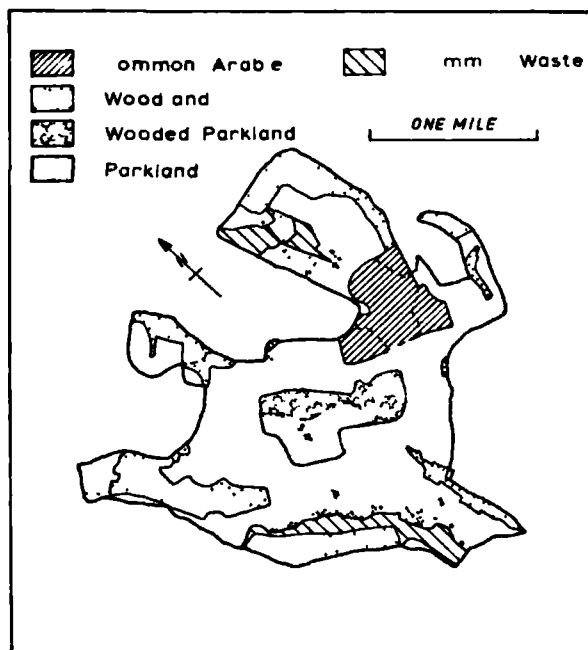


FIG. 5. The Hampdens - relief and land use, c.1800

Sources:- a map of the manor of Great Hampden, 1741, in the Hampden Estate Office; BM Ms. drawings 1st. ed. O.S. One-Inch Map; and the Tithe Map.



The significance of common arable land in the field arrangements of Chiltern townships cannot, however, be judged from the amount and proportion of this land alone. The extent to which the common arable was apportioned amongst the landholders in a township was also important. Common fields were a more significant feature of the field system where a large number of tenants shared land in them, than where strip holding was confined to a few men. A small area of common arable shared by a large number of tenants might be just as important as a larger area shared by fewer men. The percentage of the total number of arable tenants in a parish or manor who had a common arable holding can, therefore, also suggest the relative importance of the common fields in that area.

On this basis, it is clear that in the Chilterns, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the significance of the common arable in the local farm economy was greater than its actual extent would imply. The proportion of tenants mentioned in a rental or survey as holding land in the common fields, was usually higher than the proportion of the cultivated land that lay in common (Table I). In Berkhamsted, for example, 56% of those tenants with more than one acre of land held strips in the common fields, although these fields accounted for less than 18% of all cultivated land named in the survey. At Great Gaddesden nearby, the difference was even greater. There 60% of the tenants of the manor held land in common fields which occupied less than 10% of the cultivated acreage. Similar variations occurred at Codicote and King's Walden in the northeast, and at the Hampdens to the southwest. But although common field holdings were more important than the total amount of common field land alone suggests, and although there were wide local variations, the general pattern was still the same in that there was a marked increase in the significance of common arable in townships in the northeast.

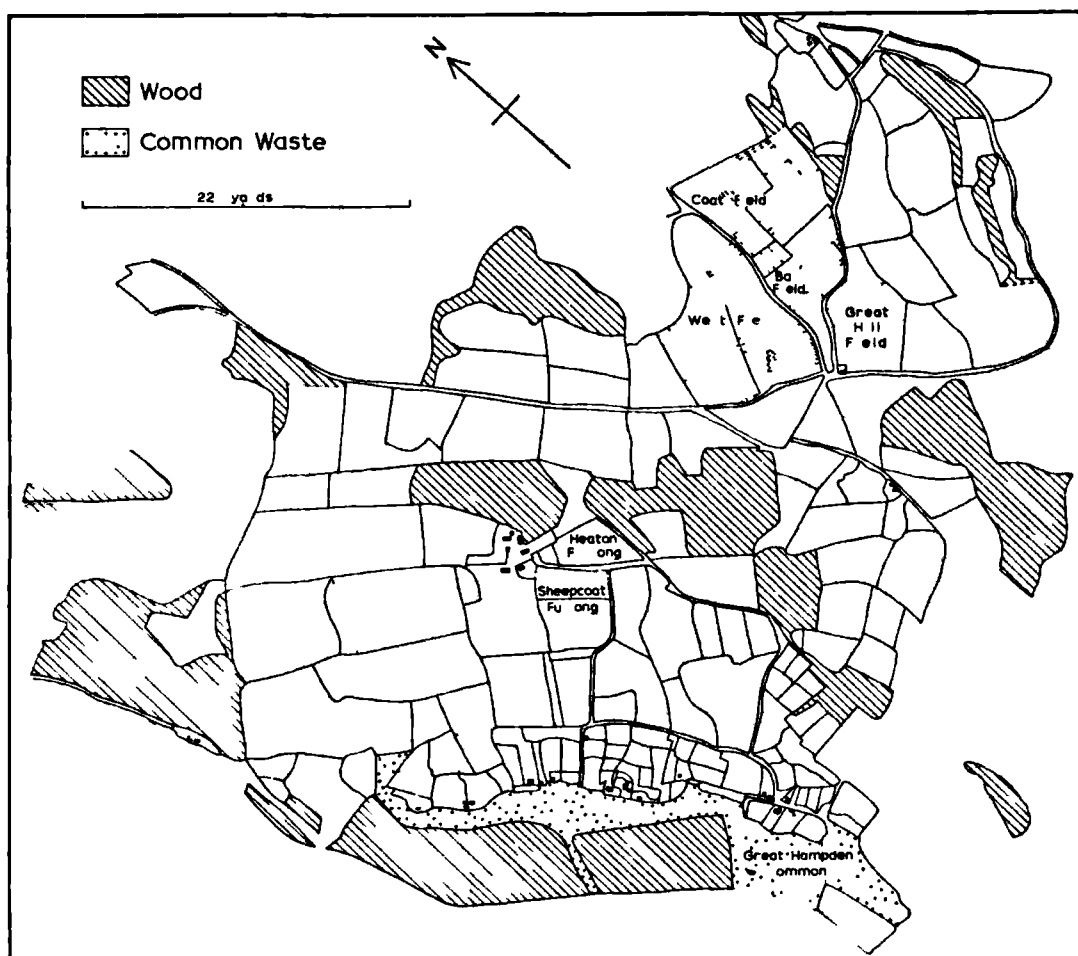


FIG. 6. The manor of Great Hampden in 1741.

Source:- a map in the Hampden Estate Office.

The Nature of the Common Arable

The Strips:- The basic unit of cultivation in the common arable was the individual strip, piece and headland. There was greater uniformity of strip size in the Chilterns during the sixteenth century than in the early nineteenth century, but in many townships the later pattern of numerous large pieces¹ had already begun to appear as a result of the consolidation of holdings. Average seventeenth century strips ranged from one rood to three acres, varying from parish to parish. In Berkhamsted² and in Chesham,³ the commonest sizes for individual strips and pieces were combinations of acres and half acres to form a unit rarely larger than three acres - there were a few pieces as big as ten acres and as small as half a rood. Elsewhere, strips were often smaller and the range of variation was less. A survey of the Great Gaddesden demesne in 1599⁴ lists 21 common arable pieces, of which ten were one acre or more, but none was larger than 1¼ acres. Similarly, in Little Gaddesden the customary acre and half acre were the commonest units. A survey made at the end of the sixteenth century includes ninety common field pieces.⁵ Eighteen of these exceeded one acre, but there were also more than forty customary half acres.

In King's Walden, on the other hand, there were signs, by the second half of the sixteenth century, that many strips had been enlarged through the consolidation of holdings. Customary acres and half acres were still by far the most numerous - the copyhold of John Sibley in 1568, for example, lay in 39 pieces of which over half were single acre strips⁶ - but combinations of these frequently occurred to form larger pieces. Thus, although 17 of the 25 strips of the copyhold of John Campkyn were half acre units in 1568, eleven of the 17 lay together in four blocks.⁷

(1) "Piece" is used here to describe open units of land within the common fields formed by the consolidation of a number of strips.

(2) PRO E315/365, ff.1-66; E315/366, ff.1-78; BM Lansd. Ms.905, ff.95-124d.

(3) BuCM ST69-76/48, 76a/48, 77/48, 1-18/56, 4-34/60, A5, C5.

(4) HRO 1164, 1434.

(5) HRO 896.

(6) BM Add. Ch. 35853.

(7) Ibid..

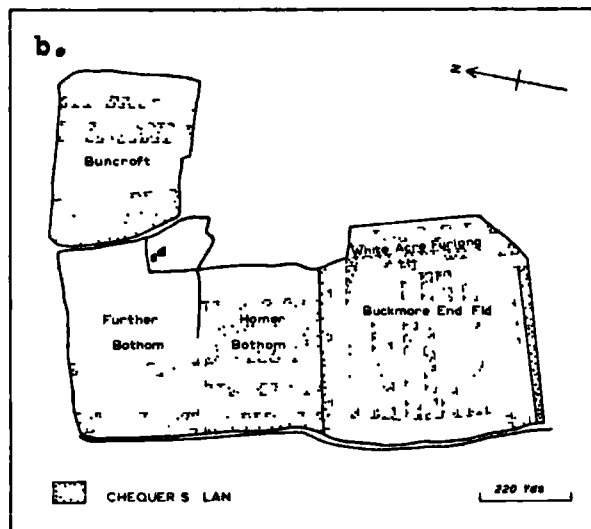
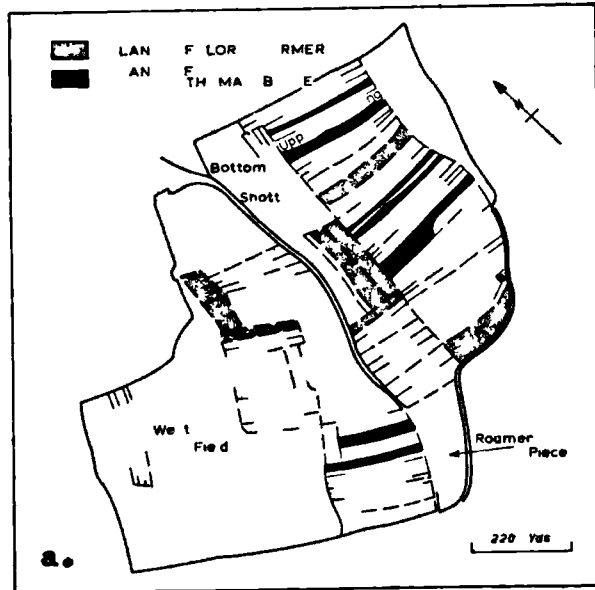


FIG. 7. Two areas of common arable in the central Chilterns c.1650. a. in Great Hampden b. in upper Ellesborough.

Source:- BuRO AR27/62.

The eighteenth and early nineteenth century maps show this process of strip enlargement at a more advanced stage throughout the Hills. Strip sizes in the Hampdens, in 1741, ranged from a quarter acre to 13½ acres¹ (Fig. 6). A century later there were 19 acre and 20 acre pieces in the common fields of Flamstead² (Fig. 8) and Studham respectively, while a range similar to that at the Hampdens is shown on the Tithe Maps, among the nine pieces of the single common field in Bix, and among the seven pieces of Stokenchurch field.

Furlongs and Shots:- In many of those Chiltern parishes where common arable land was fairly extensive and the common fields were relatively large, individual strips and pieces were often grouped into furlongs or shots. The evidence for Little Gaddesden is particularly clear in this respect. There the furlongs are referred to in manorial documents³ as stadia, quarentena or cultura. There were at least 21 furlongs in North field, eleven in South field and five in Church field. Often culturae only existed in the larger fields. In Little Gaddesden no furlongs are named in Lye field, while in Great Gaddesden only North field, with a minimum of four furlongs, and Mill field, were described as being subdivided thus.⁴ Similarly, at High Wycombe, furlongs are referred to in only six of the 19 or more common fields;⁵ at the manor of Redbourne in 1692, culturae are described only for Ley field;⁶ while at Chesham⁷ and at Berkhamsted,⁸ where common fields were numerous although fairly small, there is no reference to furlongs within them. But the fact that furlongs are not mentioned in descriptions of common arable land does not necessarily mean that strips were not grouped

(1) Map in the Hampden Estate Office.

(2) Tithe Map.

(3) HRO 896

(4) HRO 1162

(5) CCA Cap.1/29/1,3,6. They were Hawfield, Combes, Great and Little Asheridge, West field and Rye field (at least five furlongs).

(6) HRO 41333.

(7) BuCM 69-76/48, 76a/48, 77/48, 1-18/56, 4-34/60, A5, C5.

(8) PRO E315/365, ff.1-66; E315/366, ff.1-78; BM Lansd.

Ms.905, ff.95-124d.

in this way. It may be that, because common fields in the Chilterns were small, assignation of land to the field alone was sufficient to locate it precisely. In the open field townships of the Vale, on the other hand, descriptions of land in terms of one of three or four great fields was not enough, and the furlong in which the land lay was usually also referred to.¹

In the northeast, the term "shot" was used more widely than the "furlong" that was preferred further west, and there, too, shots and furlongs were mentioned far more frequently than in common arable land southwest of the Lea. In general, the more extensive the common arable and the larger the common fields, the more frequently do shots and furlongs occur in descriptions of land within them. In a few townships in the northeast, in fact, the furlong appears to have been more important than the field as a common arable unit. At Offley,² Lilley³ and Kensworth,⁴ holdings were frequently described in terms of furlongs alone, although between twenty and thirty common fields were also referred to from time to time in each of the three parishes. Sometimes the land of a single holding was detailed in court roll, survey or terrier partly in terms of furlongs alone and partly in terms of furlongs within the fields. The pattern was very confused, but clearly the furlong was at least as significant as the field there.

Another factor tending to confuse was an occasional ambiguity in the use of terms to describe common arable land. A furlong or a shot was sometimes a complete common field rather than a subdivision within a field. Elmore Land shot in Welwyn and Much Furlong in Berkhamsted (Figs. 18 and 41) were both common fields in their own right in the seventeenth century, while many of the common arable units in Lilley, Offley and Kensworth were sometimes described as furlongs and sometimes as fields. But use of the terms "furlong" and "shot" was not confined to descriptions of common arable land.

(1) e.g. in a terrier of land in Pitstone of 1555, BuCM P30/2.

(2) HRO 48407-29, 72351, DE2952, DE2659-702; BM Egerton Ms.1938, F.52d et seq.

(3) HRO 47552-900.

(4) BM Add. Ch. 259796; St. Pauls A62, WC7.

They were also sometimes enclosed fields held in severalty, ranging in size from nine acres to more than thirty acres. The two closes called Sheepcoat Furlong and Heaton Furlong, in Great Hampden in 1741, contained $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres and ten acres respectively (Fig.6); Saunse Furlong in Berkhamsted was two closes that together contained thirty acres;¹ Mead Furlong in Hemel Hempstead was three closes of 23 acres, and another three closes there in 1622-23 were also called furlongs.² The origin of enclosed furlongs is not clear from seventeenth century evidence. Some may have been taken from the common fields as furlong blocks, which may for a time have continued as a unit of strips. This procedure can be followed at a later date in Stevenage, where by 1851,³ Winding Balk and Folly Shot were named as individual common arable pieces rather than as the subdivisions of Chalk Dell field that they clearly were in 1732⁴. Alternatively, some furlongs held in severalty may have been enclosed directly from the waste as single units, and, although they may at first have been divided into strips, they remained separate from larger blocks of common arable land. Whatever their origin, the existence of enclosed furlongs and shots in the Chilterns after 1550 emphasises the danger of assuming the existence of common fields from the occurrence of terms usually associated with common field land.

The Fields:- It has been suggested that in Midland townships "the unit of cropping, especially in the corn field proper, was the furlong and not the whole field, so making cropping far more flexible than one could otherwise have got".⁵ This was not the case in the Chilterns.

(1) BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.101.

(2) PRO LR2/216, ff.39-70. Some other examples of enclosed furlongs were a 10a. close in Little Missenden in 1604, PRO LR2/210, ff.150-169; two closes which together contained 15a. in King's Langley in 1618, HRO 20108; and two closes of 16a. and 11a. in Nuffield, Bod. Ms. Maps Oxon. a.2.

(3) Tithe Map.

(4) HRO 46655B, 7258-9.

(5) W.G. Hoskins, "The Midland Peasant" (1957), 156. The suggestion that the furlong was the most significant unit of common arable cropping was first made by N.S.B. Gras, "The Economic and Social Structure of an English Village", (1930), 31; and subsequently stressed by R.H. Hilton, "The economic development of some Leicestershire estates in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries", University of Oxford D. Phil. thesis (1940), 185-87, 261. Hoskins has summarised this point of view most succinctly.

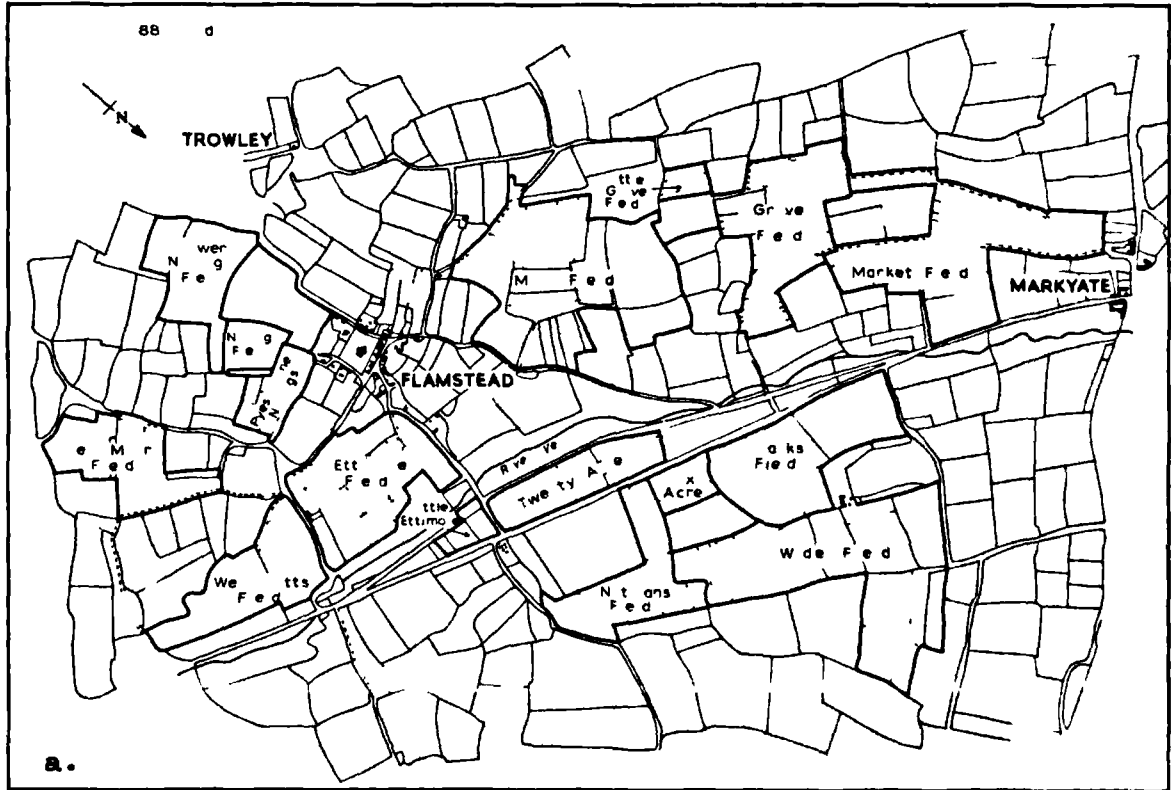
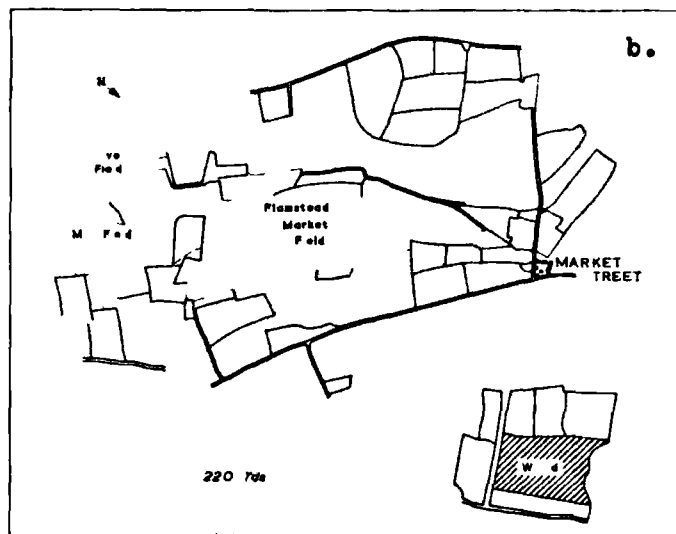


FIG. 8. Flamstead:- a. the common fields in 1838.
Source:- the Tithe Map.

b. Market Street Farm in 1756.
Source:- HRO 17304.



There the field was usually the most important grouping of common arable strips and pieces. The evidence of communal cropping arrangements and of the organisation of common pasturing on the arable is that the field was the unit of enforcement. A variety of crops might be grown in a single common field at any one time, but they were all crops of the same season, sown and harvested at approximately the same time.¹ Even at Offley and Kensworth, shots were grouped into fields, each of which lay fallow every third year,² and in Little Gaddesden, regulation of common pasturing and of the three-course rotation was always by fields.³ The importance of the field in the Chilterns can be explained partly by the presence of large areas of enclosed arable - it was only rarely that an entire farm holding consisted of common arable, and so cropping on the holding was not tied to the common arable routine to the same extent as in the Midland open field township - and partly by the character of Chiltern common fields, which was such as to allow flexible cropping and pasturing between them.

The common fields of a typical Chiltern parish were small and numerous, numbers varying at the end of the sixteenth century from the four fields of Bix⁴ in the southwest, to over thirty fields in the Chesham hamlets,⁵ and more than forty in the two Berkhamsted parishes.⁶ In general, the greater the area of common arable the more numerous the fields into which it was divided. The average number of common fields in townships of the central and northeast Chilterns - usually between twenty and thirty fields - was therefore larger than that of the southwest. Twenty four were named in a Codicote survey of 1546⁷ and in the manor of Redbourne in 1692⁸. There were at

(1) See below, p.66.

(2) See below, p.67-8.

(3) See below, p.67.

(4) PRO LR2/196, ff.185-90.

(5) BuCM 69-76/48, 76a/48, 77/48, 1-18/56, 4-34/60, A5, C5.

(6) PRO E315/365, ff.1-66; E315/366, ff.1-78; BM Lansd. Ms.905, ff.95-124d.

(7) BM Add. Ms.40735.

(8) HRO 41333.

least 26 fields in King's Walden in 1568, and still as many as 18 two hundred years later on the eve of parliamentary enclosure.¹ But there was considerable local variation. The manor of King's Langley, with common arable land in eight fields in 1555,² and the manor of Hemel Hempstead, with nine common fields in 1622-23³, although in the eastern Chilterns, were more typical of manors further west. To the southwest, common fields, although fewer in number than was general east of the Chess, were still relatively prolific. Thirteen are named in the 1606 survey of the manor of Missenden Magna Hyde;⁴ the parishes of Great and Little Hampden shared five in 1653;⁵ while there is evidence for the existence of at least three common fields in Penn⁶ in the seventeenth century.⁷ Strip fields were still numerous in many townships, particularly in the northeast, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, even although many fields had already been enclosed completely.

Such a surfeit of common fields was linked to some extent with the disintegration of an earlier pattern. Fields were being broken-up into smaller units, which were still cultivated in common, and which were sometimes the shots, furlongs and pièces of the former fields. At Great Missenden, Heaven field had been divided into Great, Middle and Little Heaven field by the beginning of the seventeenth century, while Little and Middle Wide Field were distinguished

(1) HRO 40591-2, 51440-572.

(2) HRO Uncatalogued (1963).

(3) PRO LR2/216, ff.39-70.

(4) At least three of these common fields were in Chesham parish and not in the township of Great Missenden, PRO LR2/210, ff.243-88. Other descriptions of common field land in Great Missenden are the former holdings of Missenden Abbey, PRO E315/405; E315/406.

(5) BuRO D/MH 28/2.

(6) J.G. Jenkins, "A History of the Parish of Penn", (1935), 78-90.

(7) Further examples of the maximum number of common arable fields in a township after 1550 include (starting in the southwest):- at least 7 in Hambleton, BuCM 85-89/21, 397/22 No's 13-17, 41: one in Fingest, BuRO D/A/GT Box 4: 19 in High Wycombe, CCA Cap. 1/29/1, 3, 6: 3 in Hughenden, BuRO D/MH 15/10: 5 in Little Gaddesden, HRO 851: 15 in Studham, BdRO DD.BW 966-9; 16 in Great Gaddesden, HRO 11-66, 1162: 24 in Flamstead, BM Add. Ms.6035: 14 in Caddington, PRO SC 12/28/6; HRO 11992-3; St. Paul's Press No.12, WC 6: more than 40 in Wheathampstead-cum-Harpden, Westm. 8894, 8912, 8955, 8970-1, 14049-73; HRO 46185, 8366, 27235: more than 30 in Offley and Lilley, HRO 47552-72, 48401-33: 20 in Knebworth, HRO K7-97: and 4 in Sandridge, 6 in Welwyn and 7 in Bramfield, see above, p.26.

from the rest of Wide Field.¹ Similarly, Mill field in Great Gaddesden was, by the end of the sixteenth century, subdivided into three smaller units,² and at least three common fields in Berkhamsted had been broken up in this way.³ A century later, two Redbourne fields had disintegrated into six smaller groups of strips, that were still called fields.⁴ The breakdown of common fields was associated with piecemeal enclosure from them. Seventeenth century rentals for Chesham mention Town field, Hither Town field and Further Town field.⁵ By mid-century, two closes had been taken from Town field,⁶ and by 1694, four one acre closes were described as "before parcels of land called Town field and Dungrove field".⁷ Disintegration and enclosure were complementary; but the nature of the link between the two is not clear. It has been suggested that the breakdown of common fields resulted from enclosure. Gray's study of the later history of his Midland system implies that piecemeal enclosure and consolidation led to an increase in the number of open fields,⁸ whilst F.G. Emmison has tried to show that the large number of fields in the Bedfordshire parish of Colmworth in 1838 was the result of the disintegration of an earlier organisation through private enclosure and consolidation.⁹ No firm conclusion can be reached from the Chiltern evidence. It may be that, in fact, subdivision of common fields sometimes preceded enclosure of land from them, perhaps to allow greater flexibility in cropping and grazing arrangements, and that this subdivision encouraged and facilitated enclosure. On the other hand, the two procedures were often continuing side by side. One did not necessarily precede the

(1) PRO LR2/210, ff.243-88; E315/406.

(2) HRO 1162.

(3) They were Salmons field, Mill field and Abingdon field, PRO E315/366, ff.1-78.

(4) These were Spencers field and Booth field, HRO 41333.

(5) BuCM 76a/48, C5.

(6) BuCM 76a/48, 13/60, 14/60, 23/60.

(7) BuRO ST/94/1.

(8) H.L. Gray, op.cit, 127-57.

(9) F.G. Emmison, "Types of Open Field Parishes in the Midlands!" Historical Association Pamphlet, 108 (1937), 12.

other. Some fields in which piecemeal enclosure was widespread did not break-up into smaller units.¹ Conversely, there is sometimes no evidence of enclosure in fields that had been subdivided. Subdivision and enclosure were two symptoms of a single process, the break-up of an earlier pattern of common fields, and, whatever the nature of the link between the two, they were clearly closely associated.

At the same time as the extent of common arable land was being reduced by enclosure, an enclosure often of complete strip fields, the large number of common fields in a township was often maintained, at least for a time, by the accompanying division of the surviving fields. The 18 common fields of King's Walden at the end of the eighteenth century³ were only six fewer than at the end of the sixteenth century, although the area of common arable land in the township had been more than halved (Fig. 27). Between 1568 and about 1790, a number of small separate common arable units appeared. These, like White Piece Common, Stile Piece Common and Two Piece Common, had formerly been part of larger fields, but they were now themselves referred to as common fields.

Within individual townships there was wide variation in common field sizes (Figs. 1, 6, 8, 29, 35, 41). In the manor of Redbourne in 1692, with land in 24 common fields, one quarter of the common arable holdings were in Ley field, which was twice as large as any other single field (Table IX). The relative sizes of common fields also varied, as some fields were reduced by piecemeal enclosure more than others. At King's Walden, by the end of the eighteenth century, less land had been enclosed from Wooden field than Leggats field (Figs. 27, 29). Tenurial subdivision was also greater in some fields than in others. The number of holdings in fields of approximately the same size might vary considerably. At Great

(1) e.g. Royden field in King's Walden. Cf. BM Add. R. 35853x and HRO 51479, 51489-528.

(2) e.g. Salmons field and Mill field in Berkhamsted, op. cit..

(3) HRO 67083, C2/S.4, E/67, 51479, 51489-528.

Gaddesden about 1600, 13¼ acres in Mill field was divided between 14 tenants, whereas the same amount of land in Dunn field was shared by seven tenants - the average holding in Dunn field was almost twice as large as that in Mill field (Table VIII). Similarly, in Kings' Walden the 54 acres in Wooden field, listed in surveys of 1568, was farmed by seven men, whereas the same number of tenants held only 19½ acres in Wandon field (Table XII). Differences in the average holding size from field to field were characteristic in varying degrees of every Chiltern parish with common arable land; a difference which may to some extent have reflected the consolidation of holdings that was taking place.

The distribution of common arable holdings between common fields suggests that in many townships there were distinct groups of common fields. Although these groups were not necessarily isolated from each other physically, the common arable land was divided into a number of portions within which holdings were concentrated. Common arable at Berkhamsted lay in an almost continuous belt along the slopes of the valley of the Bulbourne (Fig.41), but the location of individual holdings shows that within this area the fields were in three groups, namely those around Northchurch, those around the town of Berkhamsted, and those around Bourne End and Little Heath (Table XVIII). The main distinction at Great Gaddesden was between common fields north of the village and those to the south, although here too, common arable land extended in a fairly continuous tract along both slopes of the Gade valley (Table VIII). In King's Walden, the single area of common arable was divided between three main groups of common fields, one each in the north, centre and south of the parish (Fig.28 and Table XII). Again there were two groups of common fields at Redbourne in 1692 (Table IX) - they were those around the village of Redbourne and the hamlets of Revell End and Norrington End, and those around the hamlets of Wood End, Hogg End, South End and Beason End - although the difference between the two was not as clear as at Berkhamsted, Great Gaddesden and King's Walden. In some townships, the main groups of fields that appear from the distribution of tenant holdings were also separated from each other physically.

Thus there were two common field areas in Knebworth in 1732;¹ one consisting of seven fields lay in the west of the parish, the other comprising three fields, was to the south of the village. No tenant held land in both.² There were also two distinct sets of common fields at Studham. One lay on the Chiltern plateau, while the other was in the gap which breaches the Chalk scarp there.³ As late as 1849-53 no Studham landholder had pieces in both groups.⁴

Balks, Hedges and Ley Pieces:- Balks, that is pieces of uncultivated land, existed in common arable throughout the Chilterns, as the constant reference in court rolls to encroachment on common field balks,⁵ and frequent regulations for their maintenance show.⁶ At Great Gaddesden in 1727, almost 4% of a common arable holding was in balks.⁷

In general they had three main functions. The most obvious of these was as a boundary within the common arable. The 1602 glebe terrier of Bix, for example, describes glebe land in Bix common field as "divided by meare baulks from the rest of the field",⁸ and it was noted at Offley, in 1673, that a series of old orders forbade the keeping of any cattle "between any baulks in any corne field" during the growing season.⁹ It is difficult to judge, from these chance entries, the nature of the pieces within the common fields that were separated by baulks, whether in fact they were shots and furlongs, or were smaller units of land. The latter seems to have been the case at Wheathampstead. An account of land in Pickford field in 1743 mentions that "there were nine pieces in Pickford common but my father exchanged one piece with Coswell Farm, which piece that he had from Coswell lay next to one of the above pieces, and so the

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- (1) HRO 47258-9.
 - (2) HRO 46655B.
 - (3) BdRO X303/1, 4, 6-7, MDD.BW 1028-9, MDD.BW 984; Tithe Maps.
 - (4) Tithe Apportionments.
 - (5) e.g. a tenant of Little Hampden was said to have encroached "on that Bawe in Corte feld gayng up the hyll", BuCM 415/39, 21st. Jan. 10Eliz.
 - (6) e.g. in 1605, all tenants of common field land in Flamstead were ordered to "mend or reform their several mounds there", BM Add. Ms.6035.
 - (7) Ploughed land totalled 44a.Or.17p. while balks were 1a.3r.7p, HRO 13221.
 - (8) Bod. b.40, f.51; c.141, f.9; Ms. Top. Oxon. C.55, f.192.
 - (9) HRO 67077.

Balke was plowed up and its piece now lays in one of ye above eight pieces".¹ The implication is clearly that two pieces were separated by a balk.

Balks were also access ways within the common fields, particularly in the more extensive common arable of the northeast. An Offley agreement of 1698 refers to "ye pretended privilege of leading cows on ye balks of separate land",² while evidence to the Enclosure Commissioners a century later, frequently mentioned the right to lead cows on the balks, even when the field was in corn.³ Apart from these non-productive uses, grassed balks supplemented pasturage on stubble and fallow, although the right to use them as such was frequently prohibited during the periods that crops were in the fields.⁴ Grass on the balks was also sometimes mown for hay, a right which, at Knebworth, was confined to tenants of the manor.⁵

Common fields were divided from one another, and separated from other land, by hedges. Every detailed survey of common arable refers in some part to strips abutting on, or lying adjacent to a hedge. Orders were made at the manorial courts to ensure that the hedges around the common fields were in good repair before crops were sown.⁶ Each tenant was responsible for the maintenance of hedges next to his land. In Hertfordshire, hedgerow pieces, both in common fields and in closes, were also valued as pasturage. A common arable holding in Wheathampstead in 1538 included "two hegegrenes or hedeland",⁷ while at Great Gaddesden, rights of common grazing along a hedgerow were disputed during the sixteenth century.⁸ It would seem that a grass border

(1) HRO 27405. Other examples include a piece "between two meires" in a field in Great Missenden, PRO E315/406, f.9; a piece lying between two balks in High Wycombe, CCA Cap.I/29/6; and an acre "which was formerly two pieces and separated by a Baulk" at Chesham, BuRO ST 109.

(2) HRO 51084.

(3) e.g. HRO 51285.

(4) e.g. at Ippollitts, HRO 47925, 47903, 48350; and Hambleden, BuCM 88/2.

(5) HRO 2285, 2888.

(6) e.g. at Great Hampden, BuCM 57/51; Great Gaddesden, HRO 25; Welwyn, HRO 41332.

(7) Westm. 8971.

(8) HRO 19, 21.

was often deliberately left around the edge of a ploughed field to provide pasture and hay, a practice that was frequently remarked upon by the later agricultural writers.¹ There are only a few references to ley strips within the common fields of the Chilterns after 1550.²

Grazing on the Common Arable

Rights of common grazing in the common fields, on both the fallow and the harvest stubble, existed in the Chilterns in the sixteenth century and later. The importance of common pasturing as an integral part of a common field system has often been stressed. Gray believed that "the right of pasturage over the arable fallow was so bound up with the nature of the two and three-field system that it would not be altogether incorrect to call it the determining idea of that system",³ while C.S. and C.S. Orwin considered that "grazing rights in common in the arable fields" was one of the four main features of "open-field farming".⁴

The most complete record of the existence and working of common pasture rights in the Chilterns is in sixteenth and seventeenth century court rolls for the three manors in Little Gaddesden.⁵ Orders from these courts regulated pasturing on the common arable for more than two centuries. Typical was the order made at the June court of 1568 that "none shall keepe anye hoggs or beasts in the corne feldes tyll the laste corne or pease bey rydd".⁶ More than a century later, at a court of 1679, it was noted that "whereas there be several town feldes within the manor which are always kept in Tillage that great trespasses have been committed by turning cattell into the same before all the corne was carried out of the same. It is therefore

(1) e.g. J. Lucas, *op.cit.*, 290; D. Walker, "General View of the Agriculture of the County of Hertford", (1795), 13; W. Cobbett, "Rural Rides", (1821-32), 1912 ed., 86.

(2) Two references to ley pieces occur in a survey of land in High Wycombe, CCA Cap.I/29/3. There may also have been ley strips in the common fields of Great Gaddesden, HRO 34.

(3) H.L. Gray, *op.cit.*, 47-8.

(4) C.S. and C.S. Orwin, "The Open Fields", (1938), 61.

(5) HRO 596-770, 798-802, 805, 807-99, 943-6, 994-1012, 1017-20, 1023-6, 1029-1129.

(6) HRO 612.

ordred that no person or persons turne any Cattell whatsoever into any of the Saide Townefeilde untill all the Corne and Grayne there being be all carried out of the said field!¹ Rights of common grazing on the stubble clearly existed. In some years the court also named the fields from which animals were excluded until the harvest had been collected. At the October court of 1603, for example, the order was that no livestock was to pasture in the fields called South field, Church field, Baynolds Herne, the Hale or the Lye before All Saints Day,² presumably the fields that were cropped throughout that season. By implication, animals could graze on the unnamed common arable - in 1603 this was in North field - which must therefore have been the fallow field. Sometimes cattle and horses kept on the the tenants' own land in the common fields were specifically exempted from these regulations,³ but sheep were rigorously excluded from any common field at any time after part of the field had been sown. Usually cattle could be driven onto the stubble as soon as the fields were "cleane ridd", although in some years their entry was delayed until a few days after the harvest had been brought in. Sheep, on the other hand, were never allowed into the common fields immediately. The length of time that elapsed before they could enter the common arable varied from year to year, and might be anything between four days and a fortnight.⁴ An order of 1679 gives the reason for this prohibition, namely that "sheep stayne the grass where-in they depasture more and sooner than other cattle", and so the entry of sheep was delayed so that "the Grasse therein growing may be the sweeter for greater cattle".⁵ Right to pasture the common arable of Little Gaddesden was limited to tenants of the manors there - at a court of

(1) HRO 825.

(2) HRO 655.

(3) e.g. At the May court of 1559, it was ordered that no cattle were to be pastured "in any of the sown fields of this manor except in the tenant's own land before the Feast of All Saints", HRO 602.

(4) In 1560 it was eight days (HRO 603), by 1568 a fortnight (HRO 617), but in 1574 the period was shortened to nine days (HRO 628). In 1607 sheep were allowed in only four days after the fields were cleared (HRO 664), while in subsequent years an interval of eight to ten days was usual.

(5) HRO 825. Orders limiting sheep pasturing on the fallow until some days after cattle had been driven in were made at Caddington, St. Pauls Press N No.12, 9H.VIII.

1561¹ and again in 1679² the inhabitants of Dagnall were ordered to refrain from depasturing their animals in the fields of Little Gaddesden, and particularly in North field - and within the three manors grazing in the common fields was restricted in 1624, if not earlier, to the livestock of common arable tenants.³

Evidence of rights of common grazing over arable land, that were basically the same as those at Little Gaddesden, is available for at least twenty other Chiltern parishes from Little Hampden and Hambleton in the southwest to Ippollitts and Stevenage in the northeast (Appendix C). Variations on the basic theme are almost as numerous as the 21 examples. In no two townships were arrangements the same. Common grazing in the common fields of a parish was usually confined to men holding land there.⁴ Where two parishes were particularly closely linked, the tenants of each intercommoned some strip fields - this was the case at Offley and Lilley, both townships with detached portions in the other.⁵ Common pasturing was usually limited in some way (within the framework of the township). Unrestricted rights grazing over common arable were rare. Stints were enforced, by which the number of beasts allowed to graze was related to the size of the common arable holding. At Lilley in 1553, for example, three cattle were allowed to holdings of eighty acres or less, with an extra cow for each 25 acres in excess of eighty acres, while two sheep were allowed for each three acres within the common fields.⁶ By 1566, the number of sheep was limited further by the introduction of a stint of "18 sheep att the moste for every twentie acres of land in the common fields!"⁷ This had been reduced to a sheep an acre

(1) HRO 605.

(2) HRO 825.

(3) HRO 695, 1007.

(4) As at Great Gaddesden, where Gaddesden field alone could be commoned by men not holding land in the parish, HRO 25; and Caddington, St. Pauls Press B. No.12, 21H. VIII.

(5) Intercommoning on arable land was referred to at a Lilley manorial court of 1513, HRO 47553; and at Offley in 1522, HRO 48405.

(6) HRO 47564.

(7) HRO 47565.

by 1581.¹ Constant revision of the stint probably reflected increasing enclosure from the common arable. Numbers of sheep allowed to graze the common fallow and stubble also varied considerably from place to place. It was five sheep to an acre of fallow in the common fields,² (in Caddington in 1668), while in Knebworth in 1699 the limit was ten sheep to an acre in every common field.³

In some townships common grazing rights were also restricted areally as well as numerically. The individual tenant was not allowed to depasture his beasts in all the common fields of the parish. Frequently, his right was confined to fields in which he held land. At Caddington, those without strips in Mill field and North field were not supposed to pasture there, while at King's Walden, many tenants claimed, in their depositions to the Enclosure Commissioners, rights of sheep common only in fields in which they held land.⁴ Richard Oakley, with arable in four of the 18 common fields, alone of all the landowners claimed "the right of common for sheep levant and couchant upon my land, in and over all the common fields, common greens and lanes in the parish of King's Walden".⁵ Grazing on the common arable of Offley was decided on a strictly geographical basis. According to the testimonies of two aged inhabitants,⁶ common grazing in the west of the parish was confined to farms in and around the village of Offley, while farms in and around the hamlet of Putteridge grazed commonable land in the southwest of the parish. At the same time, rights of pasturing were again restricted to those fields in which land was held. The fallow fields here were unstinted.⁷ In a few townships only some common fields were open to common grazing. Tenants of the manor of Flamstead could common in six of the twenty or more common fields there and on all the glebe land, even although

(1) HRO 47581.

(2) St. Paul's WC 6.

(3) HRO 22888. Other stints included 2½ sheep to an acre at King's Walden in 1568, which was reduced to one sheep by 1625 (see below p.145) At Ippollitts at the end of the eighteenth century, the stint was based on ancient dwellings rather than upon the amount of land held, HRO 48350.

(4) HRO 51531-2, 51534, 51536.

(5) HRO 51508.

(6) To the Enclosure Commissioners, HRO 51287.

(7) HRO 51286.

they might hold land in many of the other fields.¹ At Ippollitts, too, where pasture rights were particularly complicated, only some strip fields were thrown open for grazing after the harvest. Each of these fields was regulated separately and the regulation for each varied from year to year, possibly in conjunction with a crop rotation between the fields the nature of which is not revealed.² Arrangements such as these may have been a stage in the total abolition of common grazing rights, and eventual enclosure of the common fields.

The existence of grazing rights over common arable land was probably the main incentive for widespread enclosure after 1550.³ Enclosure, in turn produced anomalies in common pasturing arrangements. Common grazing was sometimes practised over land that had been fenced-off from the rest of the common arable. Two closes were continually included in sixteenth century regulations of pasturage at Little Gaddesden. They had been taken from common land, and the grazing rights formerly pertaining to this land were now continued in the closes.⁴ Common closes also existed at Studham⁵ and Lilley⁶, while at King's Walden, tenants were presented at the manorial court from time to time for enclosing closes that were common to the whole manor.⁷ Alternatively, the abolition of common grazing rights could precede the break-up of a strip pattern. In 1698, there was a proposal to make common fields in Offley "every years land" and for this the common grazers had to be excluded.⁸ Common pasturing over the strip fields continued to be practised in many townships, however, until the surviving remnants were swept away by acts of Parliament early in the nineteenth century.

Pasturing in the common fields was not always confined to common grazing. As seen, common arable strips could be grazed in severalty by the cattle and horses of a tenant,⁹ and balks and greenways were

(1) BM Add. Ms. 6035.

(2) HRO 47923-5.

(3) See below, p.57.

(4) HRO 639.

(5) BdRO DD.BW 967, Dagnall 1610.

(6) HRO 47585.

(7) See below, p.146.

(8) HRO 51084.

(9) At Little Gaddesden, op.cit.; and also at Great Gaddesden, HRO 46.

probably pastured while the fields were under crops, although little evidence of this practice survives. Cattle were probably tethered on the pieces of grass and on fodder crops such as pease and vetch. Sheep folding on the arable, both enclosed and common, was also widely practised. Hurdles figure frequently as an item of farm equipment in the sixteenth and seventeenth century probate inventories;¹ tenants at Caddington were allowed to keep sheep on their own common field land during the summer months;² while from Offley there is an ambiguous reference to folding on the common arable at the end of the seventeenth century - the proposers of the agreement to abolish the fallow season over some of the common arable there were concerned about "how to continue ways for foldage" and how to exclude tenants who claimed common and foldage on the land.³ Common grazing and folding were not mutually exclusive. The two forms of pasturing could take place side by side.

Enclosure of the Common Arable

The area of common arable land in the Chilterns was being reduced on a large scale during the three centuries after 1550.⁴ Complete common fields were enclosed, while some land had been taken from most of those that survived at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There is abundant evidence of the nature of this enclosure, available for practically every parish that had contained common arable. It was a piecemeal enclosure, effected by individual consolidation of holdings and by private agreement, and it was often only ended by the clean sweep of an act of Parliament. The disappearance of many common fields can be traced in detail. In Hemel Hempstead, the common field known in the early seventeenth

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- (1) e.g. LRO Inv. 90/136, 76/217, 114/108.
 - (2) St. Paul's Press N No.12, 9H.VIII, 14H.VIII.
 - (3) HRO 51084.
 - (4) See above, p.23,25.

century as Crouch field,¹ had become by 1699 "a close known by the name of Crouch-field Common"². The former Netherfield Common at Chesham was by 1718 a close called Netherfield Common,³ and all seven pieces of land in Pull field that were described in a rental of 1629 had been enclosed by 1674. Again, Swindells field in Great Gaddesden, which was still subdivided⁴ and subject to common grazing⁵ during the sixteenth century, was enclosed by the end of the century to form a number of closes,⁶ while the common field in Bramfield called Turnam field in 1634,⁷ had become a close called Turnam field by 1706.⁸

But the change from common arable to closes held in severalty was rarely, until the work of the Enclosure Commissioners, a direct and immediate transformation. Most frequently, individual strips or blocks of consolidated strips in the common fields were hedged-in, while the rest of the field remained open. Typical references to the results of this procedure occur in the 1606 survey of the manor of Hyde in Great Missenden.⁹ The holding of Edward Tranger included "a close of arable land formerly parcel of Hill field",¹⁰ while Edward Birch held two closes that had once been part of Nuffield, a close that was once part of Mill field and another close that had once been land in Boarse field.¹¹ Similarly, at Berkhamsted in 1607, a tenant occupied "one close of arable land called New Close lying in the bottom of Barkham field",¹² and in 1616 another held "eight closes of arable land and meadow land containing by estimation 25 acres lying in a field called Barne Deane".¹³ Such enclosure of the

(1) PRO IR 2/216, ff.39-70.

(2) HRO 13622.

(3) "The Shardeloes Muniments", op.cit..

(4) e.g. HRO 29.

(5) HRO 23.

(6) HRO 1162.

(7) LRO AT37.

(8) LRO Ter.22/299.

(9) PRO IR2/210, ff.242-87.

(10) Ibid., f.245.

(11) Ibid., f.249. Nuffield was in Chesham parish, cf. "two closes called Nouffefields, and two pieces of arable land lying in the common called Nouff field" in 1623, "The Shardeloes Muniments", op.cit., 232.

(12) PRO E315/365, ff.1-66.

(13) PRO E315/366, ff.33.

common arable had been taking place at least since the early sixteenth century - a six acre croft had been fenced-in from Bower field in Wheathamstead by 1538.¹ One of the best descriptions of the results of piecemeal enclosure occurs in a 1725 survey of land in High Wycombe. A one acre strip enclosed in Rye field was divided from the rest of the field by a new hedge, and a five acre piece was "parted from the two before mentioned pieces by the new hedge".² There are similar descriptions of enclosed land within the common fields, and of land once part of a common field, for most townships in which common arable existed. Enclosure was taking place throughout the Chilterns, at Codicote³ and King's Walden⁴ in the northeast, as at Little Missenden⁵ and the Hampdens⁶ to the southwest. Its effect on the landscape was to produce a pattern of irregular common fields, often surrounded by small closes, many of which were elongated, fossilized strips; and with hedged plots scattered within the remaining common arable (Figs. 1, 6, 8, 9, 18, 32).

Many smaller closes were products of the enclosure of individual half acre and one acre strips, but, in the case of the larger blocks of land that were fenced-in, strip consolidation was a frequent prerequisite. In 1706, a King's Walden holding included "one close or piece of land lately enclosed and commonly called Lay Field close containing five acres, and seven acres of land in a field or place called Haddon whereof four acres are enclosed in one piece and are called Galloos Close and three acres residue thereof lie dispersedly in the said field called Haddon".⁷ Evidence from Offley is even more explicit. On a common arable holding there between 1705 and 1753, "the seven acre piece in Wellbury Season has had an acre added to it. The whole eight acres are now enclosed and lie in two closes".⁸

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- (1) Westm. 8971.
 - (2) CCA Cap.I/29/6.
 - (3) See below, p.142 and Table XVI.
 - (4) See below, p.191 and Table XII.
 - (5) PRO LR2/210, f.156.
 - (6) BuCM 417/39, 418/39.
 - (7) BM Add. Ms. 335842.
 - (8) HRO 57595.

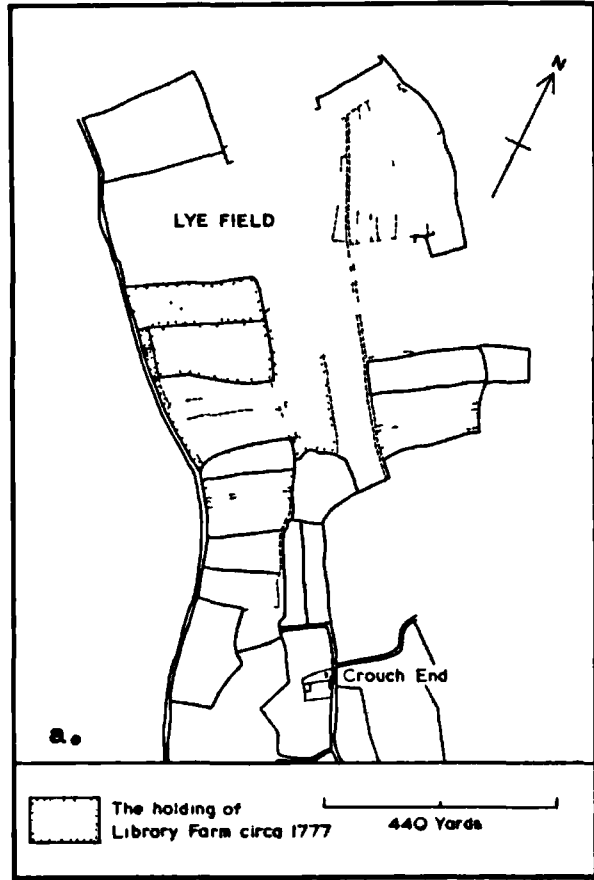


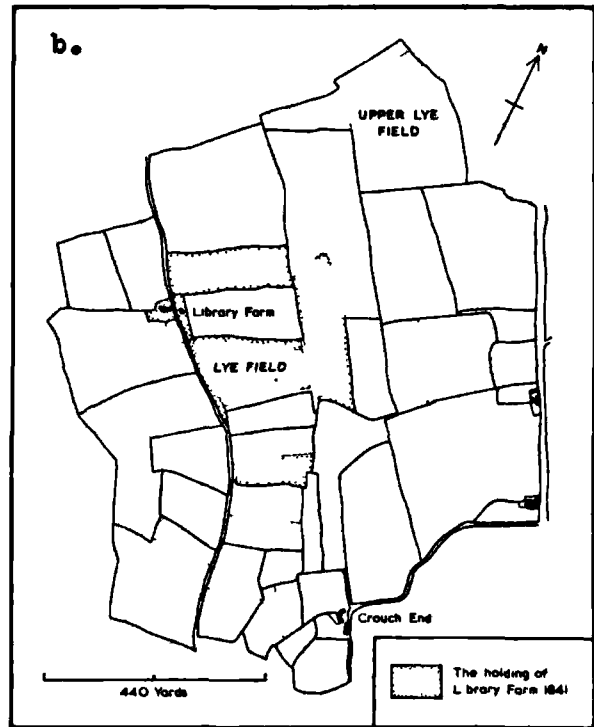
FIG. 9. The enclosure of Lye field in Redbourne.

a. Lye field c.1770.

Source:- HRO Box 69, XIII, 16.

b. Lye field in 1841.

Source:- the Tithe Map.



Consolidation was effected by purchase and exchange. At least 22 exchanges of copyhold land are recorded in the court rolls for Great Gaddesden between 1556 and 1583.¹ Sometimes the exchange was of land in the same field, sometimes of strips in different fields. Six transfers involved land in Mill field - by 1579, a seven acre piece in Mill field was being described as "now inclosed".² Another four exchanges included strips in Dunn field. By the end of the century, the pieces in this field were shared by a relatively small number of tenants - six men occupied the 33 acres in Dunn field whereas 13 tenants had strips in Mill field which was the same size³ - and a few years later a two acre close, a twelve acre close and a 14 acre close had been taken from Dunn field.⁴ Numerous exchanges were also made in the common fields of Lilley during the sixteenth century, and again many pieces were enclosed from the common arable. In 1565, for example, Thomas Rudd gave two acres in Dan field in return for land in the same field. The piece he acquired abutted on the close that he had recently enclosed from the field.⁵ At Little Gaddesden, on the other hand, strip consolidation in North field was by purchase rather than exchange. By 1664, parts of North field had already been enclosed piecemeal - of the four glebe acres in the field, two formed separate closes.⁶ A few years later, a Mr. Jarman bought all the other land in the field, which he then divided into closes. The dispersed glebe was bought together in a single four acre block and leased out to Mr. Jarman.⁷

Where consolidation was not immediately followed by enclosure, its effects were most evident in the great, and increasing irregularity of strip sizes. From Offley there is a description of the actual amalgamation of a number of arable strips to form a single large piece. Part of a common arable holding there, in 1753, included "an acre, headland to the shot shooting into Kidland Dole and half acre in the same shot changed by the tenant

(1) HRO 28-49.

(2) HRO 45.

(3) HRO 1162.

(4) HRO 59a, 1162. For other evidence of piecemeal enclosure in Great Gaddesden see Table VIII.

(5) HRO 47585.

(6) LRO AT36

(7) Ibid..

for my half acre in Holeshill one acre of Mr. R. Shepherd by the tenants for land of mine shooting against Templeheld hedge. Makes now what the tenant calls a three acre piece in the common field".¹

Although enclosure was often of a single strip or of a larger block of amalgamated pieces by the individual farmer, consolidation and the consequent breakdown of the strip pattern did not always precede or immediately follow subtraction of land from the common arable. Enclosure need not imply consolidation.² The larger closes often remained subdivided into strips held by different tenants.³ Possibly a few men sometimes agreed to fence-in part of their land in order to exclude livestock when the fields were thrown open for common pasturing. More flexible cropping arrangements could then be followed. The result was to lengthen still further the transition from common arable to closes held in severalty. Evidence of the continuation of a strip system in enclosed plots occurs almost as frequently as that of pieces enclosed directly from the common fields. A late sixteenth century survey of the manor of Great Gaddesden shows that William Halsey occupied four pieces "lying in a New Close", and that William Rose held one acre in "the close lying in Dunfeilde".⁴ A tenant of Codicote owned a one acre piece in a two acre croft in Arche field in 1546,⁵ while pieces in New Field close, referred to in a Welwyn deed of 1678, likewise represents a continuation of the strip pattern in an enclosure from the common field.⁶ Typical of numerous references in King's Walden is an admission to copyhold land in 1762, which included "one piece of arable land lying in a close called New Close lately inclosed from the common field called Wandon field also one

(1) HRO 57595. The holding also included a piece "in Wellbury season that has had an acre added to it. The whole eight acres are now inclosed and lie in two closes".

(2) cf. Gray "The enclosure of the old fields implied a consolidation of the scattered parcels of each holding and a cessation of communal tillage". H.L. Gray, *op.cit.*, 8.

(3) Similar features have been noted elsewhere. e.g. in the Norfolk Breklands, M.R. Postgate, "The field systems of Brekland", *AHR* 10 (1962), 84.

(4) HRO 1162.

(5) BM Add. Ms. 40735

(6) HRO 74959.

other piece of arable land lying in a close called Buckhurst and lately enclosed from the common field aforesaid",¹ while at Redbourne in 1692, a two acre piece was described as lying in "a field heretofore common called Woodfield".² Occasionally, a strip within a close taken from the common arable was itself enclosed. A tenant of King's Walden, for example, held one acre inclosed in a close in Ley field in 1669.³

Neither conversion of arable to pasture, nor the introduction of new crops, were significant features in Chiltern enclosure. Little of the enclosed land was turned to grass,⁴ and crops such as turnips and clover, which would have allowed the abolition of the fallow course, were not widely adopted in the Hills until the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁵ The main stimulus for sixteenth and seventeenth century enclosure was the growth of the London food market,⁶ a growth which encouraged intensification of the traditional arable husbandry.. One of the chief obstacles to more efficient production was the existence of common grazing rights over the common fields, and it was probably to free land of this obligation, more than any other reason, that men were enclosing their common arable. In the absence of large-scale agreements to abolish common rights, the only way by which the individual could break away from the common routine was to fence-in his own land. But, just as enclosure did not necessarily mean the disappearance of a pattern of open strips, so extinction of the common rights cannot always be implied from the enclosure of common arable land. Rights of common grazing sometimes continued to be enforced over land that had been fenced-off from the rest of the common arable.⁷ Alternatively, restriction or abolition of grazing rights could precede enclosure. In 1698, a number of landholders in Offley

(1) BM Add. Ms. 335843, f.106.

(2) HRO 41333.

(3) BM Add. Ms. 335812.

(4) See below, p.88-9.

(5) See above, p.17.

(6) F.J. Fisher, op. cit..

(7) See above, p.50.

proposed to make the common fields between Offley and Hitchin "every years land", that is to abolish the fallow season, by agreement between themselves. One of the obstacles to this proposal was "How to keep the foreigners from damaging us, who by reason of parcels in our fields, pretend common?"¹ Agreements such as this brought some of the benefits of enclosure without the complicated and expensive business of reallocation. Yet again the result was to prolong the change from common arable to several closes.

In general, measures to prevent enclosure were ineffective. At most they slowed down the pace of enclosure. They could not prevent it entirely. Two tenants of Great Gaddesden were presented at a manorial court of 1524 for keeping land in severalty in three common fields after the grain had been cleared,² but by the end of the century large areas of common arable had been enclosed in the parish. Again, at the seventeenth century courts of Little Hampden, the tenants complained more than once of land taken from the common fields "wherein ye tenants ought to have free common", but the enclosure remained.³ Little effort seems to have been made after 1550 to remove fences from around newly enclosed land. The inevitability of the situation was usually accepted. Only smaller tenants stood to lose by enclosure, and they could do little. In any case, the fact that the number of beasts a tenant could keep in the common fields was usually tied to the size of his common arable holding, meant that common grazing offered no particular advantage even to the smallholder. At Flamstead, in fact, right of enclosure seems to have been an established privilege. A court of 1659 noted that "by ancient custom the freehold and copyhold tenants of this manor may inclose their lands lying in the manor paying yearly to the lord of the said manor one penny for the said inclosure".⁴ This is the only example of actual licence to enclose being granted by the manor.

Enclosure by the methods described above was a slow business. Common fields were gradually reduced through the attrition of

(1) HRO 51084.
 (2) HRO 22.
 (3) BuCH 416-18/39.
 (4) HRO 17688.

individual action, a process that often took centuries to complete. A strip field might survive long after the first enclosure in it. South field was the last common field to remain in Little Gaddesden - it was finally enclosed under the General Act of 1836¹ - but closes were being made in South field in the sixteenth century.² A tenant of the manor of Legats and Parkbury was admitted to a New Close of four acres "taken from the common field called Smith field" in Kimpton in 1665.³ Six years later another admission in the same manor was to "two acres of land inclosed and taken from the field called Church field" otherwise Smith field.⁴ A map made at the end of the eighteenth century shows that Church field still existed then.⁵ At King's Walden, High field, Leggats field, Cholney field and Wandon field all survived until parliamentary enclosure at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Fig. 27) although pieces had been enclosed within them as early as the sixteenth century (Table XII), while North field in Caddington was not completely in severalty until 1798,⁶ in spite of considerable seventeenth century activity.⁷ To the southwest, Ball field in the Hampdens and Wide field in Great Missenden⁹ both survived well into the nineteenth century even although some strips within them had been fenced-off since the early seventeenth century.¹⁰

Relatively little common arable in the Chilterns was enclosed by Act of Parliament (Fig. 3). This was partly because there were only small amounts in many townships, and partly because much of what common arable there was had usually been enclosed by private piecemeal action.

(1) HRO C2/55.

(2) e.g. Crabtree Close in South field was first mentioned in 1573, HRO 62

(3) HRO 48435.

(4) HRO 48434.

(5) HRO 40443.

(6) BuRO MA 46.

(7) e.g. in 1605 an 8½a. piece in North field was described as "now enclosed", HRO 11992.

(8) Tithe Map.

(9) Ibid..

(10) BuCM 416-418/39; PRO LR2/210, f.156.

Where the procedure of an act of Parliament was adopted, it was to round-off centuries of work by private enclosers, and to end the existence of the last stubborn remnants of common arable land. West of the Gade, parliamentary enclosure was, in most parishes, synonymous with the enclosure of common waste rather than of common fields.

Enclosed Arable Fields

There were large amounts of enclosed arable land in all Chiltern townships after 1550. These amounts were steadily increasing as the common arable fields were enclosed, and as private woods and common wastes were cleared for cultivation. As already seen, the proportion of enclosed arable in a township increased from the northeast towards the southwest, where all the arable in a number of townships was enclosed and held in severalty. In every Chiltern parish, some farm holdings consisted of enclosed land alone (Table I), while individual common arable holdings were usually combined with substantial proportions of enclosed land.¹

Like the common fields, closes held in severalty were surrounded by hedges. As Kalm commented, with reference to the area around Little Gaddesden in 1748, "The arable fields were almost everywhere divided into small inclosures, always with living hedges around them instead of fences".² The practice of leaving hedgegreens, unploughed grass strips ten to twelve feet wide, around the edge of fields, enclosed and common, had already been referred to.³ Hedgerows were also a useful source of timber, and frequently figure as such in court rolls and surveys.⁴ Sometimes, particularly in the southwest, strips of timber around a field were really small woodland springs rather than hedges (Fig. 43). References to other methods of enclosing land are few. Hurdles are mentioned from time to time, but they were probably used for regulating grazing within fields rather than as permanent boundaries.⁵

(1) See below, p.71.

(2) J. Lucas, op. cit., 245.

(3) See above, p.45.

(4) e.g. A dispute about hedge timber at Little Hampden, BuCM 415/39; and 10a. of wood in the hedgerows in a Bix holding, PRO IR2/196, f.186.

(5) See above, p.51.

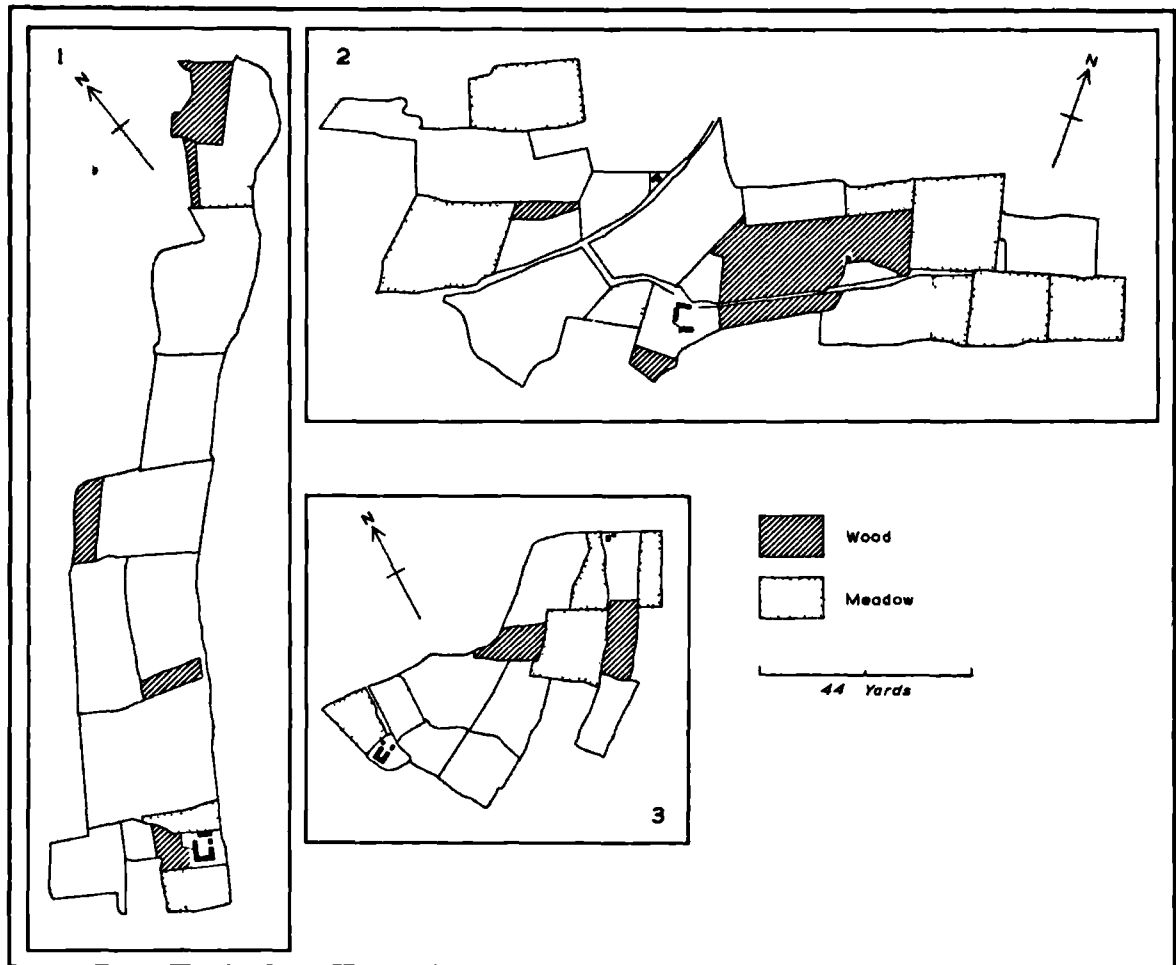


FIG. 10. Three enclosed farms in Great Gaddesden.

(1) Old House Farm, 1761.

(2) Marsh Farm, 1740.

(3) Bunkers Farm, 1763.

Sources:- HRO 15596, 15598-9.

In the southwest and central Chilterns, the average size of enclosed fields was between four and six acres (Table II), but this figure decreased towards the northeast - the average at Codicote and King's Walden in the sixteenth century was 3.6 acres and 2.9 acres respectively. The small size of closes in the northeast compared with other parts of the Hills can be accounted for in three ways. Firstly, because areas of common arable land were more extensive in the northeast and the total area of enclosed arable land correspondingly less, a greater proportion of the latter consisted of the small crofts immediately adjacent to farmsteads and cottages. To the southwest, on the other hand, homestead crofts took up only a small proportion of the total enclosed acreage. There, enclosed fields were the normal units of arable husbandry, and for efficient cultivation they could not be too small. Secondly, in the northeast, where many of the gently sloping valley sides were under common fields, the majority of closes were confined to the ridge-tops where their size was, to some extent, restricted by topography. Thirdly, many of the arable closes of the northeast had been recently enclosed from common fields as small blocks of strips, whereas most of the closes in the southwest had probably been held in severalty ever since they were first cleared from the waste.

Throughout the Chilterns, close sizes also reflected two other factors, namely the significance of settlement patterns and the greater size of former demesne fields. In parishes where there was a town or large village, the average size of enclosed fields was low because of the large number of small closes behind the streets and alleys. The average size of tenant closes in Kings Langley, a small parish centred on a town, was 3.9 acres in 1619. In comparison, at Great Gaddesden a few miles away, where settlement was largely dispersed, the average tenant enclosure contained 5.3 acres, while at Redbourne, with a village and a number of outlying hamlets and farmsteads, the average tenant close was 5.1 acres. On most Chiltern manors, the average size of the demesne fields was considerably larger than that of the tenant closes. (Table II).

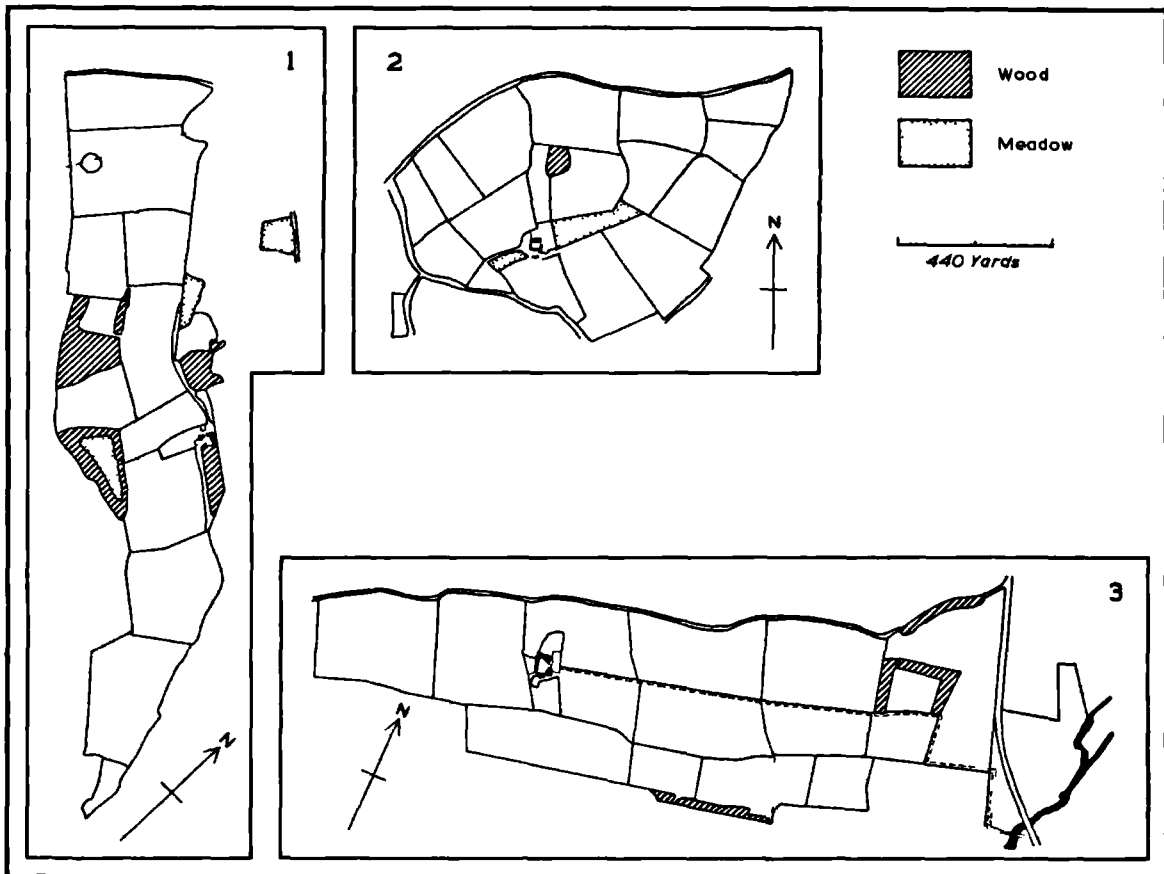


FIG. 11. Three enclosed farms in Redbourne and Hemel Hempstead.

(1) Nicholl's Farm in Redbourne and Flamstead, 1762.

(2) Boxted Farm in Hemel Hempstead, 1735.

(3) Butler's Farm in Redbourne and St Michaels, 1832.

Sources:- HRO 79700, AH680(425), Box 69 XIII 16.

TABLE II

The average size (in acres) of tenant and demesne closes in some 16th and 17th century surveys.

Location of area surveyed (from SW to NE)	Date	Tenant Closes	Demesne Closes
Stonor, Bix etc.	1725	11.1	-
Stokenchurch	1675	4.1	-
Great Hampden	1653	5.9	16.6
Great Missenden C.1550 &	1606	4.2	21.0
Little Missenden	1606	2.5	6.0
Berkhamstead & Northchurch	c.1600	6.25	15.0
Little Gaddesden	1609	3.5	-
Great Gaddesden	c.1600	5.3	12.5
King's Langley	1619	3.9	15.0
Redbourne	1692	5.1	-
King's Walden	1568	2.9	2.6
Codicote	1546	3.6	-

Sources:- Stonor, Bix etc., Bod. Ms. Maps, Oxon. a.2; Stokenchurch, Bod. Ms. Top. Bucks. B7, f.22; the rest as in Table I.

Fields of the former demesne in King's Langley averaged 15 acres, compared with 3.9 acres for the tenant closes, while at Great Gaddesden demesne fields were eleven acres larger, on average, than the tenant enclosures. This is not to say that demesne fields individually were especially large. In many manors the largest was no bigger than many tenant closes, but as a body the network of demesne fields was remarkable for their greater average size.

Closes of all sizes were occasionally subdivided into two parts. This is apparent from sixteenth and seventeenth century descriptions of land and from the later maps. Sometimes the separate parts had been leased-out to different tenants;¹ sometimes an entire field was held by one farm but was partly under grass (Fig.10), or had been divided for cropping purposes;² and sometimes the field was a relict of enclosure from the common arable which had not been completely consolidated.

(1) e.g. In closes called Hodginlane and Cloudinale in Great Gaddesden, HRO 1162.

(2) e.g. William Strode of Medmenham cultivated oats and barley in the one close at the same time, LRO Inv. 56/309.

into single ownership (Fig. 34). Usually not more than five or six closes in a manor were divided in this way at any one time (Figs. 6, 34).

During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries field boundaries were being changed. Not only were common fields being reduced in size and new closes created, but existing arable enclosures were being amalgamated or divided-up. There was a trend towards greater uniformity of field size. At Redbourne in 1692, the fields of a 142 acre farm, consisting of closes and pieces recently enclosed from the common arable, were completely reorganised. On balance, the trend throughout the Chilterns was towards amalgamation of smaller closes into larger fields. At Berkhamsted at the beginning of the seventeenth century,¹ and at Redbourne² at the end of the century, recently united closes slightly outnumbered those larger fields that had been divided up into smaller closes. Rationalisation of enclosed fields was no doubt a result of the same pressures that encouraged enclosure from the common arable, namely intensification of the traditional Chiltern husbandry to supply the growing London market. Not until after 1800, however, was there a radical change in the pattern of closes in the Chilterns. Since then field boundaries have been removed to form larger arable units,³ a change that has been most marked in the northeast where enclosed fields were smallest. The present field pattern in many parts of the Hills has evolved only during the last century and a half.

(1) PRO E315/365, f.f.1-66; E315/366, ff.1-78; BM Lansd. Ms.905, ff.95-124d.

(2) IRO 41333.

(3) This can be seen by comparing late eighteenth century estate maps and parish maps with Tithe Maps and successive editions of the Ordnance Survey 6" maps.

Cropping Arrangements

Sixteenth and seventeenth century probate inventories suggest that a three-course rotation was followed on many holdings. In the inventories sown acreages were usually fairly evenly divided between the winter-sown crops, wheat and rye, and the spring-sown oats, pease and vetch. Barley was sown in both seasons (Appendix Ai). When Richard Hill of Harpenden died in May 1598, he left sixty acres of wheat, rye and barley, and eighty acres described as sown with lent corn, that is spring-sown crops.¹ John Sawell of Nettleden was waiting to harvest nine acres of wheat and ten acres of oats and pease when he died in August 1604,² and Richard Gates of Chesham had sown 15 acres of wheat and 16 acres of lent corn by June 1588.³ Land sown with barley may sometimes have provided an additional course. Richard Wright of Hughenden, for example, left 14 acres of wheat and rye, twelve acres of oats, pease and vetch and seven acres of barley.⁴ There is no evidence after 1550 as to the proportion of a holding that was usually left fallow.

It is important to distinguish cropping arrangements in the common arable fields from those on individual holdings. Many holdings combined common arable with enclosed arable land, common arable which might be scattered between three or four or more small common fields.⁵ The existence of common grazing rights on the stubble and fallow in the common fields implies the existence of some kind of uniformity of cropping there. According to Gray "the easy utilization of the fallow for pasture was what lay behind the existence of two or three comprehensive fields."⁶ This was certainly the case in those Chiltern parishes for which evidence of cropping arrangements on the common arable survive. Different crops were grown in a single common field, but they were of the same course, sown and harvested at approximately the same time. At Bix in April 1613, for example, common arable held by

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- (1) LRO Inv. 90/145.
 - (2) LRO Inv. 99/49.
 - (3) LRO Inv. 79/209.
 - (4) LRO Inv. 99/47.
 - (5) See below, p.67-85.
 - (6) H.L. Gray, op.cit., 48.

Redpits Farm in Chalk Field was under the winter-sown wheat and rye, while spring-sown oats and vetches were in South field (Table X). Similarly, at Offley in 1705, a common arable holding lay in three of the many common fields in the parish. All the land in each of the fields lay fallow every third year,¹ an arrangement that was still working in 1753, only fifty years before enclosure. Clearly some kind of communal routine based on a three-course rotation was followed in the common fields of Offley.

The typical Chiltern pattern was of a large number of relatively small common fields. For cropping and grazing these were sometimes grouped into the required number of courses. At Lilley, there were at least 21 common fields in the second half of the sixteenth century, but for cropping purposes two "fields" alone were referred to in the orders made at successive manorial courts.² These were Middle field and Berry field. In reality, they were cropping courses each comprising a number of small common fields, temporary groupings of fields and not true fields in the sense of a single physical unit. Common fields in each course may not even have been near each other, but may have been scattered throughout the manor. Berry field was the name for the barley, or spring-sown course.³ In 1570 it included six common fields and two closes.⁴ No doubt in the following season the same "field" comprised another group. Sixteenth and seventeenth century evidence from Little Gaddesden shows the operation there of both features described above in the examples from Offley and Lilley, namely the existence of a three-course rotation over common arable land, and the grouping of common fields into cropping courses (Appendix D).⁵

(1) HRO 57594-5.

(2) HRO 47553, 47561, 47566-7, 47585.

(3) In 1563 there was a reference to "le Berryfylde al' le Barley fylde", HRO 44567.

(4) These were Sower Hill field, Worman Pightle, West field, the field under the town, Coplow field, Berryhill field, the Shawes and Mowce Hill field, HRO 47585.

(5) The basis of this evidence is the orders made at successive manorial courts concerning the hedges and fences around the common fields. The way in which this evidence has been used is discussed in Appendix D.

The common arable of this small parish was divided between four fields. The three-course rotation was followed within them, and for the purpose of this rotation the two smaller common fields, Church field and Lye field, were always considered as one. The rotation followed was wheat, spring-sown crops and fallow. The fallow course of one season was always the wheat course of the succeeding season. Occasionally, however, the system was disrupted, as in 1638-39 when spring-sown crops rather than wheat followed the fallow in North field. Again, references to common grazing on the stubble of a "wheat field" and a "lent-corn field" in Flamstead,¹ in the "wheat field" in Kensworth² and Caddington³, and in a "wheat corn season" in Ippollitts, suggests that in these townships, too, a number of common fields were combined in some way in simple three-shift arrangements.

A three-course rotation was, then, widely followed on farm holdings and in some fields in the Chilterns during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for which the numerous common fields in at least some parishes were divided amongst three groups, each forming a single cropping course, and within which the triennial fallow was enforced. A three-field system of a kind certainly existed in parts of the Hills.

(1) BM Add. Ms. 6035.

(2) St. Paul's Press B.No.12, July 9 H.VIII.

(3) Ibid., Sept. 11 H. VIII.

The Arable Holding

The sown area of the median farm in the Chilterns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was eight acres (Table III¹), and the total arable area about twelve acres - the usual median size of holdings in various manorial surveys was eleven to twelve acres.

TABLE III

Sown acreages of some 16th and 17th century holdings.

Area of sown land (acres)	No. of holdings
5 and less	5
5.25 - 10	11
10.25 - 20	7
20.25 - 30	2
30.25 - 40	1
40.25 - 50	1
50.25 - 100	4
More than 100	2
Total number of farms	33

There were wide variations, but the great majority of farms (66% in Table III) contained less than 21 acres of cropped land in an average year. The distribution of the land of the individual holding in the Chilterns presents a complicated pattern, one which Gray assessed concisely when he wrote, with reference to the field systems of Hertfordshire south of the crest of the Chalk outcrop, "in so far as the holdings of a township lay in open fields, the fields were many and

(1) Table III is based on probate inventories (references as in Appendix A, i.) which are a more suitable source than surveys and rentals. The disadvantage of surveys are two-fold viz. :- i) they were usually made on a manorial basis, and therefore did not include land in a holding that might be in another manor ii) they usually record land held by tenants from the manor, and do not indicate the degree of subletting. The size of landholdings might bear little relationship to actual farm size. Inventories, on the other hand, include all the sown land on a single holding. The main drawback to their use is that they do not indicate total farm size, nor do they usually refer to individual fields.

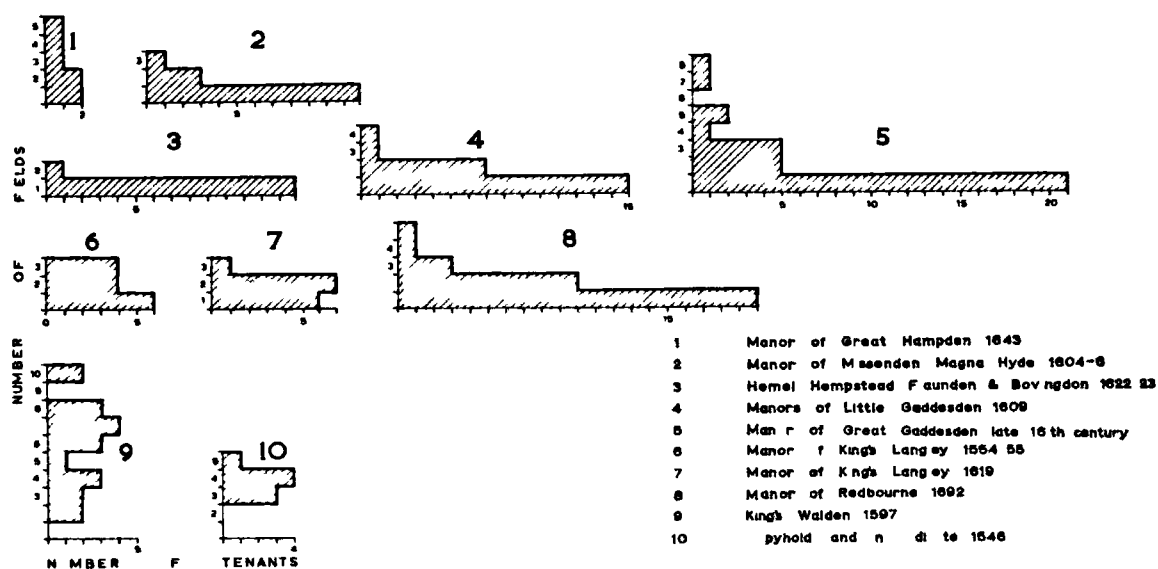


FIG. 12. The distribution of individual common arable holdings between common fields, eg. in Great Hampden (1) two tenants had land in only one field, two had land in two fields etc..

Sources:- 1. BuRO D/MH 28/2 2. PRO LR2/210, ff.243-87
 3. PRO LR2/216, ff.39-70 4. HRO 851 5. HRO 1162 6. HRO Uncat..
 7. HRO 20108 8. HRO 41333 9. BM Add. Ms. 33581
 10. BM Add. Ms. 40735.

there was no symmetry in the distribution of parcels among them".¹
Five features distinguish the pattern.

Firstly, in all Chiltern townships a substantial number of holdings consisted entirely of enclosed and several land (Figs. 10 and 11). The proportion of completely enclosed farms increased towards the southwest where, in some parishes, all holdings were in severalty. Elsewhere in the Hills there were wide local variations.²

TABLE IV

The importance of common arable land in the holdings of tenants of common arable named in some 16th and 17th century surveys.

Location of area surveyed	Date	I	II	III	IV
High Wycombe	1626	-	4	4	8
Great Hampden	1653	3	-	3	6
Great Missenden	1604	5	8	4	17
Berkhamsted	C:1600	28	33	9	70
Great Gaddesden	C:1600	23	7	5	35
Little Gaddesden	1609	11	17	9	37
Hemel Hempstead	1622	10	3	2	15
King's Langley	1619	9	4	2	15
Redbourne	1692	21	11	4	36
Harpenden	1624	1	3	5	9
King's Walden	1568	16	16	5	37
Codicote	1546	6	4	-	10

- I. Number of holdings with common arable land in which this comprised 49% or less of the total holding.
- II. Ditto, 50% to 99%.
- III. Ditto 100% (i.e. entire holding was common arable).
- IV. Total number of common arable holdings.

Sources:- as in Table I except for High Wycombe, CCA Cap.I/29/1; and Harpenden, HRO 46185.

- (1) H.L. Gray, op.cit., 371.
(2) See above, p. 29.

TABLE V

Some holdings with common arable land in Bix and Swyncombe, 1609.

Tenants	Enc.	C.f.	Common Fields			Penny-pits
			land	South field	Chalk field	
John Couper	-	3.0 100	1.5 50	1.5 50		
John Clear	-	4.0 100	2.0 50	1.5 38	0.5 12	
Thomas Clerk	a)	2.5 18.0 88	10.0 56	4.0 22		2.0 11
	b)	6.75 25.0 89	15.0 60	6.0 24		4.0 16
John Boler		83.5 74.0 43	50.0 71	16.0 18	8.0 11	
Number of common field holdings			5	5	2	2
Acreage of common field holdings			78.5	29.0	8.5	6.0

Note. In the entry for each tenant the upper figure is land in acres, and the lower figure a percentage viz. a) common field land as a percentage of the total farmland of the holding and b) land in the individual common field as a percentage of the common field holding.

Source:- PRO E315/388, ff.5,7,47,55-56.

Secondly, most of the holdings that contained common arable land also included a significant area of enclosed arable. Usually, only the smallest holdings might consist of common arable entirely. At Berkhamsted in the early seventeenth century, for example, the complete holdings of only nine of the seventy common arable tenants lay within the common fields, while at the other end of the scale, less than 50% of the holdings of 28 tenants was common arable (Table IV). The proportion of common to enclosed arable in individual tenures varied greatly from place to place within the region. Whereas 26 of 37 common arable tenants (in Little Gaddesden in 1609) had less than half of their land in severalty, in the neighbouring manor of Great Gaddesden 23 of the 35 common arable tenants had less than half of their holdings in the common fields (Table IV). Similar variations occurred throughout the Hills. In Great Missenden and Great and Little Hampden to the southwest, and in manors in Harpenden and Codicote in the northeast, the greater proportion of those who held common arable land had more than half of their holding in the common fields (Table IV). In King's Langley and Redbourne, on the other hand, the situation was reversed, while in King's Walden a little over half of those farmers with a common arable holding had the greater proportion of their lands in the strip fields (Table IV). In general, the small tenant was more likely to hold a high percentage of his land in common fields than the larger landholders. At Little Gaddesden in 1609, only two of the nine tenants whose holdings were entirely of common arable land, held more than five acres (Table VII). Similarly, at Great Gaddesden all five holdings that consisted of common field land alone were smaller than five acres, whereas seven of the eleven farmers with less than 10% of their farms in the common arable each had more than fifty acres in the parish (Table VIII). In general, the larger the total holding, the smaller the proportion that lay in common fields.

The main feature of the common arable holding in the Chilterns was its irregular apportionment between the common fields of a township. Rarely, in those parishes where there was more than one

TABLE VI

Holdings with common arable land in the manor of Great Hampden, 1653.

Tenants	Enc. land	C.f.	Common Fields				
			West field	Hill field	Blackett field	Ball field	Court field
John Lydall	98.0	89.0 42	54.0 60	28.0 32	7.0 8		
Robert Morton	114.0	65.5 36	1.0 2	22.0 34	33.25 51	0.5 1	8.75 13
Widow Hare	7.25	1.75 5	0.5 29	1.25 71			
Robert Fletcher	-	4.7 100				4.7 100	
John Knight	-	3.5 100		1.7 46	1.8 54		
Jack Treacher		1.5 100	1.5 100				
'Lands belonging to Little Hampden in the common'			28.75 11.25	1.0 in West field but in Little Hampden parish and manor.		16.8	33.25
Number of common field holdings			4	6	3	3	2
Acreage of common field holdings			95.5	55.45	42.05	21.8	41.5

Note. As in Table V.

Source:- BuRO D/MH 28/2.

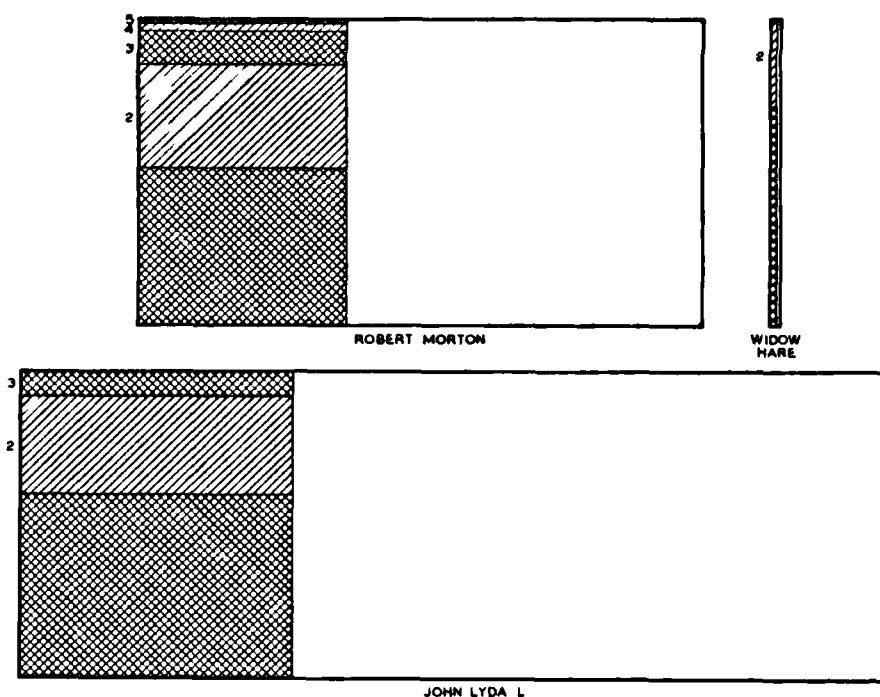


FIG. 13. Three holdings in Great Hampden, 1653. Each rectangle represents one complete holding, the shaded sector that proportion of the holding in common fields (subdivided proportionally into numbered units representing amounts in the different common fields), and the unshaded sector the proportion of the holding that was enclosed.

Source:- BuRO D/MH 28/2.

common field did a tenant hold land in all the fields there - only two examples have been found, and both in townships with relatively few common fields. Robert Morton held pieces in all five fields of the manor of Great Hampden in 1653 (Table VI), while the holding of Peter Garrett in Little Gaddesden in 1609 included land in all four common fields there - none of the 26 other common arable tenants in Little Gaddesden held strips in all four fields (Table VII). Usually, a holding was scattered within a small group of common fields. In the manor of Great Gaddesden, 21 of 36 tenants at the end of the sixteenth century held all their common arable in only one of the twenty or more common fields, while ten of the remaining tenants held pieces in only two or three fields. One man alone had land in more than eight (Fig. 12). This pattern was characteristic, in varying degrees, of all Chiltern manors where there were three or four or more common fields. It recurs in sixteenth and seventeenth century rentals, surveys, terriers, court rolls and deeds, as well as on the later maps - in fact in every document that records the distribution of common arable land.

Usually, the concentration of holdings into a few of many common fields in a parish was on a geographical basis, in that the common arable of a tenant lay in fields near to his farmstead or cottage. But, as already seen, in many parishes it is possible to go further, and to distinguish certain groupings of common fields in the township from the pattern of localisation. Thus in the two Berkhamsted parishes, three distinct groups of strip fields can be distinguished by the early seventeenth century;¹ in King's Walden, farms in the southern part of the parish rarely included land in the small common fields in the north of the township, and vice versa, although holdings centred in the north and south of the parish both shared land in the central belt of larger common fields;² while at Great Gaddesden (Table VIII) and Redbourne (Table IX) in the seventeenth century, and at Knebworth and Studham in the eighteenth century,³ most common arable holdings were

(1) See above, p.43
 (2) See below, p.154
 (3) See above, p.44.

TABLE VII

Holdings with common arable land in
the manors of Little Gaddesden, 1609.

Tenants	Eno. C.f.		Common Fields				Unnamed c.f. or in another parish
	land		North field	South field	Church field	Lye field	
John Bedford	11.0	16.0 59	2.0 13				14.0 87
Richard Bedford	10.0	13.25 57	5.0 38	2.75 21			5.5 41
Thomas Cleaver	-	1.0 100	1.0 100				
Daniel Cotton	27.0	3.0 10	3.0 100				
Francis Cotton	8.0	1.5 16				1.5 100	
Richard Dacre	45.0	9.25 21				2.75 24	7.0 76
Daniel Deane	-	1.0 100					1.0 100
Thomas Deane	2.0	5.5 73	5.5 100				
Robert Diar	1.5	8.5 85		1.5 18			7.0 82
Robert Dornar	-	2.0 100	1.0 50				1.0 50
John Eames	-	20.0 100	5.0 25	7.0 35			8.0 40
Richard Field	13.0	3.25 20	3.0 92		0.25 8		
John Garrett	-	4.12 100	2.5 69	1.0 26		0.12 5	
Peter Garrett	4.0	11.5 74	5.0 43	3.0 36	1.0 9	2.5 22	
Richard Garrett	10.0	1.0 9					1.0 100
Thomas Gosbell	24.75	35.5 59					35.5 100
Daniel Gybbe	-	0.5 100				0.5 100	
Edward Gurney	6.5	1.5 19					1.5 100
Thomas Hill	27.0	2.0 7	2.0 100				
William Hill	-	1.5 100		1.5 100			
Francis How	7.5	3.75 33					2.75 100
John Keen	23.0	11.25 33				2.25 22	9.0 88
Robert Man	5.0	3.0 38	3.0 100				
Richard Newell	13.0	1.0 7					1.0 100
Mr. Newman	34.75	8.25 19	5.0 100				
John Pratt	2.5	4.0 62	2.5 62	1.5 38			
William Pratt	-	26.0 100	?	2.0			24.0
Edward Westcott	11.0	0.5 35	0.5 100				
Number of common field holdings			15	8	3	6	
Acreage of holdings			41.0	23.25	3.25	9.62	49.0

Note. As in Table V.

Source:- HRO 851.

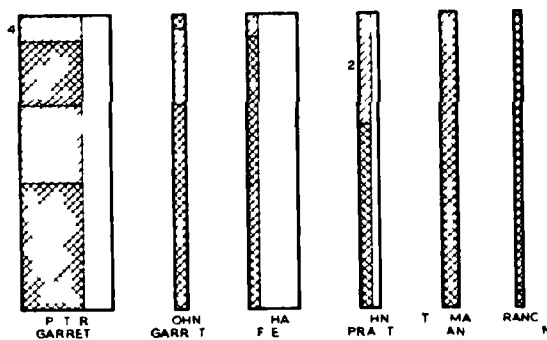


FIG. 14. Six holdings in Little Gaddesden, 1609.

Each rectangle represents one complete holding, the shaded sector the proportion of the holding in common fields (subdivided proportionally into numbered units representing amounts in the different common fields), and the unshaded sector the proportion of the holding that was enclosed.

Source:- HRO 851.

confined to only one of two sets of common fields that existed in each of these parishes. In many townships, groupings of common fields can be identified only by the concentration of holdings within them, and not by any marked physical separation from other areas of common arable land. But even where a holding was concentrated in one group of strip fields, rather than being scattered throughout the parish, it was rarely distributed between all the fields of this group. In Berkhamsted, for example, no tenant held strips in all the common fields around Northchurch, nor in either of the other two sets of fields in the township, although most common arable holdings were confined to only one of the three field clusters (Table XVIII). Just as few holdings included land in all the common fields of a township, so few men held land in all the strip fields of a more localised group within the parish.

By the early seventeenth century, the irregular apportionment of a holding between a number of common fields was, at least partly, the result of the consolidation and enclosure that was taking place after 1550. There were eight common fields in the manor of King's Langley in 1556, when six tenants held land in one field, four in two fields, and four had holdings in three fields.¹ By 1619, the same manor contained only four common fields, and in these the trend was towards the greater concentration of holdings into fewer fields. Six tenants held land in a single field, seven in only two fields, and a single tenant had pieces in three fields.²

When a holding lay in more than one common field, there was rarely any semblance of its equal division between them. This is abundantly clear from Tables V-IX. Not only was the average common arable holding in only a few of many common fields, but its distribution between the fields in which it did lie was very uneven. Irregularity was the rule. There was no evidence of the equitable allotment that might seem necessary for a balanced cropping system. The distribution of common arable land cannot, however, be assessed in terms of

(1) HRO Uncatalogued.
 (2) HRO 20108.

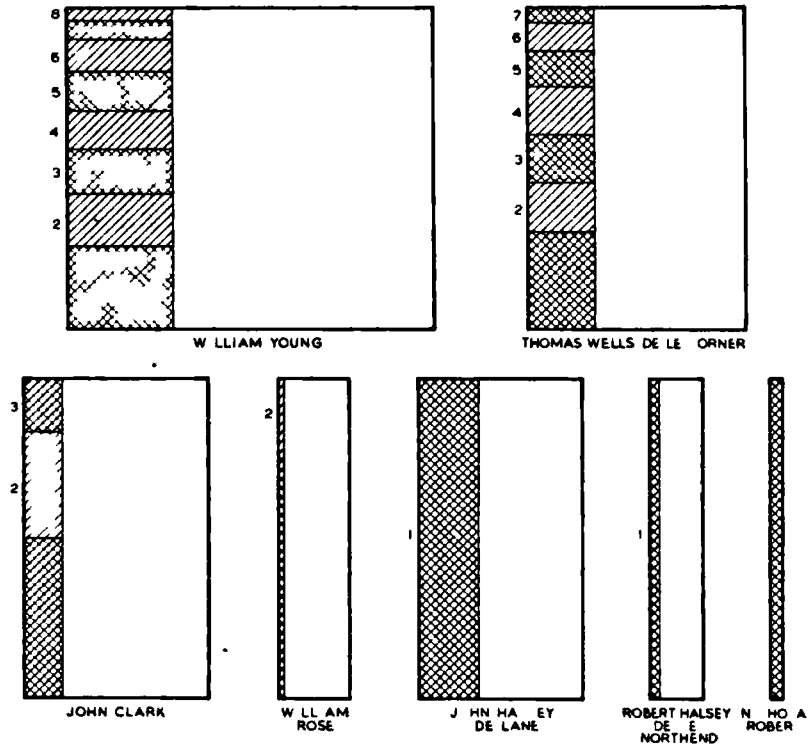


FIG. 15. Seven holdings in Great Gaddesden, c.1600. Each rectangle represents one complete holding, the shaded sector that proportion of the holding in common fields (subdivided proportionally into numbered units representing amounts in the different common fields), and the unshaded sector the proportion of the holding that was enclosed.

Source:- HRO 1162.

individual fields alone. More important was the allocation of land into common arable cropping courses. As already seen, in the Chilterns these could comprise all the land in a number of common fields.¹ The distribution of a holding between these groups of fields may therefore have been more significant than the distribution of land between the common fields themselves. But what little evidence there is, disproves this possibility. On many holdings an equitable division of land between common arable cropping courses was in fact never sought after. The Offley holding that was split between three common fields, each of which was fallow in successive years, lay in these fields in the proportions of seven acres, 16½ acres and 15½ acres.² Similarly, at Little Gaddesden, the apportionment of holdings between the three common arable courses followed there was no more regular than their distribution between individual common fields. The main reason for equality would have been to ensure a regular sequence of tillage on the common arable holding, so that proportions of cropped and fallow land were approximately the same every year. But, unlike the Midland open-field township, cropping on the Chiltern farm holding was not tied to the fixed routine of the common arable because few holdings consisted exclusively of common field land. Any irregularity in the allocation of common arable amongst the common field cropping seasons of the township could be balanced in the rotation of the holding by its combination with enclosed arable. On Redpits Farm in Bix, for example, the winter-sown course (wheat and rye) comprised both enclosed and common field land, the spring-sown course likewise (Table X). Unfortunately this is the only account of a farm holding that is sufficiently detailed for such analyses.³

(1) See above, p.66-8.

(2) HRO 57594-5. Seven acres was in Wellbury field (fallow in 1705), 16½ acres in Middle field (fallow in 1706) and 15½ acres in Catstail field (fallow in 1707).

(3) This is because descriptions of land in the Chilterns after 1550 rarely name the crops grown on the land. There are some exceptions, but they are too few in number and too ambiguous in interpretation to form the basis for any general conclusion.

TABLE IX

Holdings with common arable land in the manor of Redbourne, 1692.

Tenants	Location of Dwelling	Ac. C.f.		The Common Fields																				
		Land		Suf- field	Reading field	Lay field	Lye field	Ryecroft field	Booth field	Dudley field	Dudley Hills field	Beech field	Ort. field	Clays field	Lower field	Spencers field	Hensley field	Crouch field	Broad field	Wood field	Esarne field	Mill field	Founders field	
Jonathan Cook		4.5	1.5				1.5																	
Joseph & Widow Hayward		1.0	1.0					1.0																
Wardens of the Poor		-	10.0								10.0													
Thomas Pilgrim		-	7.0			6.5	0.5																	
John Twidell		-	0.75																					
Thomas Baldwin	Horrington End	-	0.1																					
Richard Birchmore	Horrington End	56.25	5.75		1.75		2.0																	
The Clark Sisters	Horrington End	6.5	1.5				1.5																	
Richard Hale	Horrington End	26.75	7		1	3	0.75																	
Joseph Hayward	Horrington End	-	2.75				head-land																	
Obediah Insey	Horrington End	17.5	4.7					3.75	0.75															
Mr. Reading	Horrington End	55.5	15.5			9.0	2.25	1.25	2.0															
George Simonds	Horrington End	12.0	5.0			5.0																		
Widow Sparks	Horrington End	5.5	2.75					2.75																
James Spring	Horrington End	1.25	4.75			4.0			0.75															
John Beech	Redbourne village	12.05	2.75			1.0		1.0																
John Halsey	Redbourne village	5.5	6.5			6.0																		
Richard Hickman	Redbourne village	9.75	2.25																					
Joseph Marchet	Redbourne village	5.0	1.25			0.25	1.0																	
Andrew Paddefate	Redbourne village	-	1.5			1.5																		
Jonathan Rose	Redbourne village	6.0	10.0			5.0																		
Jonathan Royle	Redbourne village	4.0	1.0					1.0																
Thomas Sells	Redbourne village	15.0	2.5			0.5				2.0														
Robert Martins	Revell End	22.1	1.5																					
Daniel Panoock	Revell End	06.75	5.0																					
John Tyler	Revell End	A field called Home field common (5a.) and a close called Sallow Common (10a.)																						
Edward Hawkins	Wood End	24.0	3.0																					
Mr. Ladysan	Wood End	-	4.75																					
Edward Neal	Wood End	166.0	1.0																					
Ed. Neal & Mgt. Foeter	Wood End	67.5	3.0																					
Thomas Potton	Wood End	39.0	3.5																					
Richard Robinson	Wood End	82.75	5.25																					
Samuel Beer	Hogg End, South End & Beeson End	127.0	18.0																					
Thomas Saunders	Hogg End & South End	155.5	7.75																					
Rigdon Baynon	Beeson End	120.25	24.75							10.0	1.0													
Number of common field holdings				1	2	14	5	6	5	1	2	4	2	1	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Acres of common field holdings				7	1.75	44.75	7.25	10.75	5.85	2.0	20.0	2.7	1.5	6.0	1.5	10.75	3.0	1.0	5.0	18.0	5.5	5.75	8.0	

Fig. As in Table V.
Sources:- HNO 41335.

(1) Little Booth field. (2) Great Booth field. (3) includes a 3a. close. (4) includes a 2a. close. (5) Lower Spencers field. (6) a close. (7) in Lower and Upper Spencers field (2.5a. and 0.75a.). (8) includes a 2a. close. (9) includes a 2a. close.

For location of the settlement see Fig.22.

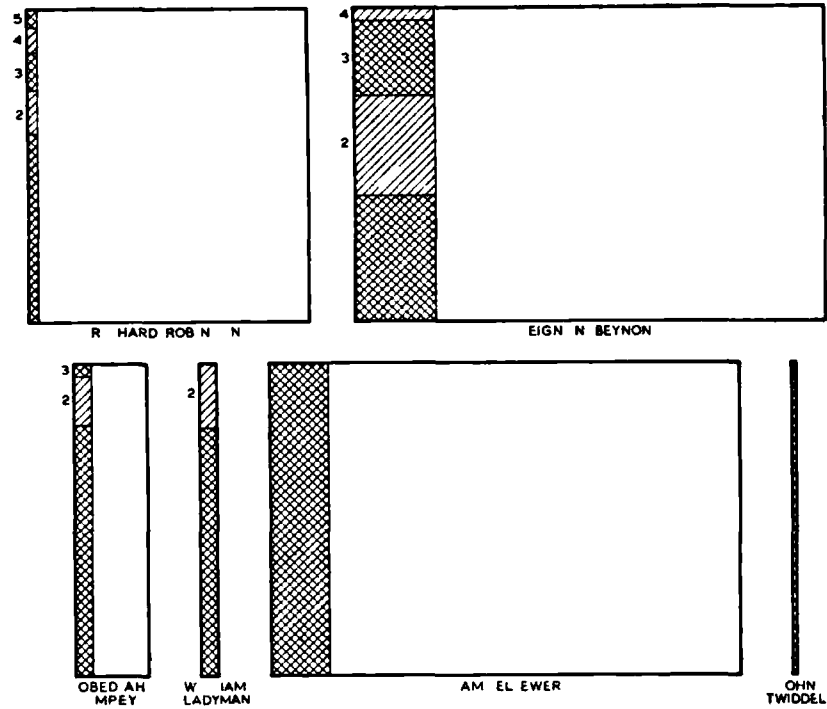


FIG. 17. Six holdings in Redbourne, 1692.

Each rectangle represents one complete holding, the shaded sector that proportion of the holding in common fields (subdivided proportionally into numbered units representing amounts in different common fields), and the unshaded sector the proportion of the holding that was enclosed.

Source:- HRO 41333.

TABLE X

Arable land and crops on Redpits Farm, Bix on 17th. April, 1613.

Crop.	Field
Rye	14a. in Chalk Field
Wheat	5a. in Chalk Field
	20a. in three closes
Oats	39a. in South Field and a close
Vetches	3a. in South Field and a close.
Barley	26a. in all places
Pease	3a. (unspecified)
Total	110a.

Source :- Bod. Wills Oxon, 44. 137.

A fifth and final feature that emerges from the distribution of the individual holdings is the relationship between location of settlement and the types of arable land in a holding. It has already been noted that the arable, both enclosed and common, of the average Chiltern tenant lay near to his farmhouse or cottage. The larger holdings that were entirely enclosed, were usually located around an isolated farmstead some distance from any common field (Figs. 10, 11). But the holdings of isolated farmstead did not always consist exclusively of enclosed land. Throughout the Chilterns, land in the common fields was shared by men living in villages, hamlets and isolated farms and cottages alike (Tables V - IX, XII, XIII, XVIII). A dispersal of settlement was not the prerogative of enclosed holdings, and conversely common arable land was not associated with nucleated settlement alone. The small and scattered nature of the common fields, their large number in many townships, the fact that they were often divided into distinct groups within the parish, and the fact that a regular distribution of the common arable holding between a number of fields or groups of fields was unnecessary, meant that the land within them could be held from dispersed and nucleated settlements alike.

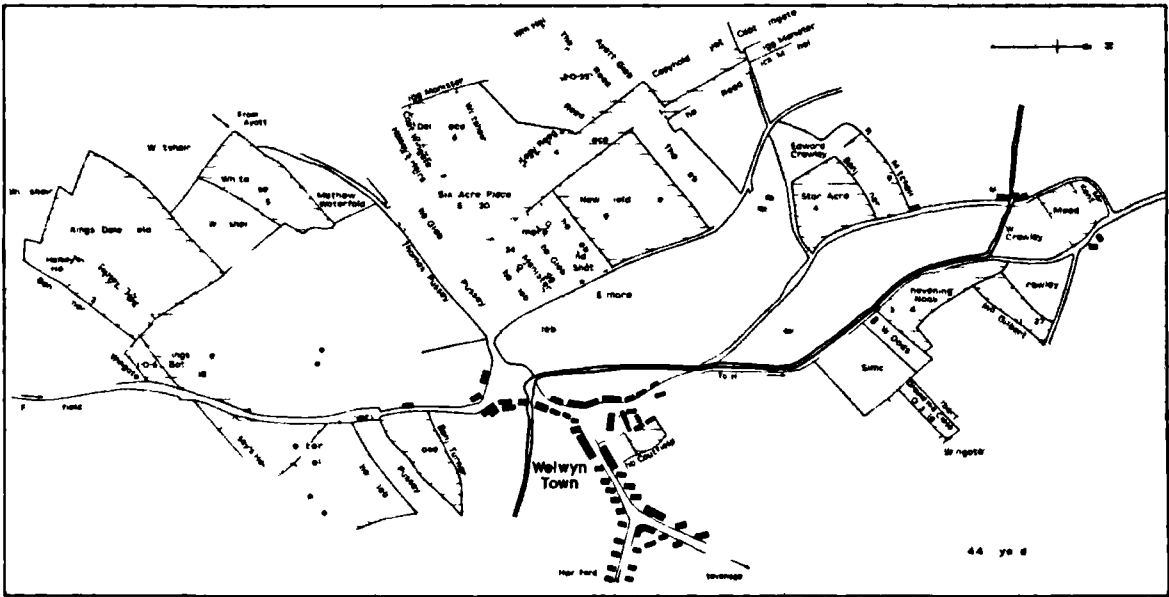


FIG. 18. Chamberlins Farm in Welwyn and Ayot, 1710.
Source:- HRO 80086.

Meadow and Pasture

Improved grassland was not extensive in the Chilterns during the three centuries after 1550.¹ Meadowland was confined to narrow tracts along the floodplains of the main streams. In some townships, too, there were damp hollows under meadow. Otherwise, areas that were sufficiently moist to support grasses suitable for mowing were rare. The scarcity of meadowland in many townships is reflected in its high value - at Great Missenden² and King's Walden³ enclosed meadow was worth four times as much as enclosed arable land, while at Ashridge⁴ it was eight times as valuable - and by the fact that hedgegreens were left around the edges of fields to provide hay and pasture.⁵ The largest areas of pasture were in the numerous parks,⁶ but this grassland did not effectively enter into the local farm economy. Otherwise, pasture was largely confined to small crofts adjacent to farmsteads and cottages, and to those riverside meadows that were not of a sufficiently high quality for mowing.⁷ There is some evidence

(1) An indication of the small amount of grassland in the Chilterns is given by the following proportions of meadow and pasture on certain large farms. The largest proportion was on the Missenden Abbey demesne which had extensive holdings in riverside meadows - 28% of the cultivated land was under grass, PRO E315/406, f.9. In comparison only 7% of the manor farm of Holmer in Little Missenden was grassland in 1605, PRO LR2/210, ff. 150-169; in 1617, 17% of the former demesne of the manor of Berkhamsted was meadow and pasture, PRO E315/366, ff.5-6; while the manor farms of Ashridge about 1550, PRO E315/406, f.3; Great Gaddesden in 1599, HRO 1434; Studham in 1650, PRO SC12/1/4, f.13; Markyate c.1550, PRO E315/402, f.11; Kinsbourne in Harpenden in 1700, Westm. 8912; and of King's Walden in 1568, BM Add. Ch. 35966; contained respectively 11%, 23%, 6%, 12%, 14% and 6% of meadow and pasture.

(2) Op. cit..

(3) Op. cit..

(4) Op. cit..

(5) See above p.45-6 . Kalm noted that "as in all these places there is very little meadowland, they carefully cultivated the reins to increase their supply of hays", J. Lucas, op. cit., 290. cf. D. Walker, op. cit., 13; and W. Cobbett, op. cit., 86.

(6) Discussed at length by H.C. Prince, "Parkland in the Chilterns", Geographical Review, 49 (1959), 18-31.

(7) As at Berkhamsted, PRO E315/366, ff. 5-6.

that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries small amounts of arable land were being turned to grass. Most examples are of land recently enclosed from the common arable fields. At Berkhamsted, in the seventeenth century, pieces taken from Barkham field, Barne Dean and Lagley field were grassed-over,¹ while at Redbourne, by 1691, Heycroft had been enclosed and turned to grass.² Amounts involved were small, and there was still little permanent grass in the Hills at the beginning of the nineteenth century. F.D. Hartley, commenting on its distribution in the region about 1840, has written "the amount of grassland, outside the parks and the valley meadows, was extremely small. Scarcely anywhere could continuous patches of grassland more than ten acres or 15 acres in size be found."³

In many valley townships some meadowland lay as strips in common meadows,⁴ although in most of these parishes a larger proportion was enclosed in small crofts. The common meadows were subject to common grazing after the hay had been lifted.⁵ Some meadow strips may have been reallocated each year, but in most townships they seem to have been in the permanent holding of individual tenants.

Scarcity of grassland was confined to townships entirely within the Chilterns. The strip parishes of the northwestern edge of the Chalk escarpment frequently shared in extensive meadows, enclosed and common, along the numerous brooks and in damp hollows in the poorly drained clay vale,⁶ while townships along the southwestern edge of the dip-slope included large areas of meadow on the Thames floodplain.⁷

(1) PRO E315/366, f.33; BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.103; LRO Glebe terrier for 1780.

(2) HRO 41333.

(3) F.D. Hartley, *op.cit.*, 123-25.

(4) e.g. High Wycombe, CCA Cap.I/29/1, 3, 6; Great Missenden, PRO LR2/210, ff.242-87; Little Missenden, *ibid.*, f.151; Amersham, BuCM A6/1/56; Berkhamsted, see below, p.218; Great Gaddesden, HRO 1162; King's Langley, HRO 20108; and Codicote BM Add. Ms. 40735.

(5) As at Great Gaddesden, HRO 17, 31, 42; Wheathamstead, Westm. 14040; and Ippollitts, HRO 47925, 48350.

(6) e.g. Pyrton, Bod. Dep. c17:49(66); Watlington, Bod. Dep. c17:49(93); Aston Clinton, BuRO IR/51a; Buckland, BuRO IR/89c; Drayton Beauchamp, BuRO p/E/2.

(7) e.g. Whitchurch, ORO QSD/A Vol.C, facing p.54; F XIV/3 and F XIV/10-18 Mapledurham, Bod. Ms. DD. Blount c.78; and Hambleton, Tithe Map.

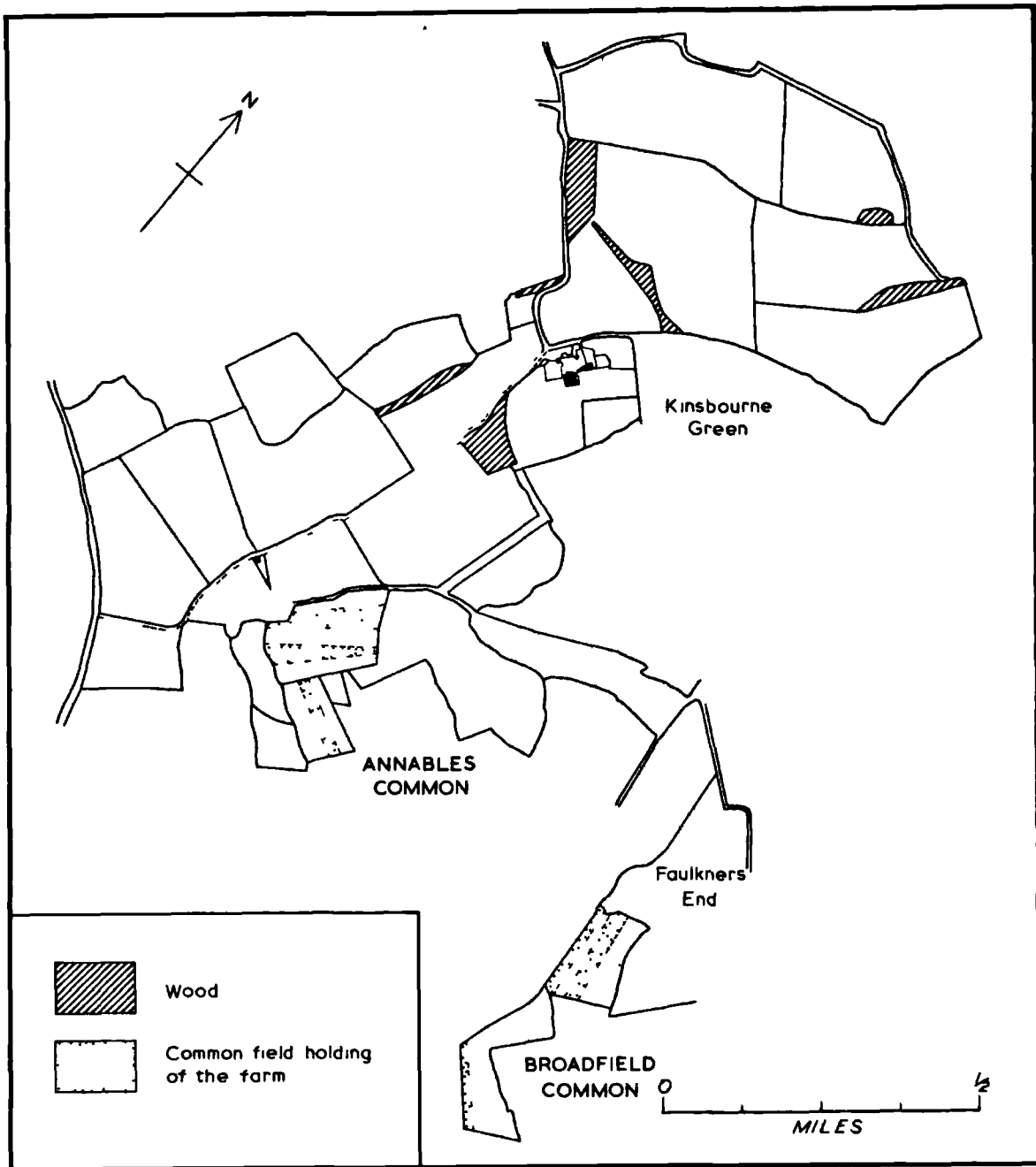


FIG. 19. Annables Manor Farm in Harpenden, c.1840.

Private Woodland

Woodland was a prominent feature of the Chiltern landscape after 1550. A.J. Mansfield has estimated that during the seventeenth century about half of the total area of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Chilterns was under woodland of some kind, be it common wood, the scrub of the more open commons and heaths, or woodland held in severalty.¹ The proportion of a given area occupied by private woods was often considerable, but decreased towards the northeast. The great woods of the southwest and central Chilterns were not found east of the Gade. Even in the northeast, however, the visual impression of woodland in the landscape must often have been greater than actual amounts would suggest, because much of the timber was scattered over a wide area in small patches, and was not concentrated in a single unit. Throughout the Hills many larger farms included some woodland (Figs. 8, 10, 11). Again proportions were least in the northeast and greatest in the southwest. At King's Walden, for example, 25% of those copyhold tenants with more than five acres of land owned woodland;² at Berkhamsted the corresponding figure for all tenants was nearly 50%;³ while at Stokenchurch all seven farms in a survey of 1675 contained a substantial amount of wood.⁴ In the southwest and central Chilterns woodland must often have played a part of some importance in the local farm economy.

In all parts of the Hills there were large private woods although nowhere, except in the northeast, could these compete in size with the common woods - in many parishes the largest common wood was five to ten times greater than the largest enclosed wood.⁵ To the southwest, some private woods were a hundred acres or more in area and were often

(1) A.J. Mansfield, "The historical geography of the woodlands of the southern Chilterns", unpub. University of London M.Sc. thesis (1952), 22.

(2) BM Add. R. 35853.

(3) BM Lands. Ms. 905, ff.95-124d.

(4) Bod. Ms. Top. Bucks. B7, f.22.

(5) For the sizes of some common woods see below, p.96. .

interspersed with arable fields, while in Hertfordshire many of the largest woods lay within the parks - Berkhamsted Park included 298 acres of timber lying in four woods in 1612;¹ the manor of King's Langley contained "a wood within the park set with many oaks and ash trees called Little Park";² Beechwood Park in Flamstead included a 77 acre wood;³ while the largest wood in King's Walden Park contained 56½ acres.⁴ Throughout the Chilterns, there were also innumerable scattered coppices, groves and springs that rarely exceeded 20 acres. The average acreage of plots of wood mentioned in various sixteenth and seventeenth century surveys range from 1.2 acres in Codicote in 1546 to 5.6 acres in Berkhamsted seventy years later.⁵ Many small woods were fenced-off from other land, while others were enclosed with arable land or pasture in a single field.⁶ Occasionally, too, small plots of woodland lay within the common fields,⁷ and some were no more than large hedgerows.

West of the Gade, the main sites for woods were on the poorer soils of the plateaux edge and upper valley slopes, while to the northeast, they were often concentrated on the higher land in the townships - in King's Walden at the end of the sixteenth century, groves were scattered amongst enclosed fields and small common fields on the two upland ridges in the parish (Fig. 29).

According to Mansfield, the woods of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire were dominated during the seventeenth century by beech, particularly beech coppice, with about 30% oak and 10% ash.⁸ The

(1) PRO MR 603.

(2) HRO 20108.

(3) HRO 18827.

(4) BM Add. R. 35996.

(5) The average size of woods described in other surveys were 11.2a. at Great Hampden (this included some very large demesne woods), 3.5a. at Great Missenden, 4.5a. at Little Missenden, 2.7a. at Great Gaddesden, 4.2a. King's Langley, 2.0a. at Redbourne and 3.4a. at King's Walden. References as for Table I.

(6) Ibid.

(7) e.g. At Bix, PRO LR2/196, f.187; and High Wycombe, CCA Cap.I/29/1.

(8) Op. cit., 60.

beech was not then as prominent as it is today. During the eighteenth century, however, it increased at the expense of oak - beech coppice, cut for sale as firewood, regenerated readily, while oak never recovered from extensive felling for sale as timber¹ - and the growth of the furniture industry in the nineteenth century confirmed its supremacy. Beech was also prominent in the larger Hertfordshire woods, but oak and ash survived more successfully there.² Beech high forest never emerged as in the southwest, and coppice-with-standards remained the main form of woodland. The chief value of private woodland was as a source of timber for sale.³ Beech underwood was sold in the Vale and in London, mainly as firewood, while the larger oak timber was sold for construction work.⁴ References to grazing or pannage in woods held in severalty are few in number.⁵

Private woods were being cleared for cultivation during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries throughout the Hills. At Flamstead Beechwood, the 25 acre Eaton Wood was described as "lately stocked" about 1600,⁶ while the Welwyn glebe included two former woods of seven acres and three acres.⁷ References to fields recently created through clearance of woodland in severalty occur in almost every detailed survey made after 1550. Expansion of the cultivated area was no doubt in response to the increased demand for farm produce, which placed a premium on arable land in the Chilterns. At the same time, replanting was also taking place. It has been

(1) Ibid., 145, 150

(2) e.g. Berkhamsted Frith, PRO E315/365, f.19.

(3) e.g. The sale of 1,000 beeches and 5 oaks in Kingswood in High Wycombe in 1541, J.N. Dalton (ed.), "The Manuscripts of St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle", (1957), 357, XV.16.40.

(4) A.J. Mansfield, op. cit., 110-17.

(5) One example was pasturage and pannage in demesne woods once held by Missenden Abbey, PRO E315/406, f.9d.

(6) HRO 18827.

(7) LRO T8, f.605.

estimated that at least one third of the present woodland in the Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Chilterns cover what was agricultural land in the seventeenth century.¹ More and more woodland became concentrated on the poorer soils and exposed sites. On balance, however, there was a reduction in the total area under wood.

Although not strictly related to a study of field systems the woods were such a prominent feature of parts of the Chiltern landscape that it would be unrealistic to ignore them. In the southwest and the central Chilterns the arable land of the valley bottoms and lower slopes was fringed by the woods of the plateaux edge and upper slopes, while on the ridges and plateaux arable closes were often surrounded by thickets, and springs of woodland often lay within the arable fields. To the northeast, a characteristic landscape in many townships was an area of intermixed coppices, closes and small common fields to be found on the higher land.

(1) A.J. Mansfield, *op. cit.*, 27.

Common Waste

Extensive areas of common waste were a prominent feature of the Chiltern landscape between 1550 and 1850. They comprised wood, heath, riverside "moors", open downland and greens, which were subject to common rights. The earliest period for which the distribution of common waste throughout the Hills can be precisely located is the first two decades of the nineteenth century (Fig. 20). Three features of this distribution are particularly noticeable. They are, firstly, the small amounts of common waste in the Vale below the Chiltern scarp compared with the large areas on the Chalk dip-slope. Most of the strip parishes of the Chiltern edge shared in the extensive common wastes of the Hills. Secondly, there was a general decrease in the area of common waste within the Chilterns from southwest to northeast. But in spite of this there were wide local variations. The two Berkhamsted parishes contained more than 800 acres of common wood and heath at the beginning of the seventeenth century,¹ whereas there was no more than 31 acres of commons in the parish of Great Gaddesden nearby.² Thirdly, there was a marked concentration of common waste along the scarp-face and near to the crest of the Chalk outcrop. This is the only clear correlation between the distribution and location of commons, and local conditions of soil and relief. Otherwise they were found on soils of all types and in all kinds of localities. The more extensive areas of heath and common wood were sited on the drift-covered ridges, although they sometimes extended down to the floors of adjacent dry valleys, as Little Hampden Common³ and Hawridge Common.⁴ Where patches of Reading Beds cap the ridges, the sandy soils developed from them were usually the site of heathland. Similarly, common waste often covered tracts of Plateau Gravels and

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- (1) PRO E315/365, ff.17d-19, and E315/366, ff.6d.-7.
 (2) HRO 1162.
 (3) Tithe Map.
 (4) Ibid.

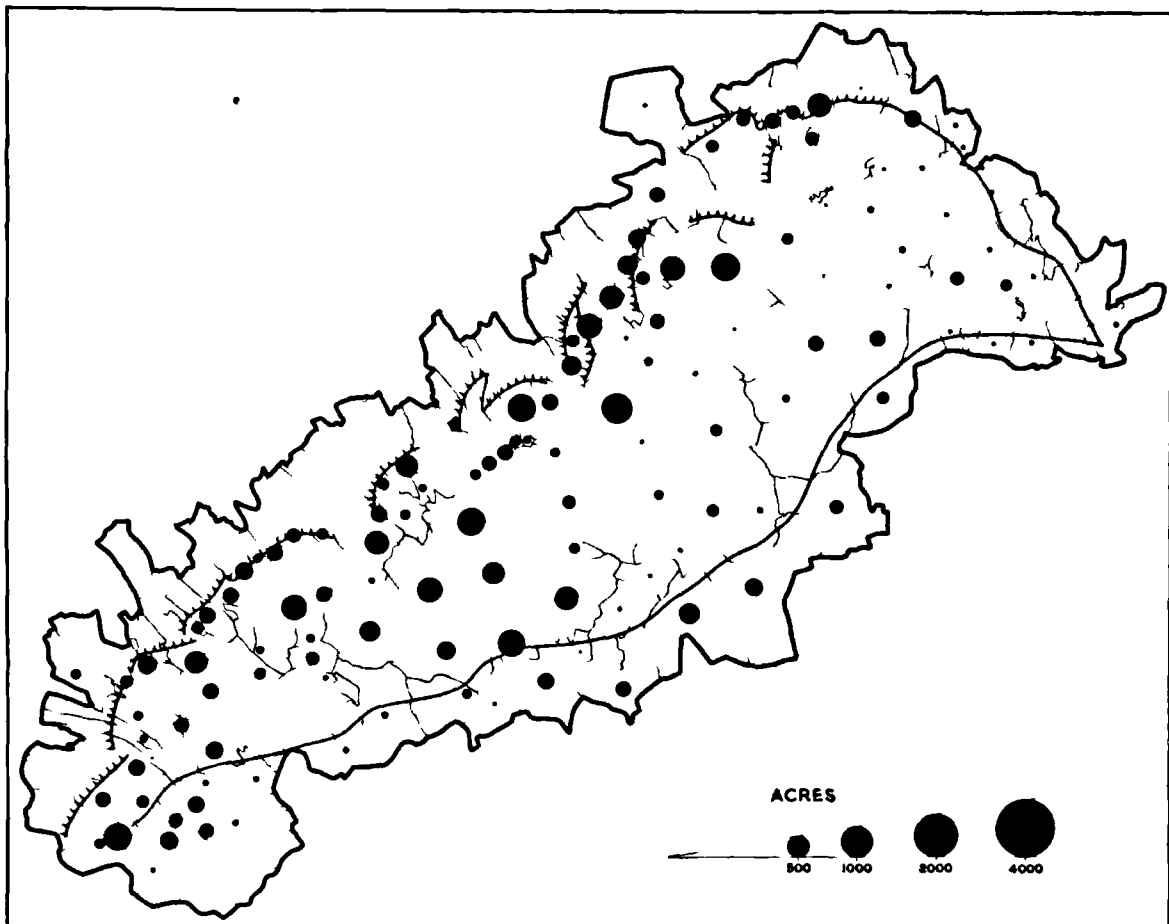


FIG. 20. Common wastes within and around the Chilterns c.1800.
Sources:- BM Ms. Surveyors' Drawings 1st. ed. O.S.
One-Inch Map and the Tithe Maps.

areas of the sandier Clay-with-flints, while the steepest valley slopes had sometimes been left uncultivated and unenclosed.¹ The existence of many large areas of common heath and wood cannot, however, be explained by the unsuitability of soil or slope for cultivation, because often such was not the case. Areas enclosed in the seventeenth century and later have remained in continuous cultivation ever since.

Of the five types of common waste in the Chilterns after 1550, most common wood lay west of the Lea valley.² The greatest concentration was in the central Chilterns, while the largest individual woods were in Berkhamsted, near Penn, and around Swyncombe and Bix.³ Many common woods had degenerated, through felling and continuous grazing, to what was little more than open scrub with a scattering of large timber. This was particularly so to the north-east, where areas of woodland held in severalty were smaller than in the southwest. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Studham Charlewood, which had once been "full of great trees",⁴ was very much depleted. Many tenants were taking more timber than they were allowed - one was presented at the manorial court of 1578 because he had overloaded his cart to such an extent that it collapsed.⁵

(1) e.g. Keep Hill Common in Chepping Wycombe, CCA Cap.I/29/1; and Broxdell in Lilley, HRO 47578.

(2) The great wood of beech and oak in Berkhamsted, called the Frith, contained more than 700a. at the beginning of the seventeenth century, op. cit.; the common woods in Tring totalled 270a., PRO E317/Herts. No.29; there was more than 600a. of common wood within the 2,000a. of Holmer Heath in Wycombe, Hughenden, Penn and Little Missenden, PRO LR2/196, f.91; Great Common Wood in Great Hampden contained 184a. in 1653, BuRO D/MH 28/2; North and South Woods in Little Gaddesden contained 286a., HRO 2011; Charlewood and Russels Wood in Studham comprised more than 160a., BdRO DD.BW 969, Dagnall 1633; much of the common waste in Kensworth and Caddington was woodland, St. Pauls A62 and Press B No. 12, June 1P. & M.; while the only large area of common waste in King's Langley were the two common woods which together contained 100a., HRO 20108.

(3) BM Ms. Surveyors' Drawings 1st. ed. O.S. One-Inch Map.

(4) BdRO DD.BW 967, Barreworthe 1609.

(5) BdRO DD.BW 966.

Holmer Wood in Little Missenden was described as "a plane having some few old trees upon it, growing sparsim and they are for the most part dead",¹ and the common Kings Wood in Princes Risborough was said to be "wasted and destroyed" by its lesee who regularly cut down the larger trees "to the great hurt of the tenants".² Again, by the seventeenth century Prestwood³ and Maynewood⁴ in the Missendens were being referred to as heaths; two common woods near Bix contained no timber trees, only scrub;⁵ while the fact that furze was being collected in Hedges wood in Great Gaddesden⁶ and in South Wood in Little Gaddesden⁷ during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries suggests that these, too, were largely open land.

The distinction between true heath and degraded woodland was often very blurred. By 1600, commons were covered by stunted beech and furze with a few larger trees regardless of whether they were called wood, heath or down.⁸ "Heath" sometimes included extensive woods, and sometimes "heaths" differed little from areas described as common wood. The Heath in Studham (otherwise Russels Wood) was said to be well stocked with great trees,⁹ while the great waste called Holmer Heath contained 600 acres of common woodland within and around it in Wycombe, Hughenden, Penn and Little Missenden.¹⁰ These woods lay in compact blocks, but even the 1,400 acres that was not woodland contained amounts of timber - the area called Holmer Green, for example, included 256 trees on 100 acres of land. The contrast between this more open scrub and the denser woods cannot be explained by soil differences.

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- (1) PRO E315/430, f.81. The area of the wood was 140a.
 (2) PRO LR2/197, f.52d.
 (3) PRO E134/7JI M7.
 (4) PRO LR2/196, f.74d. Maynewood contained 120a.
 (5) PRO E178/1854.
 (6) HRO 271.
 (7) e.g. HRO 755.
 (8) A.J. Mansfield, op. cit., 53-6. An example from Hertfordshire is Lilley Hoo, HRO 47569, 47585.
 (9) BdRO DD.BW 969, Dagnall 1633.
 (10) PRO LR2/196, f.91.

True heathland located on sandy soils was scattered throughout the Chilterns. In the northeast, two of the three heaths in Codicote were situated on sands and gravels; at Berkhamsted in the central Chilterns, the Heath and Little Heath occupied a tract of sandy Reading beds immediately south of the great common wood; while to the southwest, Ibstone Heath and Cadmore Common were similarly situated on sands that cap the ridges.¹

Along the scarp-face and the crest of the Chalk outcrop was an intermittent belt of open downland, which usually lay within the strip parishes of the Chalk edge. Britwell Downs in Oxfordshire contained 240 acres,² while Watlington Hill and Heath was 300 acres.³ A few dip-slope parishes included common downland,⁴ and there were also fairly open pastures along the highest ridge-tops and the steepest slopes in the northeast.⁵ The downs were not always open land - they included areas of scrub and furze, and patches of larger timber.⁶

Common grassland pastures, often known as "moors", lay along the floodplains of some of the larger streams. The inhabitants of High Wycombe, for example, were frequently ordered to refrain from overstocking "that common or meade ground called the Rye",⁷ while "le More" in Chesham⁸ and Waterende More in Great Gaddesden⁹ were both common land.

(1) BM Ms. Surveyors' Drawings 1st ed. O.S. One-Inch Map.

(2) PRO LR2/196, f. 185d.

(3) Ibid., f.29d.

(4) e.g. Swyncombe with downs of 240a., PRO E315/388, f.55; Studham, Tithe Map; Caddington, BdRO MA46; and Knebworth, St. Pauls A62.

(5) e.g. Broxdell and Lilley Hoo in Lilley, HRO 47564, 47578; and Offley Hoo, HRO 51248.

(6) e.g. At Ivingho, BuCM 1/36/12, 1683; and Lewknor, VCH Oxon., 8 (1964), 106. Kalm, commenting on the downs above Ivingho, wrote "the whole tableland was overgrown with furze and brackens", J. Lucas, op. cit., 197.

(7) R.W. Greaves (ed.), "The First Ledger Book of High Wycombe", BRS, 11 (1947), 70, no. 86, 120 no. 163, 142, no. 205.

(8) BuCM Ca, May 10 Eliz..

(9) HRO 30, 33, 271. Another example was Holmer Moor in Little Missenden, BuCM 456/42.

Finally, the small patches of open ground called "greens" were scattered throughout the Hills. In Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, they were often large, and often attached to a bigger common waste, in which case the green differed little from the rest of the common. The 100 acre Holmer Green in Little Missenden was part of the more extensive scrub of Holmer Heath,¹ and Frieth Green in Hambleden was an appendage of Moorend Common². Where a green was isolated from other areas of common waste, it included little wood of any kind. There were only two trees on Greenfield Green and Seymour Green in upper Watlington, which contained forty acres between them.³ In some Hertfordshire townships, such as Flamstead⁴ and King's Walden (Fig. 28), greens were the only areas of common waste left by the sixteenth century. Throughout the Hills many were no more than large roadside verges.⁵

The nature of common rights over the wastes depended on the character of the common land. Woods,⁶ heaths,⁷ downs,⁸ moors⁹ and greens¹⁰ alike were open to common grazing. The downs were primarily sheep runs, and the greens and moors were sometimes reserved for cattle, but common woods and heaths were usually open to grazing by all manner of beasts. Some woods, such as the sixty acre Cowlease Wood on top of the Hills above Lewknor,¹¹ were subject to common

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- (1) PRO LR2/196, f.88.
 (2) Tithe Map.
 (3) PRO LR2/196, f.29d.
 (4) BM Ms. Surveyors' Drawings 1st ed. O.S. One-Inch Map.
 (5) e.g. Cheverells Green in Flamstead, BM Add. Ms. 6035, f.83; and Potters Row in Great Missenden, PRO LR2/196, f.74d.
 (6) e.g. At Great Gaddesden, HRO 92; Whipsnade, BM Lansd. Ms. 1197, f.174; Princes Risborough, PRO LR2/197, f.52; and Swyncombe, PRO LR2/196, ff.185d-187.
 (7) e.g. On Goring Heath, PRO E315/406, f.40.
 (8) e.g. At Hexton, HRO 47390, 1672; and Swyncombe PRO E315/388, f.55.
 (9) e.g. At High Wycombe, op. cit.; Chesham, op. cit.; and Great Gaddesden, HRO 271, 3788.
 (10) e.g. At Kinsbourne in Harpenden, PRO SC2/178/85, 1641; Great Hampden BuCM 57/51, 6th April 7 E.VI; and Knebworth, HRO K13.
 (11) VCH Oxon., 8 (1964), 106.

grazing for only part of the year. In addition, tenants were usually free to collect wood,¹ and to gather furze and fern where these grew.² In Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, the men of villages below the Chalk escarpment held rights to timber and underwood, called "hillworks", in the woods of their parishes on the Hills above.³ Rights in the more extensive commons were usually claimed by the men of a number of townships, Vale and Chiltern alike, particularly as most of these stretched along parish boundaries, and lay in more than one township. Charlewood was intercommoned by Studham and Hudnall;⁴ the common woods of Swyncombe were open to the herds and flocks of at least four townships;⁵ men from eleven townships and hamlets claimed common rights in Berkhamsted Frith;⁶ while those from seven parishes intercommoned the huge Holmer Heath.⁷ Disputes concerning conflicting claims to intercommon occasionally arose.⁸ By 1600, common rights of all kinds were being restricted. There was a constant threat that, through overgrazing and overcutting, what resources remained would be destroyed. Already little wood was left on many commons, as the use of furze and fern as fuel testifies,⁹ and the supply of even these was endangered by the demands of the chalk

(1) e.g. At Checkendon, where tenants were allowed to take wood for wattles and hurdles, PRO SP12/34, f.39; at Pyrton, where the lessee of the manor was allowed 20 cartloads as firebote in Kilrige Wood (Queen's Wood) on the dip-slope, J.N. Dalton, op. cit., 352, XV.16.1, and 354, XV.16.40; at Crowell, where in 1728 the common wood was said to provide five loads a year, Bod. Ms. Top. Oxon. C381, ff.93-4; and Studham, where freeholders were allowed a certain amount of wood each year from Charlewood, BdRO DD.BW 966, Sept. 1581.

(2) e.g. On Hudnall Common, HRO 3760; on Aldbury Common, HRO 2665; and at Little Gaddesden, HRO 842.

(3) W.O. Hassal, "Hillwork", *Oxoniensia*, 16 (1951), 89-90; *VCH. Oxon.*, 7 (1962), 103, and 8 (1964), 86 and 106. Princes Risborough, with perhaps 300a. of common wood on the Hill, is a Bucks. example, PRO LR2/197, ff.52-52d.

(4) BdRO DD.BW 967-9.

(5) The four were Swyncombe, Bix, Ewelme and Nettlebed, PRO E178/1854.

(6) These were Berkhamsted, Northchurch, Aldbury, Pitstone, Cheddington, Little Gaddesden, Frithsden, Nettleden, Hemel Hempstead, Bovington and Flaunden, *VCH. Herts.*, 2 (1908), 162.

(7) These were Penn, Great and Little Missenden, Hughenden, Wycombe, Amersham and Wendover, PRO E134/18-19, Eliz. M.7.

(8) e.g. The dispute between the Hertfordshire tenants and the Bedfordshire tenants of the divided parish of Studham over grazing rights on the common, BdRO DD.BW 967, 1613.

(9) *op. cit.*, 208. Fern was also used with straw for cattle.

burners¹ and the brickmakers.² In some parishes an increase of population created additional pressures. At Whitchurch in the sixteenth century, it was said that a great increase in the poor of the parish was "leading to the utter ruine and destruction of all the commons" of the manor, and the introduction of a stint was proposed.³ In most parishes, in fact, stints were widely enforced both on common grazing⁴, and on the amounts of wood, furze and fern that could be collected⁵ by individual tenants.

By the seventeenth century, too, cottages and farmsteads had been built around common woods and, in particular, heaths and greens. The main centres of settlement in some parishes were the commons, rather than the hamlet or village around the parish church, and even in townships where this had not happened waste-side hamlets were often large. At King's Langley in 1619, for example, there were at least twenty separate dwellings in the hamlet of Chipperfield next to the common wood.⁶ To the northeast many of the outlying hamlets of a parish were situated around greens. There were three such settlements in Offley and Lilley,⁷ and four in King's Walden (Fig. 27),²⁹ where Breachwood Green had outgrown the old village centre. Waste-side agglomerations were often growing rapidly after 1550. New houses and cottages were being built, and the gardens and outbuildings of existing dwellings extended. At a Little Hampden manorial court in 1656, for example, three tenants were presented for building cottages on the waste and two for erecting outbuildings there,⁸ while at Ibstone in 1677 four men had recently

(1) Ibid., 304.

(2) Brickmaking was an old-established industry on many Chiltern commons, and its demand for fuel no doubt played a part in the degeneration of the common woods. There is ample evidence that it was still practised during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and was probably in fact expanding. There are numerous references to brickmakers living around common wastes, e.g. at Prestwood in Missenden, PRO E314/7 J.L. M7; and on Lee Common, "A Calendar of Deeds and Other Records Preserved in the Muniment Room at the Museum, Aylesbury", RBBAS, 5 (1941), 41.

(3) ORO PL XVIII/46.

(4) e.g. At Lilley, HRO 47561; and at Caddington, St.Pauls WC6, 1668.

(5) e.g. At Hudnall, HRO 3760; and at Little Gaddesden, HRO 842.

(6) HRO 20108.

(7) BM Ms. Surveyors' Drawings for 1st. ed. O.S. One-Inch Map.

(8) BuCM 419/39.

built cottages on the Heath and another tenant had constructed stables, a carthouse, a barn and a dog kennel about ten years previously.¹

Considerable private enclosure of common waste was taking place between 1550 and c.1800. Some was small-scale piecemeal enclosure. In addition to dwellings and gardens improved from the commons, patches of scrub or heath were ploughed-up and fenced-in for cultivation. The total number of such enclosures, including dwellings, that were presented at Little Hampden in 1656² and at Ibstone in 1677,³ for example, were twelve and ten respectively. But piecemeal enclosure of common waste never occurred on the same scale as in the common fields. Large-scale private enclosures, on the other hand, were made more frequently from woods, heaths and downs. Their purpose varied. Sometimes it was to enlarge a park,⁴ sometimes to bring fresh land into cultivation⁵ and sometimes, in the case of common wood, to protect the wood from further damage so that it could be worked for private profit.⁶ Enclosure was often by agreement of all parties concerned. One third of the heath and wood called Windmill Hill in Aston Rowant and Stokenchurch was taken into severalty in 1576 by private agreement between encloser and commoners;⁷ Frithsden Common⁸ and fifty acres of North Wood in Little Gaddesden⁹ were enclosed by arrangement between lord and tenant; private agreement between tenants was responsible for the enclosure of part of Hudnall Common and all of Russells Wood;¹⁰

(1) Merton College Ms. 5243.

(2) Op. cit..

(3) Op. cit..

(4) e.g. The enlargement of Ashridge Park by enclosure of North and South Woods in Little Gaddesden, HRO 2011-14; BuCM Fl/1-2.

(5) e.g. 300a. of Berkhamsted Frith was cleared for cultivation during the seventeenth century, PRO E317 Herts. No.9.

(6) e.g. When common coppices on Shirburn Hill were enclosed, the stated reason was to preserve growing trees from the depredations of cattle, VCH Oxon., 8 (1964), 191. Private woods were also made by enclosure of wood on Hampden Common and on Booker Common in West Wycombe, A.J. Mansfield, op. cit., 106.

(7) Merton College Ms. 2631.

(8) The Earl of Bridgewater enclosed two coppices in the common, while the waste between the coppices was divided amongst the copyholders of Berkhamsted, BuCM Fl/1-2.

(9) Between the Earl of Bridgewater and the tenants of Little Gaddesden HRO 2011-14.

(10) HRO 3570.

and at Caddington, after a lengthy dispute with its tenants, the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's was allowed to enclose 150 acres of the common wood, the remainder to stay open to the tenants.¹ Disputed enclosures were, in fact, almost as frequent as those which took place by mutual consent. In some cases no attempt was made to reach agreement. On 16th. January 1555, a certain William Gardiner assembled about a dozen men in the common wood of Penn and dug-up the ground there.² Sometimes the consent of only a few of the parties concerned had been obtained. Sir Robert Scrope and his tenants in Stokenchurch, claiming common rights in the coppices enclosed from Shirburn Wood by Sir John Chamberlain - who had bought up all the pasture rights of his own tenants in the wood - broke down one of the enclosures and pastured 240 sheep there.³ Again, fences made around part of the common wood in upper Tring were destroyed during the Civil War.⁴ At Kensworth, the manor failed in its attempts to enclose the common wood without the general consent of the inhabitants.⁵ Some downland sheep walks, on the other hand, had virtually been abandoned to scrub and wood by the seventeenth century. Common grazing on them was no longer valued. The Pyrton glebe was said in 1729 to include "common for five cows and 200 sheep on the Waste, but the tenants have not kept any sheep there for many years because of the unhealthy pasturage".⁶ Under such conditions common rights could easily be bought-up by prospective enclosers. Some commons disappeared during the eighteenth century without any record of their enclosure surviving.⁷

(1) Cal. SP Dom., 1637, 448-9; 1639, 309.

(2) PRO Duchy of Lancs, Pleadings, 18, No.4.

(3) VCH Oxon., 8 (1964), 191-2.

(4) PRO E317/Herts. No.9.

(5) Cal. SP Dom., 1621, 323.; H.C. Maxwell Lyte (ed.) "Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's", being pp.1-72 of the Appendix to "Ninth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts", (1883), 55.

(6) VCH Oxon., 8 (1964), 165.

(7) e.g. The 40a. of Redbourne Heath, HRO 41333.

In spite of private enclosure, great areas of common waste remained in the Chilterns until the beginning of the nineteenth century, including at least part of all the larger commons. Many were subsequently swept away by parliamentary acts. Again there is a sharp contrast with enclosure of the common fields, the greater part of which, in most townships, had already disappeared by the time enclosure acts were introduced. Wastes near the crest of the Hills were usually taken into severalty at the same time as the open fields in the Vale below, but many commons entirely within Chiltern parishes required separate acts, dealing with common wastes alone.¹ The regular fields of the Enclosure Commissioners are still evident in the present landscape on the site of former commons, while many straggling hamlets and villages in the central and southwest Chilterns are based on the waste-side settlements of the early nineteenth century.

(1) Many examples are given in W.E. Tate, "A Hand-list of Buckinghamshire Enclosure Acts and Awards", (1946); and "A handlist of Hertfordshire Enclosure Acts and Awards", Transactions East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society, (1947), 18-31.

Settlement.

There was no marked change in the settlement pattern of the Chilterns between 1550 and 1850. The distribution of settlement during the second half of the sixteenth century was largely the same as that shown on the early nineteenth century maps (Figs.21-3), and the pattern was fairly uniform throughout the Hills. It was one of small towns, villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads, and it contrasted sharply with the settlement pattern of the Vale, which was dominated by large villages.

Before 1850, the largest towns in the Chilterns were in the main valleys that cross dip-slope. Important lines of communication northeast from the Thames valley followed these routeways, and here the largest market centres in the Hills had grown up.¹ The larger of these towns, Berkhamsted, Amersham and High Wycombe, expanded in the eighteenth century as coaching stations and, with their added advantage of proximity to the few sources of permanent running water in the Chilterns, as small industrial centres concentrating on the processing of agricultural products. West of High Wycombe, the only towns were Great Marlow and Henley, while to the northeast the biggest settlements were Luton, Hitchin, Stevenage and Welwyn. All six towns were peripheral to the Chilterns proper.

Outside the small urban centres, the villages were the main nucleations and were the chief centres of many parishes throughout the Hills. Of the 58 settlements near to or around a parish church, 32 (68%) were situated somewhere in the valleys, while the remaining 26 were located on ridge-tops or plateau surface. Water supply was a problem throughout the region except in the main valleys with permanent streams², and 14, of the villages were in fact situated on or near to valley bottoms.

(1) For a detailed account of each town, see the relevant sections of the Victoria County History. For High Wycombe see, L.J. Ashford, op. cit..

(2) J.T. Coppock, "The agricultural geography of the Chilterns, 1870-1951", unpublished University of London Ph.D. thesis, (1960), 152-4; F.D. Hartley, op.cit., 127-8.



FIG. 21. Settlement in the southwest Chilterns and the adjoining lowland c.1830.

Source:- 1st. ed. O.S. One-Inch Map.

The contrast between valley-floor village and ridge-top or plateau nucleation was particularly marked in the southwest (Fig 21).

Much of the ridge and plateau settlement in the Chilterns was in hamlets scattered around patches of common waste.¹ West of the Lea valley in particular, heaths and common woods were foci for loose concentrations - at Studham and Little Gaddesden, heathside agglomerations were the largest settlements in the two parishes - while to the northeast many hamlets were situated around the smaller common greens. Hamlets existed in all Chiltern parishes, and in some townships they had outgrown the old village centre by the seventeenth century. At Paul's Walden, Whitwell down by the Rhee was larger than the village around the church;² in Kensworth, the number of houses and cottages along the edge of the common wood was greater than those in the village of Kensworth³; while Hampden Row along Hampden Common was larger than Great Hampden village.⁴

Village and hamlet forms varied considerably.⁵ At one extreme, were compact nucleations around a parish church as at Flamstead on a low ridge between two valleys, or Turville and Fingest in two dry valleys (Figs. 8, 22, 43). At the other extreme, were the loose agglomerations strung along a ridge such as Lilley in the northeast, the Chesham hamlets in the central Hills which followed the ridge-tops between the dry valleys that come together at Chesham town, and Bledlow Ridge and Ibstone to the southwest (Figs. 23, 43). Settlements around the common wastes had a distinctive form of their own, a form that has often survived enclosure of the commons - many of the loose nucleations in the central Chilterns today are former waste-side hamlets supplemented by nineteenth century building on the allotments made at enclosure. "Green" hamlets often reproduced these forms on a smaller scale. Settlement at Breachwood Green in King's Walden was

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- (1) See above, p.101.
 - (2) BM Ms. Surveyors' Drawings for the 1st ed. O.S. One-Inch Map.
 - (3) BdRO Kensworth Enclosure Map.
 - (4) Map of the manor of Great Hampden in 1741 in the Hampden Estate Office
 - (5) See BM/MS, surveyors' drawings for the 1st ed. O.S. One-inch Map for the following examples.



FIG. 22. Settlement in the central Chilterns c.1830.
Source:- 1st. ed. O.S. One-Inch Map.

was concentrated around three sides of a square patch of waste, while Cheverells Green in Flamstead was strung along a narrow roadside strip (Figs. 22, 25). Other greens were no more than small plots at a road junction around which a few houses and cottages were concentrated - such were Ley Green and Cox Green in King's Walden and Peters Green in Kimpton (Fig. 25)

Isolated farmsteads existed in all Chiltern parishes. Many of the "ends" in the centre and northeast were no more than this. Enclosure of the common arable, that was taking place after 1550, did not result in any renewed dispersal of settlement. There was no reason why it should for isolated farms, as well as those in village and hamlet, shared land in the common fields. In a few parishes in fact, settlement was almost entirely dispersed in small hamlets and isolated farmsteads although there were also substantial areas of common arable land there. At Great Gaddesden at the end of the sixteenth century, the settlement around the parish church down by the Gade, called Church End, contained no more than a few houses and cottages. Otherwise settlement in the township was concentrated in the hamlets of Water End and Little Mill End on the Gade in the south of the parish, and North End in the north of the parish, and was dispersed in isolated farms such as the Hoo, Tagsend, Balingdell, Lane Farm, and in particular in the line of farmsteads called Gaddesden Row, along a ridge in the northeast of the parish. There was at least 220 acres of common arable in the township, held by farmsteads in the hamlets and the isolated farmsteads alike.¹

(1) HRO 13-60, 1162, 13091, 13095-6, 56472, and Fig. 22.



FIG. 23. Settlement in the northeast Chilterns and on the Lower Chalk dip-slope c.1830.

Source:- 1st. ed. O.S. One-Inch Map.

Conclusions

The emphasis in Chiltern farming during the three centuries after 1550 was on arable cultivation. Amounts of grassland were small, and were largely confined to the bottoms of a few large valleys, and to orchards and crofts around homesteads. The main sources of pasturage were the common waste, and the arable fallow and stubble. A greater part of the arable was enclosed and held in severalty. This was in marked contrast to the Vale to the northwest and the Thames terraces to the south, where large open fields, divided into innumerable strips, were predominant. But there was common arable land in the Chilterns, too. Common fields existed throughout the Hills, although the proportion of the arable in them and the proportion of men with common field holdings increased greatly from southwest to northeast. Even in the northeast, however, there were substantial amounts of enclosed arable. In most townships, the percentage of tenants with a common arable holding was much greater than the percentage of cultivated land that was in common fields - in other words common fields had a more significant role in the local economy than actual acreages alone would suggest.

The common arable of the typical Chiltern parish was divided into a large number of relatively small common fields, and for cropping and grazing these, rather than the furlongs within them, were the usual unit of enforcement. A three-course rotation was followed on most holdings and within the common fields. Common fields were sometimes grouped together into a single cropping course - a three-field system of a kind certainly existed in parts of the Chilterns after 1550. There were farm holdings that consisted exclusively of enclosed arable land in all townships, but in many, a large number of holdings combined enclosed and common arable land in varying proportions. A common arable holding was not distributed between all the common fields of a township, but usually lay in only a small group of fields, which were some of those near to the farmstead or cottage. Concentrations of holdings in this way suggest

the grouping of common fields in some parishes, but even on this smaller scale few held land in all the common fields of a group. Moreover, the apportionment of a common arable holding between the individual common fields in which it did lie, was often irregular in the extreme.

Settlement patterns in the Chilterns combined elements of nucleation and dispersal, both of which were associated with common arable holdings. Men in the towns, villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads alike were holding land in the common fields.

The main change within the field system, after 1550, was enclosure of the common fields, which was taking place on a large scale. Enclosure was prompted neither by the introduction of new crops, nor by a desire to convert arable to pasture. Rather it was to improve conditions for arable farming in response to the increased demand for farm produce, and in particular to escape the fixed routine imposed by common grazing on the arable. It was a private and piecemeal enclosure, effected through strip consolidation by purchase and exchange, and through private agreement to fence-in blocks of unconsolidated strips, which often remained in divided ownership for sometime afterwards. It was a long process - many common fields survived for centuries after closes had been taken from them - and often common arable land did not disappear completely until an act of Parliament was passed. In many townships, however, legislation was never needed - the common fields were taken into severalty entirely by private action. Piecemeal enclosure was associated with many anomalies, one of the chief of which was the subdivision of common fields into smaller units. It is difficult to say whether either feature was responsible for the other, but it is clear that in many townships in the central and northeast Chilterns the number of common fields remained fairly constant, even although the area of common arable land was reduced considerably.

As the common fields were enclosed, so the area of arable in severalty increased. But the small closes produced by piecemeal enclosure were not particularly distinctive elements within the Chiltern

field pattern - these recent enclosures were, on average, no larger or smaller than the older enclosed fields that already existed in large numbers in most townships - and only the elongated shape of some suggested their strip origin. The former demesne closes were distinguishable by their greater average size. There was a slight increase in the acreage of individual enclosed fields during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but it was not until the nineteenth century that many closes were amalgamated to form the fields of ten to fifteen acres that are commonplace in the Chilterns today. The area of enclosed arable land was also being extended by the clearance of private woodland for cultivation, and by the enclosure of common waste, to produce closes of a variety of shapes and sizes ranging from tiny crofts to large regular fields.

Common wastes, in particular common woods and heaths, had an important role in the traditional economy of the Chilterns and of the townships below the Chalk escarpment. Apart from the common fields, they were the main sources of common grazing for these two areas, they were sources of fuel and litter, and they formed a focus for the growth of settlement. Although most commons were being nibbled at during the sixteenth century and later, and some were enclosed completely following private agreements, large-scale enclosure did not come until the first half of the nineteenth century.

The sixteenth century Chiltern landscape was a distinctive one. The open down of the Chalk face and crest, rising from the claylands of the Vales of Oxford and Aylesbury, separated the great open fields and large villages below from an area of innumerable hedged fields, the larger of which were often subdivided into strips. The fields lay amongst patches of woodland, large and small, and there were frequent tracts of common wood and scrub. Farmsteads and cottages were scattered around the stretches of common, were huddled into small groups in the valley bottoms or strung along the ridge-tops, or they were isolated from other settlement. Towards the northeast, the landscape became more open. Relief is more subdued, the great tracts of waste and woodland were less frequent, small plots of woodland were fewer in number, and the area of common arable was more extensive.

CHAPTER IIFIELD SYSTEMS IN KING'S WALDEN: c.1250 - c.1600.

The field system in King's Walden at the end of the sixteenth century was characteristic of that in many of the parishes at the eastern end of the Chilterns (Fig. 29). The greater part of the arable land of the parish lay in strips which were grouped into furlongs. The furlongs belonged to a large number of fields, over which rights of common grazing extended. The common arable of the individual holding was distributed between only a few of the many common fields, while many holdings included a significant area of enclosed land. There was no large area of common waste, only a number of "greens". Settlement was in the village of King's Walden itself, around the greens, and in outlying "ends" and isolated farmsteads. The problem in King's Walden, as throughout the whole of the Chilterns, was whether the main features of the sixteenth century field system had only recently arisen, or whether they had evolved over a longer period of time, a problem which can only be answered by analysis of the medieval pattern.

This study of King's Walden is based on about 500 charters, most of which date from the mid-thirteenth century and later, and which include a large number of grants and leases of land and rent. There are also a few fourteenth and fifteenth century court rolls, a larger selection of sixteenth century court rolls, and a number of fifteenth and sixteenth century rentals and surveys.

The Setting

The Land

The parish of King's Walden extends across three dry valleys, all aligned towards the southeast, and incorporates the four ridges of higher land between these (Fig. 24). The largest valley is across the centre of the parish. The ridge-tops are capped by Clay-with-flints with a superficial admixture of Brickearths, while the Middle and Upper Chalks are exposed along the valley sides. Soils therefore vary between the heavier loams on the ridges and lighter soils developed on the valley slopes.

Society and the Land Market¹

At the time of the Domesday survey, there were two large manors in the township of King's Walden. They were eventually amalgamated towards the end of the fourteenth century. A number of smaller lordships also existed in the parish in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. By 1300, a large proportion of the tenants in King's Walden, possibly more than half, were free men. Villein services were exceptionally light, and, although week work had once been widespread, seasonal works alone were now demanded. By the 1340's, most of these had been substituted for a money rent. "Free" and "Villein" became tenurial forms alone. More and more men were holding land in both tenures, until by the sixteenth century the largest group of tenants in the manor were those with both free and copyhold land.

The large free element and the preference for money rents to the performance of services, meant that there was no bar to the existence of an active peasant land market. Sale and leasing of peasant land had appeared in King's Walden by the end of the twelfth century, and by the second half of the thirteenth century land transfers were very numerous. Small pieces of land were being bought and sold by peasants and lords alike.

(1) For a more detailed account see Appendix E.

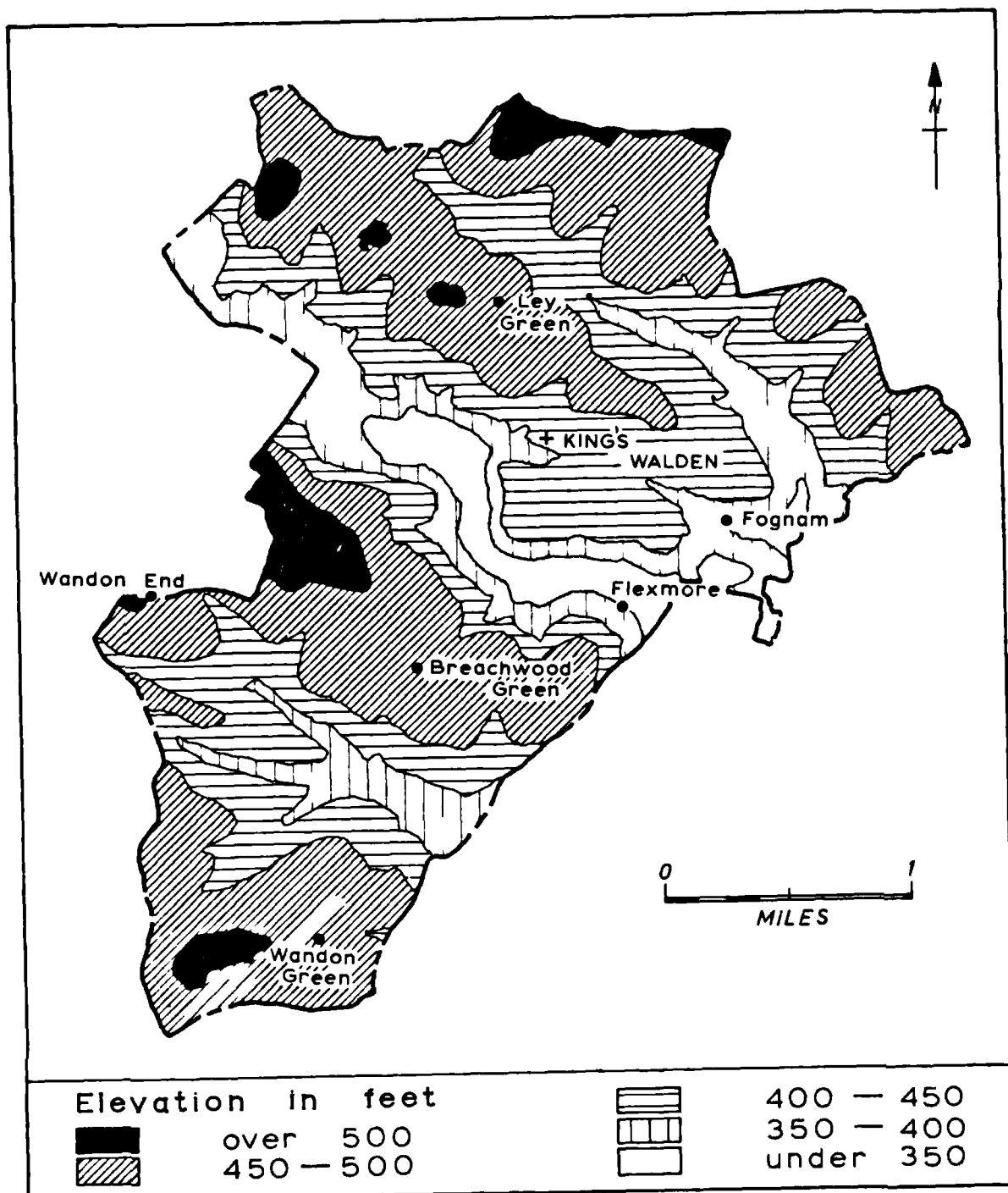


FIG. 24. King's Walden - relief.

The average amount involved in individual transactions was two acres. Large sums of money were being paid for a few acres, and subletting was widespread. Some men were able to build up substantial holdings by acquiring property on the land market. An active peasant land market and the early commutation of services suggest that peasants, as well as lords, were farming for profit here. Demand for land has been equated with a demand for produce from the land¹; sale of agricultural produce must have been the main way of financing land transactions; while money for villein rents must have come from sales of crops and livestock. Profit farming would provide an incentive for the rationalisation of holdings, in particular consolidation of land within the common fields. The active land market provided the means by which this consolidation could take place, that is, by sale or exchange.

During the middle of the fourteenth century the character of land transactions changed. Land values declined rapidly. At the same time, emphasis on the transfer of small pieces of land was replaced by an emphasis on the transfer of larger units, often of complete holdings comprising a messuage and lands. In the second half of the century, and during the fifteenth century, a few men were accumulating large numbers of holdings. The earlier small peasant freeholders were replaced as land owners by men who often came from outside the parish, and whose interests in land were scattered over the surrounding district. By the sixteenth century, all holdings in the parish, free and copyhold, were concentrated in the hands of 35 tenants. Subletting must have been widespread, but its extent is never satisfactorily revealed.

Crops and Livestock.

Evidence of the form of husbandry practised in King's Walden is limited. What there is, suggests mixed farming with an emphasis on the production of grain for sale. Wheat, oats, barley, dredge and pease were the main crops at the end of the thirteenth century. Grain rents from tenant land

(1) e.g. by R.H.Hilton, "Medieval agrarian history", in W.G.Hoskins (ed.) VCH Leics., 2 (1954), 184.

were usually in wheat and oats,¹ while quarrels and cases of trespass recorded in the early court rolls frequently refer to all four². These were the crops grown on the manorial demesne during the fifteenth century (Table XI). Proportions of land under each varied from year to year. A statement of manorial income in 1424, however, shows that rents were a far more valuable source of revenue than the demesne farm³. Income from the sale of farm produce was only half that from rents, while the sale of grain, in particular of wheat, was the most important single item of agricultural income. A list of stock on a villein farm, which was forfeited to the manor in May 1413,⁴ suggests that tenant farming differed from that being practised on the demesne only in scale. The balance between crops and livestock, and the types of crops sown, were the same. In turn, tenant farming at the end of the sixteenth century had altered remarkably little from that of 1413. A probate inventory made in May 1593 shows an arable holding evenly divided between forty acres of oats and pease, and forty acres of wheat and barley⁵. Livestock included five horses, four cows and two bullocks, and a flock of eighty sheep.

A flock of between forty and one hundred sheep appears in all examples of individual farms, tenant and demesne alike. Sheep had an important role in the mixed husbandry of the eastern Chilterns, valuable both as a source of income and as a means of improving the cultivated land. Sheep folding was being followed in the fourteenth century in King's Walden⁶.

(1) BI Add. Ch. 35636, 35653; Add. R. 35924, 35926.

(2) BI Add. R. 35922, 35924-6, 35928, 35935, 35937, 35939.

(3) BI Add. R. 35938.

(4) The barn contained wheat, barley, oats and pease, and eight acres of wheat had been sown. The farm supported one plough and four plough horses, while other livestock included a small herd of eight cattle, a flock of 45 sheep, and seven pigs. BI Add. R. 35933.

(5) LRO Inv. 90/140.

(6) BI Add. Ch. 35684.

TABLE XI

Crops and livestock on the demesne of the manor of King's Walden.

	1413-14		1417		Six summer months 1424	
	% amount	% value	% amount	% value	% amount	values not given
Wheat	16	22	35	33	33	
Barley	26	34	11	14	13	
Oats	12	7	36	32	35	
Pease	13	14	18	20	20	
Vetches						
Dredge	35	23	-	-	-	
	number	value	number	value	number	value
Horses	13	£3. 2.8	16	£8. 0.0	12	£6. 8.0
Bulls	1	£0.10.0	1	£0.10.0	1	£0. 9.0
Cows	5	£2.10.0	10		8	£3.12.0
Bullocks	3	£1. 0.0	-	-	-	-
Calves	-	-	-	-	4	-
Sheep	98	£4. 4.2.	100	£10. 0. 0	20	£1.13.4
Pigs	60	£3. 6.8	37	£1.12.10	16	£1.13.4

Sources:- A list of crops and stock on the manor in 1413-14, BM Add.R.35934; a lease of the manor in 1417, *ibid.* and BM Add. Ch.35746; and an account for six months in 1424, BM Add.R.4593^c.

Inheritance

There is no evidence to suggest that any form of inheritance other than primogeniture prevailed in King's Walden. On a father's death his property passed to his eldest son, intact if no widow survived. Elaborate remainders were sometimes included in grants to ensure the succession to property.¹ The same customs applied equally to villein tenure as to

(1) eg. by a charter of 1359, John Smyth acquired lands and tenements in King's Walden. On his death the property was to remain with his son Thomas. If Thomas died without heirs it was to pass to his brother William; if William died without heirs it was to pass to his brother John; and if John died without heirs the land was to remain with "the rightful heirs of John le Smyth". BM Add. Ch. 35718.

freehold property.¹ In the absence of male heirs, land passed down through the female line,² and when there were a number of daughters, they inherited jointly.³ Six daughters, all of whom were married, inherited from John Laurence in 1516. They all immediately surrendered their share in the property on behalf of John Laurence of Luton.⁴ There is no evidence of any division of land as a result of partible inheritance under these circumstances.

Normally, when a widow survived her husband, rights in one third of the estate passed to her as dower.⁵ If land had been granted away before the death of a holder, the widow usually released her right in one third of the property in return for a money payment.⁶ Similarly, when a son inherited, the widow in most cases quitclaimed her dower to him. In that way the holding remained undivided. On the other hand, dower could, and occasionally did, lead to a physical partitioning of land. Prerequisites

(1) The history of four generations of the family of Nicholas atte Lee, a fugitive from the manor, was given at a manorial court of 1413. Nicholas great grandfather, Robert atte Lee, had been "a villein of the lord by blood. He had had three sons, John, Thomas and John. John the first-born son (filius primogenitus) had been a swineherd in the manor, but he had died without issue. When Robert atte Lee died his property therefore passed to his second son, Thomas, and then to Richard, the eldest of Thomas's two legitimate sons. John, the younger son, became a kitchen boy and eventually set up business in London as a Chandler. There was a third son who was born out of wedlock. When Richard died, his only son Nicholas failed to come forward to inherit. Richard's brother John therefore became heir, but he too failed to come forward. The family goods and land were seized by the lord. BM Add. Ch. 35774, Add. R. 35933.

(2) Alice, widow of William Legat, was able to quitclaim rights in the land which formerly belonged to her father, Thomas de Flexmere, in 1319, BM. Add. Ch. 35686; while at the same time John Legat, her son by William Legat, released all rights in the same land, BM Add. Ch. 35687. John's claim had descended to him through his mother.

(3) BM Add. R. 35942.

(4) BM Add. R. 35962-3.

(5) G.C. Homans, "English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century", (1942), 170

(6) Agnes, widow of Fulcon ad Aquam, released to Richard de la Corner all right in the one acre near the Fouleslow which Richard had received from Fulcon, her dead husband, BM Add. Ch. 35594.

for such a division were firstly, that the dower was expressed as a specific piece of land or as pieces of land rather than as a right of one third over the whole property; secondly, that the piece or pieces were actually within the land inherited by the son; and thirdly, that either the widow or the son granted away their share of the land to a third party. All these requirements were fulfilled in at least one case in King's Walden, and as a result a croft called Stokkyng croft was divided into three pieces of one acre each.¹ The croft had been held by Richard de Flexmere, who was survived by his wife Alice and a son Robert. Alice's dower in Stokkyng croft was one acre, which divided the inheritance of her step-son Robert into two pieces of one acre each. Robert subsequently granted these two pieces, with hedges and ditches appurtenant, to Richard de la Corner, and in that way division of the croft was perpetuated. Robert's grant stipulated that the two acres be held in severalty (in severallo). Each piece may have been enclosed subsequently to become a croft in its own right, or the three acres may have been amalgamated into the original single croft. Usually, any division brought about as the result of dower was reconsolidated by a grant from widow to inheritor. The same Alice had a dower piece near Hocwell dividing, as in Stokkyng croft, the inheritance of her step-son, Robert. She released her right in the land to him in return for a money payment.² Robert was thus able to bring together the original holding. Dower had resulted in only a temporary division.³

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35570-1.

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35537.

(3) In any case, according to Homans, the widow's interest in her share was only a life interest, which reverted to the holder of the rest of the tenement on her death. The holding could not be divided permanently, G.C. Homans, *op. cit.*, 130.

The Field System and Associated Features.

Thirteenth and fourteenth century charters suggest that there were then, as in the sixteenth century, essentially two types of landscape in King's Walden (Fig. 29). On the one hand was an area of large open fields, divided into a multiplicity of strips and with little enclosed land. This was the western part of the parish south of Ley Green, and penetrating eastwards, along the broad central valley known as Walden Bottom, to Fognam and Flexmore in the east. On the other hand, there were, in the northeast of the parish and down its eastern side, two areas distinguished by an intimate intermixture of small strip fields, crofts, groves and larger patches of woodland. The area later to become the park of King's Walden Bury cut across these two landscapes. Land there lay in large arable enclosures in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, although the southern part of the later park was still in strip fields. The only area of meadowland was in the poorly-drained hollow around and to the west of Fognam.

Settlement.

The medieval pattern of settlement in King's Walden did not differ radically from that shown on the early nineteenth century maps. (Fig. 25) It was a pattern of hamlets and isolated farms. There were at least ten small nucleations in the township. Four of these had been recognised as separate units in Domesday Book¹, Walden itself and the hamlets of Landon, Ley and Flexmore were all assessed independently - and for several centuries afterwards individual hamlets continued to be referred to as distinctive units.² Two of the hamlets, Breachwood and Wanwood, were situated around common woods, which, by the sixteenth century, had been converted to open greens³.

(1) VCH Herts., 1 (1902), 302, 304.

(2) See below, p.133.

(3) See below, p.129.



FIG. 25. King's Walden - settlement.
Source:- 1st. ed. O.S. One-Inch Map.

Another group of farms was strung along a patch of heathland.¹ There is some evidence of a shrinkage of settlement during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A cottage next to Breachwood had been removed by 1315, and its site was changing hands as a croft of land.² Again, in 1359, a tenant was allowed to remove houses and a chimney from a plot in the parish.³ The hamlet known as Flexmore had probably fallen to ruin before 1400; it had disappeared completely by the sixteenth century. King's Walden village, too, was by then smaller, - two sixteenth century rentals described "a tenement without a messuage next to the cemetery"⁴ and a "tenement without a cottage situated at the Townehous"⁵ - and the settlement around three sides of Breachwood Green was probably the largest in the parish.

Wood and Heath.

The Domesday entry for King's Walden and its associated hamlets records woodland to feed a total of 385 swine.⁶ This figure was considerably smaller than that in many Chiltern parishes further west, but it was similar to that in other townships at this extreme eastern end of the Hills.⁷ Two and a half centuries later the demesnes of the two manors together contained only 72 acres of woodland,⁸ and by 1575 the demesne of King's Walden included eighty acres in woods and groves.⁹

(1) See below, p.130. Personal names occurring in the charters suggest that there was medieval settlement of some kind at a number of the later hamlets and isolated farmsteads, including Austage End (de Austage), Astholt (de Astholt), Hernes End (de Hurne), and Winchill (atte Winche). They also confirm settlement at other hamlets (de Flexmere, de Wavenden, de Fogenham, de Bruera and atte Hathe, and de la Lee). The group of houses that were at Brownings End and Coldams Green in the fifteenth century (BM Add. Ch.35736) had probably existed a century earlier.

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35670.

(3) BM Add. Ch. 35715.

(4) BM Add. R. 35940.

(5) BM Add. R. 35998.

(6) VCH Herts., 1 (1902), 302.

(7) E.M.J.Campbell, "Hertfordshire", in H.C.Darby and E.M.J.Campbell (eds. "The Domesday Geography of South-East England", (1962), 76-8.

(8) PRO C135/16/11, C135/50/17.

(9) BM Add. R. 35996.

During 250 years the amount of woodland in the parish had probably changed very little. The significance of woodland in King's Walden in the thirteenth and succeeding centuries was not its total amount, but its concentration in two areas in the parish north and south of the central valley.

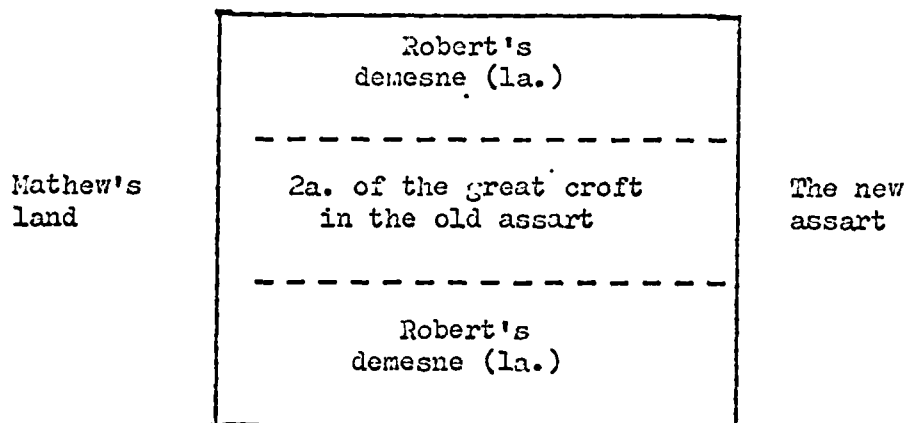
Assarting:- Woodland was still being cleared for cultivation in the thirteenth century. An early charter records the transfer of a croft and assarts, but neither the location nor the nature of the assarted land is described. A grant made about 1250, on the other hand, shows that land had recently been cleared in the northeast of the parish, where a new assart lay next to an area of older assart land. Part of this latter had been enclosed in a four acre croft, which was in turn subdivided into three pieces, held by three different men, by the sale of a central strip of two acres and subsequent alienation of the two remaining acre units to separate tenants (Fig. 26).¹ There is no evidence that this land was incorporated with a larger area of strips.² This is the last reference to assarting in the township.

The Nature and Uses of Woodland:- Some woodland in King's Walden was open to pannage and common grazing during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Sometime before 1250 the lord of the de Neville manor released a feeding for "twenty pigs every year in his manor or wood of Walden" in

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35539.

(2) About 1250 Robert de Astholt granted 2½a. to Robert de Hurne, including "the two acres which lie in my large croft in the old assart between my demesne land on both sides; one end extends onto my new assart and the other end extends onto the land which was Mathew's; excepting the pit with water which remains with me". The other half acre was in Ley field, BM Add. Ch. 35614. The same land was included in a grant of 4½a. made in 1266-7, when the 2a. of assart was then described as "two acres of the four acres lying together in the old assart between the land of Silvester de Preston and Walter the Carpenter; one end extends onto the new assart", BM Add. Ch. 35577. Clearly some, if not all, of the land in the old assart had been enclosed in a croft of four acres, which had been subsequently subdivided into at least three pieces. These had, in turn been granted away. The grant of 2a. to Robert de la Hurne had been the first such subdivision, but by the time the second grant was made, land on both sides of the 2a. piece had been alienated to different holders, Silvester de Preston and Walter the Carpenter. The new assart appears to have remained in one piece.

Robert de Astholt to Robert de la Hurne



John de Beyford to Richard de la Hurne

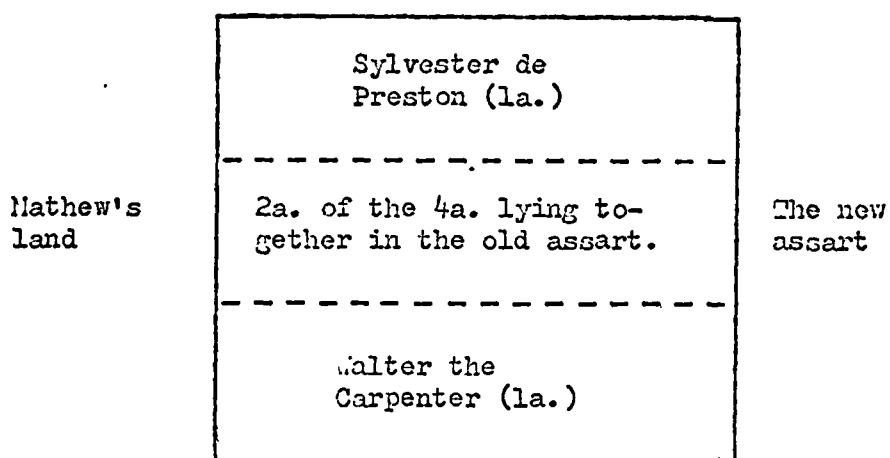


FIG. 26. King's Walden - subdivision of an assart.

Sources:- BM Add. Ch. 35577, 35614.

return for a money payment,¹ while in 1328 the lord of the same manor grants to John de Dokesworth, lord of the other manor, common of pasture for all kinds of beasts and cattle in his wood called "Le Brachewood" at all times of the year, except at the time of pannage.² But by 1328 the areas of woodland over which rights of pannage and common grazing extended must have been limited. Breachwood was probably one of the last of the larger areas of common waste left in the parish.

By the late thirteenth century, most of the woods had been enclosed into severalty. They were often divided into numerous smaller pieces called groves, which were separated from each other by ditches and hedges, were held by both free and villein tenants, and were transferred freely on the land market in the same way as any other land. As early as 1270, Walter de Neville exchanged three acres of arable for a piece of woodland that was enclosed on all sides by Walter's wood.³ Leggattesgrove, held by John de Dokesworth in 1331, was separated from Prestmeregrove - held in bondage by two sisters from the de Neville manor - by a ditch that had been dug for John.⁴ Earlier, he too had been consolidating his woodland holdings, acquiring, in 1317, a half acre grove that abutted on a grove he already held,⁵ and buying, seven years later, another grove of 1½ acres next to a small wood and enclosed by hedges and ditches.⁶ Some groves were attached to crofts of arable land - Robert de Neville sold a croft with appurtenant grove.⁷

Dealings such as these, in small pieces of woodland, suggest that its value as a source of income in its own right was early recognised. By the fourteenth century, most woods in King's Walden were not just remnants

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- (1) cf. R.H.Hilton, loc. cit. (1954), 158, for a similar example.
 (2) BM Add. Ch. 35548.
 (3) BM Add. Ch. 35696-7.
 (4) BM Add. Ch. 35580.
 (5) BM Add. Ch. 35703.
 (6) BM Add. Ch. 35681.
 (7) BM Add. Ch. 35689.

of uncleared waste on land unsuitable for cultivation. According to the de Neville inquisition of 1313, profit from underwood on the demesne was, at 4d. the acre, only slightly less than the value of arable land.¹ This valuation was repeated in 1329, when it was the same as that for the arable. Felling for sale in the private woods was systematic. Timber was rarely cleared completely. A kind of woodland farming was practised. By the second half of the fourteenth century, and perhaps earlier, this involved a rotation of felling. Seven acres of wood was valued in 1382 at 40d. the acre when it was cut. The wood had lately been felled, except for 2a. 2½ r. which was to be cut that year.³ Six years later, a further inquisition referred to the same wood as "seven acres of wood which can be cut every tenth year and are then worth about 40d. the acre, three acres having been cut within the last three years and four acres within the last five years".⁴ By 1405, the seven acres was again valued at 40d. the acre, and it had again been recently cut, except for the 2a. 2½ r. mentioned in 1382, which was to be cut in the following year.⁵ The time between felling had been reduced from ten years to seven years. By the late sixteenth century this period had increased to 16 years. Eighty acres of woods and groves on the demesne of King's Walden in 1575 were "felled at 16 years' growth, namely five acres to be felled every year at £4 the acre".⁶ The annual value of an acre of wood was therefore 5s., compared with 2s.6d. an acre for enclosed arable and 1s.8d. an acre for common arable land. Woodland had been more valuable than the arable in King's Walden since the early fourteenth century. This was the reason why the area of wood on the demesne remained constant during three centuries, and why little woodland was cleared for cultivation after the mid-thirteenth century.

Woodland and the "Greens":- Those place-names incorporating the element "green", which had appeared by the early sixteenth century, were all

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- (1) BM Add. Ch. 35605.
 - (2) PRO C134/32/24.
 - (3) PRO C135/16/11.
 - (4) Cal. Inq. Misc., IV, 121, no. 8.
 - (5) Ibid., V, 102, no. 142.
 - (6) BM Add. Ch. 35777.

located in the two more thickly wooded parts of the parish, suggesting a connection between forest clearance and a group of houses clustered around a green over which rights of common grazing extended. The existence of such a link in King's Walden can be substantiated by documentary evidence. The green called Breachwood Green in the sixteenth century, had once been a wood called Brachewood.

There is no doubt that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Brachewood was in fact woodland on the de Neville manor. It was first mentioned in a thirteenth charter, which described land in Wandon field as "butting on the way from Brachewood to le Brachathe".¹ At a court of 1292, two tenants of the manor were presented for digging in the wood of "le Brach",² while a charter of 1302 refers to the way from the wood of the lord John de Neville "which is called le Brach Wode".³ The sale, in 1333, of 236 trees "in a wood in King's Walden called the Brachewode" leaves no room for doubt.⁴ As already seen, it was a common wood, subject to rights of pannage and common grazing, and it extended over an area which was very similar to that of the later Breachwood Green. There were houses near and adjacent to the wood. A messuage with a croft and grove, that was granted away in 1325, was situated between a tenement "and the wood of the lord Walter de Neville that is called le Brachewood".⁵ At one end was another tenement, while the wood of John de Dokesworth was at the other end. It is not clear when the change from woodland to open green took place. Sale of the best timber in 1333 may have been responsible initially,⁶ and common grazing for almost the whole year after extensive felling would, by restricting regeneration, have completed the cycle. Brachewood was not described as woodland after 1333, although the name "Brachewood" continued to be used for at least a century afterwards. "Brachewodgrene" first appeared in 1493.⁷

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- (1) BM Add. Ch. 35595.
 - (2) BM Add. R. 35924.
 - (3) BM Add. Ch. 35644.
 - (4) BM Add. Ch. 35705.
 - (5) BM Add. Ch. 35691-2.
 - (6) BM Add. Ch. 35705.
 - (7) BM Add. R. 35966.

It seems probable that the open common known in the sixteenth century as Wanwood Green was also originally woodland. Before 1500 it was only called Wavendenwode. In 1318, for example, four acres in Reding field abutted on the way leading from Wavendenwode towards Hitchin,¹ while in 1346, Andrew Laurence was amerced at a manorial court for digging turves in Wavendenwode.² "Wanwoodgrene" first appears in a 1532 court roll.³ Ley Green was first named as such in 1418⁴ - previously the settlement was simply "le Lega" - while the first references to Cocks Green⁵ and Coldams Green⁶ occur in sixteenth century documents. By 1500, fresh building was taking place around these commons. The only area of heathland in the parish was at the hamlet known in the sixteenth century as Heath, and earlier as Brachathe.⁸

By the thirteenth century, therefore, the areas of waste over which rights of common grazing extended were relatively small. They probably included one patch of natural heath and a number of pieces of woodland or scrub. Homesteads were situated around the edges of these areas of waste, and had probably been built after the clearance and enclosure of woodland in the parish had removed other possible areas for fresh settlement. Whereas men had once been able to establish new farms for their

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35682

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35931. A farm there is still known as Laurence End.

(3) BM Add. R. 35970, 35079.

(4) BM Add. R. 35937.

(5) BM Add. R. 35948, 35950; Add. Ch. 35839.

(6) HRO 54521.

(7) In 1493, the lord granted an acre of his waste at Breachwood Green to a tenant as a site for a house, BM Add. R. 35966; a few years later, another tenant was accused of encroaching on Cocks Green by building a carthouse there, BM Add. R. 35948; and about the same time, the manor claimed new rent for land taken from the green, BM Add. R. 35945.

(8) In 1292, Robert le Shepherd received a ditch and heathland near to "le Brachathe" and next to land he held there, BM Add. R. 35923. The common furlong near Brachathe mentioned in two late fifteenth century deeds was probably a patch of common waste, BM Add. R. 35766, 35782; and in 1493, a tenant was ordered to remove a hedge from "the lord's waste near the heth", BM Add. R. 35966. Bouches croft (later Boudge croft) was immediately north of this area, BM Add. Ch. 35670. The name has been interpreted as "heath, uncultivate ground covered with heather", A.L. Smith, "English Place-Name Elements", English Place-Name Society, 25 (1956), 45.

families by reclaiming land, when no virgin land remained they were forced to squat on the edge of one of the few remnants of common waste, be these wood or heath. Many were probably originally small cottagers for whom right to pasture on the waste was a significant asset. Following years of continuous grazing, and, in the larger common woods, extensive felling, the former woodland became open "greens" which remained as foci for settlement.

Meadow and Pasture

The amount of meadow and pasture in King's Walden was, at all times very limited. The only detailed evidence is of a small area of meadow, probably no more than two closes, which lay in the poorly drained hollow at Fognam, where it was surrounded by arable land and wood.¹ It came into the possession of the de Neville manor before 1300, and may well have been the eight acres of "pasture" referred to in an extent of 1313.² By the fifteenth century, there were also ley strips and pieces of pasture in some of the common fields.³ No doubt, too, orchards and small crofts attached to dwellings were often left under grass, but most enclosed fields were in arable cultivation. The general shortage of grassland of any kind was reflected in the high value at which it was assessed in the manorial inquisitions. During three centuries of fluctuating land prices the value of meadowland was one of the few items to show a constant increase.⁴

Enclosed Arable Fields.

As in the sixteenth century, so in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the area of enclosed arable land in King's Walden was substantial

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35551-2, 35568, 35576, 35635.

(2) PRO C134/32/24.

(3) See below, p.136.

(4) In 1313, 8a. of pasture was worth twice as much as the arable equivalent op.cit. By 1329, 8a. of mowing meadow and 10a. of several pasture were extended at six times and three times the value of demesne arable respectively, PRO C135/16/11. Fifty years later, one meadow acre equalled forty common arable acres and more than nine enclosed arable acres in value, Cal. Inq. Misc., V, 102 No. 142. By 1575, when the value of arable land had recovered, the 13a. of demesne meadow was still worth four times as much as arable in severalty, BM Add. R. 35996.

Many holdings, peasant and demesne alike, included arable in severalty in addition to land in the common fields (Table XII). Most enclosed fields were in arable cultivation rather than under grass. There were references at thirteenth and fifteenth century manorial courts to grain and pease crops in crofts. According to a case of trespass brought before a court in 1291, a croft had been sown with pease and oats.¹ A century and a half later, animals broke into and destroyed oats growing in a croft called Longemere and wheat in Stoldkyng croft.² Part of the enclosed land of the demesne in 1472-3 lay as stubble,³ while a century later the demesne farm was said to include 44 acres of arable land "inclosed into 19 severall inclosure".⁴ Clearly the arable cultivation of closes was a continuing feature of field systems in King's Walden. Closes larger than ten acres were rare - most were demesne holdings - and the majority were less than five acres. Occasionally, closes were subdivided into a number of open units, either by sale or lease to more than one tenant, or for cropping purposes. In 1472-3, demesne fields of 9½ and 16 acres were leased-out amongst three and four tenants respectively. One of the fields contained both arable and pasture.⁵

The Common Arable.

The area of common arable land in King's Walden, and the number of common fields in the township, were both slightly larger c. 1300 than c. 1600. But in all essentials the field pattern remained the same. There was neither large-scale enclosure nor the disintegration of an earlier simpler pattern. The common arable was characterised by its ~~simplicity~~

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- (1) BM Add. R. 35922.
 (2) BM Add. R. 35939.
 (3) BM Add. Ch. 35945.
 (4) BM Add. R. 35996.
 (5) Op. cit..

division amongst numerous relatively small common fields,¹ and by a contrast between larger common fields lying in a solid block in the centre and east of the parish, and smaller strip fields scattered amongst closes and groves in the remaining areas (Fig.29). The contrast probably represented two distinct phases in common field formation, the larger fields coming into existence during early settlement and colonisation, the smaller fields appearing with secondary clearance in the surviving areas of waste.

The Hamlets and the Common Fields:- The larger strip fields of the parish may have been originally divided between a number of separate common field systems, each based on a separate hamlet. As already seen, at least four different centres of settlement had appeared by 1086, each of which was assessed individually in Domesday Book.² Hamlets within the parish continued to be recognised as semi-autonomous units until well into the fourteenth century. Twelfth and thirteenth century fines locate land with reference to the hamlet of Wandon rather than to the vill of King's Walden.³ A lease of 1297 records the transfer of land and wood in the hamlet of Flexmere in the parish of King's Walden,⁴ and as late as 1359 a tenement was being described as "in the hamlet of Flexmere in the parish of the township of Walden and in the fields lying and being situated there".⁵

(1) Most of the sixteenth century common fields can be identified individually in the earlier documents. Ashcroft, Bilknal field, Bradcroft, Burdens field, Darley field, Flexmore field, Fognam field, Heighanger, Ley field, Redding field, Wooden field are all first mentioned in thirteenth century evidence, PRO CP25(1)/84/9/48; BM Add.Ch.35561,35567,35573,35577,35580,35586,35614,35621,35647: Hadden field, Leggats field and Royden field are first mentioned in the fourteenth century, BM Add.Ch.28763,35610,35707: while Austage field, Astoll field, Cholney field, Hernes field, Mill field, Sedcop field, and Shotmere field are all first named in fifteenth century documents, BM Add. Ch.35735,35740,35748,35751,35759,35935.

(2) See above, p.122.

(3) BM Add.Ch.35544, 35582; Cotton Ms. Julius Diii, F.70: PRO CP25 (1)/84 /17/247 and 19/279: Cañ. Curia Regis Rolls, 1203, 4, and 1207,104.

(4) BM Add. Ch. 35636.

(5) BM.Add. Ch. 35716.

Even King's Walden itself was occasionally referred to as a hamlet in its own right rather than as the centre of a parish - in 1237 St. Alban's Abbey acquired rent from a croft "in the hamlet of Walden in the parish of King's Walden".¹

Thirteenth and fourteenth century evidence suggests that each of these hamlets had once been associated with a common field or group of common fields, although the distinction between them had by then become blurred. At least three common fields, Wandon field, Darley field, and the small Pedderscroft, were within the territory of the hamlet of Wandon. The earliest grants frequently describe land as "in the field of Wavendon in the parish of King's Walden"², but by the fourteenth century the general form had emerged as Wandon field.³ Land in Darley field was referred to in a late thirteenth century grant as "the acre of land which lies in the field of Wavendon that is called Darley",⁴ while of another two acres it was said "they lie together in the parish of King's Walden in the field of Wavendon in Pedderscroft".⁵ Similarly, Flexmore field was the common field of the hamlet of Flexmere. The earlier grants describe land in "the field of Flexmere", a phrase which recurs occasionally until as late as 1309,⁶ although "Flexmersfeld" was being used increasingly, and continued to be used, until the field was enclosed in the late eighteenth century.⁷ Again Fognam field, north and south of the hamlet of Fognam in the east of the parish, was called "the field of Fognam" in 1266-7.⁸

(1) BM Cotton Ms. Julius Diii, f. 70d.

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35579, 35595, 35597.

(3) BM Add. Ch. 35647, 35667, 35671, 35677, 35674.

(4) BM Add. Ch. 35579.

(5) BM Add. Ch. 35595.

(6) BM Add. Ch. 35568-9, 35574-5, 35584, 35616, 35621-2, 35648.

(7) eg. BM Add. Ch. 35553, 35585, 35591, 35659, 35666, 35725, 35738, 35740, 35742, 35859; Add. R. 35853.

(8) BM Add. Ch. 35577.

The largest proportion of common arable, however, was that embraced in the early charters by the phrase "the field of King's Walden",¹ as distinct from the field of Flexmere or the field of Wandon. Walden field,² or, as it had become by the fifteenth century, Wooden field,³ referred to some of this land until enclosure. The complex common field pattern that appears in the sixteenth century surveys had its origins, at least partly, in the multiple field systems of the early Middle Ages, when the parish was divided between a number of hamlets each with its own area of common arable.

Assarting and the Common Fields:- Although some assart land was subdivided by the alienation of pieces within it during the thirteenth century, there is no evidence that this land was ever incorporated with the common arable of the parish. On the other hand, it may be that many, if not all, of the small common fields scattered in the two wooded parts of the township were originally formed through the division of land that, in the thirteenth century, had only recently been cleared from the waste. The names of six of these common fields were characteristic of late woodland clearance.⁴ Another three fields had been named after families who had extensive holdings in the parish in the late thirteenth century,⁵ suggesting that they were originally in one holding and only subsequently divided. Again, a family called Passelew claimed lordship over the small common field known as Ashcroft and the common pasture in it.⁶ Perhaps Ashcroft had originally been taken into

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35559-60, 35638, 35654, 35670.

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35561, 35601, 35699.

(3) eg. BM Add. R. 35853, 35937.

(4) They were two Reding fields, two Ley fields, Inning field, and Stocking field. The significance of these names is shown by A.L.Smith, op. cit., 25 and 26 (1956).

(5) They were Burdens field, Cranemerescroft and Hernes field (Heron). Martin Burdeyn was holding land in the northeast of the parish in the thirteenth century, BM Add. Ch. 35599, 35607-8; Osbert de Cranemere and his descendants had an extensive holding in the area around Cranemerescroft in the northwest, BM Add. Ch. 28763, 28814, 35612-13, 35702; the family of Hugo de Heirun (Heron) acquired land in Wandon in 1203, Cal. Curia Regis Rolls 1203, 4.

(6) BM Add. Ch. 35684.

cultivation in severalty by their ancestors, and later divided up in a way which allowed the family to retain its rights over the land. These possibilities cannot be substantiated by direct documentary evidence.

The Strips:- The basic unit of cultivation in the common fields of King's Walden was the strip. Strip sizes given in the charters dated before the mid-fourteenth century were more uniform than those in the sixteenth century surveys. Strips varied in area from a half rood to four acres, but those of half an acre and one acre were by far the commonest. Of more than one hundred pieces of common arable land named before 1350, 45 were one acre in size and 37 were half an acre. By the late sixteenth century, the average strip size had increased, although the acre and the half acre were still the most frequent individual units.

By the fifteenth century, and perhaps earlier, some common arable strips were under grass. In 1472-3, the demesne included a ten acre ley piece in Royden field, while 24 acres of its 53½ acre holding in Mill field, and seven acres of 21 acres of demesne land in Hadcon field, were in leys. Whereas ley strips were probably deliberately cultivated as such, two parcels of pasture in Leggats field, containing twelve acres, had probably just tumbled to grass - the land was said to be without a tenant.²

Furlongs:- Quarantena, cultura, and furlongae occur frequently in the terminology of the King's Walden charters. Their use was ambiguous, for they were applied from time to time to cultivated land of three types. Cultura was sometimes used to describe enclosed fields held in severalty.

(1) Some of the smaller strips were headlands to a larger block of land in the same field. Alienation of headlands as separate pieces indicates that the field or croft was divided into at least two parts - the headland was in that particular case not just a ploughing unit, but was also a unit of tenure. The number of other subdivisions in the same field is not always clear. A croft could be divided into only two parts, the headland and the plough strips butting onto it. A one rood piece in Stortecroft, for example was headland only to the land of Richard de la Corner - in this case other evidence shows that there was a number of separate holdings in the croft. BM Add. Ch. 35606-7.

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35945.

Gatecroft, for example, was "a cultura of land with living hedges" in a single holding,¹ while Hayrunescroft was referred to as a cultura of two acres.² One of the larger common fields could be described by the same term,³ which was also sometimes used for smaller strip fields.⁴ Although occasionally applied to a bundle of strips within the larger common fields,⁵ shot and furlong were not widely used in that sense until the second half of the sixteenth century,⁶ The common quarentena included in abuttals of land near Brachehath, in 1481⁷ and 1524,⁸ probably referred to a patch of waste.

As a result of this confusion the nature of a number of culturae, quarentenae and furlongs mentioned in the charters is not clear. The two pieces of land in the quarentena near Dene, included in a late thirteenth century grant,⁹ were probably part of a larger common field, but the quarentena below Livingeswell,¹⁰ also described as "Livingeswell furlong",¹¹ which was divided into a number of pieces, may have been a small strip field, or it may have been part of a larger field. Similarly, the quarentena called Little Astholt, mentioned in 1423,¹² was possibly part of the common field known in the sixteenth century as Astoll field,¹³ but the nature of the quarentena called Henerslo also in the same grant, or of the quarentena opposite the messuage once belonging to Adam Ochyn

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- (1) BM Add. Ch. 35578.
 - (2) BM Add. Ch. 2^o636, 28704.
 - (3) eg. a half acre granted in 1274 was "in the cultura which is called Flexmore field", BM Add. Ch. 35594.
 - (4) eg. one acre described in 1308 lay in two places in "that cultura called le Pyricroft near Flexmere", BM Add. Ch. 35655.
 - (5) eg. a grant of 1266-7 included "one acre in the field of Fognam in Hassendelle furlong with the marl pit appurtenant to that acre", BM Add. Ch. 35577.
 - (6) eg. BM Add. R. 35353.
 - (7) BM Add. 35766.
 - (8) BM Add. Ch. 35782.
 - (9) BM Add. Ch. 35549.
 - (10) BM Add. Ch. 35640.
 - (11) BM Add. Ch. 35615.
 - (12) BM Add. Ch. 35748.
 - (13) eg. BM Add. R. 35353.

is unknown.¹ It is perhaps significant that these unattributed furlongs were all situated in the wooded area in the northeast of the parish, where land was still ^{being} assarted in the mid-thirteenth century, and where a highly confused pattern of small strip fields and closes existed.

Changes in the Common Fields:- The grouping of strips into fields was flexible. Some of the smaller fields were at one stage incorporated into a single large field, while by 1550 other common fields were being broken down into smaller units. The term "field" was itself subject to considerable variations in usage.

Certain old-established patterns persisted until the sixteenth century. The basic division of the larger common fields into the territory of different hamlets has already been noted. Within these, there was a picture of some complexity. The phrase "the field of the township of King's Waldon", for example, embraced a number of common fields of very different sizes. Two of the largest, Royden field² and Wooden field,³ certainly existed in the second half of the thirteenth century as a part of King's Walden field, but the area of common arable between Flexmore and Royden fields was divided into four smaller units, which were also called fields. The largest of these was Cowsditch field;⁴ the other three were Rowcroftdane,⁵ Heldefeld,⁶ and Stankesdene field.⁷ Sometime between 1320 and 1336 the four were amalgamated into a single unit called Leggats field. After 1320 the names of the four smaller fields occur only as furlongs and locations within Leggats field,⁸ and not as independent

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35640.

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35610.

(3) See above, p. 135.

(4) BM Add. Ch. 35553, 35596, 35609, 35638, 35641, 35672; PRO CP25 (1)/84/c

(5) BM Add. Ch. 35533, 35586, 35596, 35621.

(6) BM Add. Ch. 35541, 35643.

(7) BM Add. Ch. 35642.

(8) BM Add. Ch. 35707. viz. "1/2a. in the field called Leggats field". This is the first charter in which Leggats field is named. It is dated 1336.

features. Thus one acre of arable land transferred in 1510 lay in the "field called Legat field in the cultura called Stangsdan",¹ while a late sixteenth century survey describes one acre in Leggats field in Standgoden furlong, one acre "being at Cowsditch and called Cowsditch Acre", and three roods at the Cowsditch.² It is not clear how the change from four fields to a single field was effected, but it was probably associated with the grant to Robert Legat, in 1319, of all pasture for sheep, separate and common, in the manor of King's Walden.³ Robert most likely brought the four fields together for convenience of grazing. The same kind of rationalisation seems to have taken place around Flexmere on a lesser scale. The small strip field known as Pyricroft, at the eastern end of Flexmore field, was incorporated with the latter sometime after 1309.⁴ John de Dokesworth, who was consolidating his holding in Pyricroft in the early thirteenth century, may have been responsible for the amalgamation. Similarly, the part of Wandon field that was on Stocking Hill was distinguished, between 1481⁶ and 1524,⁷ as a small common field known as Reding field. As an independent field it was of uncertain age, and by the second half of the sixteenth century had disappeared as a separate feature. Land on Stocking Hill was then described as part of Wandon field.⁸

By the sixteenth century, the reverse process was also taking place. Larger common fields were beginning to be broken-up into smaller groupings,

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35773.

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35853.

(3) BM Add. Ch. 25684

(4) BM Add. Ch. 35630, 35658; Add. R. 25684. The location of the later Street Orchard piece was identical with that of the earlier Pyricroft, "the pear orchard croft". A.H.Smith, *op.cit.*, 26 (1956), 65-6.

(5) BM Add. Ch. 35650, 35655, 35658.

(6) BM Add. Ch. 35766.

(7) BM Add. Ch. 35782.

(8) eg. BM Add. Ch. 35840. In another sixteenth century deed three areas, Fowleslowe Valley, Rowgrove Valley, and Malande Hawse Acre, were called fields although all other evidence shows that these areas were furlongs or locations within Leggats field, BM Add. Ch. 35780. A vague use of terms is probably the correct explanation for this anomaly. Similarly, the names of at least four strip fields in the north of the parish, which appear in medieval charters, had disappeared by the sixteenth century. The fields were Scorthcroft, BM Add. Ch. 35599, 35607 - t.E.I; Watlondefeld, BM Add. Ch. 35602 35612 - t.E.I.; Hepmerefeld, BM Add. Ch. 35702 - 1331; and Pelhamsdene, BM Add. Ch. 35748 - 1423. These four fields may have been incorporated into a larger strip field area, they may have been enclosed, or perhaps the names were changed.

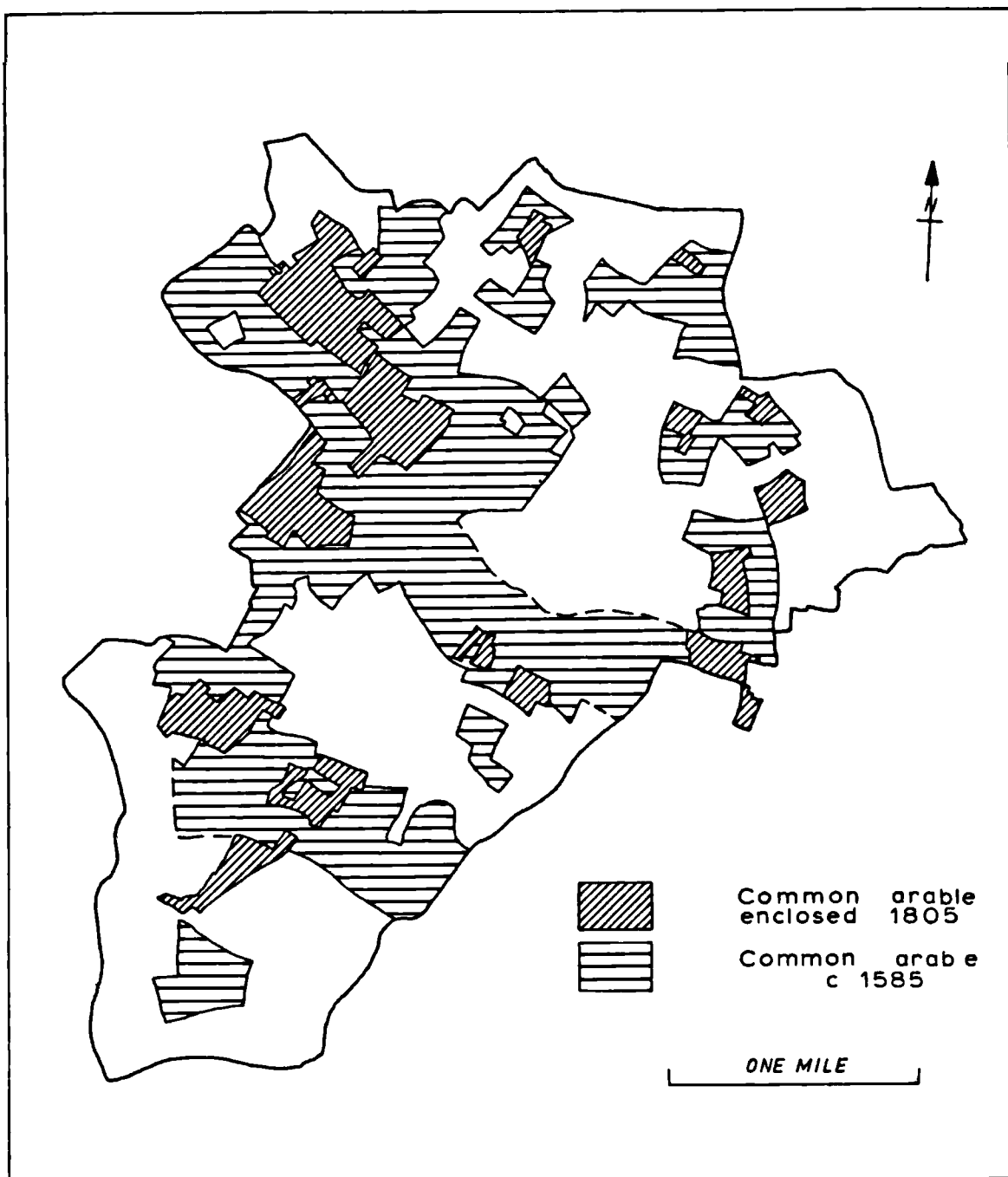


FIG. 27. King's Walden - common arable land c.1585 and in 1805.

Sources:- BM Add. Ch. 35853x and HRO 67083.

that were also called "fields". Down field is first mentioned in the early sixteenth century. It was formerly part of Fognam field, which, by the latter half of the century, was being considered as three units, namely Hither, Nether and Fognam Down fields.²

Breakdowns such as these were to occur more widely during the next two hundred years. By 1600, the traditional field systems were on the threshold of disintegration.

Consolidation and Enclosure:- The roots of disintegration extended back for at least three centuries. Consolidation and enclosure were continuing features of the field systems in King's Walden, from the time of the earliest charters in the second half of the thirteenth century until enclosure by Act of Parliament at the beginning of the nineteenth. Medieval consolidation was effected by sale and exchange, was facilitated by the ease with which tenants could transfer land, and was no doubt stimulated by the importance of market production on demesne and peasant farms. Six exchanges of land are recorded amongst the charters (which concern only free land). All six took place before 1330, and all involved common field land.³ In five of these transactions, exchange led to a consolidation of land within the common arable. By an exchange of five roods for two acres in 1305, for example, John de Dokesworth acquired a strip next to land that he already held in Flexmore field, while Walter de Flexmere now had one acre and half an acre next to his pieces in Ashcroft and Reding field respectively.⁴ Holdings in a particular common field were also

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35784, 35800.

(2) BN Add. R. 35853.

(3) BM Add. Ch. 35580, 35610, 35648, 35654, 35670, 35693.

(4) BM Add. Ch. 35648.

enlarged by selective purchase. Already, in the thirteenth century, men were buying land next to their own strips, an activity that was to fall off sharply in the second and third decades of the following century. In 33 of more than one hundred charters that record land transfers between 1250 and 1330, at least some of the land bought or leased lay next to a holding of the purchaser, and in 23 of these the pieces involved were in common fields.

The demesne strips of the two manors were, in particular, brought together and enlarged in this way. Between them, Walter de Neville, who held one manor between 1286 and 1329, and John de Dokesworth, holder of the other manor from 1303 to 1338, accounted for 22 of the 33 possible consolidations. As a result of such activity, the average size of common arable pieces on the demesne was, by the fifteenth century, considerably larger than that of the tenant strips. In a survey of the demesne of the former de Neville manor in 1472-3,¹ the average strip area exceeded that of tenant strips a century later. The 4½ acres of demesne land in Royden field, for example, lay in ten pieces, the largest of which was ten acres and the smallest one acre, individual strips ranging from one rood to seven acres.² Again, the 7½ acres of demesne in Mill field was in 16 pieces, an average of 4½ acres each, whereas copyhold strips there averaged less than one acre a century later. Medieval consolidation of common arable holdings had been more extensive on the demesne farms than on tenant land.

In spite of widespread consolidation, medieval enclosure of the common arable was limited, and was carried out by the manor alone. One common field, Reding field, was taken into severalty following buying

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35945.

(2) BM Add. R. 35853x.

and exchange of land within it by John de Dokesworth, to form part of the demesne of his manor,¹ while part of Leggats field had been taken into what was later to be the grounds of King's Walden Bury by 1472, although it remained in arable cultivation.² Rationalisation of the holding alone seems, on the other hand, to have been the basis for peasant consolidation. During the third and fourth decades of the fourteenth century the number of recorded consolidations dwindled to almost nothing, and did not revive until the second half of the following century. By then, piecemeal enclosure of individual strips or blocks of strips was taking place for the first time. At a manorial court of 1493, penalties were imposed for "inclosing of the common fields", and by the mid-sixteenth century, at least three more fields

(1) By an exchange with John in 1305, Walter de Flexmere had obtained half an acre next to land that he already held in Reding field, BM Add. Ch. 35585. A few years later, Walter de Neville granted John 4a. with its crops and heges and ditches in the same field. The 4a. lay next to John's own land on both sides, and one end abutted on the land of John Passelew, BM Add. Ch. 35682. It was extended, in 1327, by an exchange with the latter - in return for a piece in Reding field lying next to the land of John Passelew, John de Dokesworth obtained two strips in the field lying between his land on both sides, and abutting at one end on his land, BM Add. Ch. 35695. When Reding field was next mentioned it had been enclosed, and lay as a single field of twenty acres next to the site and gardens of the manor of Duxworth, BM Add. R. 35937. By the late sixteenth century, the large field had been divided into "two closes called the Ridings sometimes butt one containing twenty acres whereof half is freehold land," BM Add. R. 35853. John de Dokesworth was a particularly active consolidator. As the result of exchanges and selective buying, he acquired 22 different pieces next to land that he already held. In particular, he was consolidating and enlarging his holding in Flexmore field, and in Pyricroft, the latter eventually being amalgamated with the former, BM Add. Ch. 35659, 35666.

(2) A rental of demesne land describes "land and pasture in the frith in Leggattesfeld and out of frith". Most of the land that had been taken into the Frith (the grounds of the Bury) lay "severall at al tymes of the yere", BM Add. R. 35945.

had been enclosed entirely, including the small Pedderscrofte¹ at the eastern end of Wandon field, and Lyvote field, a sixteenth century enclosure.² Smaller pieces had also been taken from most other common fields (Table XIII). Phrases such as "two acres in Shottmere parte inclosed", or "one close in Ashcroft", or "four acres taken out of Legats field" recur in surveys and deeds after 1550,³ and occasional attempts to prevent piecemeal enclosure are recorded in the court rolls. In 1564, four court officials were ordered to inspect "a comon bracke" in Shotmere field and to see that the land was laid open again.⁴ These attempts could not have been very successful. Enclosure continued on an ever increasing scale until, in 1625, holders of "any comon field bracke" were instructed, not to return their land to the common arable, but simply to see that it was surrounded by a hedge or hurdle when ordered.⁵

In parishes such as King's Walden, where a moderate proportion of arable land had always been in severalty, and where many tenants held both several and common arable, the advantages of enclosure would have long been obvious. On the demesne, enclosed arable had been valued more highly than common arable since the end of the fourteenth century, a recognition that it was more highly prized by the cultivator.⁶ But until the sixteenth century, in spite of medieval peasant consolidation of scattered holdings, enclosure had been confined to demesne lands. Perhaps it was only on the

(1) Pedderscrofte was next to the highway "from Brachewode towards le Brachathe", BM Add. Ch. 35595. Tudor surveys show that this area was entirely enclosed, HRO 54621; BM Add. R. 35853.

(2) Early charters clearly show both its location and the fact that it was divided into strips, BM Add. Ch. 35652, 35667. Lyvot field was still subdivided in 1471, BM Add. Ch. 35759. In 1582, the former strip field was described as "one field called Lyvett field containing 15a. in the tenure of John Ivery", HRO 54521.

(3) eg. BM Add. R. 35853.

(4) BM Add. R. 35991.

(5) BM Add. Ms. 33584, f. 163.

(6) The 24a. in severalty on the Dokesworth demesne in 1382 was worth, at 4 the acre, four times as much as each of the 164 common arable acres, Cal. In Misc., IV, 121; V, 102; BM Add. Ch. 35777. By 1575, the 170a. of the common arable demesne of the manor of King's Walden was to be let at 20d. the acre, compared with 30d. the acre for the 44a. that were enclosed, BM Add. R. 35996

demesne that the scale of farming was sufficiently large to make enclosure worthwhile under prevailing economic conditions. By the sixteenth century, the growth of the London market - an important factor in this area of mixed farming - together with the concentration of land holding into fewer hands, which had been taking place for two centuries, and consolidation which had been taking place for three centuries, stimulated and facilitated piecemeal enclosure by tenants.

Pasturing in the Common Fields:- By the thirteenth century, the small amount of common waste remaining; the small area of meadow and pasture, and the fact that most crofts were sown with crops and not left under grass, must have placed a premium on grazing on the arable fallow and stubble. Sheep were folded on the demesne arable, probably as much for benefits to the land pastured, as for its value as a source of fodder. In return for a grant of sheep pasture, both several and common, in the de Neville manor, Robert Legat was to provide 100 sheep for the demesne fold for two years.¹ Rights of common pasture undoubtedly existed over common fields in the parish, but the medieval evidence is limited. The clearest statement of the nature of pasture rights, was the grant in 1319 by Isabella Passelewe and her son to John de Dokesworth of chief lordship in the pasture of Ashcroft.² Four significant facts emerge from the text of the grant. First, rights of common pasture existed in Ashcroft in 1319. Second, these rights were restricted to the period after the harvest had been collected, unless special permission had previously been obtained. Thirdly, the distinction between cattle and sheep, namely that cattle could pasture the stubble before sheep, had already been made in the fourteenth century. It was a distinction that later occurred in many Chiltern townships. Finally, the practice later known as stinting (the limitation of common rights according

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35684.

(2) Isabella and John were not to drive their beasts or horses into the field before Michaelmas, and after that only according to the measure of their land. They could neither drive in sheep before the feast of All Saints, nor take distraint on animals feeding in the field without approval from the Dokesworth manor. Ashcroft was one of the many small common fields east of Breachwood, an area within which the Passelewe family had considerable land. Possibly they held a small manor here which included overlordship of all Ashcroft. BM Add. Ch. 35694.

to the amount of land held) was already enforced in the fourteenth century. Stinting was also widespread in the Mills by 1600.

Not until the sixteenth century, however, is there evidence that rights of common grazing existed over all the common fields in King's Walden. By orders and presentments in the manorial courts, attempts were made to assert the common rights against those whose interests lay in ignoring them. Customs were restated and reinforced by penalties for contravention. As early as 1515 it was ordered that no tenant was to put sheep into the fields in which wheat and barley were growing before the 13th October.¹ Similar orders, occurring from time to time throughout the sixteenth century, referred to 'any common field called the whete stobull fields' and generally set the date at 1st November.² Occasionally, the common fields in which common pasture rights existed were named in presentments against overstocking.³ It was the duty of the four "Hedborowes", elected annually, to see that these and similar regulations were enforced. Two were responsible for "le Brachewodgrene side" and two for "le Church side".⁴ Even so, orders were often ignored. In 1534, three men were presented for breaking the agreed regulations about sheep pasturing,⁵ while, in 1586, fifteen men put sheep into the wheat stubble contrary to the court's orders.⁶

For much of the sixteenth century, there was a limit on the number of animals that could be pastured on the common stubble and fallow. Certainly rights of common pasture were confined to tenants of the manor,⁷ and frequently these tenants were presented for overstocking the common,⁸ but there is no evidence as to the nature of the restrictions until 1568, when details of

(1) BM Add. R. 35960-1.

(2) eg. BM Add. R. 35981-4, 36002, 36007.

(3). They include Mill field, High field, Heighanger field, Wooden field, Hadden field, and Howcroft, BM Add. R. 35975-6, 35935-6.

(4) BM Add. R. 35993.

(5) BM Add. R. 35983-4.

(6) BM Add. R. 36008.

(7) BM Add. R. 35981-2.

(8) eg. BM Add. R. 35969, 35971-2, 35975-6, 35981-2.

the stint were clearly set forth.¹

It is noticeable that sixteenth century orders mention only sheep. In comparison, the one specific fourteenth century example gave detailed instructions about both cattle and sheep, and clearly distinguished between the two - both were excluded from the field until after harvest. Perhaps it had been accepted by the sixteenth century that cattle could be tethered on individual pieces within the common fields at any time of the year. This point is not clear.

The piecemeal enclosure from the common arable, that was a feature of sixteenth century field systems in King's Walden, also affected arrangements for common grazing. Larger blocks fenced from the common arable by the lord were held in severalty the whole year round. Thirty-nine acres in Leggats field, taken in the fifteenth century to enlarge the enclosed demesne, was described, in 1472-3, as "beyng severall al tymes of the yere", while one piece of 2½ acres lay "half severall and half comyn in the said frith and field".² Enclosure on a smaller scale may have been responsible for features known in the sixteenth century as "common closes", that is closes that were thrown open for common pasturing along with the strip fields. They probably represented an intermediate stage in the process of piecemeal enclosure. When, in 1493, John Shepherd was accused of enclosing a croft called Bennelond it was claimed that "the lord and his tenants have been accustomed from time immemorial that the aforesaid croft lies in common and remains in common for the same time as the other crofts and fields." Similarly, Lucia Grome was presented, in 1530, for enclosing a close called Prestcroft, which was a close common to all tenants of the manor.³ She was ordered to return the

(1) At a court of that year, it was ordered that no one "put more sheep in any common field where diverse men have land within this manor but in the manner and form following namely for every 40a. 100 sheep, for 20a. 50 sheep, for 10a 25 sheep, for 5a. 12 sheep one week and 13 sheep the next week..... the Hedhor owes for both sides of the parish will supervise at the appointed day and time when they ought to enter and when they ought to limit their sheep and to see the enforcement of the regulations", BM Add. R. 35995. By 1625, the stint had been reduced to one sheep for an acre, BM Add. Ms. 33584.

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35945.

(3) BM Add. R. 35975 - 6.

close to its former condition. By the end of the century, pieces taken from the common fields were being grazed as their holder wished.¹

Cropping:- The existence of rights of common pasture over the common arable implied a uniformity of cropping. If certain fields were to be open to grazing after the harvest, then all the land in the field had to grow crops which could be cleared by the same time. Frequent references in sixteenth century orders to pasturing on the wheat stubble is suggestive of such uniformity, although it is difficult to find any conclusive evidence. Nor is it clear whether an equal amount of the common arable of the parish was left fallow each year. A factor tending to upset any simple rotation based on the common fields was that only part of the arable land lay within them. Many men held some enclosed land in addition to common arable, and were therefore less dependent on the common husbandry for both crops and pasturage than if almost the whole parish had been in common fields. A degree of independence existed, implying greater flexibility in the field system as a whole.

The only detailed evidence of cropping in King's Walden relates to the demesne. A rental of 1472-3 describes 67½ acres of the arable demesne as stubble, 101 acres as "assigned by the farmer for fallow", and 101½ acres of other arable land. Presumably, this triple division referred to three separate cropping courses. The stubble lay in both closes and common fields the latter including Royden, Leggats, Heighanger, Hernes and Fognam fields. But some of the fallow also lay in Fognam field, as well as in Mill and Haaden fields. Clearly, by the fifteenth century, there was no simple cropping course based on the common fields alone, nor one involving all the common fields of the parish. There may have been some kind of rotation between groups of a few fields - no one had land in all the common fields - but there is no evidence of this. Nor, on the other hand, is it clear whether cropping was based on the furlong rather than the field. Demesne proportions in stubble, fallow and other arable show little more than that a three-course rotation was followed, and that common and enclosed arable was combined in a single cropping course on the individual holding.

(1) BM Add. Ms. 33584, f. 163.

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35945.

Arable Holdings.

Detailed evidence of the character of arable holdings is, apart from the 1472-3 rental of domesne lands, very limited before the second half of the sixteenth century. Few medieval charters describe the transfer of entire holdings comprising a messuage and lands, and those that do usually provide only the barest detail. Nonetheless it is clear, even from the restricted information available, that the composition of medieval arable holdings differed little from the sixteenth century pattern. Four features are particularly characteristic, namely fragmentation of individual holding, inclusion of both enclosed and common arable in the majority of holdings, concentration of the land of the tenant in one part of the parish, and a general absence of any equality in the allocation of a common arable holding between fields.

Fragmentation was quite marked. A thirteenth century holding of seven acres was divided into six pieces,¹ while in 1471 the six acres attached to a messuage at Coldams Green were lying in nine pieces.² By the end of the sixteenth century there had been little change. The 59 acres of a farm at Kingswell End was, for example, scattered as 49 separate units.³

The remaining three features of arable holdings are all clearly illustrated in Table XII. There is no record in the medieval charters of a farm comprising enclosed arable land alone, while 70% of the holdings described in a 1568 survey included arable of both types - 6% of the holdings contained no common arable and 24% included no enclosed arable.⁴ Proportions of enclosed land in individual holdings varied quite considerably. By the sixteenth century it had increased because of the piecemeal enclosure from the common fields that was taking place. A cottage at Breachwood Green, held by John Welsh, had attached to it 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres, of

(1) BI Add. Charter 35621.

(2) BI Add. Ch. 35759.

(3) BI Add. R. 35853x, viz. the holding of Thomas Hurst.

(4) Ibid..

TABLE XII

Some holdings with common arable land in King's Walden.

Table with columns for Tenants and Dates, Location of Holding, Acreage, and various field types (Common Fields, Mill, Wood, Solinger, etc.).

Notes: (1) Includes 1/2 a. enclosed from Heighanger field. (2) Includes 1/2 a. close taken from Broadcroft. (3) Includes 1/2 a. close in Leggate field. (4) Includes 1/2 a. close in Heighanger field and 1/2 a. close in Ashcroft. (5) Includes 1/2 a. in two closes in Fismore field. (6) Also 1/2 a. (7) in the common arable of Kington and Ippolittle. (7) Includes 1/2 a. part enclosed. (8) Part enclosed. (9) Includes 1/2 a. close in Ley field and 1/2 a. close in Choley field. (10) Includes 1/2 a. taken from Leggate field. (11) Includes 1/2 a. enclosed in Fismore field, 1/2 a. enclosed in Leggate field and 1/2 a. enclosed in Sedock field. (12) Part enclosed.

which seven acres was in severalty, but six of the seven acres were pieces enclosed from the common fields.¹

The arable lands of a holding, both enclosed and common, were concentrated in an area near to the farmhouse or cottage. Such localisation may have survived from the early medieval pattern of separate hamlet field systems within the parish, of which traces still remained in the fourteenth century. But any rigid concentration of a holding in the territory of one hamlet had by then disappeared, if in fact it had ever existed. Assarting of parts of the township until the thirteenth century, together with the growth of a peasant land market, would both tend to break down any earlier simpler pattern based on the hamlets. The family known as the Godwins of Flexmere,² for example, although originally from Flexmere hamlet, lived at Breachwood,³ and held land not only in Flexmore field⁴ and other large common fields round about,⁵ but also in the smaller common fields east of Breachwood.⁶ Similarly, another Flexmere family, that of Fulcon de Flexmere, who also lived at Breachwood,⁷ figure prominently in charters relating to the fields of Wandon.⁸ By the sixteenth century a broad pattern had emerged. Most

(1) Ibid..

(2) Roger son of Godwine first appears granting land and rent in the second half of the thirteenth century (BM Add.Ch. 35553, 35583), and his name occurs in abuttals in several other charters (BM Add.Ch. 35554, 35566, 35569, 35605, 35641, 35641, 3564², 35659). The two succeeding generations of his family can be traced in the charters, and an approximate guide to the location of the family holding obtained. The size of the arable holding on the death of Roger's grandson Robert was 16a. (BM Add.Ch. 35675) but during the two previous generations at least 15a. of land had been granted away (BM Add.Ch. 35570, 35573, 35585, 35588, 35591, 35593, 35627, 35655). There is record of only one grant, of one acre, to the family during this time (BM Add.Ch. 35569).

(3) BM Add.Ch. 35566, 35616, 35672-3.

(4) BM Add.Ch. 35553, 35567, 35569, 35585, 35587, 35591, 35627.

(5) viz. Heighanger field, Cowsditch, and Pirycroft, Rowcroftdane and Gromesgate, three smaller common fields near Flexmore, BM Add.Ch. 35553, 35585-8, 35591, 35593, 35596, 35641, 35650, 35655, 35659.

(6) viz. Reding field, Ashcroft, and Billnal field, BM Add. Ch. 35566, 35571, 35621-2, 35648, 35659. Other land included two groves near Ashcroft and a croft near Fognam, BM Add. Ch. 35570, 35573, 35605.

(7) BM Add. Ch. 35672, 35691.

(8) BM Add. Ch. 35595, 35597, 35621-2, 35627, 35648, 35654, 35667, 35672.

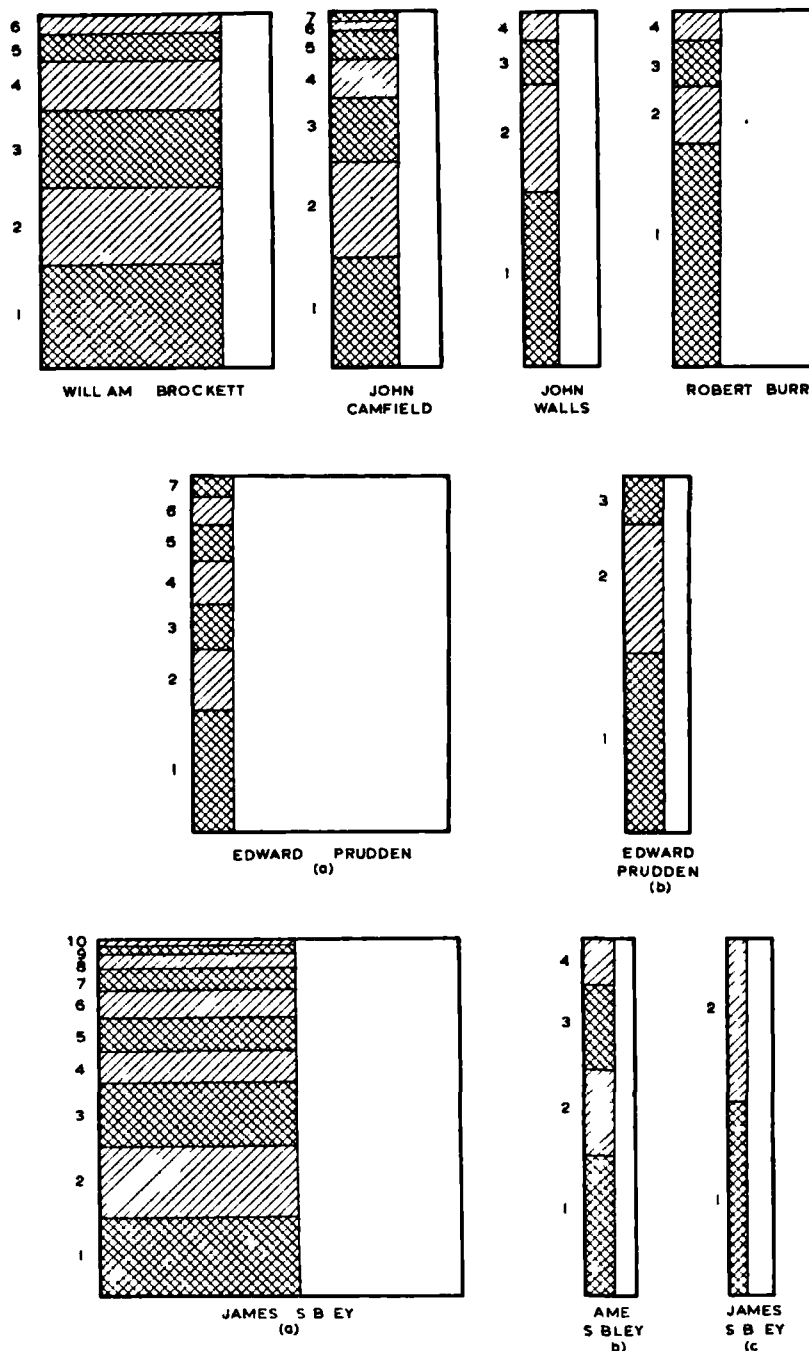


FIG. 28. King's Walden - nine holdings, 1568.

Each rectangle represents one complete holding, the shaded sector that proportion of the holding in common fields (subdivided proportionally into numbered units representing amounts in the different common fields), and the unshaded sector the proportion of the holding that was enclosed.

Source:- BM Add. R. 35853x.

tenants held arable land of both types in one of the two areas of closes and small common fields in the parish. It was there that settlement was concentrated - Wandon End, Fognam and the village of King's Walden were the only exceptions. No farm had land in both areas. In addition, most holdings included arable in the tract of larger common fields. The land of the individual tenant was therefore often quite widely dispersed within one part of the parish, but never throughout the whole parish. It may be that by the sixteenth century convenience, in the form of ease of access to land, was the most important factor influencing the location of a holding. The apparent absence of a rigid common field rotation involving all the strip fields of the township would allow such a localisation of holdings.

The distribution of a holding between individual common fields was at all times irregular in the extreme. Even within part of the parish a tenant rarely had land in all the common fields there, while the allotment of his holding between the fields in which it did lie was very uneven. The frequent combination of enclosed and common arable in a single holding, the large number of relatively small common fields, the lack of any strict rotation between them, in fact the general flexibility of the field system as a whole, made any regularity in the distribution of a holding unnecessary.

Field Boundaries

Hedges and ditches have been the main field boundaries in King's Walden since at least the mid-thirteenth century. Closes, woods and common fields were all separated from each other in this way - in the thirteenth century land in the common field called Ashcroft was separated from a grove by a ditch;¹ a meadow and croft at Fognam in 1262 were enclosed by hedges and ditches;² in 1331 a ditch had recently been dug to separate two woods called Leggattesgrove and Prestmeregrove;³ and the field called Gatecroft

(1) BM Add. Ch. 35573.

(2) BM Add. Ch. 35568.

(3) BM Add. Ch. 35703.

was transferred with "the living hedges",¹ a phrase that recurs in many subsequent charters. Such was the importance of these boundaries that they were occasionally described in detail,² while three charters record the transfer of hedges and ditches as individual items, unattached and unappurtenant to other lands.³ Common fields were also separated from each other by hedges and ditches. Flexmore field was enclosed on three sides by Hasylhedge. Half an acre next to Hasylhedge is recorded in an early thirteenth century charter,⁴ and was referred to from time to time until the Inclosure Award of the early nineteenth century.⁵ Another early example was Heronshegg, mentioned in a grant of 1316, which lay between Hernes field and Wandon field.⁶

Conclusions.

The main conclusions reached from this detailed study of King's Walden is that the field system c. 1600 was in all essentials the same as that operating c. 1300. Assarting in the parish had ended by the late thirteenth century to leave a pattern of fields and land-use that was modified only slightly during the next three centuries. Settlement was scattered in hamlets and isolated farmsteads. Some were around patches of common wood, which later degenerated to open greens. Areas of common waste in the parish were slight, but woodlands in two parts of the township had been enclosed into severalty either as small groves, or as larger woods which were divided-up amongst a number of tenants, and worked for profit.

(1) BI Add. Ch. 35578.

(2) eg. 2a. exchanged by John de Neville in 1307 had attached to it a growing hedge together with two ditches, one on each side of the hedge. Each ditch was four feet wide. BI Add. Ch. 35654.

(3) eg. in 1310, Germanus son of Richard granted to John de Dokesworth "a living hedge with all the ground on which the hedge grows, together with a strip of ground four men's feet wide alongside the hedge to make a ditch for John". The hedge was between the land of Germanus and John. BI Add. Ch. 356

(4) BI Add. Ch. 35567.

(5) eg. in 1437, BI Add. Ch. 35750, 35755; in 1524, BI Add. Ch. 35780; and in 1568, BI Add. R. 35353

(6) BI Add. Ch. 35676.

In farming the emphasis was on arable cultivation. There was little meadowland or pasture. Common arable fields occupied perhaps two-thirds of the cultivated land of the township. At least some, and probably all, were subject to common grazing. They were small and numerous, and of two kinds. An unbroken tract of generally larger common fields extended along the central valley and down the western side of the parish, while smaller common fields were scattered amongst arable closes and woodland in the rest of the township. At all times many holdings included land in both types of common fields - although there was no regularity in the distribution of common arable holdings, either amongst the common fields of the township or between individual common fields - as well as arable closes. The individual farm was concentrated in one part of the township and never throughout. A three-course rotation was probably followed on the holding, with enclosed and common arable combined in a single course, allowing considerable flexibility in cropping, and consequently in the distribution of the land of the holding.

Apart from a shrinkage of settlement during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the main changes between 1300 and 1600 were within the common arable. Medieval consolidation of holdings by peasants, but more particularly by lords, led to a general increase in strip sizes by the sixteenth century, especially on demesne holdings, and in one case resulted in the enclosure of an entire common field by the manor. Piecemeal tenant enclosure did not take place until the sixteenth century, however, when it was stimulated by a combination of economic and social changes. Already, before the end of the sixteenth century, a few common fields had been enclosed entirely, while closes had been made in almost every field remaining. During the fourteenth century some smaller common fields were amalgamated, probably to form a more efficient unit for pasturing, but by the end of the sixteenth century the reverse process was taking place, and individual common fields were being subdivided into two or three parts.

Finally, it is possible, on the basis of the medieval evidence, to suggest lines along which the early field system may have evolved. The first

permanent settlement in the township was in a number of small centres, originally, no doubt in isolated clearings. In time, with expansion of the cultivated area, each of these hamlets acquired their own group of common fields contiguous with, but distinct from, those of neighbouring hamlets. Later clearance, which was ending in the thirteenth century, was concentrated in two areas in the parish. There, substantial amounts of land, both cleared and uncleared, were enclosed directly into severalty to form arable closes and private woods. Scattered amongst these were small common fields, the formation of which may in some way have been associated with an individual family holding. In these areas, too, were the surviving patches of common wood and a strip of heath around which the final phase of medieval settlement in the parish was concentrated. With continued assarting before 1250, and with the growth of the land market, peasant holdings, which may have once been confined to the territory of a single hamlet, became more widely dispersed, including land in both the older common arable fields and in one of the more recently cleared areas. But by the sixteenth century the distribution of the lands of a holding may have reflected nothing more than general convenience.

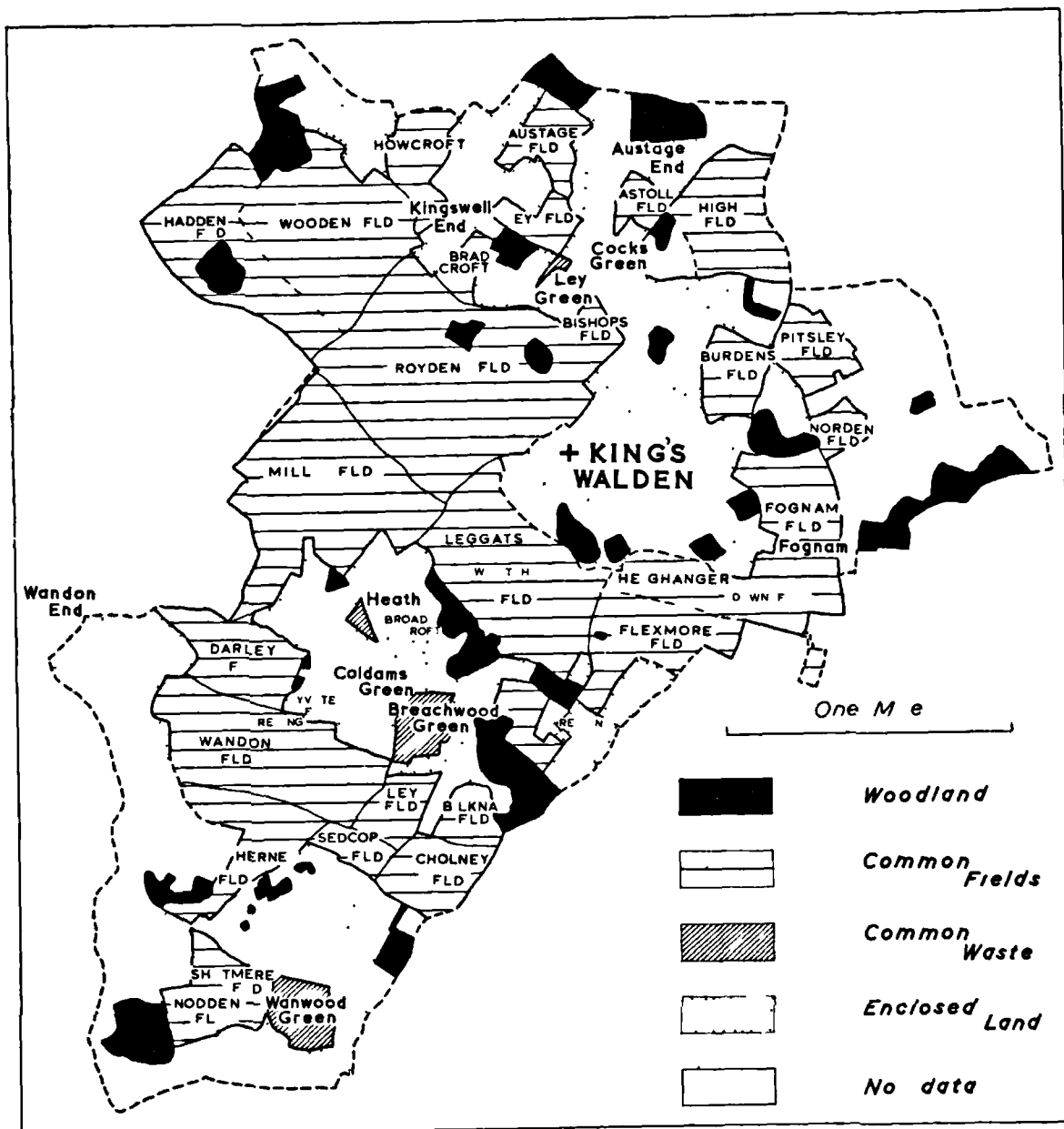


FIG. 29. King's Walden - a reconstruction of fields and land use c.1600.

Sources:- BM Add. Ch. 35537-36068, in particular 35839-40, 35853, 35996, 35998; and HRO 54521, 67083.

CHAPTER IIIFIELD SYSTEMS IN CODICOTE: c. 1250 - c. 1550.

Codicote lies at the eastern end of the Chilterns near to the lower edge of the dip-slope. The land of the parish rises from the flood plain of the Rhee (Fig. 30). In addition to Clay-with-flint capping the ridges and chalk exposed in the lower slopes, there are patches of Glacial Clays and Gravels.

The field system of Codicote in the mid-sixteenth century was typical of many parishes in the northeast Chilterns (Fig. 35). Common fields occupied about one third of the arable land of the parish, and their number was large. Along the floodplain of the Rhee was a strip of meadow and pasture, some of it lying in common. The area of woodland was small, but there were three stretches of heath. Settlement was scattered in hamlets and isolated farmsteads away from the village.

From a study of the court book of the manor of Codicote, which covers almost every year between 1244 and 1415,¹ of a manorial extent of 1332 and of a small cartulary² it has been possible to answer three problems in particular. The first of these is whether the main features of the sixteenth century field system in Codicote were then recent developments, or whether they had existed in much the same form in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the second is the form of cropping that was followed in the township in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the implications of its use in terms of land holding; and the third is an assessment of the influence of customs of inheritance on the field system.

(1) BM Stowe Ms. 849.

(2) BM Add. Ms. 40734.

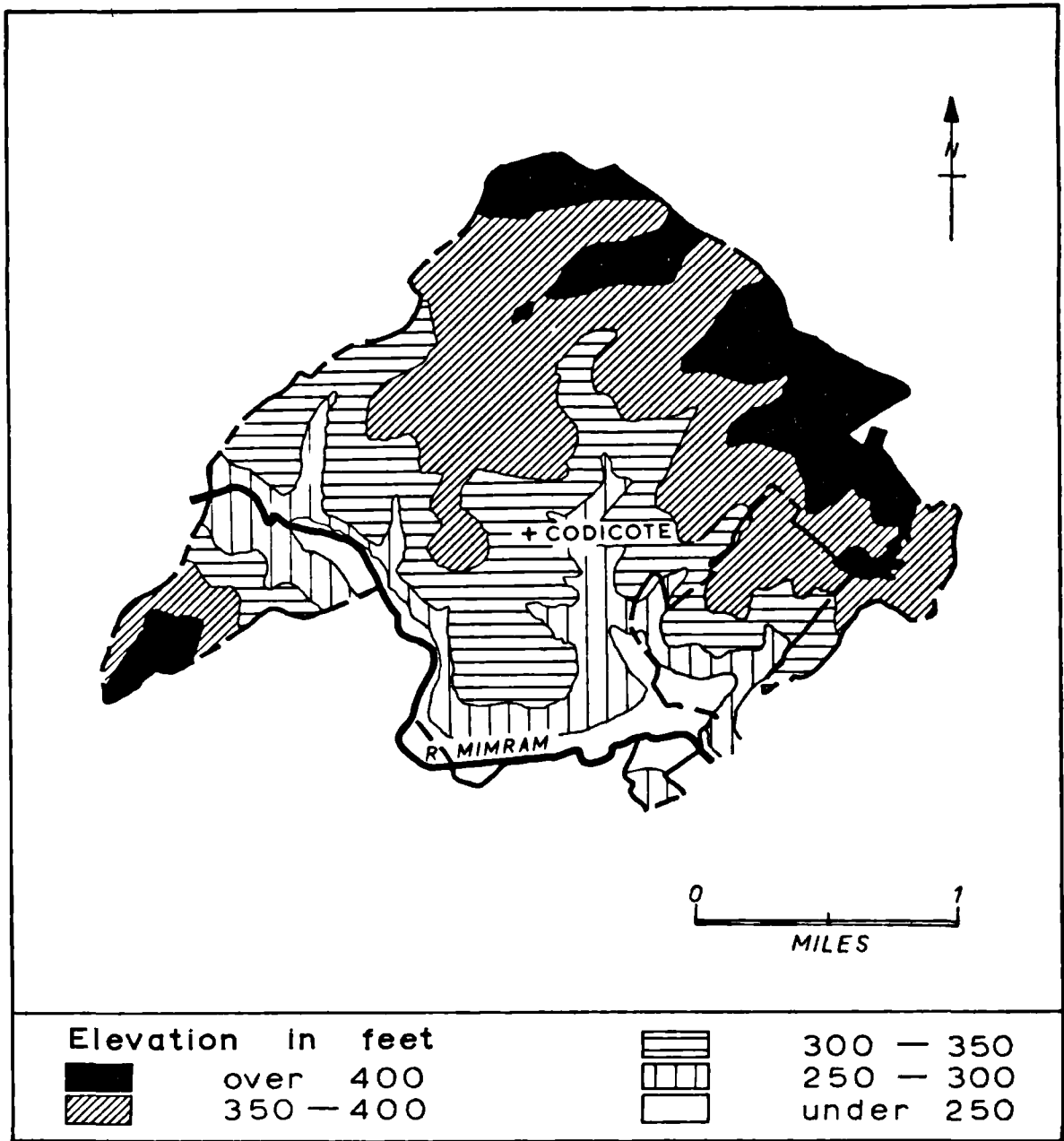


FIG. 30. Codicote - relief.

Social and Economic Influences.

Society and the Land Market¹

The manor of Codicote was held by the Abbot and Monks of St. Albans from the early eleventh century until the sixteenth century. By the twelfth century the small subsidiary manor of Cissevernes, which lay in the south-east part of the parish, had appeared. Between them these two manors included the whole township of Codicote.

Most evidence for Codicote relates to villein land. There were free tenants, but their proportion of the total population in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is unknown. The basis of villein land holding in the township were the customary holdings - these were the half virgate, the ferlingate, the cotland and the coumbeland - to which services were attached. By 1332, the burden of villein services was relatively light. They were mainly seasonal works such as ploughing services and harvest works. Week work had once existed, but it had been commuted by the mid-thirteenth century. On many holdings rents were also paid for other services for, by 1332, works owed varied considerably from holding to holding, and those that survived were alternative to the payment of a money rent. The two manorial demesnes - that of the main manor contained 462½ acres of arable land while the demesne of Cissevernes included 171 acres of arable - must have been cultivated largely by wage labour. That lords and tenants were farming for profit is clear from the stress placed on money rents. There was neither manorial nor customary restraint on the alienation of land by villein tenants in the thirteenth century and later. One result of these two factors was an active tenant land market. Throughout the second half of the thirteenth century and the early fourteenth century, villein tenants were buying, selling and leasing small pieces of land. The Lord did not object as long as these transactions took place through the manorial court. Villein tenants were even able to buy free land with his permission. Although in theory free alienation of tenant land was not a customary right in Codicote, in practice tenants were able to transfer land as they wished

(1) This summary is based on the detailed account, Appendix F.

so long as they followed the manorial rules. The main restraint must have been the expense involved.¹ Some men were able to build up substantial holdings for themselves by acquiring a large number of small pieces of land in this way. Customary holdings were broken up by alienation from them - one half virgate was halved in a generation - and by the 1330's, tenants who had recently entered a holding were asking the lord to determine who held land from their holdings, and by what rents or services. By the time that the extent of 1332 was made, the earlier pattern of customary land holding in the manor had been modified considerably in this way, but customary units still formed the basis of many holdings.

The significance of the freedom of villeins to deal in land, and of the resulting market in small pieces of land, to a study of field systems in Codicote is three-fold. Firstly, tenants could consolidate their holdings, in particular within the strip fields, by exchange, or by buying and leasing land next to that which they already held. Farming for profit, of which the existence of the land market was a further indication, would be a stimulus to the rationalisation of the land of a holding. Secondly, succession to land was far more flexible than the existence of customs of primogeniture might suggest, because tenants could freely alienate land from their holdings to their children, because they could buy land for their children, and because men could build up holdings through acquisition on the land market. Thirdly, closes and crofts were being subdivided by the sale and lease of pieces of land within them. This was the only significant form of land division in Codicote in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In the first half of the fourteenth century, there was a large body of small tenants in the manor. According to the extent of 1332, which is the only complete account of holding sizes in the manor, 61 of the 98 villein tenants held five acres or less. About half of these were holdings in the small market centre, but even so, half of all

(1) In the form of entry fines, licence to lease, etc. It was no doubt to avoid this expense that tenants were also attempting to transfer land without reference to the manor.

those tenants who held some land in addition to their house plot had less than ten acres. These figures are not a complete guide to holding sizes, however, for it is clear from charters for Welwyn and Knebworth, two parishes next to Codicote, that even in the early fourteenth century many Codicote tenants also had holdings in neighbouring townships.

Much of the fourteenth century, in Codicote was a period of economic decline, with consequent changes in the structure of society and in the nature of the land market. The first signs appeared during the second decade of the century. Arrears of rents and services increased, tenants were leaving the manor without permission in increasing numbers, holdings were remaining vacant for lack of tenants, men were acquiring all the land of a number of customary holdings, and tenants were subletting complete holdings on an increasing scale. All these trends were accentuated after the epidemic of 1349, when 73 tenants of the manor died in two years. Tenants were soon found for most of the vacant land, largely from within the manor; villein land holding was concentrated into even fewer hands; and all but nominal services were commuted.

The existence of an unfree society owing heavy labour services on the manorial demesne has been equated with the maintenance of a strict open field routine, because it was in the interest of the lord to maintain the status quo, while a free society with weak manorialisation has been equated with more flexible patterns of land holding, with the early enclosure of open arable land, and with the existence of a large number of small tenants, because men were free to dispose of their land as they wished.¹ The situation in Codicote in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was midway between these two extremes. The burden of tenant services was not exceptionally heavy, and villeins were free to dispose of land as they wished so long as they did so through the manor. Traditional patterns of land holding were breaking down, and the way was open for a modification of the field system if tenants so wished.

(1) eg. G.C.Homans, op. cit., 200 - 4.

Inheritance and the Division of Land.

In theory, the prevalence of a system of partible inheritance could produce the division of a complete holding comprising a number of pieces of land, and sometimes of the individual pieces of land themselves,¹ while a system of single son inheritance implied the maintenance of a standard holding size and of an established field pattern.² This is the relevance of inheritance laws to the study of field systems. Because of this basic contradiction between the theory of divided and undivided inheritance, the different effects of the two on field patterns have sometimes been over-emphasised. In practice, as G.C.Homans has demonstrated, both forms were often modified considerably to suit changing economic conditions.³

Homans has suggested that partible inheritance favoured an increase in population whereas "descent of land to one son should lead to relative stability of population"⁴, and H.E.Hallam has shown that the net population increase in thirteenth century Fenland townships was much greater where partible socage was widely followed because partibility meant greater opportunity for the young.⁵ But the influence of inheritance on population growth may only have been important under certain circumstances; where, in the case of partibility, conditions for agriculture were especially favourable and could support a high rural population density, as in the Lincolnshire

(1) Gray, writing of Kent, a county where partible inheritance was practised, claimed that "the history of iugum was..... one of continuous subdivision and reapportionment, largely due to the practice of transmitting landed property to groups of heirs". H.L.Gray, op.cit., 296. Recently A.R.H.Baker has confirmed the importance of division due to partible inheritance in Kentish field systems. He notes that the multiplicity of small open fields in Kent usually represented "the degeneration under the impact of gavelkind tenure of formerly more or less compact family farms." A.R.H.Baker, "The field systems of Kent", unpublished University of London Ph.D.thesis, (1963)40.

(2) G.C.Homans, op. cit., Chapters 8 and 9.

(3) G.C.Homans, "Partible inheritance of villagers' holdings" EHR, 8 (1937 - 38), 48-56; and loc. cit. (1942), Chapter 9.

(4) G.C.Homans, "The rural sociology of medieval England", Past and Present, 4 (1953), 37.

(5) H.E.Hallam, "Some thirteenth century censuses", EHR second series, 10 (1957), 340-61.

Fens - there even small amounts of land had extensive rights in the marsh - or where, in the case of impartibility, alternative opportunities for employment were available for non-inheritors - in Lincolnshire many emigrated to the large trade centres.¹ Elsewhere, under thirteenth century conditions of rapidly growing population and increasing land hunger, the cultivated area had to support the maximum number possible. At the same time, there was an absolute limit in any area to the amount of extra population that the land could absorb. Because of the prevailing land hunger, this limit would be reached whatever the form of inheritance, but, regardless of the form of inheritance, this limit could not be exceeded. A system of partible inheritance would no more increase the capacity of the land to support an increase in population, than a system of undivided inheritance could prevent the absorption of the maximum population onto the land. In practice, therefore, a point would be reached beyond which the subdivision of property was no longer practicable, and various methods were used to minimise or reverse the effects of partition.² Likewise, succession of one person to an entire holding need not be maintained in practice. Devices could be adopted which ensured descent of property without the enforcement of inheritance laws.³ There was a clear distinction between the form of inheritance and succession to land. Customs of inheritance only affected land held at the time of death. Succession could be divided, even although laws of single son inheritance were followed.

The Form of Inheritance:- One of the main values of this study of Codicote is that, because of the nature of the documentary material, it has been possible to follow succession to villein holdings during the critical period of the second half of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth in an area where primogeniture was widely practiced by a peasant population.

There is no evidence of any form of inheritance other than primogeniture operating in Codigote. In every case mentioned in the court book of a

(1) Ibid., Homans has summarised the opportunities open to non-inheritors, G.C.Homans, loc. cit. (1942), 133-42, 209, 215.

(2) eg. G.C.Homans, loc. cit. (1953), 38; R.H.Hilton, loc.cit.(1954), 158.

(3) cf. G.C.Homans, loc. cit. (1942), 124, 127-31, 144-46, 149.

tenant dying intestate, only one child succeeded him in the property. In some cases it can be shown that the son who inherited was in fact the eldest son. Ralph de Thikeney was the eldest of the three sons of Bartholomew de Thikeney and it was he who inherited his father's land about 1291.¹ Even although a daughter was the eldest child, it was the eldest son who entered the father's holding.² If the inheriting son died without issue the property passed to his brother if he had one, and failing that to his sister.³

This system of inheritance was simple, but disposal of a tenant's land could be complex. In theory a villein could, if he so desired, divide his property amongst all his children, male and female, in any proportion wished by the normal process of surrender and admission. Only any residue in his hands at death would then go to the single heir in law. Although, in fact, this never happened, some land from most parental holdings was generally surrendered to a number of children before the parent died. Usually this was land that had been bought and added to the holding,⁴ rather than land from the customary unit itself. Even although a parent

(1) In 1291 Bartholomew's widow was claiming dower from Ralph, BM Stowe MS, 849, ff.20d -21. It is known that Ralph was the eldest of the three sons because he was receiving land from his father in the same year that Bartholomew married his second wife, Leticia of King's Walden (ibid., ff.10 - 10d), and could not therefore be a son by Leticia. Leticia was the mother of Bartholomew's other two sons, Philip and John, ibid., ff.30d and 24. Ralph was therefore the eldest of the three.

(2) Thomas le Cowherd died in 1327 leaving an only son, William, who inherited, ibid., f.50d. William was the younger of two children and a minor, for custody of the land passed to his elder sister.

(3) When Roger Arnold died without issue in 1319, his land passed to his brother Walter, ibid., f.42d. Walter died in the epidemic of 1349 leaving no legitimate children, and so the holding was inherited by a third brother, ibid., f.75. When Richard le Bray died in 1332 without children or brothers, his sister was heir to his property, ibid., f.55d.

(4) Roger le Carpenter had a son and two daughters. When he surrendered the family half virgate to his son in 1312 (ibid., f.34), the daughters had already been provided for with gifts of land from their parents - Elena had taken a messuage and $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in 1295 (ibid., f.23), while Margaret later received a messuage in the market place and 5a. (ibid., f.24d).

could alienate land from his half virgate or ferlingate to his children he rarely did so.¹ Occasionally an entire holding was surrendered to a child who would not normally have inherited.²

The processes by which villein land was transferred were refined during the thirteenth century, so that a tenant could dispose of his holding, sometimes years before he died, while at the same time retaining his interest in the property until death. One device was joint holding of land, usually by husband and wife,³ but sometimes between brothers and sisters, or even between husband, wife and child.⁴ At death, all land held jointly automatically reverted to the surviving partner. Of wider application was conditional surrender of property, often of a complete holding. The land involved was surrendered on condition that the former tenant be allowed to retain it until death, when it passed to the second party to the transaction.⁵ Before the end of the fourteenth century death-bed surrender on behalf of a named successor was also being adopted more and more frequently.⁶ Often, these arrangements were entered into solely as an assurance of security in old age or illness for the incumbent tenant - an alternative that sometimes occurred was for parents to surrender their property to a child in return for a guarantee of shelter, food and clothing⁷

(1) When land from a customary holding was alienated, it was usually outside the family (eg. Appendix F, Table XXVI).

(2) Thomas le Driver preferred to surrender all his land, a messuage and 15a., to his daughter than to allow his only son to inherit, *ibid.*, f.49.

(3) William atte Hathe surrendered his two cottages and a croft to the use of himself and his wife in 1329, *ibid.*, f.51d; and when Alicia le Gray married in 1322, she surrendered all her land to the joint holding of herself and her husband, *ibid.*, f.45.

(4) eg. William le Reve surrendered all his lands to John son of Nicholas on condition that William retained possession of the land until he died, *ibid.*, f.9d. John was subsequently referred to as the heir of William, *ibid.* f.10. Robert le Smyth, on the other hand, surrendered only two small pieces of land from his holding on the same condition, one to his son and one to an unrelated tenant, *ibid.*, ff. 35 and 51.

(6) eg. the surrenders by Agnes atte Welles in 1365 and Margaret Hundreder in 1367, *ibid.*, ff. 97 and 98.

(7) When Hugo Cok surrendered his holding to his son John in 1309, it was only on condition that John supported his parents until they died, *ibid.*, f.32.

and sometimes of a special room or cottage¹ for their use - but they were also used on occasion to provide for a more flexible succession to land after death.² In the majority of cases only some land was surrendered in one or more of these ways, the greater part of the holding eventually being inherited by the single heir. Primogeniture was by no means a last resort. It was a practical law, widely enforced, but modified to suit changing conditions. The techniques described were used, not to obviate it entirely, but only to make its application more flexible.

This flexibility, together with the ease with which villein tenants could transfer land in *Codicote*, meant that the pattern of land holding in the manor was far less rigid than might have seemed possible in an area where single-son inheritance was the rule. Men could amass holdings through the land market from very small beginnings.³ Larger tenants might buy a few acres for all their children. For younger sons this could be the basis of a fresh holding, built up by buying and leasing more land,⁴ sometimes eventually obtaining a larger farm than the brother who inherited the bulk of the family lands.⁵ But many were never able to accumulate enough land to support a family. They were themselves often the sons of landless men

(1) When Cristina le Drake surrendered her entire holding to Ralph Blosine in 1275, he agreed to build a cottage for her to occupy until she died, *ibid.*, f.13.

(2) cf. Homans commenting on a conditional surrender on the St. Albans manor of Park that "by this means a father could arrange during his lifetime how the whole or a part of his land was to go after his death. He could choose his heir." G.C.Homans, *loc. cit.* (1942), 129.

(3) Appendix F, Tables XXIII-XXV.

(4) Of the three sons of Roger atte Hathe, Edward inherited his father's land in 1293 (BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.21d) having previously acquired no land, while the other two sons had received 12a. and 3a. respectively from their father fifteen years before he died, *ibid.*, f.14d. On the basis of his 3a. Ralph built up a small holding for himself in the southeast of the parish, *ibid.*, ff. 21d, 23d, 27, 28d, 29.

(5) William Haleward, the younger of two sons, had received only one acre of land from his father (*ibid.*, f.31d) before the latter died in 1311, *ibid.*, f.32d. During his lifetime, by leasing land from the lord, by acquiring small pieces of land from other tenants, and by a profitable marriage he built up a holding far larger than the messuage and *ferlingate* inherited by his brother. When William died in 1349, he left a messuage and one third of a *virgate*, together with a messuage and 10a., *ibid.* f.75.

or small craftsmen. The large body of small tenants in the manor was composed mainly of men such as these. Only a small proportion of the villeins left the manor to work elsewhere - their numbers were largest when more land was becoming available and not at a period of maximum land hunger¹ - and the majority of those unable to subsist from their holding could still support themselves within the township either by working as wage labour on the demesne² and the larger tenant farms,³ or through the opportunities provided by the market.

The usual pattern of succession and inheritance in Codicote in the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth century can be summarised as follows. The customary holding of the family was passed on to a single son, either by inheritance or by some form of surrender before death that allowed the parent to retain his interest in the land until he died. The other children had, meanwhile, been given a few acres of land, and perhaps a cottage. This had usually been bought by the parent, perhaps for this specific purpose. Grants to non-inheriting children were not often subtracted from the basic family holding, which passed on from generation to generation largely intact. Some sons were able to build up a holding on the basis of the parental gift by buying and renting land. Other sons made no attempt to do so and went, with those children of small holders who received no land from their parents, to swell the ranks of small tenants and landless men in the manor. Some family examples of this pattern of inheritance and succession in Codicote are given in Appendix G.

(1) See Appendix F. Before the second and third decades of the fourteenth century the number of tenants leaving the manor with or without the permission of the lord had been few.

(2) The demesne of the main manor was large - in 1332, 463a. of arable land was farmed by the manor (BM Add. Ms. 40734, ff. 1-1d) - while the amount of labour provided by customary services was, by 1332, relatively small, *ibid.*, ff. 15d-16d. Week work had not been enforced for at least a century, tenant ploughing services accounted for little more than one third of the arable demesne, and most other services were seasonal. Moreover, by 1332 many tenants probably opted for the payment of money rents rather than the performance of services. Permanent farm servants and casual labour were needed on the demesne of the main manor, and there must have been a similar demand for the 171a. arable demesne of Cissevernes.

(3) eg. John Poleyn held 206a., BM Stowe Ms. 849, ff. 88d-90d; while in 1332, seven villein tenants held more than 50a. of land, BM Add. Ms. 40734, ff. 1d.-16

Fragmentation of Land:- Partibility in inheritance could take ~~one~~ of three forms. Co-heirs might hold property jointly, or they could apportion the parental holding amongst themselves, either dividing it up piece by piece to ensure a fair distribution between land of all types, or allotting it unit by unit.¹ In Codicote, inheritance led neither to the fragmentation of a holding nor to the division of individual pieces of land, because inheritance was almost always impartible. There is one possible exception, inheritance by sisters. Elsewhere in the Chilterns,² the one exception to the general rule of impartibility was when, in the absence of male heirs, all surviving daughters entered the parental holding. For Codicote there is no clear example of female co-heirs, but there are two cases of sisters holding land jointly. In 1249 Alice, daughter of William Bishop, asked the township to state whether the land that her sister Matilda held "is partible or not". The township decided that the land was partible, and Alice entered half of the holding.³ The two sisters held jointly rather than dividing the land between them, until Matilda died a few years later.⁴ The Frinchold sisters, on the other hand, divided the messuage formerly their father's.⁵ In both examples joint succession may have been the result of a form of partible inheritance, or it may have been the product of an unrecorded disposition by the father before he died. The evidence is not clear, but the former seems the more likely.

Succession to land other than by inheritance could, and sometimes did, lead to a division of land such as might result from partible inheritance.⁶ When Mathilda Synoth died in 1338, her messuage and curtilage were divided equally between her son and daughter.⁷ In fact, Matilda had surrendered half the messuage to the daughter nine years previously, on condition that she be

(1) P. Vinogradoff, "The Growth of the Manor" (1905), 205-6, 315-18; and "English Society in the Eleventh Century", (1908), 92-3, 274-77. Also G.C. Homans, loc. cit. (1937-38), 49-53.

(2) See above, p.120 and below, pp.240,283-4.

(3) BM Stowe Ms. 849, f4.

(4) Ibid., f.16.

(5) Ibid., ff. 23-23d.

(6) It has already been shown that succession did not lead to large-scale fragmentation of holdings. See above, p.169.

(7) BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.63.

allowed continued possession of this half until death.¹ When Matilda died, therefore, half of the property passed to the daughter, while the son inherited the other half.² More usually, division was the result of a gift of a single piece of property to the joint holding of two children, each receiving half. In most cases the property was a dwelling of some kind,³ but occasionally pieces of cultivated land were also involved. In 1283, Peter Doget surrendered a two acre plot before his door to two daughters, who received an acre each. One daughter died almost immediately, and the other entered the share.⁴ Partition could be more lasting than this. The three acre Coumbecroft remained divided for 26 years following a grant of the whole of it to a brother and sister, Geoffrey and Isabella atte Hurne, by their parents.⁵ Geoffrey and Isabella each received half of the croft. The two parts were reunited when Isabella died,⁶ and the integrity of the croft was later maintained following elaborate arrangements between Geoffrey and his nephew John, who had inherited Isabella's portion.⁷ By the arrangement, Geoffrey held the complete croft until he died, when the land automatically passed to John. The croft had been partitioned for a number of years but the division had not been permanent.

In Codicote, the most frequent cause of land division, as of the fragmentation of holdings,⁸ was simple alienation through sale or lease. Closes that had once been complete units were broken-up. Usually, however, they were back in a single holding after a few years. From time to time a tenant leased out part of a croft, while retaining the rest of the land in

(1) Ibid., f.52.

(2) cf. G.C.Homans, loc. cit. (1942), 130-131, for a division of a messuage in Barnet between two brothers under similar circumstances.

(3) eg. Robert de London surrendered a cottage to a son and daughter to be held by them jointly, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.32d. The son later gave his half to an elder brother, *ibid.*, f.37d; the daughter retaining her half until she died in 1349, when it passed to the same elder brother, *ibid.*, f.78.

(4) Ibid., ff.16d-17.

(5) Ibid., ff.17, 28d.

(6) Ibid., f.32. Isabella's son was a minor, and so his uncle had custody.

(7) Ibid., ff.41d-42. When John came of age, he leased his half of the field to his uncle until he died, while Geoffrey surrendered his share to his nephew on condition that he be allowed to retain this portion until the end of his life.

(8) For an example of the fragmentation of a holding by sale and lease see Appendix F, Table XXVI.

the field. John le Reveson, for example, released half of his three acre Hamstalecroft for twelve years.¹ In this case the close was simply split in two. More complex leasings resulted in crofts being divided temporarily into a larger number of pieces. During the seven years from 1307 till 1314, Godfrey Whitecock gradually leased-out most of his Whitecockescroft in four pieces, three of one acre and one of three roods, to two tenants for periods ranging from eight to twelve years.² Until the last of these leases expired Whitecockescroft remained subdivided.

Similar results obtained where a close of villein land was sold only gradually, and in several units, to another tenant or tenants. In 1316 Alice Thurbern surrendered her two acre croft to Simon de Childemere in four separate plots,³ and during the four years after 1324 Philip de Thikeney released land in Walterscroft on behalf of his nephew in seven different pieces each adjacent to the other,⁴ having already surrendered two pieces of the same croft to a third tenant.⁵ Again, the five acre Moricescroft was divided temporarily into many pieces as a result of its gradual alienation by a former holder. In 1346 two pieces were surrendered to Simon May,⁶ in 1347 three pieces to Richard le Helder,⁷ and in 1348 another eight pieces were surrendered to Simon May.⁸ By 1374 the land was again in one unit held by one man.⁹ Often closes divided in these ways were difficult

(1) BM Stowe Ms. 849, ff.38d-40.

(2) Ibid., ff.29d-36.

(3) Ibid., ff.38d-40.

(4) Ibid., ff.48d, 51.

(5) He had surrendered these two pieces to William Haleward in 1322 and 1323, *ibid.*, ff. 46-46d.

(6) Ibid., f.72d.

(7) Ibid..

(8) Ibid., f.73. These eight pieces of land were held by Christine, mother of William Haleward, as dower. Reversion in this land was granted to Simon May.

(9) Ibid., f. 103.

to distinguish from the common fields. Halecroft, subdivided as a result of particularly complicated transactions involving free and villein tenants of the manor, could easily be mistaken for a common strip field from the charter and court book descriptions.

More lasting divisions were sometimes produced by such arrangements. Having already leased-out two acres of his land in Bromecroft for fixed terms, John le Reveson surrendered completely another 5½ acres in the same croft during the three years after 1322 (Table XIII).

TABLE XIII

The division of Bromecroft by John le Reveson.

Granter	Date	Amount & nature of transfer	Recipient	Ref.
John	1316	1½ a. - 12 year lease	Roger le Helder	f.38d
"	1316	½ a. - 6 crop lease	"	f.40d
"	1321	1½ a. surrendered (land of John on both sides)	"	f.44
"	1322	½ a. surrendered (between the land of Roger & John)	"	f.46
"	1322	½ a. surrendered (between the land of Roger & John)	"	f.46
"	1323	1a. surrendered (between the land of John & Roger le Helder)	Roger May	f.46
"	1323	1a. surrendered	"	f.46d
"	1324	1a. surrendered (between the land of Roger May and the common called the Heath)	"	f.48

Source:- All references are to the court book. (op. cit.).

(1) In 1283 Walter atte Strate, a villein, bought 4½ a. in Halecroft in five different pieces from Thomas atte Wicke, the free tenant who owned the whole croft, BM Add.Ms.40734, ff.18-22; Stowe Ms.849, f.17. Another two tenants, Hugo Cok and Roger Poleyn, held the remaining land in the field, BM Add.Ms.40734, f.18. The former exchanged his 5r. with Walter atte Strate, *ibid.*, f.19; while the latter leased his 1a. to Walter, BM Add.Ms.40734, f.18. By 1287, the entire close seems to have been once more in a single holding in the hands of Walter atte Strate, for he surrendered "a croft called Halecroft" enclosed with hedges and ditches to one of his daughters, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.18d.

The land was alienated in six pieces to two tenants who had acquired, by 1325, two blocks of land of three acres and 2½ acres comprising the pieces released to them. Again, Rudyng field was held by a number of tenants at the end of the thirteenth century following the surrender of land within it by Thomas atte Wicke.¹ The separate existence of some of these pieces was perpetuated by continuing alienation. Robert Smith, for example, granted away his land in the field to four different men.² Most prolonged and complex was the subdivision of Crawley croft which took place over the 54 years between 1282 and 1336 (Table XIV).

TABLE XIV

The division of Crawley croft

Granter	Date	Amount & nature of transfer	Recipient	Ref.
John le Reveson	1282	1½ a. - 10 year lease	Hugo Cok	f.16
Hugo Cok	1309	1a. surrendered	his son John	f.32
John le Reveson	1315	1a. - 6 crop lease	Richard Baughel	f.37
" "	1316	1a. - 6 crop lease (next to the Abbot's field called Eldebury)	" "	f.38d
" "	1323	2a. surrendered (between land of John Cok & Abbot)	" "	f.46d
" "	1324	1a. surrendered (between land of John and Richard)	" "	f.48
" "	1325	1a. surrendered (between the Heath & land of William Cok)	" "	f.48d
" "	1326	piece of land surrendered to make a ditch between land of John and Richard	" "	f.49d
Richard Baughel	1353	3a. 1½ r. surrendered (3a. next to Heath & 1½ r. next land of William Cok)	William Cok	f.60
" "	1336	3r. surrendered (land of William on both sides)	" "	f.61d

Source:- All references are to the court book, (op. cit.).

(1) Ibid., ff.18-26.

(2) *BM Stowe Ms. 849*, ff.38,47,51,54. Other references to the field are *ibid.*, ff.32, 88d-89, 100d.

During this period the croft seemed to pass through a full cycle from a close held in severalty to a miniature strip field, and, through consolidation and enclosure, back to land held in severalty. John le Reveson first leased-out two acres in Crawley croft to Richard Baughel for the term of six crops in 1314. Then, between 1323 and 1325, he surrendered a further four acres lying in two pieces to the same Richard, and in 1326 the subdivision of the croft was made permanent by a ditch dug between their two holdings. But by 1335 William Cok also held an acre piece in the field. The first recorded alienation of land in Crawley croft had, in fact, been the surrender of $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres to Hugo Cok by John father of John le Reveson as early as 1282. This piece passed down to Hugo's grandson William, and in 1335 separated the two pieces held by Richard Baughel. A year later, William acquired all the four acres and the ditch held by Richard in the croft, and thus brought five acres together into one piece. Gradual alienation of land in Crawley croft had produced its permanent division and had formed a strip lay-out in one part. This pattern had been removed only after one tenant had obtained land on both sides of his own piece, in much the same way as strips within the common fields were consolidated. Fragmentation of land by lease and sale, although often temporary, occasionally had a lasting effect on the landscape.

But such features should not be confused with the common fields. Although sometimes difficult to distinguish from common fields, closes subdivided by the alienation of pieces of land within them were in fact quite different. The majority were much smaller in area than any common field, while the subdivisions within them were either very regular or very irregular, and lacked the organisation into furlongs of the common arable strips. Above all, subdivided closes were only temporary features. Within a few years of their formation most were back in a single tenure. Many of the common fields, on the other hand, were already long-established by 1300, and most survived until the sixteenth century and later.

The Field System and Associated Features.

Settlement

The settlement pattern of Codicote during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was essentially the same as that at the end of the eighteenth century (Figs. 31 and 32). Apart from the large village, settlement in the parish was in a number of outlying hamlets and in isolated farmsteads. Two of the hamlets were grouped around small greens - these were at Nup End¹ and Taglemere Green² - while others were along the edges of three heaths in the parish.³

In 1268 the Abbot and Monks of St. Albans were granted the right to hold a weekly market at their manor of Codicote.⁴ Four years later they were granted a three day annual fair.⁵ By the end of the century a small market centre had become established, attracting a variety of craftsmen and small traders.⁶ Within and around the market place there were houses

(1) This green was called by two names, namely Colliers Green and Smith's Green. In 1276 a plot of land at "Colliersgrene" was transferred, *ibid.*, f.13d; while in 1322 John le Colier surrendered a cottage and 1a. near "le Upende", *ibid.*, f.44d. In 1345 a cottage and curtilage at Smith's Green was surrendered. It lay between two tenements, *ibid.*, f.71d. In 1368 a cottage was described as lying near "le Uppend" next to "Smythesgrene", *ibid.* f.99. Other references to settlement at Nup End were in 1322 (a cottage and curtilage, *ibid.*, f.44d), in 1360 (a curtilage called Dyeswick near "le Uppend", *ibid.*, f.92d) and in 1362 (a cottage and curtilage and 1a. near "le Upende", *ibid.*, f.94d).

(2) In 1414 there was a vacant tenement called Taglemere, *ibid.*, f.124. The family called "de Taglemere" was first mentioned in 1315, *ibid.*, f.37d.

(3) References to settlement at Frobele Heath included a cottage in 1356, *ibid.*, f.84d; a cottage and curtilage between two tenements in 1358, *ibid.*, f.87; and a cottage and croft in 1362, *ibid.*, f.94d. The references to settlement at Frobelehale were also to this area. These were in 1271, *ibid.* f.11d; in 1303, *ibid.*, f.26; and in 1330, *ibid.*, f.53. References to settlement at Pollarus Heath were to a cottage and 1a. between two tenements in 1356, *ibid.*, f.84d; and to a messuage and 1½ a. in 1364, *ibid.*, f.96. For further discussion of these and of settlement at the Heath, see below, p.184.

(4) Cal. Charter Rolls, II, 112.

(5) *Ibid.*, 183.

(6) See Appendix F.

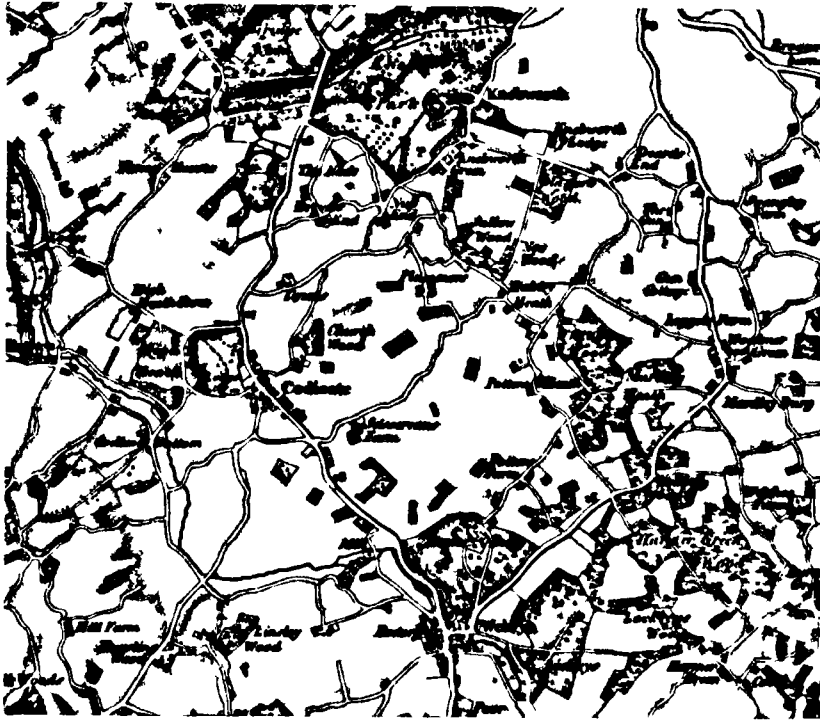


FIG. 31. Codicote - settlement.

Source:- 1st. ed. O.S. One-
Inch Map.

and cottages,¹ shops,² stalls,³ vacant plots where stalls could be erected,⁴ and storehouses.⁵ Many of the houses of the village were immediately east of the market place around the well-house and pond called Lidewell.⁶ Other buildings straggled out along the roads from the market place.⁷ Until the end of the thirteenth century new houses and cottages were being built in the parish. Settlement was still expanding. Presentments at the manorial courts for decayed dwellings were rare.⁸ More numerous were transfers of small pieces of land on which buildings were to be erected. At one court in 1274, for example, three tenants separately acquired land on which to build three houses.⁹ Cottages were being built on land improved from the waste and on pieces taken from the common fields.¹⁰

(1) eg. in 1332, BM Add. Ms. 40834, f.13d; and in 1306, BM Stowe Ms.849, f.28 in 1278, *ibid.*, f.14; in 1301, *ibid.*, f.25; in 1296, *ibid.*, f.23d; in 1292, *ibid.*, f.21d; and in 1291, *ibid.*, f.21.

(2) eg. in 1328, *ibid.*, f.51; in 1329, *ibid.*, f.52d; and in 1332, BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.15.

(3) eg. in 1305, a stall in "le Fishrowe" and two other stalls in the market place, BM Stowe Ms.849, ff.27-27d.

(4) eg. in 1278, a plot in the market place where fish is sold, *ibid.*, f.14d; in 1292, *ibid.*, ff. 21-22d; and 1301, *ibid.*, f.25.

(5) eg. in 1392 there was "a storehouse in the market place for merchandise" *ibid.*, ff. 112-112d.

(6) eg. in 1280, *ibid.*, f.15d. In 1306, a messuage next to the market place was described as being between a tenement and the pond of Lidewell, *ibid.*, f.28d; and in 1344, a plot in the market place was described as lying between a tenement and the well called Lidewell, *ibid.*, f.70.

(7) eg. Bury Lane, *ibid.*, f.106.

(8) See Appendix H.

(9) BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.13.

(10) The messuage of new land described in 1291 (*ibid.*, f.20d) was one of the four cottages built on land taken from Cokreth field that were referred to in 1332, (BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.7d).

By the end of the century this expansion of settlement had ended. No new houses were being erected, while the number of buildings in need of repair or completely destroyed was increasing (Appendix H). Two decades later settlement was shrinking. The evidence is unmistakeable. At the courts, presentments of ruined houses and cottages, and the granting of licences to remove cottages from land acquired, became ever more numerous. Dwellings were being left to fall into ruins, either because the holding was without a tenant or because the land had been added to another holding - the new holder had no need for the extra cottage and could not find a tenant for it. In 1313, for example, William White was allowed to move a house from tenement Blostine to his own land.¹ John, the son and heir of Maurice Blostine, had fled the manor, and so the holding passed to Maurice's daughter, whom William White had married. He added the tenement to his own holding.² William died a few years later leaving his holding in disrepair.³ Custody passed to his widow⁴ and the lands were eventually leased-out for fourteen years to a tenant who already had a substantial holding in the parish.⁵ When William's son John eventually entered his father's land, the dwelling on this too had been destroyed.⁶ Such a history was typical of many houses and cottages at this time. Occasionally, a tenant was ordered to rebuild a ruined house⁷ or to replace the building that he was allowed to remove,⁸ but such orders had little effect on the general trend. Some houses and cottages had tumbled down, others were in bad repair. According to the extent of 1332 the three cottages built on 1½ acres taken from Cokreth field had gone, while another cottage was described as assarted.⁹ Within the village signs of decay were even more marked. As early as 1315 a market stall lay in

(1) In 1313, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.35d.

(2) Ibid., f. 32d.

(3) In 1314, *ibid.*, f.36d.

(4) *Ibid.*,

(5) The land was leased to Thomas atte Pirye by the lord in 1320, *ibid.*, f.43

(6) This was in 1335, when Whiteslond was described as 9a. of land and a plot where the messuage had once stood, *ibid.*, f. 59d.

(7) eg. in 1320, *ibid.*, f.43; and in 1322, *ibid.*, f.45.

(8) eg. in 1322, *ibid.*, f.45; and in 1330, *ibid.*, f.53.

(9) BM Add. Ms. 40734, f. 7d.

ruins,¹ and by 1332 there were five empty plots in the market place where five shops had once stood, but where there were now no buildings. The roof of a block of seven shops had been allowed to fall in "because of a lack of tenants",² During the next few years, attempts to improve market facilities were encouraged, and fewer restrictions were imposed on tenants of property within and around the market place.³ Settlement in the village continued to shrink, however. Houses, shops and other buildings were removed from time to time, sometimes to more convenient sites where the buildings had fallen into disrepair. (Appendix H).

The events of 1349 meant that settlement was reduced even further. With 74 deaths in the parish in two years instead of the usual two or three a year, with complete families wiped-out, and with subsequent engrossment of holdings, it was inevitable that fewer dwellings were needed. More buildings were removed, sometimes to provide material to repair other ones, sometimes only to clear the site. Where a tenant acquired a number of holdings the lord waived the obligation to maintain the buildings on all of them.⁴

This decay of settlement in the parish during most of the fourteenth century did not alter the basic pattern; Only a few of the established centres of population disappeared. Many were reduced in size considerably, but they still remained. Apart from the village, which must have been smaller at the end of the fourteenth century than at the beginning of the century,⁵ many of the hamlets were smaller. At Abboteshay and Frobele

(1) BM Stowe Ms.849, f.36d.

(2) BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.15.

(3) Tenants were still forbidden to build a house on the market place, but William atte Dane was allowed to build a stable on a plot there, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.56d and f58d; and later to build on the ruined plot next to his shop, *ibid.*, f.63. Eva le Helder was allowed to build on the plot of land in the market place next to her house, *ibid.*, f.59; while John Lorugh was allowed to enclose a strip of land in front of his three shops from the street, *ibid.*, f.65. Within the market place, three tenants were allowed to erect more permanent stalls, with a roof on four posts but without walls on the plots lease to them, *ibid.*, ff. 59-59d.

(4) See the entries for 1316, 1320, 1341, 1342, 1350, 1351, 1352, 1353, 1354 and 1360 in Appendix H.

(5) In spite of its decline the market was still functioning. In 1405-6, for example, the manor Knebworth bought grain from 'diverse men in the market of Codicote', PRO K110.

Heath,¹ houses and cottages were removed, or were left to fall down. At least four hamlets disappeared completely. They were Oxwick, Thikeney, Beupas and Taglemere. There is proof of the existence of the hamlet at Oxwick as early as the eleventh century.² At the end of the thirteenth century, there were at least three cottages and a large farmstead there,³ but by 1359, the farmstead had been demolished for a number of years⁴ - its site was an empty field - and the last mention of a cottage at Oxwick was in 1299.⁵ The hamlet called Thikeney was mentioned only in late thirteenth century charters.⁶ All traces of it had later disappeared, probably some time during the fourteenth century. References to settlement at Beupas do not occur after that of 1301.⁷ Again, there had been at least one house at Taglemere Green,⁸ but it was empty in 1414 and probably tumbled down soon afterwards. There were no buildings there at the end of the eighteenth century (Fig. 32). A number of isolated farmsteads and cottages also disappeared. The three cottages built on land taken from Cokreth field had been removed by 1332,⁹ while no trace later remained of the tenement next to Pulford field. Many isolated farmsteads survived, however, and the settlement pattern of Codicote was to remain basically the same for another five hundred years.

(1) See the entries for 1316, 1336, 1350, 1352, 1356 in Appendix H.

(2) BM Cotton Ms. Nero Dviii, f.21.

(3) References to settlement at Oxwick occur in court book entries for 1274, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.12d; 1283, *ibid.*, f.17; and 1299, *ibid.*, f.24. Also in a late thirteenth century charter, BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.25d. Oxwick was in the southeast of the parish near to Cissevernes.

(4) BM Stowe Ms. 849, ff.89-89d.

(5) *Ibid.*, f.24.

(6) Enclosed land was sold, and 2a. was described as lying "above the lane which leads to Thikeney", BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.27. This hamlet was the home of Bartholomew de Thikeney and his family. The earliest reference to the family was in 1239, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.1.

(7) *Ibid.*, f.25.

(8) *Ibid.*, f.124.

(9) See Appendix H.

Woodland

Assarting in the township had ended by the early thirteenth century,¹ and all the surviving woodland had been enclosed into severalty. These private woods were not extensive. The demesne of Codicote contained a total of 502 acres of land in 1332, only 30½ acres of which was under woodland, and all but half an acre lying in two woods.² Similarly, no more than six acres of the 179 acre demesne of Cissevernes was woodland in 1414.³ The manor, with a smaller demesne, still contained only thirty acres of wood in 1593.⁴

Individual areas of woodland varied in size from the 16 acres and 14 acres of the two demesne woods⁵ to small thickets of a rood or less.⁶ Some of the larger woods were divided in ownership. Simon de Childemere, for example, was granted a very small piece of the lord's wood near the Park, which he was allowed to enclose with a ditch.⁷ But much of the woodland of the parish was scattered in small patches, that were often called "groves", and that were held by free and villein tenants alike.⁸

(1) From the time of the first entry in the court book in 1239, there is no evidence of any extensive clearance for cultivation. The assarting of trees was mentioned only once in 175 years of continuous court records, and this was only permission to cut down apple trees in the garden of a vacant tenement, *ibid.*, f.47.

(2) BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.1d.

(3) BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.124.

(4) PRO C142/236/97.

(5) BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.1d.

(6) eg. in 1349 - a thicket of 1r. called "shawe", BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.77.

(7) In 1329, *ibid.*, f.52d.

(8) Examples of groves held as freehold were the grove of 1/2 a. next to Sheppecotcroft, the grove of 1r. called Rowelane and Shrovelfeldgrove containing 2½ a., which were all held by John Poleyn, *ibid.*, f.83d. Examples of grove held in villeinage included the grove once held by Robert le Bedell as part of his half virgate. This can be traced for nearly a century in 1305, *ibid.*, f.27; in 1379, *ibid.*, f.105d; and in 1383, *ibid.*, f.106d. Other villein tenants with groves included Roger Arnold, *ibid.*, f.29; John atte Strate, *ibid.*, f.35; John le Bray, *ibid.*, f.35; and Robert atte Strate, *ibid.*, f.47d.

Frequently, the smaller groves were next to a house or garden,¹ but they also sometimes lay within an arable field.² Groves were transferred individually in the same way as other pieces of land, and, like the fields, they were enclosed by hedges and ditches.³

Some of the woods were used for pannage,⁴ but there is no evidence of rights of common grazing in any wood.

Heath

Most of the unenclosed waste that remained in the parish by the thirteenth century were the three heaths (Fig. 35). The largest of these, referred to simply as the Heath,⁵ was on the sandy soils of a tract of Glacial Gravels west of the town. Pollaras Heath⁶ was on similar soils along the parish boundary with Welwyn in the southeast, while Frobele Heath⁷ to the north, was situated on soils developed from the Clay-with-flints.

(1) eg. "a plot with a ditch between the grove of Robert le Bedell and Hawislane" in 1305, *ibid.*, f.27; a plot of wood with a ditch next to a curtilage in 1306, *ibid.*, f.29; a hedge between the grove of Robert atte Strate and le Greneplot in 1324, *ibid.*, f.47d; and a grove of 1r. between two messuages in 1361, *ibid.*, f.93.

(2) eg. 3a. and 13½ a. in the field called Rudying included, respectively, 2½ a. and 1½ a. of woodland, *ibid.*, ff.88d-89; a croft and a grove contained 1¼ a. enclosed by hedges and ditches in 1389, *ibid.*, f.110d; while in 1394, Hugo Besouth was fined for cutting down 32 trees in Boverscroft, *ibid.*, f.116d.

(3) eg. in 1324, a hedge between a grove and le Greneplot, *ibid.*, f.47d; and licence to make a ditch to enclose a grove in 1331, *ibid.*, f.54.

(4) In 1246, Thomas Heroldin claimed that he need not pay for the right of pannage, *ibid.*, f.2; while, in 1332, the demesne woods were valued not only for their underwood, worth 4s. a year, but also for pannage within them, worth 2s. a year, BM Add. Ms.40734, f.1d.

(5) eg. in 1272, "1r. below the heath of Codicote", BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.11d; and in 1300, "2a. next to the Heath", *ibid.*, f.24d.

(6) eg. in 1264, "½ a. next to Pollardehath", *ibid.*, f.9.

(7) eg. in 1320, "a plot next to the way leading to Frobeleheth", *ibid.*, f.25d. This was later called Rabley Heath.

Although only the Heath was ever referred to as an area of common land,¹ all three were probably open to common grazing.

A few cottages and farmsteads had been built around the edges of all three heaths. By the mid-thirteenth century, two families were being called "atte Hathe"² and "de Frobelehath",³ while the family called Pollard probably lived at the edge of Pollards Heath.⁴ By the middle of the following century, there had been references in the court records to "a cottage and curtilage called Shepecotwyk next to the heath of Codicote"⁵, to "a cottage and one acre enclosed by hedges and ditches next to Polardisheth"⁶ and to a "cottage near Frombelehath".⁷ Small patches of land had probably been taken from the heath and cottages built on them.

But there was no large-scale clearance of any heathland. The fields called the Brach⁸ and High Heath field, which were adjacent to the Heath, may once have been cleared from it, while Crouchcroft, which was enclosed by hedges

(1) In 1324, a piece of land in Bromecroft was described as lying "next to the common that is called the Heath", *ibid.*, f.48; in 1356, Crouche croft was "in the common heath", *ibid.*, f.84d; and in 1389, a croft lay between the common heath and the mill moor, *ibid.*, f.110d.

(2) The earliest reference to the family was in 1244, *ibid.*, f.1.

(3) *Ibid.*. The reference was to William de Wrobbledale. Later evidence shows this to be the same family.

(4) The first reference to the Pollards was in 1239, *ibid.*. This heath was later called Potters Heath. Roger le Potter held land here as early as 1251, *ibid.*, f.5; and in 1263, he acquired ½ a. of land "atte Pollardeshath", *ibid.*f.9.

(5) In 1341, *ibid.*, f.66.

(6) In 1356, *ibid.*, f.84d.

(7) In 1358, *ibid.*, f.87.

(8) The meaning of "brach" has been given as "land broken up for cultivation" A.H.Smith, *op.cit.*, 25 (1956), 47.

and ditches and was described as lying in the common heath,¹ must have been taken from the common. But during the period covered by the court book, only one tenant was presented for taking land from the manorial waste, and that was only a small plot to make a gateway between two messuages.² A small area of land called "moor", between the Heath and the river, was probably a patch of rough pasture.³

Meadow and Pasture

The proportion of grassland in Codicote, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was larger than in many Chiltern parishes. Most lay in a narrow belt along the floodplain of the Rhee, some as meadowland that was mown for hay, and the rest as pasture.⁴ Although there is some confusion in the evidence as to the difference between meadow and pasture,⁵ it is clear that much of the grassland in the parish lay as small strips, ranging in size from half a rood to one acre, within common meadows. These parcels were being exchanged and consolidated in the same way as common arable land,⁶ and during the sixteenth century piecemeal enclosure was taking place within the common meadows.⁷

The riverside meadows were an important feature of the field system. In 1332, their value was at least three times that of the arable demesne,⁸

(1) In 1356, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.34d.

(2) In 1336, *ibid.*, f.61d.

(3) In 1312, ½ a. of moor near Gogepole was described, *ibid.*, f. 34d; and in 1389, there was a croft of 2a. enclosed by heages and ditches lying between the common heath and the mill moor, *ibid.*, f.110d.

(4) Demesne meadow was worth twice as much as pasture, according to the extent of 1332, *op. cit.*

(5) Some of the demesne pasture lay in fields which, according to the court book, were largely meadow. Compare pasture in Westmead with court book references to meadow in 1272, *op. cit.*, f.11d; in 1279, *ibid.*, f.15; in 1316, *ibid.* ff 40-40d; in 1319, *ibid.*, f.42d. Compare pasture in Brodemead with court book references to meadow in 1283, *ibid.*, f.16d; in 1342, *ibid.*, f.67d; in 1353, *ibid.*, f.81d; and in 1361, *ibid.*, f.93d. There are also other references in the court book to pastureland in meadows; eg. in 1283, a plot of pasture within the meadow called Aldemade was exchanged for a plot in Brodemead, *ibid.*, f.17.

(6) eg. the acquisition by John le Huleward of 1 r. of meadow next to another meadow strip held by him near Gogepole in 1337, *ibid.*, f.62; and the consolidation by Reginald Doget in West mead in 1334, *ibid.*, f.69d.

(7) eg. a little close in Padde mead in 1546, BM Add. Ms. 40735.

(8) BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.1d.

while tenants whose holdings were concentrated in the north of the parish, often held a few pieces of meadow in the south.¹ That the meadows were so highly valued, was an indication of the general scarcity of winter fodder and pasturage. Common waste was limited and its grazing probably of low quality, while most closes were in arable cultivation and not under grass.

The Arable Closes

The cultivated area of medieval Codicote had reached its maximum extent by the mid-thirteenth century, and the limits then achieved were not exceeded for another six centuries. Only with the enclosure of the heaths, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was any large amount of land added to that already cultivated in the parish.²

At the end of the thirteenth century, about two thirds of this cultivated land lay in hedged closes held in severalty, and much had probably always been enclosed - improved from the waste directly into closes rather than as a bundle of open strips. Many of the tenant closes were small - they were generally less than ten acres and often less than five acres - and they were sometimes temporarily divided by alienation of land within them in more than one unit. But at least 350 acres of the enclosed arable was in huge demesne fields. In 1332, the 201 acres of several arable of the manor of Codicote lay in only seven fields,³ while the total arable holding of Cissevernes, in 1414, was 171 acres. All of this latter was enclosed, 153 acres of it lying in only four fields, the largest of which contained an estimated sixty acres.⁴ The former demesne fields of Cissevernes were still considerably larger than other closes in the parish nearly 400 years later (Fig. 32).

(1) eg. the holdings of Thomas le Driver, Walter atte Strate, John Haukyn, William Cok, Margaret Pulter and John Poleyne (Table XVI).

(2) HRO C.a/S 2 F.

(3) BM Add. Ms. 40734, ff.1-1d.

(4) BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.124.

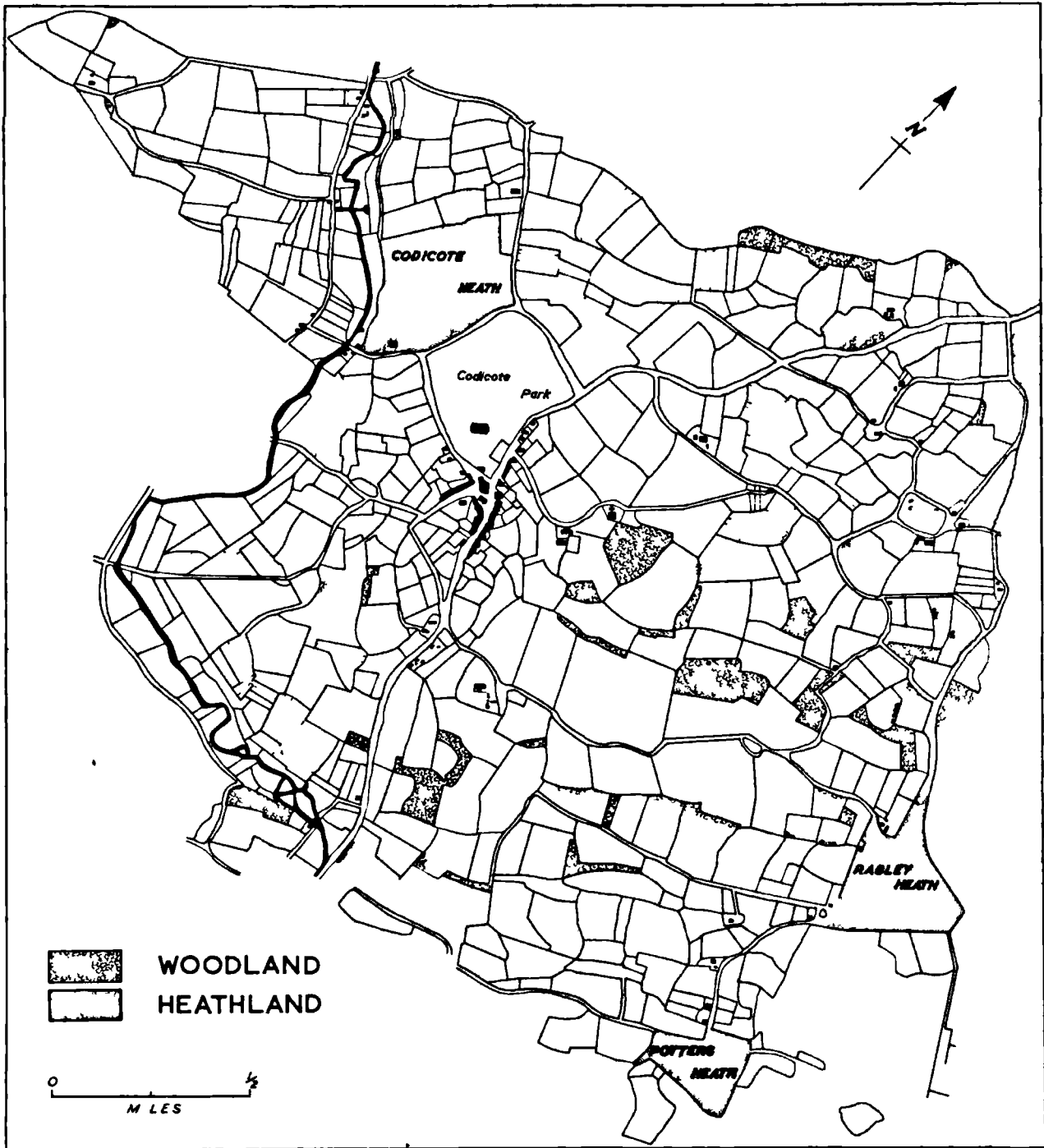


FIG. 32. Codicote - the parish at the end of the eighteenth century.

Source:- HRO AR 178/63743.

The Common Arable

The other third of the cultivated land in the township was common arable land, which extended in two belts approximately east-west across the parish. The distribution of enclosed and unenclosed arable about 1300 was very similar in outline to the sixteenth century pattern, as too, was the division of the common arable into a multiplicity of hedged fields (Fig.35). During four centuries, only minor changes were made within the general framework.

Strips and Furlongs:- Individual strip sizes in Codicote ranged from half a rood to more than 14 acres. The largest number was those no more than one acre in size. Pieces of one rood, half an acre, three roods and one acre were all frequently described in the court records and charters of the manor. In every common field in the parish, most of the parcels were of these sizes, but in every field, too, there was a wide range of strip areas. John Poleyn held a total of 34 acres in Heyden field.¹ This land was in 22 units, 13 of which were one acre or less, while nine were more than one acre. The largest was 14½ acres and the smallest one rood.

The individual strips within many common fields were grouped together into furlongs,² at the ends of which were headland pieces.³ But, as in King's Walden, the terms cultura, quarentena and furlong were often imprecise. They sometimes described a complete common field rather than a block of strips within a field. Thus the small unit called Marcolf might be referred to as "the quarentena called Marcolf"⁴ or as "the field called Marcolf",⁵ while Heyden field was once described as "the cultura of Heyden",⁶ and the groups of strips generally known as Efeld (or Nefeld)⁷ was occasionally

(1) Ibid., ff.88d-92d.

(2) Ibid., f.31d.

(3) A lease of 1328 included "½ a. at the head of the furlong of Heyden field", *ibid.*, f.51d.

(4) *Ibid.*, f.78d in 1350. Compare this with land in Marculnecroft in 1279, *ibid.*, f.15.

(5) *eg.* in 1392, *ibid.*, f.112.

(6) BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.18.

(7) *eg.* in 1291, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.20d.

called Eforlong¹ or even Eforlongfeld.² Benfurlong, on the other hand, seems to have been a close held in severalty.³

The Common Fields:- The common fields of Codicote were as numerous in the fourteenth century as they were in the sixteenth century.⁴ There were at least twenty individual fields, many of which were small and poorly defined, a vagueness that was accentuated by the frequent ambiguity in the use of terms. It was perhaps inevitable, where strip fields were so numerous, that there was confusion about the nature of some of them.

A few of the smaller common fields may have been amalgamated with the larger fields. In one case, the change occurred before the end of the thirteenth century - Long field was included as a part of Pulford field⁵ - while the fourteenth century abuttals of the small Bilgrave field⁶ and the field called Barlilond⁷ suggest that they had been taken into the adjacent Radenho and Haldens fields by the sixteenth century. The reasons for these changes are not clear. They may have been made for greater convenience in cropping and grazing, but they were not always permanent. Marcolf field, which, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was always referred to as a separate unit of strips, had been incorporated with Cokreth field, according to the survey of 1546 - land was then described as being "in

(1) eg. in 1304, *ibid.*, f.26d.

(2) In 1366, *ibid.*, f.98. Similarly, land on Henhull, often described as being "in the field called Henhull" (eg. in 1291, *ibid.*, f.20d), appeared in 1280 as land "in the cultura called Henhull", *ibid.*, f.15d.

(3) In 1334, *ibid.*, f.82d.

(4) Twenty common fields can be identified in the thirteenth and fourteenth century manorial court records, including all the sixteenth century common fields. The twenty were Ailriche field, Ash field, Barlilond, Bilgrave field, Broad field/croft, Church field, Cockeshill, Cokreth field, Haldens field, Henhill, Heydon field, Longcroft, Marcolf field, Oakhill, Pulford field, Radent field, Ree field, Thikney field, Thurboldescroft and West field, *ibid.*, ff.4d, 8d, 13d, 14, 14d, 15, 16, 16d, 20, 25, 17d, 28d, 30d, 36d, 65 (only the first references are given). Crabtree field and Groundall field were in Welwyn, *ibid.* ff.38, 125.

(5) at the spring court of 1291, a piece of land was described as being in "the field of Pulford in the place that is called Long field", *ibid.*, f.20d; and similar references were made from time to time at subsequent courts.

(6) eg. *ibid.*, ff.31, 84d, 9d.

(7) eg. *ibid.*, ff.31, 57d, 84d, 89d.

Marcolf in Cokreth field"¹ - yet, fifty years later, Marcolf was again being considered as a separate field.² The exact status of the individual small common field had never been precisely determined.

There is virtually no evidence to suggest the origin of the common field pattern in Codicote - how individual common fields came into being, and why there was a large number of them. The arrangement was already so well established by the mid-thirteenth century, that little trace of its origin remained. Large-scale woodland clearance had ended, and in only one case is there a suggestion that part of the common arable had recently been improved from the waste. A section of Heyden field, in the northwest of the township was called "old Heyden",³ presumably to distinguish it from a more recent addition to the same field. This new land was north of the main body of the field, and adjacent to an area of mixed woodland and closes. Here, too, was a large seven acre piece lying in Poleyn's shot.⁴ The Poleyn family had an extensive holding in the parish at the end of the thirteenth century. Conceivably, the land had been brought into cultivation only recently and by one family, had been divided into a number of irregular strips, and had then been added to an established common field.

The medieval strip pattern was further complicated by the temporary subdivision of enclosed fields through alienation from them. It is tempting to suggest that the larger areas of common arable land were formed in the same way, but there is ^{no} evidence to support this. As already seen, the subdivided closes and the common fields were quite separate and distinctive features of the field pattern, although it may be difficult to distinguish the two in the documentary evidence, when a close remained subdivided for more than a few years.

Common Pasturing:- In 1332, three tenants were presented at the manorial court because they had "overstocked the common pasture over and above the extent".⁵ The jury said that "each acre of Codicote is extended at four sheep at the time of fallow". Clearly tenants pastured their livestock in common over

(1) BH Add. Ms. 40735.

(2) PRO C142/236/97.

(3) BH Add. Ms. 40734, ff. 18, 21d; Stowe Ms. 849, f. 90.

(4) BM Stowe Ms. 849, ff. 107, 113, 123.

(5) Ibid., f. 55d.

arable fallow in the manor. The phrasing of the entry in the court book suggests that this right extended over a large area rather than being confined to a single field, but it is not clear whether it included enclosed as well as common arable land. A stint limiting the number of animals allowed to graze was enforced, and its existence was another indication of the shortage of pasturage in the township. That the stint applied to all the land in the manor ("every acre in Codicote") is further proof that common pasturing on the fallow was not confined to a few fields.

Consolidation and Enclosure:- The consolidation of common arable holdings was not as marked at Codicote, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as at King's Walden. Only two exchanges of common arable were recorded at the manorial courts, although the purchase of strips to enlarge a common arable holding occurred more frequently. By an exchange of 1314, both parties to the transaction acquired parcels next to the land that they already held in Thikeney field.¹ Roger le Helder was particularly active in this respect. He was one of the participants in an exchange of land in Ashfield in 1320, by which each of the two tenants involved enlarged a strip in the field,² and during the following three years, he obtained another three pieces next to his land in Ash field.³ He was also buying up strips next to his parcels in Broadcroft and Ailriche field.⁴ From time to time, tenants brought together their land in the other common fields, and many of the larger pieces, described for almost every common field in the parish in the fourteenth century, were probably the result of such consolidations.

But the acquisition of adjacent strips did not always produce their permanent amalgamation. In 1360, for example, John Doget obtained four pieces in Ree field that were next to land that he already held there,⁵ yet sixteen years later, he was surrendering some of this - it was a strip with his land on both sides - to another tenant.⁶ In the same way, the reverse process to consolidation, the fragmentation of strips, was also taking place.

(1) Ibid., f.36d.
 (2) Ibid., f.43d.
 (3) Ibid., ff.44, 44d, 48d.
 (4) Ibid., ff. 3ⁿ, 52d.
 (5) Ibid., ff. 91-91d.
 (6) Ibid., f.104.

Both Reginald Aleyn and Thomas atte Pirie, for example, surrendered land in Ash field while retaining a part of the parcels in their holdings.

As in King's Walden, tenant consolidation of common arable land was not followed by enclosure before the sixteenth century. There may, in fact, have been little incentive to enclose - the value of arable in severalty differed only slightly from that in the common fields² - and the one field that was enclosed, was taken into severalty by the manor. This was Church field. The existence of an 8½ acre piece in the field before the end of the thirteenth century³ suggests that considerable strip consolidation had already been undertaken within it. By 1332, the same field included a large proportion of arable demesne,⁴ and by the late sixteenth century, the whole of Church field was part of the manor farm.⁵ It was not until after 1500, that enclosure other than by the manor was in progress. Strips of all sizes were then being fenced-in piecemeal by the tenants - a close only slightly larger than a quarter acre lay in Haldens field in 1546.⁶ By the end of the century, examples were numerous - according to an inquisition of 1593, at least three pieces in Cokreth field had been taken into severalty⁷ - and much of the

(1) Ibid., f.44.

(2) In 1328, six acres of enclosed arable was valued at 8d. an acre and another five acres at 6d. the acre, *ibid.*, f.51. Common arable was worth 4¼d. an acre. A few years later the difference was less - in 1344, common arable was worth only 1½d. less than the 6¼d. the acre for enclosed land, *ibid.*, f.70. By 1350, a 9a. block of enclosed land and 4a. of common arable lying in two fields were both valued at 4d. the acre, *ibid.*, f.73d. Again the same value, 2½d. an acre, had been given to both the several and the common arable of the demesne in 1332, BM Add. Ms. 40734, ff. 1-1d.

(3) Ibid., f.13.

(4) Ibid., f.1.

(5) PRO C142/236/97.

(6) BM Add. Ms. 40735.

(7) PRO C142/236/97.

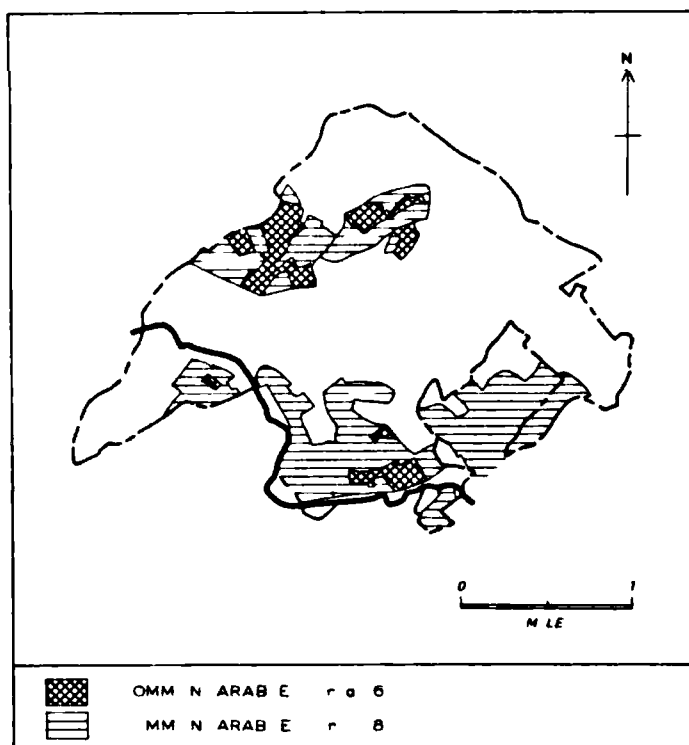


FIG. 33. Codicote - common arable land c.1600 and c.1800.

Sources:- BM Add. Ms. 40735;
 PRO C142/236/97; HRO Acc. 969,
 AR 178/63743.

remaining common arable in the parish was enclosed in the same way during the next two centuries (Fig. 33).

Cropping

A three-course rotation was widely followed in Codicote, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with individual holdings evenly divided between winter, spring and fallow courses. The arable demesne, as described in the extent of 1332, was grouped into first, second and third seasonae, or cropping courses, of 135½ acres, 175 acres and 152½ acres respectively, while the services owed by many tenants, and listed in the extent, included ploughing an equal amount of land in each of these three shifts.¹ The same rotation was used on villein land. The duration of a number of thirteenth century leases was expressed both in years and in the number of crops to be taken from the land in that period, and a comparison of the two statements invariably suggests a triennial fallow. In 1260, for example, a tenant accepted 28 acres from the manor for a term of twelve years "until eight crops have been taken therefrom",² while, a few years later, in 1272, Ralph Blostine entered all the land of Cristine le Drake for a term of nine years, until he had taken six crops.³ He entered the land when it lay fallow, and so would have three complete cropping courses of three years each, relinquishing the land at the end of a spring-sown course. In both of these examples, and in a third case,⁴ the number of crops to be taken from the land was two-thirds of the length of the lease as expressed in years. Clearly the three-course rotation was practised on demesne and tenant farms alike.

At the same time, fixed rotations were probably followed within the common fields, enforced by the need to clear all the crops from them before they were thrown open to common grazing - the demesne arable in each individual common field was confined, in every case, to a single cropping course.

(1) eg. John Salecok ploughed 2½ a. at the winter "season", 2½ a. at the Lent "season" and 2½ a. at the fallow, *ibid.*, f.2.

(2) *Blf Stowe Ms.* 849, f.7.

(3) *Ibid.*, f.11d.

(4) In 1301, 1a. was leased out for twelve years until eight crops had been taken, *ibid.*, f.24d.

(5) See below, p.195.

The manor appears to have regulated cropping within the common arable - in 1362, a tenant was presented for sowing seven acres of oats in Heyden field without permission¹ - but there is no evidence as to how the entire common arable of the township/^{was}organised for cropping purposes; whether all the common fields were simply divided into three large courses, each course consisting of a number of common fields; whether there were a large number of groups of common fields, the fields in each group being divided between three courses; or whether each field was subject to its own rotation irrespective of cropping in its neighbour.

The three-course arrangement of the farm holding had to be so organised that the crops grown on its common arable conformed with the common routine of the various common fields in which this land lay. The parcels in a particular field could not be in a sown course of the holding when the rest of the field was due to lie fallow, a problem that was further complicated by the fact that many farms contained land in five or six common fields, usually in irregular proportions. It was overcome, on the demesne, by balancing common and enclosed arable within the rotation, combining them in a single course if necessary. In 1352, the first demesne cropping course of 135½ acres contained at least 82 acres in the common fields; the second course consisted entirely of common arable lying in two fields; while the third course was of completely enclosed land.² The common arable in the demesne was not evenly divided between three cropping courses, but this did not matter because the addition of enclosed arable in the rotation produced three reasonably balanced courses. The same practice was probably adopted on tenant farms wherever possible. By using permutations of enclosed

(1) Bli Stowe Ms. 249, f.94d.

(2) The first course was 52a. in Cokreth field (common field), 9a in Lverlonge (Eforlon; - common field), 31a. in Eldebury field (enclosed), 22a. in Hallywelldene (enclosed) and 18a. in West field (common field). The second course was 40a. in Church field (common field) and 35a. in Pulford field (common field). The third course was 14a. in Catesden (enclosed), 40a. in Wode field (enclosed) and 58½ a. in Heyhathe field and Coksate (enclosed), op. cit..

land and land in a variety of common fields, the tenant could adjust the cropping on his holding to suit the triennial fallow by necessity enforced in the individual common fields. It was a flexible cropping system.

There is a little evidence to suggest that the manor regularised cropping on villein holdings outside the common fields, as well as within them. When John Chival was presented, in 1362, for sowing oats in Heyden field, he was also fined for sowing three acres of wheat in the croft called Aldewyk without licence.¹ It would seem that a fourteenth century tenant in Codicote did not have the freedom to work his enclosed land as he wished. If this was the case, it would explain why there was only a slight difference between the value of enclosed and common field land in the parish in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and why, therefore, there was little incentive for tenant enclosure.

The Holdings

The basis of villein land holding in Codicote had once been the standard customary holdings, the half virgate, the ferlingate, the cotland and the coumbeland, but by the beginning of the fourteenth century, some of these were being broken down by alienation from them. The largest of the customary units, the half virgate, was about thirty acres,² although there were considerable variations in size, even within the one parish. Karechaleslond, for example, contained at least 38 acres,³ whereas the half virgate held by John atte Strate was only 26 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres.⁴ There were similar differences in the area of the ferlingate - Whiteslond had contained nine acres,⁵ whereas

(1) Bli Stowe Ms. 849, f.94d.

(2) The half virgate formerly held by Thomas le Driver contained 32a. *ibid.*, ff. 59d-60.

(3) Bli Add. Ms. 40734, ff. 9d-10.

(4) In 1328, the land that John atte Strate held in villeinage was apportioned at 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ a., Bli Stowe Ms. 849, f.51; but in 1332, John was said to hold a half virgate except for 1a.1r., Bli Add. Ms. 40734, f.4d.

(5) In 1335, Robert de Thikeney received a plot and 9a. called Whiteslond, Bli Stowe Ms. 849, f.59a. During the rest of his life he received no other land and when he died, in 1343, he was said to hold a ferlingate, *ibid.*, f.69.

Duranteslond was 22 acres¹ - with a wide range of sizes between the two extremes.² The cotland was not more than ten acres,³ and the coumbelond was usually five acres or less.⁴

These two smaller tenurial units seem to have comprised enclosed arable land alone, but the ferlingate and the half virgate generally included different types of land in varying proportions. Common arable, common meadow, small patches of wood, and enclosed arable and meadow were all to be found within them. The half virgate called Moriceslona, for example, contained an almost equal amount of enclosed and common arable;⁵ the ferlingate of Richard atte Hurne included 14 acres of enclosed land and

(1) In 1338, Duranteslond, which John Laurence held when he died, contained 22 acres, *ibid.*, f.63. Six years previously, John held a ferlingate formerly held by Durant le White, *BM Add. Ms. 40734*, f.6d.

(2) eg. Bedelleslond contained more than 20a., *BM Stowe Ms. 849*, f.61; Ravenslona contained a messuage and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. (compare land held by Robert atte Pirye in 1341 and in 1349, *ibid.*, ff.60 and 76d); the ferlingate once held by John Laurence contained a messuage and 15a. (compare the land held by Thomas Dyer in 1338 and 1343, *ibid.*, ff.63 and 69); the ferlingate once held by John le Lord contained a messuage and 13a. (compare the land received by Richard atte Pirye in 1336 and leased to Geoffrey atte Thorne in 1341, *ibid.*, ff. 61d and 67); the ferlingate called Jebbeslond contained 11a. (compare the land held by John Haukyn in 1332 and the apportionment of the rest of the land in 1333, *BM Add. Ms., 40734*, f.11d. and *Stowe Ms. 849*, f.57); and the ferlingate called Edwardeslond, once held by Edward atte Hathe, contained 10a. (compare the land received by William de Thikeney in 1342 with that held by him in 1348, *ibid.*, ff.63 and 74). The ferlingate was also called the ferthinglond and the ferthlingate.

(3) A cotland held by John Lough contained 7a. (compare the land held by him in 1332 with that received in 1321, *BM Add. Ms. 40734*, f.3d and *Stowe Ms. 849*, f.43d). Wexholeslond contained a messuage and 5a. (compare the land received by Thomas Thikeney in 1330 and surrendered by him in 1334, *ibid.*, ff.53d. and 69); and the cotland held by Alice le Grey when she died contained 5a. (*ibid.*, f.61).

(4) In 1332, William Mareschal held a coumbelond of 3a., *BM Add. Ms. 40734*, f. 13; Geoffrey atte Hurne held a coumbelond of 3a., *BM Stowe Ms. 849*, f.42

(5) *Ibid.*, f.61.

six acres of common field land;¹ but that once held by Richard le Webbe contained ten acres in the common fields, and only one acre was enclosed.² The land of other fourteenth century tenants, from the few acres of the many small holders to the substantial holdings of those tenants active on the land market, showed similar variations (Table XV).

TABLE XV

Enclosed and common field land in some 14th century holdings (in acres).

Date	Tenant	Enclosed	Common	Ref.
1361	Richard Mulleward	1¼	1¼	f.93
1376	John Doget	2	½	f.104
1335	Thomas le Potter	-	4	f.58d
1344	Thomas Thikeney	5	-	f.70
1291	Edward de Bromeshale	-	5	f.20d
1300	Margaret Carpenter	2	3	f.24d
1318	Adam Haulyn	7	-	f.41d
1359	A villein holding of John Poleyn	¾	7	f.39d
1354	Henry Meleward	3½	4¼	f.82
1291	Aldith Colesmith	10	-	f.20d
1332	Ferlingate held by Richard le Webbe	1	10	E.f.11d & CB, 1
1367	Margaret Hundreder	7	7	f.98
1360	Reginald Smith	3	11	f.92
1328	Ferlingate of William Lord	14	-	f.51d
1332	John Whitecok - part of a half virgate	4¼	10	E.f.14d
1409	John Pulter	-	14¼	f.122
1309	John Cok	7	8½	f.32
1336	Ferlingate called Bedelleslond	6½	c.10	f.61
1332	Jalter atte Strate	3+	13	E.ff.6d-7
1332	Roger le Holder	6¾	15	E.f.12d
1344	Ferlingate of Reginald atte Hurne	14	6	f.70
1332	William atte Felde	15	6	E.f.4
1328	Half virgate of John atte Strate	11	13½	f.51
1332	Hugo Cok	15	9½	f.14
1336	Half virgate called Moriceslond	14½	16	f.61
1335	Half virgate of Thomas le Driver	12½	18½	f.59d
1372	Laurence Fairwoll	15	12	f.101d
1359	A villein holding of John Poleyn	14½	57	f.89
1361	William Cok	4 crofts	32¼	f.93d
1359	A villein holding of John Poleyn	¾	27½	f.89
1359	A free holding of John Poleyn	41½	66	f.89

Sources:- All references are to the court book (op.cit.) except those to the extent of 1332 (op.cit.).

(1) Ibid., f.70.

(2) BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.11d; and Stowe Ms. 849, f.57.

A comparison of some fourteenth century holdings with those of certain copyhold tenants in the manor in 1546, shows that the distribution of the land of a typical holding was basically the same at both times (Table XVI). In the fourteenth century, as in the sixteenth, the amounts of enclosed and common arable in a farm holding varied from tenant to tenant. The common arable land of a holding might lie in only one field, or in five or six. It certainly never lay in all the common fields of the township, but was concentrated in one area and even there in only a few of many common fields. The holding as a whole, both enclosed and common arable land, was near to its farmstead or cottage.

There was no regularity in the allocation of a common arable holding between the fields in which it did lie nor, and this was more important, between the different cropping courses. Thus the 257 acres of common arable on the demesne in 1332 was in five separate common fields in the amounts of 55 acres, nine acres, 18 acres, 140 acres and 35 acres; this land was confined to two of the three courses of the demesne rotation; and it lay in these two courses in the proportions of 82 acres and 175 acres.¹ There was no attempt at a symmetrical distribution of any kind. But, as already seen,² the rotation on the manor farm comprised both enclosed and common arable land, so that any irregularity in the apportionment of the former was balanced in the rotation of the farm holding by its combination with the latter. The location of the common arable holding was not determined by the need for an equal amount of land either within the individual common fields or within each of three cropping courses in the common arable. On holdings where there was insufficient enclosed arable to achieve such a balance in the farm rotation, the same effect was probably obtained to some extent from the distribution of the common arable between a fairly large number of relatively small fields.

The flexibility in land holding that arose from these two factors together - the large number of small common fields, and the combination of enclosed and common arable in substantial proportions on many holdings - made the localisation of the arable holding near to the dwelling of its tenant a practical

(1) Bli Add. Ms. 40734, f.1-1d.

(2) See above, p.195.

TABLE XVI

Some holdings with common field land in Codicote.

Date and Date of Dwelling	Location of Dwelling	No. of land	C.F.		Thimney		Thurholde		Ash		Heydon	Ree	Hans-hill	Broad Palford		Cokehill		Haldens		Buryland		Groundall		Common Meadow
			Church f.	Altriches f.	Church f.	Altriches f.	Longcroft	Longcroft	f.	f.				f. & Marolf f.	f.	f.	f.	f.	f.	f.	f.	f.	f.	
2 & 14th																								
to Cot	-	5.0	8.5		2.0			3.0	2.0	1.5														
to Cot	-	15.0	9.5	1.0				5.0	5.0	0.5														
to Cot	-	four	31.75	2.5	2.5	7.0	4.0	1.25	8.5	1.5				4.5										1/2 & 1 piece
to atte Felde	-	15.0	6.0	1.0	3.5					1.5														3 pieces
to le Helder	Village	6.75	12.75		2.5		2.25	3.25	2.0				2.5						0.25					1/2 & 1 piece
to Hushyn	-	1.0	5.75		1.75		1.25	1.25	1.5															1r.
to Foley a)	-	14.5	95.0	2.5	10.0	7.0	3.5	5.0	23.5	3.5														2a.
to Foley b)	-	34.0	65.0	17.5	3.0		6.0	10.5					3.0						25.0					1a.
to Weyr Paltor	Village	-	14.0	1.25	0.5	0.5	1.25	2.75	0.75	6.0				1.0										
to atte rate	-	3.0	12.5		0.5	1.75	5.25	2.75	1.5	0.75														1a.
to Hard le Hobbe	-	1.0	10.5		4.5		2.0	2.5	1.5															3r.
to ward de			5.0										3.0											
to Huseghin			100										100											
to Huseghin	Abbotshay	2.0	1.25										0.25	0.25										
to Huseghin			7.0										4.0		1.5	1.0	0.5							
to Huseghin			5.0										5.0											
to Huseghin			7.0										5.0											
to Huseghin			5.0										2.75											1/2
to Huseghin			1.25			0.75																		
to Huseghin			0.12																					
to Huseghin			0.25																					
to Huseghin			3.0																					1a.
to Huseghin			3.0																					
to Huseghin			0.4																					
to Huseghin			6.5																					
to Huseghin			29.0																					2/2
to Huseghin			10.4																					2a.
to Huseghin			21.0																					1a.
to Huseghin			0.4																					
to Huseghin			7.7																					0.1a.
to Huseghin			28.7																					
to Huseghin			17.0																					
to Huseghin			14.6																					
to Huseghin			5.0																					
to Huseghin																								

Fig. As in Table V.

Notes: - See Add. No. 40735.

(1) referred to as Hush field. (2) referred to as Coknell field. (3) referred to as Arches field.

proposition. At the same time, this pattern was a long-established feature of the field system - it occurred in the customary units of tenure,¹ as well as in holdings that had been recently amassed through purchase - and probably reflected, as in King's Walden, the original settlement and the clearing of the wood in the township. Land assarted from the waste was taken into numerous small common fields and closes. Hamlets and isolated farmsteads were being established away from the village at the same time as assarting was taking place, and families living in them were sharing the new land rather than cultivating a holding in the nucleus of older land around the village. Such was the possible sequence of development reflected in the pattern of land holding in the fourteenth century and later.

(1) eg. the lands of the half virgate of Thomas le Driver were concentrated in the north of the parish near his farmstead at Grenemere, later Drivers End, and in the common fields there. (Table XVI).

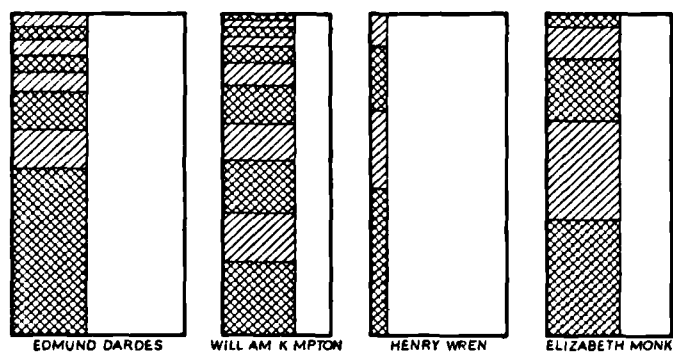


FIG. 34. Codicote - five holdings, 1546.

Each rectangle represents one complete holding, the shaded sector that proportion of the holding in common fields (subdivided proportionally into numbered units representing amounts in the different common fields), and the unshaded sector the proportion of the holding that was enclosed.

Source:- BM Add. Ms. 40735.

Conclusions.

1. The thirteenth and fourteenth century field system differed very little from that of the sixteenth century. Apart from the enclosure of one field and minor readjustments amongst others, the proportion of enclosed to common arable land in the parish, and the large number of common fields in the parish, had not changed. Similarly, the distribution of the land of the average tenant holding was basically the same in the fourteenth century as in the sixteenth century. Only part of the land of the average holding was in common fields; this common arable land was in only a few of the many strip fields in the parish; and the distribution of the land between these fields lacked any symmetry. The field system, as it existed in the sixteenth century, was already established by the thirteenth century.

2. The thirteenth and fourteenth century landscape as a whole was substantially the same as that of the sixteenth century. The distribution of woodland and heathland hardly changed. The amount of woodland in the parish was small; the heaths were more extensive; but at all times one of the main sources of fodder in the parish were the riverside meadows and pastures. Settlement shrank throughout most of the fourteenth century, from a peak during the last few decades of the thirteenth century, but, apart from the disappearance of three hamlets and some isolated farmsteads, the settlement pattern of the parish remained the same. There was a large village and a number of isolated farmsteads and hamlets.

A number of significant features also become clear from the thirteenth and fourteenth century evidence.

1. There was a shortage of grazing in the parish in the thirteenth and fourteenth century. Common grazing on the arable fallow was therefore an important feature of the field system. A stint had to be imposed on sheep grazing on the fallow.

2. The lands of both demesne and tenant holdings were grouped into three-course rotations which combined both enclosed and common arable land.

3. The large amount of enclosed land and the numerous small common fields in the parish, together with the fact that the two were combined in cropping systems, made possible a considerable flexibility in the distribution of the lands of the individual holdings.

4. Above all, there is the importance of the thirteenth and fourteenth century evidence concerning inheritance and the fragmentation of land. This can be summarised as follows:-

- a. Primogeniture was practised in Codicote, but because inheritance laws applied only in cases of intestacy, succession to land was often complex.
- b. The heir did not necessarily succeed to the family holding. Generally, the main part of a holding passed to a single heir, but a number of children also received land from the parents. This gift of land, together with the ease with which villein tenants could transfer property, made it possible for a younger son to build up a substantial holding for himself. The less successful were still able to find employment on the manor to supplement their small holding of land.
- c. During a period of growing population, this system of inheritance and succession dealt with the situation in a crowded manor as well as any form of inheritance. In practice, the differences between a township in which single son inheritance was enforced and one where partible inheritance was the rule, were not as great as theoretical differences might suggest.
- d. In Codicote, neither inheritance nor succession resulted in any significant division of land. The main cause of land fragmentation was alienation by lease or sale. Usually, the results were only temporary, but where more complex transactions had taken place the subdivision of land might be more lasting and was difficult to distinguish from the common fields.

CHAPTER IV

FIELD SYSTEMS IN BERKHAMSTED: c.1300-c.1650.

Berkhamsted is in the central Chilterns near to the Hertfordshire border with Buckinghamshire. The township lies along the valley of the Bulbourne, one of the large overdeepened troughs which cut right across the dip-slope, and it incorporates the slopes and ridges north and south of the river (Fig.36). The land of the township was divided at an early date between the two parishes of St. Peter and St. Mary, based respectively on the church of St. Peter in the town of Berkhamsted itself and on the church of St. Mary in the village of Northchurch. Within the two parishes, there was a single large manor. This passed to the Duchy of Cornwall in the early thirteenth century and remained Crown property until 1862.¹ The manor was divided between the borough, which included the town and adjacent land, and the halimote, or outer part of the manor. The services attached to villein tenures were light, those attached to free holdings even lighter.² By the end of the thirteenth century, two small manors, Norcot and Maudlyns, had appeared in the township³ - in 1617, they were said to contain 90 acres and 110 acres respectively⁴ - while another small manor, Durrants, had been established by the fifteenth century.⁵

The boundaries of the two parishes encompass a variety of soil types, ranging from those developed from the sands and gravels of the river flood-plain to the Clay-with-flints that cap the ridges. These latter are overlain by a patch of sandy Reading Beds in the east of the township, north of the Bulbourne. Soils on the slopes of the main valley, and of the dry valleys tributary to it, have been developed from the Chalk exposed there.

1. VCH Herts., 2 (1908), 166-7.
2. The half virgate villein holding owed ploughing and hoeing for 2½a. at the winter sowing, 2a. at the spring sowing and 1a. on the fallow. Mowing and autumn boon works were also owed. Free holdings usually owed only the last. PRO C133/95, E152/8.
3. VCH Herts., 2 (1908), 246-8.
4. PRO E315/366, ff.7-8.
5. VCH Herts., 2 (1908), 248. In 1617 Durrants contained 56a.

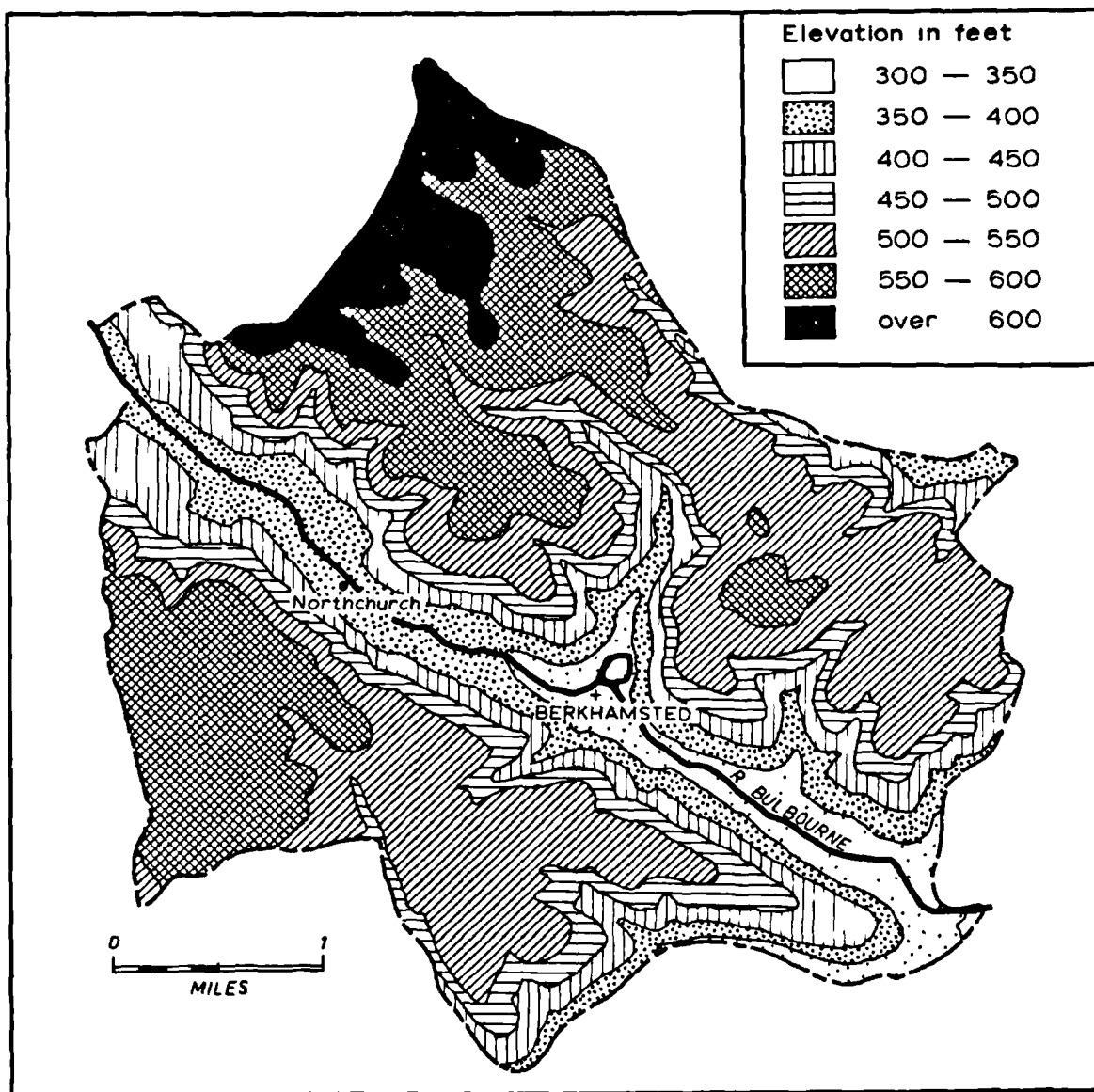


FIG. 36. Berkhamsted - relief.

The field pattern in the two Berkhamsted parishes at the beginning of the seventeenth century was typical of townships in the larger Chiltern valleys, where a central strip of meadowland was bounded by an area of common arable (Fig.41). The common arable was divided amongst a large number of relatively small fields, which stretched along the slopes on both sides of the main valley. These, in turn, were fringed by an area where closes and patches of woodland were intermixed. Finally, there were the common wastes on the higher ridges near to the parish boundaries. This generalised pattern of land-use recurred in parishes in the valleys of the Misbourne and the Wye, as well as in that of the Bulbourne.

The basic problem presented by this study of Berkhamsted is whether the early seventeenth century field system was a recent development - perhaps a product of the piecemeal enclosure that was taking place on a large scale by the second half of the sixteenth century - or whether it was a pattern that had already been established for several centuries. The early evidence is fragmentary, but it is sufficient to answer this question.

Settlement:

The settlement pattern in Berkhamsted in the fourteenth century was much the same as that in the two parishes in the seventeenth century, and as that shown on the nineteenth century maps (Fig.37). It comprised a small town, a village and many outlying hamlets and farmsteads.

The borough of Berkhamsted was situated on the floor of the valley of the Bulbourne below the Castle. In 1357, there were 114 shops and tenements within the town.¹ Other settlement along the valley bottom was concentrated in the small village of Northchurch around the church of St. Mary,² and in

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1. The centre of the town was along Castle Street, which runs south from the Castle, and in the area to the east and west of it as far as Water Lane to the west and Ravens Lane to the east. Most of the dwellings were in this area, although houses also straggled out along the road from the town to Chesham (Elvenweye). The permanent shops were situated in Castle Street and "le Shoperow", while in 1357, the seven meat stalls of the butchers of the town were to be found on a strip of waste land next to the wall of St. Peter's cemetery, PRO SC11/271-2.
 2. J.E.B. Gover, A. Mawer and F.M. Stenton, "The Place-Names of Hertfordshire". English Place-Name Society, 15 (1938), 48. The demesne farm was at Northchurch, PRO SC11/271-2.



FIG. 37. Berkhamsted - settlement.
Source:- 1st. ed. O.S. One-Inch Map.

outlying "ends" or hamlets such as Gossams End¹ and Dudswell² northwest of the borough, and Bourne End³ and the cluster of cottages around Bankmill⁴ southeast of the town. Away from the valley floor, settlement in the two parishes was dispersed in isolated farmsteads and in small groups of farms and cottages. Many of the dwellings north of the river were scattered around the edge of the common wood and heath, on small plots of land cleared after most of the arable in the township had been brought into cultivation.⁵ The main centres around the Frith were the hamlets at Northcot⁶ in the west and at the Heath⁷ in the east. The isolated farm called Haxters End,⁸ also in the east, can be compared with the isolated Northcot Court⁹ in the northwest. There is

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1. BM Add. Ch.15469. Cf. seventeenth century references to cottages and tenements at Gossams End, when there were at least five dwellings there, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.109,109d,112d; PRO E315/366, ff.17d,31. The isolated farm called Durrants was near Gossams End, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.110.
 2. Dudswell may have been the Westhalfden referred to in the extent of 1357, PRO SC11/271-2. The main valley was often called "le Dene". Westhalfden was therefore the western half of this valley. In the early seventeenth century, there were at least three dwellings at Dudswell, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.106,107d,108.
 3. Two messuages, in 1357, were described as lying at Bourend, PRO SC11/271-2. There were at least four seventeenth century dwellings here, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.101d,102,102d; PRO E315/366, ff.34d,66.
 4. PRO SC11/271-2. Cf. a cottage near Bankmill two and a half centuries later, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.99; PRO E315/366, f.30.
 5. eg. the messuage and croft next to "boscum del Frith" in 1300, PRO C133/95, E152/8. Cf. the seventeenth century cottage on the east side of the Park towards the Frith, PRO E315/366, f.17d.
 6. A plot in the lord's waste near Northcot Row was next to a messuage in 1357, PRO SC11/271-2. Cf. a seventeenth century tenement on Northcot Hill, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.104d; and two cottages built on the waste at Northcot Hill, PRO E315/366, ff.62,67d. A map of 1612 shows four dwellings here, PRO MR 603.
 7. Surmans End was near here. It was probably the house of Robert Shireman that was south of heathland in 1291, Cal. Charter Rolls, II, 385. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, there was a farmstead called Surmans End, and five cottages and tenements described as lying on the heath, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.96,97,98d,100; PRO E315/366, ff.14, 62d, 65d. There were also two messuages at Little Heath, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.99d; PRO E315/366, f.22, E315/366, ff.28,66.
 8. Otherwise Hackstalls End, PRO E315/366, f.63.
 9. PRO MR 603, E315/366, f.33d; BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.107.

no early evidence of dwellings around the three small patches of common waste south of the river, although, by 1607, a cottage had recently been built for the poor on Shutters Green.¹ If anything, settlement in this part of the township was even more dispersed than in the area north of the river. The small hamlet called Wood Green may have been here.² Fridays End,³ Harefoots End,⁴ and Maudlins⁵ may have been either hamlets or isolated farms, while Rothway,⁶ Harriets End,⁷ Dawland End⁸ and Ashlins⁹ were certainly isolated farmsteads here about 1600.

Buildings of all kinds were falling to ruin in the mid-fourteenth century, as they were in parishes throughout the Chilterns, as general economic decline was accentuated by the epidemic of 1348-50. Sickness seems to have ravaged the population of Berkhamsted in those years. The survey of 1357 was made because of the great changes after the pestilence.¹⁰ Arable land was going out of cultivation,¹¹ and holdings remained in the lord's hands for a lack of tenants.¹² Men who took up vacant land merely added it to their existing holdings. Cottages and farmsteads were therefore frequently left unoccupied, even though tenants had been found for the land attached to them. In 1357, the houses of bond tenants, and of free holders who had

1. PRO E315/365, f.24.
2. PRO SC11/271-2. This was probably the seventeenth century hamlet at Woodcock Hill, where there were at least three dwellings, BM Lansd. Ms.905, ff.111d,112; PRO E315/366, ff.30d,31d.
3. There are thirteenth century references to Agnes Friday and to Frydaysende, BM Add. Ch. 15468, Harl. Ch. 50G37. Cf. a seventeenth century cottage near Fryday Street, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.103d.
4. The earliest reference was to Harefordeshende in 1287, J.E.B.Gover, A.Mawer and F.M.Stenton, op. cit., 28, n.2. By 1617, the site was "a toft where the ancient farm house called Harefoots End stood", PRO E315/366, f.8d.
5. The earliest reference was to La Magdeleine in 1274, PRO C133/110. Cf. the seventeenth century Maudlins, PRO E315/366, f.31d; BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.105.
6. PRO E315/366, f.33d; BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.106.
7. Ibid., f.100.
8. Ibid., f.107.
9. PRO E315/366, f.14; BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.115.
10. PRO SC11/271-2.
11. See below, p.217.
12. PRO SC11/271-2.

recently taken up land, were said to be "very ruinous and greatly in need of repair".¹ The tenants complained that they had accepted their tenements the more readily, and at a higher rent, in the hope that they would be assisted with timber for repairs. The steward was ordered to supply this from the manorial woods. Similarly, buildings on the demesne farm had been neglected by the farmer, in 1356,² and two years later the farmhouse and two sheepcotes there, were on the point of tumbling down.³ Buildings in the Castle were also said to be ruined, by 1360, "the greater part having fallen to the ground".⁴ This decline in settlement did not change the basic pattern, however. It remained the same - a scattering of hamlets and isolated farmsteads away from the town of Berkhamsted and the village of Northchurch.

Woods and Heaths:

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, there were two areas of common waste in the two parishes.⁵ Along the ridges and plateaux north of the river, was a great stretch of common pasture, woodland and heath that was divided into two main sections. The larger part, called the Frith, consisted largely of woodland and pasture,⁶ while the heathland lay to the southeast, on a patch of pebbly clays and sands, in the areas called Berkhamsted Heath⁷ and Little Heath. Three small commons were also strung along a ridge south of the river. Apart from the Frith, all the woodland in the township was held in severalty, either as small springs and groves

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1. "Register of Edward the Black Prince", IV, 128 (henceforth referred to as Register).
 2. Ibid., 190.
 3. Ibid., 243.
 4. Ibid., 342.
 5. PRO E315/365, ff.17d-19 and E315/366, ff.6d-7.
 6. Two parts of the Frith are described on a map of 1612 as "a place without trees", and as "ground with very few trees thereon", PRO MR 603
 7. The Heath contained 100%a., and was described in 1612 as "without trees", *ibid.*

adjacent to or within the arable fields,¹ or as blocks of woodland varying from 2½ acres to twenty acres.² The largest amount of enclosed woodland was within the Park, where four woods contained 298 acres, in 1612,³ and 1,600 trees in 1650,⁴ while most of the other private woodland in the township was on the upper slopes south of the river.⁵

The common wood called the Frith occupied 763 acres in the two parishes at the end of the thirteenth century.⁶ It was bounded to the west by heathland in Aldbury, to the north and east by the woodland and parkland around Ashridge,⁷ while to the south was Berkhamsted Park.⁸ In the thirteenth century, as in the seventeenth century, the common included a patch of heath southeast of the woodland.⁹ There was also a small common wood, Sandpit Wood, south of the Bulbourne,¹⁰ which three centuries later had been reduced, no doubt by continuous grazing, to an open waste that was called a "green".¹¹ Of the areas of private woodland, one of the most extensive, in the fourteenth century, was in the Park, as frequent sales of timber from this wood show.¹² Much of the parkland timber lay in small plots called groves or dells.¹³ Only a few medieval references to other woods survive, and these suggest a distribution essentially the same as that of the early seventeenth century. Patches of woodland were interspersed with closes of arable land on the upper slopes and plateau

1. eg. the 18a. of land and wood called Amberlains Hill, the two closes and two woods containing 6a. called Redings, the close with a little wood called Haning field that contained 12a., or the 10a. of arable and wood called Cock Grove, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.96,97d.
2. Ottendean Grove contained 2½a., while the wood called the Great Springs in Amberlains contained 20a., *ibid.*, ff.96,96d.
3. PRO MR 603.
4. PRO E317/Herts. No.9.
5. BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.95-125.
6. PRO C133/95, E152/8.
7. In the details of a grant to Ashridge, Cal. Charter Rolls, II, 385.
8. L.M.Midgeley (ed.), "Ministers' Accounts of the Earldom of Cornwall, 1296-7, Vol. I", Royal Historical Society, Camden Third Series, 66 (1942), 12-27.
9. This was the Heath between Grims Ditch and the house of Robert Shireman, that was described in the grant to Ashridge in 1291, *op. cit.*.
10. PRO C133/95, E152/8.
11. The common was referred to as Shukers Green, PRO E315/365, f.22d.
12. eg. the sale of 60 beeches there in 1358, Register, IV, 243.
13. Register, IV, 97; PRO SC6/863/8, SC11/271-2.

surface, particularly on the higher land south of the river. A charter of 1294, for example, describes recently cleared land and wood in an enclosure called Northrudying.¹ The close was below the wood of la Maudeleyne (later Maudlins)² - while another thirteenth century charter records the sale of a close, with a grove of wood attached, in the same area.³

The beech was ubiquitous. It was the only species mentioned in fourteenth century references to timber in the demesne woods,⁴ and both the Frith and woodland in the Park must have consisted largely, if not exclusively, of stands of beech. By the early seventeenth century, there were also oaks growing on the Frith.⁵

The uses of woodland were varied. The common woods were open to common grazing - men of the township of Berkhamsted had rights of pasturage in the Frith and Sandpits Wood at all times of the year, except when the beech mast had fallen in autumn⁶ - while rights in the Frith were shared with other townships. In 1285, the Rector of Ashridge and his tenants were granted common grazing there all year round,⁷ while the lord of Aldbury and the men of his township had free entry and exit in the woods.⁸ The woods were also used for swine pannage in autumn, but pannage was not a common right for Berkhamsted men. Pannage dues had to be paid for the use of the common woods at this time,⁹ only Ashridge and its tenants being exempted from the obligation by the grant of 1285.¹⁰ Pannage in enclosed demesne woods was also leased-out to tenants.¹¹

1. BM Add. Ch. 977, Harl. Ch. 50G37.
2. Now Marlins. The Tithe Map shows a field here called Reding. Cf. the three seventeenth century woods called Maudlin Grove and Maudlin Spring, which together contained 19a., BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.106-106d.
3. BM Add. Ch. 15468.
4. Register, IV, 5, 35, 36, 42, 81, 82, 109, 121, 128, 146, 198, 218, 219, 243, 256, 273, 279, 280, 321, 353, 365, 384, 385, 417, 431. 600 beeches were referred to in 1361, *ibid.*, 384.
5. In 1607, Francis Whethered had cut down 120 beeches in the Frith and 29 oaks there, PRO E315/365, f.19.
6. PRO C133/95, E152/8.
7. Cal. Charter Rolls, II, 324.
8. PRO C133/95, E152/8.
9. *Ibid.*, and PRO SC11/271-2, SC6/863/9; and L.M.Midgeley, *op. cit.*,
10. Cal Charter Rolls, II, 324.
11. L.M.Midgeley, *op. cit.*.

Private woodland was valued, above all, for its timber. About 1300, for example, 4,000 faggots cut from the demesne woods were sold,¹ and during the fourteenth century frequent gifts of firewood were made.² Local timber was widely used - for fuel,³ and for repairing and building houses and fences.⁴ Beech was not suitable for all purposes, and oak in particular had to be brought-in from outside the manor. The expense of these timber imports was met by extensive sales from the woods of the manor. When, in 1353, it was decided to enclose the Park with a wooden fence,⁵ rails and stanchions were made of oak, while the rest of the fence was of beech. In order to buy the necessary oak timber, £20 worth of beech had to be sold. Five years later, sixty beeches in the Park were sold to pay for repairs to this fence, and for the cost of some houses that had been bought for the Castle,⁶ while, in 1358, one hundred beeches,⁷ and in 1359, another hundred,⁸ were sold to pay for repairs to the Castle. Large timber sales also followed the great storm of 1362.⁹

Precautions were taken when felling timber, for sale or otherwise, to ensure that the woods were not overcut. The usual order to the parker was that he should sell timber in the woods "in places where there is the least damage and destruction",¹⁰ or that "all the beeches are to be cut in different parts of the wood, as shall be most profitable for the Prince and

1. PRO SC6/863/8.
2. eg. in 1354, four separate gifts of beeches for fuel were made, Register, IV, 109,121.
3. Ibid., 218.
4. eg. in 1285, the brethren of Ashridge were granted rights of housebote and haybote, and of collecting wood for fencing their park from the Frith, Cal. Charter Rolls, II, 324.
5. Register, IV, 81.
6. Ibid., 243.
7. Ibid., 256.
8. Ibid., 279.
9. Ibid., 417,423,431,464. The storm of 1362 must have sent trees crashing to the ground throughout the Chilterns. There was widespread destruction in the woods of Ibstone at this time.
10. As in 1358, Register, IV, 256.

least wasteful of the wood".¹ By the fourteenth century, the woods of Berkhamsted were a valuable asset. Felling was of timber for sale and local requirements, and not to clear land for cultivation.

Large-scale assarting had ended by the mid-thirteenth century at the latest. The last land to be cleared for cultivation was on the clay-capped ridges and plateaux surface above the lighter Chalk soils of the valley slopes. Most of the isolated farmsteads and hamlets on these ridges had been established by the second half of the thirteenth century, while on the plateau near the western boundary of the township, a chapel had been built.² An extent of 1300³ distinguishes this land as "old assart", and 131 acres was described as such. Assart land was held by tenants and, although its location is not given, it seems probable that much of it was in the north-east corner of the township.⁴ Three messuages included with the assarts were probably on small plots taken from the edge of the Frith. Here, as elsewhere in the Chilterns, common waste was a centre for late settlement. In this area, too, there was a common field called Reding field,⁵ suggesting that some of the last woodland clearance in the two parishes was associated with the formation of strip fields. There may also have been widespread assarting in the west of the township, in the early thirteenth century, in the area called Maudlins, around the chapel of St. Mary Magdalene.⁶

1. As in 1353, *ibid.*, 81.

2. See below.

3. PRO C133/95, E152/8.

4. 18a. of the old assart was held by Roger Hacksalte. The name of the farmstead called Haxters End was derived from the family called Hackstalls, while in the seventeenth century and the nineteenth century, there were two closes called Hackstalls in this area, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.100 and Tithe Map. Another 21a. of old assart was held by Walter Podifat in 1357, PRO SC11/271-2. There was a close called Puddephats in this area on the Tithe Map.

5. This common field was immediately north of the closes called Hackstalls.

6. The chapel was built sometime before the end of the thirteenth century, *VCH Herts.*, 2 (1908), 246.

Assarting there was not associated with the formation of common fields, but left a mosaic of arable closes scattered amongst patches of woodland.¹

The basic pattern of cultivated land, woodland and waste in Berkhamsted was established by the mid-thirteenth century. The woods that remained when assarting ended, were preserved because of their value. It was a pattern that did not change greatly during the following four centuries. Some clearing still took place, but it was small in scale - a new garden was made in the Park by felling wood there.² Conversely, some land went out of arable cultivation in the mid-fourteenth century,³ but it probably reverted to pasture rather than lying waste. Before the end of the sixteenth century, there had been a revival of woodland clearance for cultivation, and a number of small private woods had been "newlie-stocked-up" by 1600.⁴ A few years later, 300 acres were enclosed from the Frith to make the present Coldharbour Farm.⁵

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1. See below, p.226. On the Tithe Map, there are two groups of closes called Reding here, one of which was probably the North Rudyng referred to in a late thirteenth century charter, BM Harl. Ch. 50G37. Another thirteenth century croft in this area was called Asortcroft, BM Harl. CH. 46F48.
 2. PRO SC6/863/8.
 3. In 1360, a dispute arose concerning tithes from lands "which have not been sown since the pestilence until now", Register, IV, 353.
 4. eg. "a close latelie stocked-up", "one peece newly stocked" in Balkeys, and "one piece newly stocked between Long Croft and Balkeyes", BM Lansd. Ms., ff.100d, 103d.
 5. PRO E317/Herts./9.

Meadow and Pasture:

Meadowland in the Berkhamsted parishes was restricted to a narrow strip along the floodplain of the Bulbourne, apart from which no areas were sufficiently moist to support grasses suitable for mowing for hay. The amount of meadowland in Berkhamsted was larger than in most Chiltern parishes, but even so it was insufficient to meet all the demands of the township. The demesne, with 427 acres of arable land in 1300, had 24½ acres in the riverside meadows.¹ All the hay mown there was used to feed the livestock on the demesne in winter,² and in some years, when hay from these meadows failed to satisfy the requirements of the demesne farm, substantial amounts had to be bought.³ The high value of meadowland reflected its scarcity in the township. In 1300, most of the demesne meadow was assessed at 2s. the acre, that is four times the value of the arable,⁴ and although the value of many of the meadows had been depressed by 1357, even the poorest quality meadowland was still worth more than any arable.⁵ The riverside meadows were probably liable to severe flooding. Surviving manorial accounts show that each year stones had to be collected from them.⁶ At the same time, there was often a shortage of water in summer. The 4½ acres of meadowland next to Bankmill was worth only 6d. an acre in 1357, "because it is in an extremely bad condition and dry".⁷ These variations must have affected the quality of hay yields. Some of the meadows were subdivided into strips lying in common, but there were also large areas in small closes.⁸

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1. PRO C133/95, E152/8.
 2. PRO SC6/863/7.
 3. PRO SC6/863; Register, IV, 190; L.M.Midgeley, op. cit.,
 4. PRO C133/95, E152/8.
 5. PRO SC11/271-2.
 6. PRO SC6/863/4,7-9; L.M.Midgeley, op. cit..
 7. PRO SC11/271-2.
 8. Ibid..

The Arable Fields:

In Berkhamsted in the fourteenth century, as in many other Chiltern parishes, there were three main elements in the pattern of arable fields. These were the huge enclosures of the arable demesne of the main manor, the common fields and the tenant closes.

The Arable Demesne:- The arable demesne contained 427 acres in 1300.¹ By 1357, this area had been reduced to 329 acres through the subtraction of land to make a lawn in the Park.² The arable of the demesne was entirely enclosed and held in severalty, and it lay together in a single block that stretched along the northern slope of the valley of the Bulbourne, west of the Castle (Fig.41) - an area where there might otherwise have been a large block of common field land. The demesne enclosures were huge. The 334 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres that was leased-out in 1346³ lay in three fields, an average size for each of 110 acres, while the 180 acres that was taken into the Park was a single field. The fields were enclosed by hedges.⁴

All fourteenth century evidence of cropping and grazing practices in the township, refer to these three or four demesne fields. At the end of the thirteenth century, the main crops grown on the demesne were wheat, in the winter-sown course, and oats, in the spring course. There were also small acreages under the two poorer grains, mixed corn and dredge,⁵ sown in winter and spring respectively, while small amounts of barley were produced. Wheat was the main cash crop, and all the harvest, apart from seed and a small allowance to servants, was sold.⁶ Dredge and barley were usually the only spring grains to be sold,⁷ although in some years oats extra to the requirements of the demesne were disposed of in this way.⁸ About one third of the demesne arable was left fallow each year.⁹ The remainder was divided

1. PRO C133/95, E152/8.

2. PRO SC11/271-2.

3. Register, I, 148.

4. Register, IV, 233.

5. Dredge was a mixture of oats and barley here, L.M.Midgeley, op. cit..

6. Ibid.; PRO SC6/863/4, 7-8.

7. Ibid..

8. As in PRO SC6/863/8.

9. The account rolls show that the sown acreage of the arable demesne, at the end of the thirteenth century, was about 300 acres (Table XVII). This can be compared with a total arable acreage of 427 acres given in the extent of 1300, PRO C133/95, E152/8.

irregularly between crops of the two sown courses, the area under particular crops varying from year to year, while the sizes of the two sown courses also fluctuated considerably (Table XVII). The demesne fields must have been subdivided for cropping purposes - there were five crops each year and a fallow course, whereas there were only three or four fields - but there is no indication as to how this subdivision was effected.

TABLE XVII

Crop acreages on the Berkhamsted demesne.

Crops	1296-97	?	?
Wheat	129	155	98
Mixed corn	14	14	23
Total autumn course:	143	169	121
Oats	157	143	149
Barley	4	4	14
Dredge	12	5	11
Total spring course:	173	147	174
Total sown area:	316	317	295
Sources:- L.M.Midgeley, op.cit.; PRO SC6/863/7-8.			

The manorial flock at the end of the thirteenth century usually consisted of about 300 sheep.¹ In addition, there was a herd of between twenty and thirty cattle,² while horses were used for ploughing.³ The sheep were pastured on the arable. An account of 1296-7 records the expense of making hurdles for the sheep fold.⁴ Careful preparation of the fallow, which was an essential part of good arable husbandry in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, included intensive sheep folding on unsown arable land.

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1. The figures were 256, L.M.Midgeley, op. cit.; 344, PRO SC6/863/4; 343, PRO SC6/867/7; and 169, PRO SC6/863/8.
 2. The figures were 21, L.M.Midgeley, op. cit.; 24, PRO SC6/863/4; 27, PRO SC6/863/7; and 35, PRO SC6/863/8.
 3. Two teams of six affers each were kept, *ibid.*.
 4. L.M.Midgeley, op. cit..

When the manor farm was leased-out in 1349, 89 acres were lying fallow.¹ This land had been ploughed three times in preparation for the winter sowing, and 18 acres had been manured by the sheep fold.² Manure for the demesne was also found from a variety of other sources. The farmer was allowed to take dung from the Castle and stables, he could collect the fallen leaves and droppings in the Park, and he could take litter from the ditches there "for manuring and improving said demesne lands".³

By the early seventeenth century, the great fields had been broken down into smaller closes - the 240 acres of demesne arable then existing was divided into 16 closes, an average size of 15 acres each.⁴ This was little different from many tenant closes.

The Common Fields:- Thirteenth and fourteenth century evidence relating to the common fields is slight, but it is sufficient to show that, as in the early seventeenth century, the pattern was of a large number of relatively small fields lying along the slopes of the valley of the Bulbourne. Of the 25 or more common fields in the township at the beginning of the seventeenth century, twelve are referred to in thirteenth and fourteenth century documents,⁵ while a further seven medieval strip fields cannot be identified at the later date.⁶

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1. Register, I, 148.
 2. Register, IV, 82.
 3. Providing he did not remove them from the Park in the fawning and rutting season.
 4. PRO E315/365, f.17, E315/366, ff.5-5d; BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.123.
 5. These fields were Aldwick or Aldix, PRO SC11/271-2; BM Harl. Ch. 46E48; Register, IV, 225: Bourne field, otherwise known as Barne field or Barnes Dean, PRO C133/95, E152/8, SC11/271-2; HRO 44423; Register, IV, 225: Barkham field, PRO SC11/271-2: Broad field, *ibid.*; HRO 71184: Braddie, otherwise known as Brodegh or Bredecch, PRO SC11/271-2: Greenway field, *ibid.*: Mill field, *ibid.*: St. Edmunds field, *ibid.*: Salmons field, otherwise known as Salemannes field, BM Add. Ch. 5948: Stonycroft, BM Harl. Ch. 46F48: Wessenden, otherwise Westend field or Westendene field, PRO SC11/271-2: BM Harl. CH. 50H21: and Woodcroft, PRO R.II/4/9.
 6. These were Asonelycroft, BM Harl. Ch. 46F48; Dependeissh or Deprichesdistche, BM Add. Ch. 7505; PRO SC11/271-2; Lokslade, Bod. Ms. Radcliff d.d. 194-6; PRO SC11/271-2; Maldesfeld, BM Add. Ch. 66851: Munchesfeld or Monkenfeld, J.G.Jenkins (ed.), "The Cartulary of Missenden Abbey, Vol.II", ERS, 10 (1946), 49, no.338; PRO SC11/271-2: Wolfrichescroft, PRO SC11/271-2: and Wynchfeld, BM Harl. Ch. 46E48; PRO SC11/271-2.

Although the basic pattern was the same, there were three significant changes between the fourteenth century and the seventeenth century. These were the consolidation and enclosure of common arable land, and the division of some of the common fields into smaller units. Common arable was being enclosed in Berkhamsted during the fifteenth century. In 1357, the 42 acre holding called Galeweislond included 18 acres of arable described as lying in common,¹ and next to Shootersway.² By 1527, the 42 acres called Galoweyfield was in four closes, that lay together between the manor of Maudlins and Shootersway.³ At least three other fourteenth century common fields had been completely enclosed by 1600. Two of these, the fields called Harefoot Hill and Le Rugge, were in the southeast of the township, and it is clear, from the extent of 1357, that both were divided into a large number of small pieces of land.⁴ There are eleven separate references to land "super Harefoot Hill" in the extent, some to single pieces, the others to land "in diverse parcels", or to land "lying divided". Similarly, there are 15 references to arable "super les Rugges", with descriptions typical of common field land - there were, for example, three acres lying in three pieces. Le Rugge still existed as a common field in the first half of the sixteenth century.⁵ By the early seventeenth century, both common fields had been enclosed entirely. Instead of a pattern of small strips there were two closes of 16 acres each, that were called Harefoot Hill, and a 22 acre close called Ridges.⁶ Again, Leche field was still subdivided in 1555,⁷ but sixty years later it had been fenced-in to form three closes.⁸ There is no evidence as to how or why common fields were enclosed. Only the fact of their enclosure by the seventeenth century is clear.

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1. Register, IV, 225.
 2. PRO SC11/271-2.
 3. BM Harl. Ch. 58E6.
 4. PRO SC11/271-2.
 5. HRO 44423.
 6. BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.104-104d.
 7. HRO 66511.
 8. BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.113d.

Consolidation of common arable land had, however, been taking place since the second half of the thirteenth century, if not earlier, and was effected by sale and exchange. Pieces in the common field called Lokslade, for example, were being enlarged in this way towards the end of the thirteenth century. Between 1295 and 1297, Adam Pusse was involved in three transactions, by which he acquired four parcels next to land that he already held in Lokslade,¹ and in one of these, he exchanged a croft for land in the common field.²

One of the main results of three hundred years of common arable consolidation was, by 1600, a considerable irregularity in strip size. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the usual size of common arable pieces and strips was one rood, half an acre and one acre. Individual strips were rarely larger than an acre. By the early seventeenth century, there was far greater diversity. Many of the small regular strips remained intact, but there were also many larger pieces in almost every common field. A single parcel in St. Edmunds field was 18 acres,³ while another eight pieces in the same field contained 33½ acres between them.⁴ Again, there was an eleven acre plot in Hungry Hill,⁵ and another two pieces there together comprised eleven acres.⁶ Greenway was another field where there were numerous large strips.⁷

Enclosure was a logical conclusion to the sequence of consolidations that had produced single units as large as this, and, by 1600, piecemeal enclosure from the common arable was widespread in Berkhamsted. Parcels were being taken from many of the common fields in the two parishes. In 1616, Barne Dean included eight closes of arable and meadow totalling 25 acres.⁸ Part of Abingdon field had been fenced-off to form a close called Nether Abingdon field,⁹ while there were at least two closes within Wessenden field.¹⁰ But enclosure was not necessarily preceded by consolidation.

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1. Bod. Ms. Radcliff d.d. 194-6.
 2. Ibid., 196.
 3. BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.120d.
 4. Ibid., f.196d.
 5. Ibid., f.115d.
 6. Ibid., f.120.
 7. Ibid., ff.115-24.
 8. PRO E315/366, f.33.
 9. BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.114.
 10. Ibid., ff.106-9.

Sometimes, blocks of strips that had been fenced from the common routine remained subdivided between a number of tenants - at least two closes of land in Barkham field continued to be divided into strips in this way¹ - and such enclosures probably represented joint action by two or more tenants. Most of the common arable in Berkhamsted and Northchurch had been enclosed piecemeal by the early nineteenth century (Fig.38).

The main reason for medieval consolidation was probably the rationalisation of holdings within the common arable rather than enclosure of this land, but if the process was carried on to its logical conclusion enclosure would follow. By the sixteenth century, consolidation was no doubt taking place with subsequent enclosure as the main aim, and one of the chief incentives to enclose must have been the existence of common pasture rights within the strip fields, in particular the limited routine that these imposed. That common grazing was being practised over the common arable, is clear from the orders made at a number of manorial courts. In 1513, for example, it was stated that no more people were to come with their cattle into the common fields without permission,² while, in the following year, a tenant was presented for overstocking the common fields with 80 sheep.³ By the second half of the century, many men must have found the restrictions imposed by common pasturing irksome, particularly as demands for grain, the staple of Chiltern farming, were increasing with the growth of the London food market.⁴ It was probably for this reason that some were acting together to fence-in blocks of strips, were consolidating land, and enclosing the consolidated blocks. But, whatever the reasons for the piecemeal enclosures that were beginning in the sixteenth century, it is clear that many of them had their basis in a process of strip enlargement that had begun before the end of the thirteenth century.

At the same time, individual common fields were being divided into smaller units, a process which, in some cases, had already begun by the fourteenth century. Salmons field, which was a single unit at the end of the

1. In Barkham field close and New close, *ibid.*, ff.102-102d.

2. PRO SC2/177/16.

3. *Ibid.*

4. F.J. Fisher, *op. cit.*, 47.

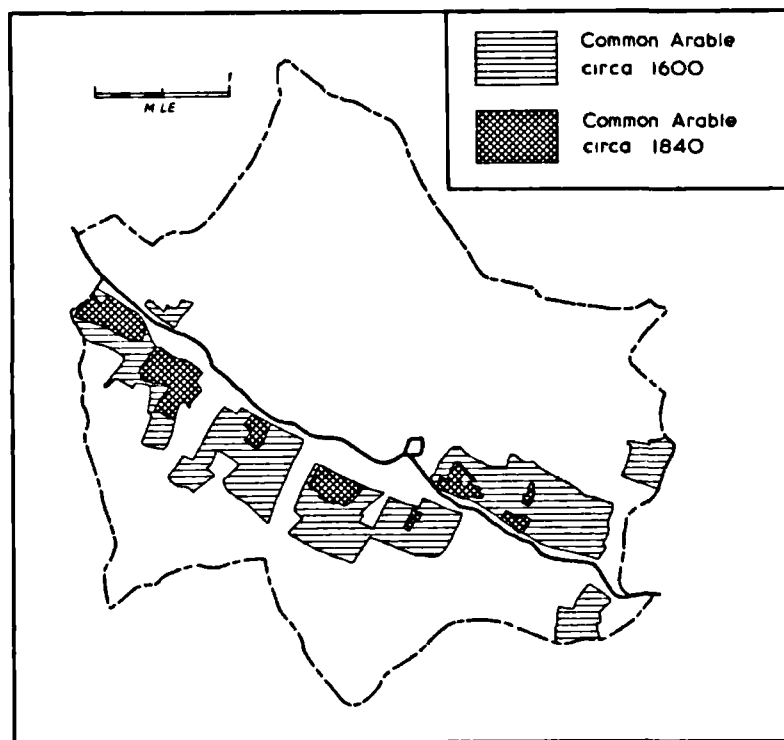


FIG. 38. Berkhamsted - common arable land c.1600 and c.1840.

Sources:- BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.95-124d
and the Tithe Maps for Berkhamsted and
Northchurch.

thirteenth century,¹ lay as North and a South Salmons fields one hundred years later.² By 1600, subdivision was well advanced. Mill field had been one field in the mid-fourteenth century,³ but by 1593, Great, Little and Middle Mill fields were all described separately.⁴ Again, an Over Leche field, as distinct from Leche field itself, was being referred to, before the whole field was enclosed in the second half of the sixteenth century.⁵ The reason for this fragmentation of common fields is not clear. It may have been one of the results of piecemeal enclosure, or fields may have been broken-up into smaller units to facilitate cropping and grazing - the more numerous the common arable units the more flexible cropping arrangements could be. In fact, the two reasons were probably inter-related. The sixteenth century was a period of agricultural change in the Chilterns, which, in Berkhamsted, was reflected in tenant enclosure and the division of common fields. Increased demands for grain stimulated piecemeal enclosure and encouraged a greater flexibility of cropping, while the fact that common fields were smaller would facilitate enclosure. Although the area of common arable in Berkhamsted was decreasing during the sixteenth century, with the complete enclosure of some fields and the partial enclosure of others, the number of common fields in the two parishes was increasing.

The Tenant Closes:- By the early seventeenth century, enclosed arable land in the township was expanding rapidly at the expense of the common arable. But a substantial proportion of the arable of the township, apart from the demesne of the main manor, had long been enclosed, and was held in severalty by the tenants. A thirteenth century charter, for example, records the sale of fifty acres in six enclosed fields in the south of the township.⁶ Some complete holdings comprised only arable in severalty - in 1357, two thirds of a virgate was the single field called Synyldesfeld, which was described as lying between Shootersway and the road to London.⁷ Other holdings

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1. BM Add. Ch. 5948.
 2. PRO R.II/4/9.
 3. PRO SC11/271-2.
 4. HRO 54283.
 5. HRO 66511.
 6. BM Harl. Ch. 46F47.
 7. PRO SC22/271-2.

included a substantial proportion of several arable, in addition to land in the common fields. The 42 acres of Galeweislond, for example, contained 24 acres lying enclosed in three crofts in 1357,¹ while 6½ acres of an 8 acre holding near Harefoot End was in severalty.² Much of the enclosed arable held by tenants was along the parish boundary with Chesham south of the river. The size of the closes there ranged from small crofts of an acre or less to fields of 14 acres or more.³

Enclosed fields were occasionally subdivided by the partial alienation of land within them, probably by sale. Ralph, son of Simon, had once held 14 acres in a close called Rudyng. By 1357, this had been divided between two tenants, who held 10 acres and 4 acres respectively.⁴ Again, the field called Twelve Acres appears, from the seventeenth century evidence, to be a typical common field, divided into at least ^{seven} pieces.⁵ In the fourteenth century, what would seem to be the same field was undivided and held in severalty.⁶ The fourteenth century close had, by the early seventeenth century, become indistinguishable from the older common fields. There is no indication as to how or why Twelve Acres was divided.

By 1600, the enclosed fields in the township varied in size from the small plots attached to dwellings, to fields as large as 20 to 30 acres, the average being 6¼ acres. Closes in a single holding were also being broken-up into smaller fenced units. It has already been seen how the huge demesne fields were divided into closes with an average area of 15 acres.⁷ The same

1. Register, IV, 225.
2. PRO SC11/271-2.
3. BM Harl. Ch. 50H21, 46F48, 50G37, 46F47, Add. Ch. 15468, 977 all describe enclosed land in this part of the township.
4. Register, IV, 224.
5. BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.110,113.
6. In 1358, Henry Cook held a croft in the Borough called Twelve Acres, PRO SC11/271-2.
7. See above, p.221.

thing was happening to some of the larger tenant enclosures. A 10 acre close called Pittesleye was described as "now several but once one croft",¹ the 9 acre Connye croft was "now two closes",² while 16½ acres on Hariot Hill was "now two closes".³ The reverse process could also take place. Pond Gutterich was an 18 acre close "late three closes",⁴ and a 40 acre field had been divided in two.⁵

The Arable Holdings:

The pattern of arable land holding in the two Berkhamsted parishes in the fourteenth century was essentially the same as that in the early seventeenth century (Table XVIII), and at all times, it was typically Chiltern. Some large holdings consisted entirely of several arable land,⁶ but the majority combined enclosed with common arable in varying proportions.⁷ The common arable holding lay in only a few of the many common fields in the two parishes. These were usually located in one part of the township, and were usually those nearest to the farmhouse or cottage. The distribution of the common arable holding between these fields was extremely irregular. Thirteenth and fourteenth century evidence is small, but it is sufficient to show that this pattern then existed in the south of the two parishes. There, a sale of 53 acres, in the second half of the thirteenth century, included

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1. PRO E315/366, f.23.
 2. Ibid..
 3. Ibid..
 4. BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.97.
 5. Ibid., f.107.
 6. eg. the virgate called Syneldesfeld in 1357, PRO SC11/271-2. In the early seventeenth century, the 92a. of Maudlins lay in nine closes, while Rothways included 120a. of enclosed land and wood, BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.105, 106.
 7. A thirteenth century grant included 8½a. of enclosed arable and 3¼a. of common arable, BM Harl. Ch. 46F48; while in 1357, Galeweislond contained 18a. in common and 24a. enclosed arable, Register, IV, 225; the former holding of Clement Harefod contained 6½a. enclosed arable and 1½a. in the common fields, and land held of James le Vyneter included 10¼a. of several arable and 105a. of common arable land, PRO SC11/271-2. For the seventeenth century pattern, see Table XVIII.

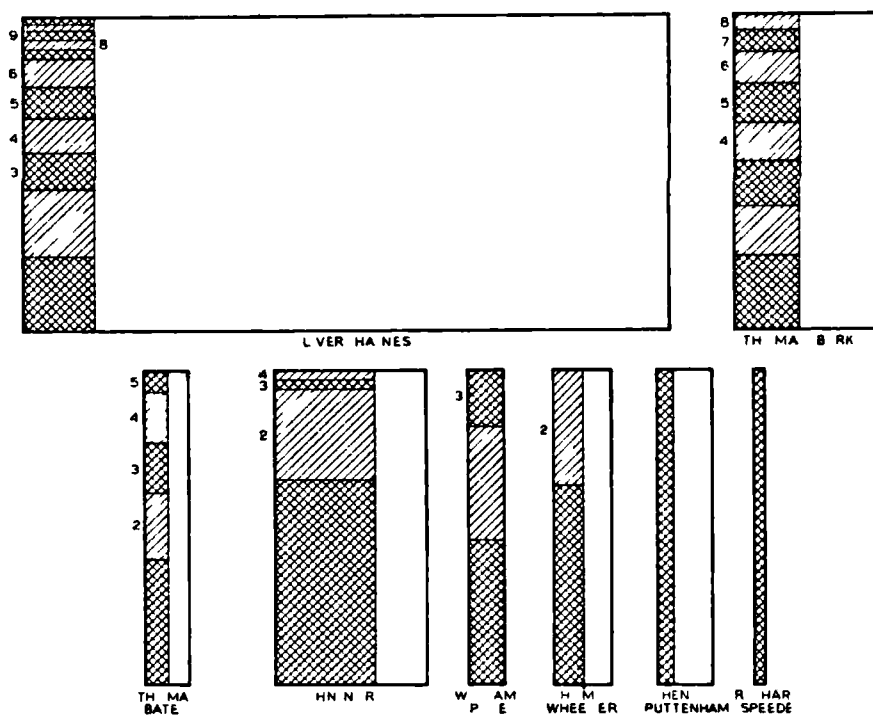


FIG. 39. Berkhamsted - eight holdings, c.1600.

Each rectangle represents one complete holding, the shaded sector that proportion of the holding in common fields (subdivided proportionally into numbered units representing amounts in the different common fields), and the unshaded sector the proportion of the holding that was enclosed.

Source:- BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.95-124d.

3 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres lying in six strip fields,¹ while a fourteenth century holding of 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres, in the same area, contained 105 acres of common arable land distributed unevenly between five fields.² Similarly, a small holding of a messuage and 8 acres near Harefoot End included only 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres in two common fields.³

Seventeenth century surveys portray this same pattern throughout the township, with the land of individual holdings, enclosed and common, concentrated in one area and in the common fields there. The location of common arable holdings reveals three main groups of common fields in the township, namely those around the village of Northchurch, those around the borough of Berkhamsted, and those around the hamlets of Bourne End and Little Heath. Even within these groupings, however, few tenants held land in all the common fields, while the distribution of a holding between the fields in which it did lie was very uneven. No doubt in Berkhamsted, as in Codicote, the combination of enclosed and common arable meant that cropping on the holding could be very flexible, and explains the irregular apportionment of individual holdings between common fields, while the concentration of common arable holdings into one of the three groups of fields may have represented an earlier arrangement whereby there were, in effect, three separate field systems in the township.

The relationship between settlement patterns and arable holdings in this part of the Chilterns is clearly illustrated by the pattern of land holding in Berkhamsted about 1600. The lands of some isolated farms were entirely in severalty - the 92 acres of Maudlins lay in nine closes,⁴ while Rothways comprised 120 acres of enclosed land and wood⁵ - but other isolated

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1. These were 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. on Harefoot Hill, 15a. in Wynch field andruding, 4a. in Aldwyc (Aldix), 4a. in Asonelycroft, 3a. in Stonicroft and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Bourne field (Barne Dean), BM Harl. Ch. 46F48.
 2. These were 34a. on Harefoot Hill, 32a. on les Rugges, 14a. in Bourne field, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Wynch field, 1a. in Wolfrichescroft and 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ a, described as lying on les Rugges and in Bourne field, PRO SC11/271-2.
 3. Namely 1a. on Harefoot Hill and $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Wolfrichescroft, *ibid.*.
 4. BM Lansd. Ms. 905, f.105.
 5. *Ibid.*, f.106.

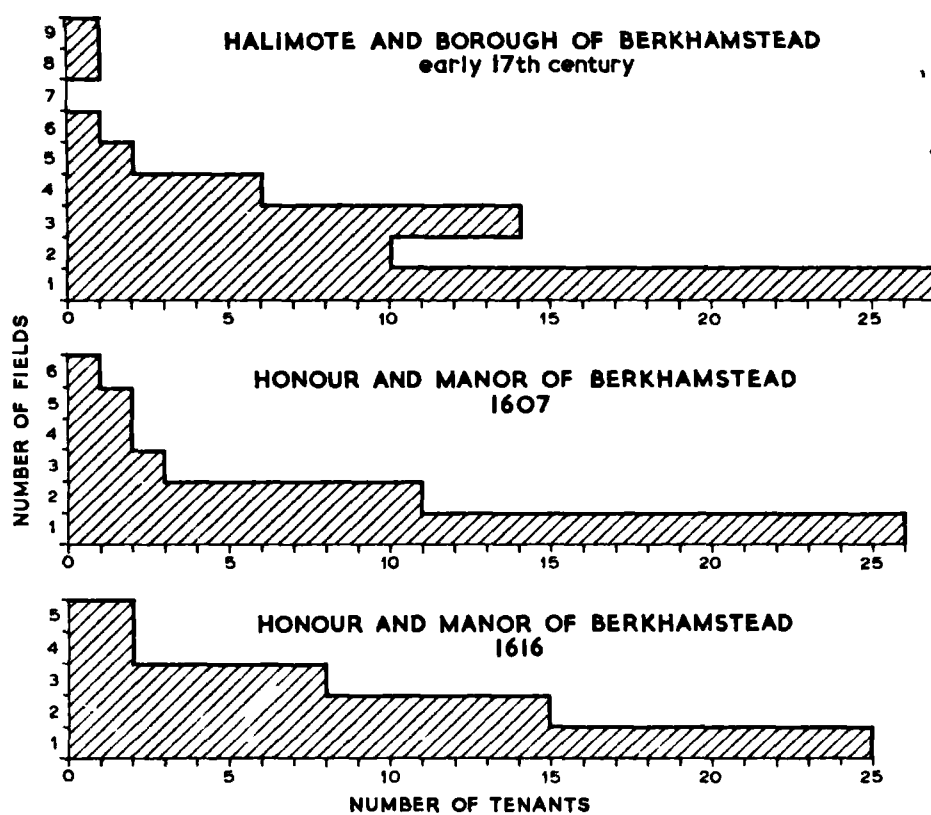


FIG. 40. Berkhamsted - the distribution of individual common arable holdings between common fields as illustrated in three early seventeenth century surveys.

Sources:- BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.95-124d; PRO E315/365, ff.1-66 and E315/366, ff.1-78.

farms combined holdings in severalty with holdings in the common arable. About 16% of the land of Surmans End and 10% of Haxters End lay in the common fields, while nearly one third of Durrants was common arable (Table XVIII). Land in all three groups of common fields in the two parishes was shared by isolated farms at Northcot Hill, Dawland End, Middle Hill and Woodcroft Hill. The fact that holdings were dispersed in numerous common fields did not imply a nucleation of settlement.

Conclusions:

A possible sequence of events that produced the thirteenth century pattern of fields, woods, wastes and settlement in Berkhamsted can be summarised as follows. The earliest settlements in the township were the villages and hamlets of the valley bottom, while the land first cleared from the waste lay on the lighter soils of the valley slopes on either side. Early clearing produced a pattern of small common fields extending in a belt along these slopes, on the side of a tributary valley in the south of the township, and stretching up to the heavier clay lands on the plateaux surface above. The block of several arable on the demesne may have been enclosed directly from the waste in this first phase of clearance, or it may have been formed by subsequent enclosure of common arable land. As clearing of the wood progressed, the frontier of the cultivated land moved away from the nucleus of old fields, across the clays of the ridges and plateaux surface, particularly south of the river. Some new common fields were still formed, but the main result of this later stage of assarting was a network of closes scattered amongst patches of enclosed woodland. With the advance of clearing and cultivation, new settlements were established away from those on the valley floor. Isolated farmsteads and hamlets appeared on the upper slopes and the ridge-tops, but the men living there frequently retained a holding in the older common fields as well as their new holding of enclosed arable. Clearing and colonisation was ending, in the thirteenth century, to leave large areas of unenclosed wood and heath on the clay and sand-capped ridges in the north of the township. This pattern of fields, private woods, waste and settlement remained largely unchanged until the seventeenth century.

The unimproved areas of wood and heath were subject to common rights and became centres for squatter settlement, small encroachments which were the only changes in the boundaries of the wastes until clearance was resumed three hundred years later. Enclosed timber within the Park and amongst the tenant closes was being cut for sale, but felling was carefully managed to preserve the woods, and little new land was taken into cultivation from them until the second half of the sixteenth century, when a number of smaller private woods were grubbed-up and the land turned over to arable farming. The Park was extended in the fourteenth century, and then remained largely unchanged until the seventeenth century, with extensive areas of woodland and "lawns". Grassland in the Park was the main area of pasture in the township, but it did not really enter into the local farm economy. Otherwise, meadow and pasture was concentrated in closes and common meadows along the floodplain of the Bulbourne. Of the three main elements in the fourteenth century field pattern, the great demesne enclosures had been divided-up, by the early seventeenth century, into units that were little larger than many of the tenant closes, while the common fields were being enclosed on a large scale, by 1600. Consolidation of common arable holdings was taking place about 1300, but there is no evidence of widespread enclosure by tenants until the sixteenth century. By 1600, at least three common fields had been enclosed entirely, and plots of land had been taken from the common routine in many of the remaining fields. At the same time as the common arable was being reduced by enclosure, the number of common arable units was being increased by subdivision of the common fields. There was widespread decay of settlement, but the pattern of town, village, hamlets and isolated farmsteads that was established by the end of the thirteenth century, did not change in its basic features.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this study of Berkhamsted, therefore, is that in all essentials the early seventeenth century pattern of fields, land-use and settlement was the same as that of the early fourteenth century. In particular, common arable land was divided between a large number of relatively small common fields, and enclosed arable land was a persistent feature of the field pattern. Although common arable holdings were being consolidated in the thirteenth century, there was no large scale enclosure until three hundred years later.

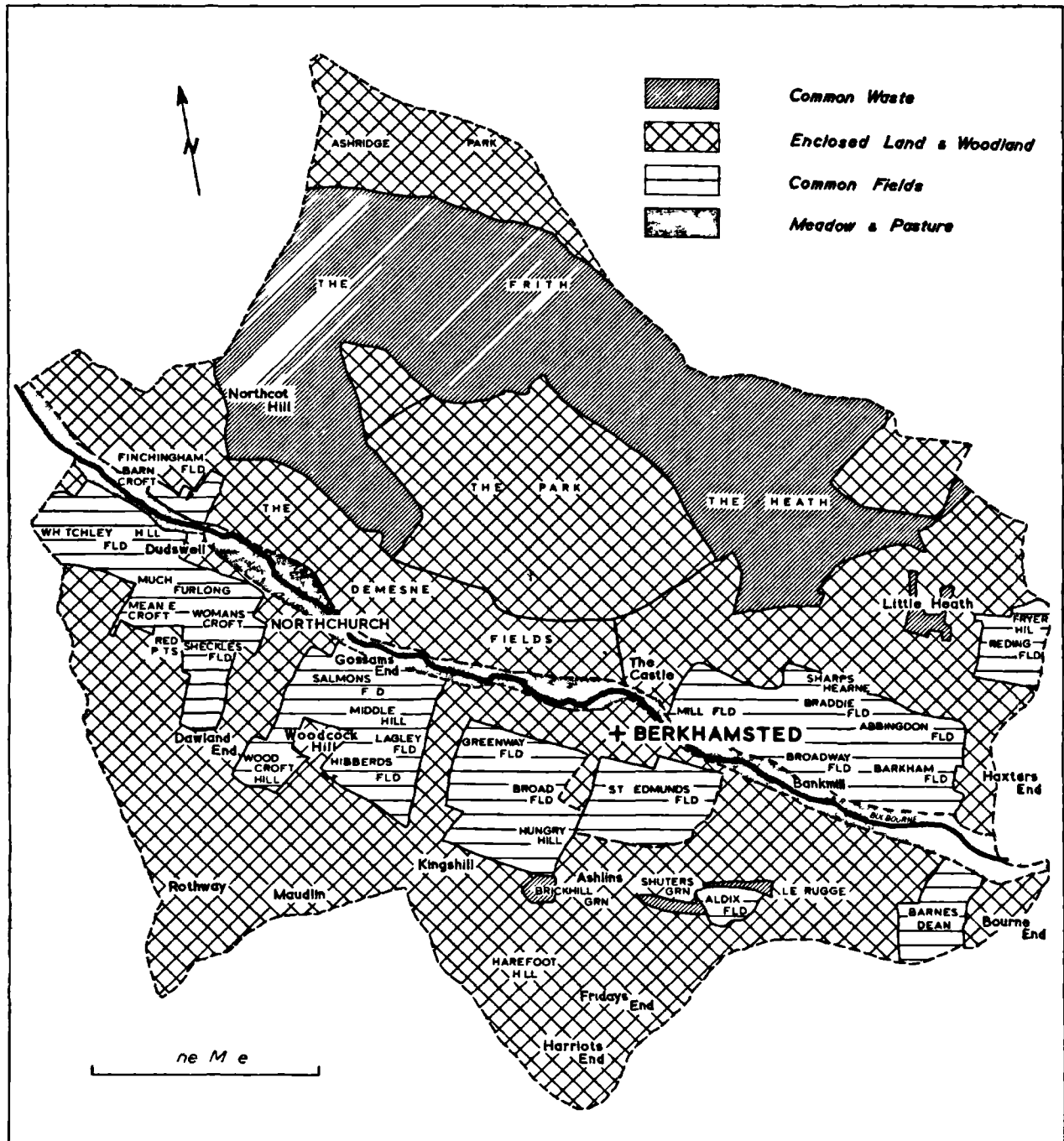


FIG. 41. Berkhamsted - a reconstruction of fields and land use c.1600.

Sources:- BM Lansd. Ms. 905, ff.95-124d; PRO E315/365, ff.1-66;
E315/366, ff.1-78; MR 603: the Tithe Maps.

CHAPTER V

FIELD SYSTEMS IN IBSTONE: c.1250 - c.1500

The Setting

Ibstone is a small parish that occupies a ridge in the southwest Chilterns near to the Buckinghamshire border with Oxfordshire. Until the adjustment of the county boundaries at the end of the nineteenth century, the parish lay in both counties. Soils developed from a variety of formations lie within the township, including the Valley Gravels along the floors of the two dry valleys below the ridge, the Middle and Upper Chalk exposed in the valley sides, and the Pebble Gravels, sandy Reading Beds and Clay-with-flints capping the ridge.

The medieval landscape here was characteristic of the southwest Chilterns in general. The ridge was heavily wooded, with patches of timber, large and small, scattered amongst hedged closes, and amongst large enclosed fields that were often subdivided into blocks lying under different crops or as fallow. There was a stretch of heathland in the north of the parish, while a small park - an area of open woodland and pasture - was on the centre of the ridge. Settlement was not closely nucleated.

In 1270, Walter de Merton granted the manor of Ibstone,¹ along with other lands, to the college that he had recently founded in Oxford. Manor and parish were co-extensive. The economy of Ibstone was not greatly influenced by its ties with Merton College, although grain, livestock and, above all, woodland products were sent down to the College and to other College manors in the Vale from time to time. In general, each manor was worked as an independent unit and not as a specialist producer within an economic complex.²

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1. Merton College Mss. 2426 (all subsequent references are to documents in the possession of Merton College, Oxford, unless otherwise stated).
 2. P.D.A. Harvey, "The history of Cuxham (County Oxon.) with special reference to social and economic conditions in the Middle Ages", unpublished University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, (1960), 105, 108.

Where appropriate, conditions in Ibstone have been compared with those in the Vale township of Cuxham.¹ Both were small manors held by the College, and both had once been in the possession of Ralph de Cheinduit. The main differences between the two reflected their different locations. Whereas the nucleated village of Cuxham lay at the centre of its three open fields, Ibstone was strung along a ridge amongst its woods and closes.

The main value of this study is the information obtained about cropping and grazing practices in a township where, by the late thirteenth century at least, all the arable land was enclosed, and where woodland was particularly extensive. The chief sources are the account rolls, court rolls, rentals and charters preserved at Merton College. The series of court rolls is incomplete, but provides a fairly full sequence from the end of the thirteenth century until the beginning of the sixteenth. Accounts survive from 1280,² for most years until the end of the sixteenth century, but direct farming was practised for only a short period,³ and so detailed accounts are relatively few.

Society and the Land Market:⁴

Social organisation in Ibstone at the beginning of the fourteenth century was typical of that of the Chilterns as a whole. It was characterised by considerable personal freedom, with free tenants outnumbering the villeins and cottars. Labour services were owed by some free land, but on the whole, they were light and largely seasonal. The only heavy demand on the villein tenants was in autumn. Money rents were more important than works, and became increasingly so. Most services had been commuted by the mid-fourteenth century, and as a result, the manorial demesne was worked largely by wage labour, both permanent and seasonal.

1. Ibid..

2. 5055. There are fragments of two earlier account rolls, 5053-4.

3. The demesne was leased-out between 1287 and 1293, "Merton Catalogue of Mss.", VI, 68, and 5062; between 1301 and 1337, 5071 and 5078; and for the last time in 1360, 5106.

4. This is a summary of Appendix I.

There was not an active tenant land market here by 1300. The buying, selling and leasing of small pieces of land, that was taking place in Hertfordshire at this time, did not occur in Ibstone. The reason for the difference is not clear. There is no evidence of any customary or manorial prohibition on the alienation of tenant land. One factor may be that there were few small pieces of land available to support a market of this type - some customary holdings were no more than one or two relatively large closes and in particular, there were no common arable strips by the early fourteenth century.¹ The growing economic stagnation of the later Middle Ages may also have appeared at an early date in this marginal manor - the peak of demesne farming was in the last decade of the thirteenth century. Transactions in land, when they did take place, were usually between lord and tenant, and usually involved complete holdings. Much of the land in the manor was held on lease from the lord, and many tenants had acquired a number of complete holdings. This trend was accentuated after 1349, when more holdings became vacant, and when demesne fields were being leased-out for grazing because of a shortage of labour to cultivate them.

Apart from the land, resources within the manor were limited. There was no market or trading centre to occupy small craftsmen and traders, and a tenant would find little to supplement his income other than seasonal employment on the demesne and in the woods. Smallholders were therefore relatively few - in 1286, nearly half of the 26 tenants held 10 acres or more - and many left the manor. After 1349, the number of all tenants declined, and the proportion of smallholders was reduced further.

1. Where common fields existed in the Chilterns, transactions involving the pieces of land within them formed an important part of the land market, as lords and tenants consolidated their holdings.

Inheritance:

There is no evidence to suggest that the field pattern in Ibstone was in any way affected by customs of inheritance. The rule of primogeniture was followed¹ - a single son, if there was a son, inherited the parental holding - but, as in Codicote, succession to land was very flexible. Inheritance laws applied only in cases of intestacy, and children could enter the family lands before the death of a parent.² Joint holding had also been adopted as a device through which the parent could decide, sometimes years before he died, who should succeed to his property. Joint holdings were generally between husband and wife, parent and child, or a combination of the two.³ Parents could also provide a son or daughter with a holding whenever they wished, and sometimes a dwelling was constructed on this land.⁴ Alternatively, unmarried daughters might be supplied with a cottage, built for them on the parental holding, without a separate transfer of land.⁵ But the procedure that was found at Codicote, whereby a parent gave a cottage and a few acres to a son, who could then build-up a holding by buying or leasing small pieces of land, was unknown at Ibstone, partly because complete holdings held by contract from the manor were readily available, and partly because of the absence of an active peasant land market. Parental gifts were usually of a complete holding.

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1. eg. when Richard Peris died in 1294, it was his son Henry who inherited his half virgate (5211), and when Henry died in 1343, he was in turn succeeded in this land by his son John (5218).
 2. eg. in 1332, John de Stratton surrendered his villein messuage and 1a. to his son William, 5218.
 3. eg. when Sara atte Pulle died, in 1323, her land automatically passed to her husband who had held it jointly with her, 5216. Other examples of joint holding include the three crofts received by John le Shepherd jointly with his daughters in 1315, 5216; the entry to land by Henry Coleman jointly with his son in 1330, 5217; and the two tofts received by Robert Aleyn jointly with his wife and son, in 1330, *ibid.*.
 4. eg. John Coleman transferred two complete holdings to a son and a daughter respectively, in 1315, and in both cases a cottage was to be built, 5216. Expansion of settlement could be associated with the alienation of land from a parental holding in an area of single son inheritance, as in an area where partible inheritance was the rule. Cf. P.Vinogradoff, *loc. cit.* (1908), 274-7.
 5. 5221.

Succession to property was otherwise basically the same as that in Codicote. Although single son inheritance was followed in cases of intestacy, parents could, and did, dispose of their land before death. John Coleman, for example, acquired an extensive holding during his lifetime, decided on the disposal of this land before he died, and ensured that all three of his children were provided with a holding, two by direct grant and the other through a joint holding with his father.¹ A flexible pattern of succession was not confined to a St. Albans Abbey manor at the northeast end of the Hills,² but was also found on a Merton College manor more than thirty miles to the southwest.

There was one exception to the system of impartible inheritance. It arose when a free tenant was survived, not by sons, but by at least two daughters, who became co-heirs to the property. When Simon Drew died in 1349, leaving a messuage and a virgate in free tenure, his two daughters claimed the land,³ and both were described as the heirs of Simon. There is no evidence that the holding was divided physically between them.

In fact, there is no suggestion that any form of inheritance, succession or alienation by sale and lease, resulted in the division of either units of land or of complete holdings, in Ibstone. But a detailed partition of all the land of the tenant holding called Lipenor's does survive from the fifteenth century.⁴ No reason is given for the partition, which took place in 1451. The parties involved were the College and a Thomas London.

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1. In 1284, John Coleman held one free half virgate, 5202. By 1293, he had acquired two villein half virgates on a six year and a three year lease, and, in the same year, obtained a virgate, 5210. Four years later, John entered jointly with his son Henry, yet another half virgate, which, by 1298, formed the basis of his holding (5211), a holding that also now included another 21a. in five separate pieces (5065). By 1313, he also had the complete holdings of two former tenants on lease from the manor, 5216; and two years later, these were given to his two other children, Alice and John, *ibid.*. When John, the father, eventually died, the half virgate that he had held jointly with Henry automatically passed to the latter, who, in turn, surrendered the land to the joint holding of himself and his son, 5217.
 2. Homans has suggested that the freedom to dispose of land that existed on the Hertfordshire manors was unusual, G.C.Homans, *loc. cit.* (1942), 131.
 3. 5223.
 4. 5250.

Scrupulous care was taken to ensure an accurate division and equitable apportionment of land of all types to both parties. Two surveyors were employed, and, rather than allotting the holding as complete fields, the individual fields were divided-up. Smaller crofts and groves were halved, but the larger fields were split into a number of pieces that were referred to as furlongs,¹ each of which was halved longitudinally between the two parties. South field, for example, was subdivided into six pieces (that is the halves of three furlongs), while White field was divided into the eight halves of four furlongs. There is no indication whether this partition was ever effected in practice, and if so, whether the pieces of land were subsequently fenced-off, or were cultivated separately for a number of years as units within a larger field. The division of a holding in this way, in order to ensure a fair apportionment of land, is something that is often referred to but seldom described in such detail. It is also interesting to note that this kind of parcelling, associated with the fragmentation of a complete holding, was not confined to an area where partible inheritance was the rule.

Crops and Livestock:

Demesne farming in Ibstone, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was based on arable husbandry. In most years, income from grain sales far exceeded that from the sale of livestock and livestock products (Appendix J). This was true even after 1294, when the sheep flock was expanded and the sale of wool became a more significant annual item. The production of grain for sale was so important, that the effect of a poor harvest or of low prices was reflected throughout the manorial economy. Periods of high income coincided with periods when income from grain was at a maximum.² In years when crop sales were poor, other possible sources of cash had to be exploited and the manor was farmed-out three times after a succession of low grain sales.

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1. The only other reference to a furlong in Ibstone was to the croft called "Arilesforlong" in 1297, 5211.
 2. As between 1293 and 1298.
 3. Particularly from the sale of timber, as in 1286-7 and 1349-50, 5061, 5095.

The conditions for cultivation along this ridge high in the southwest Chilterns are more rigorous than those in the northeast of the Hills or in the lowlands below the Chalk escarpment. Climate is harsher;¹ soils are thinner, derived mainly from the Chalk and from sands and gravels; slopes are steep and often exposed; the spread of thorn bushes was a problem, even in fields in continuous cultivation;² and the yields of all grains, and especially of wheat, were low compared with those at Cuxham down in the Vale (Tables XIX and XXI).

TABLE XIX

Crop yields on the Ibstone demesne, 1281-1358.
(quarts for every quart sown)

Date	Wheat	Mixed corn	Oats	Barley	Dredge	Pease
1281-82	3.2	2.5	2.1	1.5	2.2	1.4
1285-87	4.3	2.4	2.2	?	2.4	?
1294-1301	3.2	2.6	2.5	3.2	2.7	3.8
1338-44	3.4	3.4	3.4	4.2	3.4	3.2
1346-58	2.5	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.8
Sources:- As in Appendix J.						

Under these circumstances the poorer mixed grains were particularly prominent. Of the two autumn-sown crops, mixed corn, which included wheat, rye and other grains,³ always accounted for the larger acreage, while dredge, a mixture of barley and other grains,⁴ was an important constituent of the spring-sown course.

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1. Climatic differences are discussed by J.T. Coppock, op. cit., 151-2.
 2. Thorns growing in the arable fields had to be removed from time to time, viz. in 1283-4, in Stony field, 5059; in 1294-5, in Hole field, Stony field and the garden of the manor farm, 5063; in 1342-3, in Church croft, above Copesdon, in East field and in Stony field, 5087; in 1346-7, in Church croft, and in Stony field, 5092; and in 1347-8, in Home field, 5093.
 3. Rye was added to the mixed corn seed in 1294-5 and 1359-60, 5063, 5105; and wheat was added in 1294-5 and 1295-6, 5072, 5066.
 4. Barley was added to the dredge seed in 1293-4 and 1295-6, 5062, 5072.

Although large quantities of grain were occasionally sent to the College¹ or to other of its manors,² the types of crops grown on the demesne were not influenced by College policy. Production was directed to the open market and to the internal needs of the manor. The main markets appear to have been Wycombe and Henley,³ from which grain was probably sent down the Thames to London.

Wheat and mixed corn were the two winter-sown crops on the demesne farm,⁴ and wheat was its principal grain export at the end of the thirteenth century, often accounting for more than one half of the crop sales in value, and in a few years, providing more than three quarters of the income from this source (Appendix J).⁶ But wheat occupied less than one half, and sometimes less than one quarter,⁷ of the total area devoted to winter crops (Appendix K). In terms of acreage, mixed corn was more prominent.

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1. As in 1342-3, when nearly all the oat harvest, apart from seed, was sent to the great hall in Oxford, 5087.
 2. Wheat was sent to Cuxham in 1339-40, 5083.
 3. In 1294, each carrying service performed on the manor was to take one half quart of wheat or other grain, or six bushels of oats to Henley or Wycombe, 5210. For a number of years, the manor paid to store grain in a warehouse in Henley, as in 1293-4, 5062.
 4. The respective winter and spring crops in Ibstone are indicated by an account compiled in February 1339, when only wheat and mixed corn had been sown, 5082.
 5. As in the three years 1284-7, 1297-8 and 1299-1300.
 6. As in the two years 1280-2.
 7. As in 1297-8 and 1299-1300.

Nearly all the harvest was used within the manor, however, and usually more of this grain was brought in than left the demesne (Table XX).

TABLE XX

Grain exports and imports on the Ibstone demesne, 1280-1360
(in quarts)

Date	Wheat			Mixed corn			Oats			Barley			Dredge			Pease		
	a.	b.	c.	a.	b.	c.	a.	b.	c.	a.	b.	c.	a.	b.	c.	a.	b.	c.
1280-82	41	21	-	62	-	1	133	2	-	2	-	-	9	5	-	1	-	-
1284-87	40	23	5	70	5	5	122	21	-	3	-	½	14	9	-	¾	-	¼
1293-1301	40	17	2	77	9	6	81	2	15	24	16	-	19	13	-	4	2	½
1337-49	28	13	2	55	¼	5	48	14	5	26	17	½	27	10	-	9	3	-
1349-60	12	3	4	28	1	4	27	12	1	4	2	¼	13	6	-	2	½	-

a. = average annual issue
b. = average annual grain exports
c. = average annual grain imports

Totals are to the nearest quart.

Sources:- As in Appendix J.

Apart from the seed, most mixed corn was given in part payment to the manorial servants.

Oats was the most important of the spring crops, both in acreage sown and crop produced. Until 1287, it accounted for more than 85% of the total area of this course each year, and although subsequently less important, it always remained the most widely sown of the spring grains. The bulk of the yield was used as horse feed, but a steady export developed in the 1340's, with oats being sent to the College in Oxford¹ or to one of the many royal households around the Chilterns.² Barley and dredge were the main spring cash crops. Nearly all the crop left the demesne, and income from their sale, and

1. eg. the export of oats to Oxford during each of the three years between 1341 and 1344, 5086-8.
2. In 1345-6, 31½ qts. were sold to the King, the Queen and the Prince, and sent to Reading, Wycombe, Risborough and Henley, 5091.

from malt made from them, was exceeding wheat sales in value before the end of the thirteenth century (Appendix J). The proportion of land devoted to these two was later increased, until their combined acreage surpassed that of oats.¹ At the same time, the area under pease and vetch was also expanded,² and pease sales in particular became an important annual item after 1337. Formerly, these had been primarily forage crops.³

Acreage of all grains varied considerably from year to year, no doubt in response to fluctuating demands, and to weather conditions. The overall trend, between 1280 and 1360, was towards a greater diversity of crops, particularly in the spring course.⁴ Oats became less prominent, while barley, dredge, pease and vetch all became relatively more important in terms of area sown. In grain exports from the manor, there was a move away from the dominance of wheat sales and towards a greater export of the spring grains, at first of barley and dredge, and later of oats and pease. These variations in crop production were facilitated by the flexible cropping system followed on the demesne.

This part of the Chilterns was not an area of specialist rearing and breeding. On the demesne, the livestock were always ancillary to crop production, and income from grain sales usually exceeded that from the sale of animals and their products, even in years of poor harvest (Appendix J).⁵ Deaths amongst beasts of all types were often high,⁶ and as a result, the sales of live animals were irregular. In many years, a large proportion of

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1. In the five years after 1344-5.
 2. In particular in the five years preceding 1349, when land sown with pease was more than doubled in extent.
 3. Particularly before 1301. In some years only enough grain for the following year's sowing was harvested: eg. in 1285-6, only 1½bu. of pease was harvested from 1¼a., 5059-60; while in 1284-5, no vetch was harvested, although land had been sown, 5059. In other years a small surplus was sold.
 4. cf. similar trends in Kent in the mid-fourteenth century, T.A.M. Bishop, "The rotation of crops at Westerham", *EHR*, 9 (1938), 42-3.
 5. Livestock sales surpassed grain sales in value in only seven of the 34 years for which detailed accounts survive, and five of these years were after 1349, when much arable was turned temporarily to grazing.
 6. eg. in 1286-7, one third of the horses on the demesne died, as did more than 20% of the cattle and nearly half of the sheep, 5061.

the new stock was retained to replenish depleted flocks and herds,¹ but in favourable years any surplus was sold.² Every year, too, old or sick beasts were sold, and had to be replaced. Income from these sales often inflated the true value of livestock products.

The sheep flock was the most valuable item of livestock. Until the manor farm was leased-out in 1288, the size of the permanent flock had not exceeded 34 sheep (Appendix Kii), but this was increased to more than 200 sheep after 1293, and a large flock was maintained until the manor was farmed-out for the last time in 1360.³ Lamb sales were very irregular, and on average about half of the annual issue was retained on the demesne. The emphasis was on wool production.⁴ But the value of the flock cannot be assessed in terms of cash income alone, for it was also important as a means of maintaining and increasing soil fertility, through grazing on the arable fallow. It is perhaps significant that the yields of most grains increased after the flock was enlarged in 1294.

The permanent herd of demesne cattle was based on a bull and between eight and eleven cows, although numbers of other cattle fluctuated considerably from year to year. Mostly, calves were sold within a few months of birth, while cheeses made from cow and ewes' milk were also often sold. Sales of butter were sometimes quite large until the demesne herd was leased-out in 1351-52.⁵ The numbers in the pig herd also varied widely, comprising at its largest 55 adult beasts. Again, most of the young stock was sold each year.

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1. In 1299-1300, when an abnormally large number of sheep died, all the lambs were retained on the demesne, 5068.
 2. In 1298-9, all the calves were sold, and lamb sales were above average, 5067.
 3. The peak was in 1344, when the flock numbered more than 280 beasts. The only break was in 1353, when the entire flock was sent down to Cuxham, 5099; but a fresh flock had been built-up again two years later.
 4. During the earlier periods of direct farming by the College, wool was usually sold each year from the manor. After 1337, it was the practice to store the fleece for several years before selling it through the College - in 1346-7, wool kept in stock for the previous four years, including some from Cheddington, was sent to Oxford, 5092. The value of wool sales was not then recorded in the account rolls.
 5. 5098.

Horses and not oxen were the draught animals on the demesne. Two cart horses were used for harrowing¹ as well as carting, while two plough teams, each normally consisting of six geldings, were maintained.

There is little evidence relating to peasant farming at this time, but one tenant inventory survives, and suggests a form of mixed husbandry similar to that being practised on the demesne.² Cases of trespass brought before the manorial court also suggest that, by the mid-fourteenth century, there was a large tenant flock in the manor - individual tenants were being presented for the trespass of as many as sixty sheep³ - no doubt supported to some extent by the increased area of pasturage available after 1349.

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1. As in 1295-6, 5072.
 2. The inventory was made in the second half of the thirteenth century, and describes goods to the total value of £9.13.8. Five acres had been sown with a winter crop, while 21 qts. of oats and 1bu. of beans remained in store. Livestock included two horses, a cow and three bullocks, and six pigs.
 3. Presentments for trespass included the 40 sheep of John Batte in 1341, 5219; the 16 sheep of John Coleman and the 16 sheep of John le Shrapier in 1344, 5221; the 40 sheep of Richard atte Nokslade and the 30 sheep of Simon Dolesden in 1355, 5224; and the 60 sheep of Robert le Clerk in 1356, 5224.

The Field System and Associated Features

The Arable Fields:

The clearing of the wood for cultivation had ended in Ibstone by the early thirteenth century. There are no references in either account rolls or court rolls to assart land, and in fact, the only description of recently cleared land was an exchange by Robert Thuig, about 1240, of rent for an assart lying before his gate¹ - probably in the north of the parish in the area later known as Twigsid. At least three crofts had names suggestive of² recent woodland clearance towards the end of the thirteenth century.

By 1300, the cultivated land of the manor lay in hedged closes, but there may have been at least one common field in the township. This was East field, which extended along the lower slope of the Turville valley immediately north of the village of Turville (Fig.43). About 1280, the College had been granted "an acre of arable land in the east field of Ibstone to the north of the church of Turville",³ and by the mid-fourteenth century more than 70 acres of demesne arable lay in the field.⁴ It seems probable that almost all of this land had been consolidated and taken into the demesne by Ralph de Cheinduit before the manor passed to Merton College⁵ - the fact that the Cuxham demesne lay as a few large blocks of consolidated strips in the three open fields of that township has been attributed to his work as "an active and improving landlord"⁶ - and certainly the whole of East field was enclosed by 1391, for it was then leased-out in its entirety by the manor.⁷ The other fields were all enclosed, and held in severalty by demesne and tenants alike.

1. 2446.

2. These two crofts were called Inning and Saarte, 5202, 2430, 2432.

3. 2433.

4. 5086.

5. About 1240, Ralph de Cheinduit received all the land between Copsdon and the church of Turville, abutting on the demesne of Ralph and the land of Hernald de Copesdon. The description of this land suggests that it was in East field, 2441.

6. P.D.A. Harvey, op. cit., 24.

7. 5226.

The Demesne Fields:- About half of the cultivated land in the parish lay in the ten fields of the manor farm. At least four of these closes were large - each contained more than 30 acres,¹ and at least two were more than 70 acres² their size reflecting the stress on arable cultivation in the manorial economy. They did not lie together in one part of the parish, but were located in particular in three areas (Fig.43), the two larger areas being on the slopes and valley bottom below the farmstead and above the village of Turville, while the third lay in the northeast corner of the manor, on the other side of the ridge.

The sown acreage of the demesne was most extensive before the farm was leased-out in 1301 (Appendix K). At this time its average area was 212 acres each year, although it fluctuated by as much as 60 acres, from a maximum of 235½ acres in 1284-5 to a minimum of 171½ acres in 1300-1. After direct farming was resumed in 1337, the average sown acreage fell by about 40 acres during the years before 1348, presumably/ because of an increase in the area left fallow - there is no evidence that any demesne land was leased-out at this time. Then, in 1349, the cultivated land was reduced by nearly one half, a year later by a further 50%, and in the following year reached its lowest point, when only 56 acres were sown. Before the whole demesne was farmed-out for the last time, in 1360, there had been some recovery, and more than 100 acres was being ploughed each year.

A three-course rotation was probably followed on this land. At the end of the thirteenth century, each villein half virgater owed ploughing and harrowing for half an acre of land at each of three courses, winter, spring and fallow.³ In most years, the sown land was divided more or less equally between the winter and spring-sown courses (Appendix K) with minor variations which probably reflected weather conditions at the time of the autumn and spring ploughing and sowing. Occasionally, there were large differences between the two, but these were always off-set by a trend in the opposite direction in the following year.⁴ Thus the total discrepancy between the two

1. viz. East field, Lipenor field, Home field and Twigside.

2. viz. East field and Lipenor field.

3. 5102.

4. eg. in 1293-4, the area of spring-sown crops was 34a. larger than those sown in autumn, a difference that was more than balanced in the next year - the area of winter-sown crops was then 49a. larger than that of the spring course.

sown courses, during the 21 years after 1280, was no more than 36 acres, and although there were large fluctuations after 1337, the sown land was evenly divided between the two cropping seasons over a period of 23 years, with an average of 61 acres each. There is no indication at any time of the amount of land lying fallow, but it is clear from the wide annual variations in the extent of the sown area, that this must have fluctuated considerably from year to year.

The early account rolls give no more than the acreage of land sown with the different crops and not their location. After 1337, however, field names were also frequently recorded, and on this basis it is possible to reconstruct the system of demesne cropping in more detail. Before 1349, the fields were divided into three groups, amongst which a systematic rotation was practised (Appendix L). Between 1338 and 1349, land sown with wheat followed the triennial sequence of East Field, Lipenor field and other cultura, and Home field, even though the area under wheat varied from 14 acres in 1341-2 to 47 acres in the following year. The other autumn-sown crop, mixed corn, may also have followed this pattern, but the evidence is less specific. Fluctuations in the acreage of wheat could have been taken-up, to some extent, by an expansion or reduction of that under mixed corn. Of the spring crops, barley was sown in East field at least once every three years, in the season following wheat and mixed corn, and sometimes twice in three years. With the large-scale disruption of arable cultivation that occurred in 1349, this arrangement was abandoned.

Cropping within the demesne fields was complex, particularly after 1349. The larger fields were divided into a number of pieces sown with different crops,¹ which were not always crops of the same course. Two or more shifts of the rotation were sometimes represented within a single enclosure. In 1348-9, for example, East field included the winter-sown wheat and mixed corn as well as barley sown in spring, while in the following year, land in Lipenor field was sown with these three crops. The individual subdivisions

1. eg. in 1348-9, oats, barley, dredge and pease were sown in East field.

within a field were also subject to their own rotation, which was followed independently of other land in the rest of the close. 22 acres of Home field was sown with wheat in 1349-50, while in the following year almost the same acreage was under oats, barley, pease and vetch, and wheat was again sown. One result was that a single crop, or crops of the same season, might follow each other in one field for a number of consecutive years, presumably on different plots of land - for each of the three years 1354-7, Lipenor field contained a spring crop, and for two of these years mixed corn was also sown. There may, in fact, have been three types of arable land in a demesne enclosure in any one year, namely winter-sown, spring-sown and fallow land; in another field only two courses may have been represented; while a third might remain undivided. Cropping was rotated within the individual fields as well as between fields.

Sheep were folded on the demesne arable. Many accounts record the expense of making hurdles, while one of the services attached to cottar land was to "carry five sheep hurdles when they are taken from one field to another".¹ Where a field was divided into plots under different crops or in more than one cropping season, hurdles were essential to prevent damage to the growing crops while fallow, stubble or green crops were being pastured. At the same time, folding concentrated manure from the flock on one part of the field. Dung from stock grazed on the arable was also supplemented by litter from the stables, cowsheds and lambing pens,² and in one year 66 cartloads were bought.³

The overall result of this system of cropping was to allow considerable flexibility in the annual routine of arable farming on the demesne. Acreages under a particular crop could easily be changed from year to year, while substantial variations in the proportion of land under winter and spring-sown grains in any one season - variations which were no doubt made in response to changing demands and to varying weather conditions - could be

1. 5202, 5065.

2. eg. in 1297-8, a man was paid to collect dung, 5066; while in 1344-5, a farmhand was employed for five weeks in the summer to follow the cart spreading dung, 5089.

3. In 1297-8, 5066.

adjusted within the rotation of the farm. Wider changes of crop acreages over a long period - the diversification of the spring-sown course was an example - were accommodated within the general framework.

But the best example of the adaptability of this cropping system, was the relative ease with which readjustments were made after 1349. Reduction of the sown demesne to one third of its pre-1349 average was accomplished by an extension of the area left fallow, rather than by allowing land to go out of arable cultivation completely. One field, Twigside, was turned over to pasture for two years,¹ and, whereas only some of the land in the other large fields had previously lain fallow at any one time, now entire fields were being left to grazing for a year or six months.² For the rest of the time, plots of land were still being cultivated within these fields, although cropping was now concentrated in fewer fields. Within individual closes, the pieces of sown land were smaller and more numerous, while the surrounding areas of fallow were large. These plots were probably cropped for one year, and then returned to fallow for a number of years. In other words a system reminiscent of the convertible husbandry described by T.A.M. Bishop for Westerham "under which a relatively small, fluctuating and on the whole declining area of cultivation shifted within the limits of a relatively large cleared area",³ may have been practised at Ibstone after 1349. The distinctive feature of the Ibstone system was that, there the ploughed area often shifted within a single field rather than between the fields.

Tenant Closes:- Tenant closes were, on average, larger than those in the northeast Chilterns. Some complete customary holdings comprised a single enclosed field - the close called Copesdon was a quarter virgate,⁴ as too was the 10 acre field called Thornechon,⁵ and the land of other holdings

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1. viz. 1353-5, 5100-1.
 2. eg. in both 1352-3 and 1353-4, all of Lipenor field lay fallow during the winter half of the year, 5099-1; while the whole of East field was uncropped throughout 1352-3, 5099; and again during the winter of 1354-5, 5101.
 3. T.A.M. Bishop, op. cit., 40.
 4. 5228.
 5. 5205.

lay in only a few closes. Three crofts lying next to each other formed the quarter virgate called Bakers,¹ while the half virgate called "Whitesfield and Scelyacre"² comprised two fields with these names, which together probably totalled about 25 acres, the average size of the half virgate in Ibstone.³

The little evidence that there is, suggests that cropping arrangements on the tenant farms were similar to those followed on the demesne. A three-course rotation was practised, and the manor enforced a triennial fallow on land held from it.⁴ The larger tenant fields were probably divided-up in the same way as the demesne fields for cropping, particularly as some complete holdings were a single field, and others contained no more than a few closes.

1. The three crofts formerly held by John Baker, in 1298, can be compared with a cottage and a quarter virgate formerly "le Bakers" in 1332, 5065, 5203.
2. The half virgate called "Whitesfield and Scelyacre", that was held by Henry Peris in 1329, can be compared with the two crofts which formed the half virgate held by him in 1298, 5217, 5065.
3. The half virgate called Sonnings comprised a messuage and 25a., cf. 5203 and 5217; the quarter virgate called Thornchon was 10a., cf. 5065, 5202, 5205 and 5218. By the end of the fourteenth century, the meaning of these terms was becoming confused. The tenement called Bussards, formerly a half virgate, was referred to as a virgate, 5226; while in 1453, two half virgates contained 12a. each, 5235.
4. At the September court of 1336, it was claimed that the executor of the dead parson had "not fallowed the land which ought to have been fallow in the summer", 5219. The extent of the damage to the soil resulting from this negligence was valued at 14d. the acre. In all, 14a. was affected, 9 of which was land of the holding called Bussards. Other evidence shows Bussards to have contained 34a., *ibid.* Slightly less than one third of the holding ought to have been fallow.

Field Boundaries:- The hedge alone, and not the hedge and ditch, was the main field boundary in Ibstone, although there was a large ditch around the Park.¹ Fields,² woods,³ gardens⁴ and the Park⁵ were all enclosed by hedges in the fourteenth century. Hedgerows were valued not only as fences, but also as a source of firewood and other timber. In 1338, for example, the manor sold loppings cut from a boundary with a tenant;⁶ in 1355-6, 18s. was received from timber from the ditch around the Park;⁷ and a tenant was presented at the manorial court, in 1390, for cutting down a hedge and burning it for charcoal.⁸ Within the Park, and within the larger demesne fields, hurdles were used for closing-off areas for the sheep fold.⁹

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1. A ditch was dug around the Park in 1337-8, 5078.
 2. The expense of hedging around the demesne fields is frequently recorded in the account rolls, eg. in 1296-8, 5064, 5066.
 3. Hedges around Eastgrove were repaired in 1293-4, and a hedge was planted next to Turville Dene in 1296-7, 5062, 5064.
 4. The hedges around the garden of the manor farm were repaired in 1293-4 and in 1377-9, 5062, 5122.
 5. The hedges around the Park frequently had to be repaired, as in 1293-5 and 1337-8, 5062-3, 5078.
 6. 5079.
 7. 5102.
 8. 5226.
 9. See above, p.251.

The Woodland:

Woodland was an important element both in the landscape of Ibstone and in the manorial economy. Clearing of the wood for cultivation had ended by the early thirteenth century, leaving areas of enclosed timber throughout the township. Some woods were held by tenants of the manor, bond and free alike and amounts of wood on tenant land were often substantial¹ - and some were part of the demesne. The demesne woods were the largest. On one side of the parish, the long strip of woodland known as Turville Dean² stretched along the bottom of the Turville valley, while a slightly smaller area of wood also lay in the corresponding valley on the other side of the ridge.³ Woods of varying sizes, many of them called "groves", were scattered along the ridge itself - Eastgrove⁴ and Westgrove,⁵ which were part of the demesne, seem to have been two of the larger.⁶ Some, especially the smaller groves, lay within the arable closes - Lucas croft contained 8 acres of arable and 1 acre of wood;⁷ others were in the tofts and gardens adjacent to cottages;⁸ and a few were within the Park.⁹

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1. In theory, the timber on villein holdings could not be cut without permission; eg. in 1294, a tenant was amerced for cutting down five ash trees on villein land, 5211; and in 1313, John Coleman was presented for cutting down two oaks without licence, 5216. Presentments at the manorial courts for unlicensed felling suggest substantial amounts of timber: in 1346, Richard Oxlade had cut down 80 trees on his land, 5221; in 1403, another tenant had removed 50 trees without permission, 5226; and in 1346, a third tenant was given permission to cut down all the timber on a toft and half virgate, namely 16 oaks and ashes, 5228.
 2. The first reference to wood in Turville Dean was in 1281-2, when 301 quartron' of wood and 130 trees were sold, 5057.
 3. This wood was referred to in 1324, 3215.
 4. Eastgrove was first mentioned in 1294, 5211.
 5. In 1293-4, the manor sold 400 trees from Westgrove, 5062.
 6. Another grove, at the lower end of the ridge on Copsdon Hill, was held by a villein tenant, 5219.
 7. Ibid..
 8. eg. in 1333, Geoffrey Stok was presented for cutting 3 ash trees on his toft, 5218; and in 1388, Robert Wylleys cut down an oak on the site of a cottage, 5226.
 9. The earliest reference to the wood in the Park was in 1281-2, 5057.

Beech, oak and ash were the main species, and there were also a few elms and maples. In the larger woods, the beech and oak were dominant,¹ while the beech was less prominent in the smaller patches of woodland, where oak and ash were more important.² The occurrence of ash in the Park was particularly marked.³

There was no common woodland in the parish by the fourteenth century.⁴ Only the rector of the parish church could run his pigs in the demesne woods when the beech masts had fallen, a privilege that was held by ancient custom pertaining to the church.⁵ Other tenants had to pay for access to this pannage, which they did occasionally and in varying numbers.⁶ The size of the demesne herd of swine fluctuated considerably from year to year, but in some years, if not every year, pigs from Cuxham, Holwell and Cheddington, three Merton College manors down in the Vale, were also sent up to pasture in the woods.

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1. These were the trees that were mentioned most frequently in Turville Dean and during the high winds of 1363-4 more than 100 beeches and 400 oaks were blown down there, 5109. Other references to the type of timber there include the presentment of two men of Turville, in 1341, for cutting down 10 beeches, 5219; the sale of beechwood in 1377-9, 5121; the 2 ashes and the 2 beeches that were blown down in 1390, 5226; and the sale of beech, oak and ash in 1508, 2750.
 2. In 1356-7, 2 hard oaks in Twigside were cut down and 12 oaks, including 1 in Eastgrove, were sold, 5103. In 1362-3, another oak in Eastgrove was sawn-up for the mill, 5108.
 3. In 1349-50, ash trees to the value of £7.5s. were sold from the Park, 5095; while in 1355-6, 28 ash trees, 3 beech trees and 2 maples were sold from the Park, 5102.
 4. Tenants were not even allowed to collect firewood on the demesne without permission - William de Lippenor was ammerced in 1294, because his wife collected wood in Eastgrove, 5211.
 5. 5216.
 6. eg. in 1286-7, the manor received 4s.3d. in pannages dues, 5061. For the next 10 years no payment was recorded, and then in 1296-7, 3s.7d. was received, 5064. This was followed by another gap of 2 years until 1298-9 when the pigs of two tenants accounted for dues of 1s.3d., 5067.

Pannage was, however, only a minor aspect of the woodland economy. The sale of timber and woodland products¹ was far more important, and in some years accounted for a large proportion of the manorial revenue. In 1281-2, for example, more than one third of the total income came from this source.² But the manor was not a specialist supplier of timber - grain sales were the main regular source of cash - and income from timber and timber products varied considerably from year to year. Years when the figures approximated to those of 1281-2 were infrequent (Appendix J). Usually, cash from wood sales was much lower, and in at least twelve years non-existent. To suggest, as M.W. Beresford has done, that "villagers were able to maintain themselves by exploiting the resources of a forest economy" and that cultivation had only a secondary role,³ is a gross overstatement of the importance of the woods in this part of the Chilterns.

When income from the woodland was high, it was always from the sale of timber rather than other products. Timber was sold, not as a matter of policy as an annual item, but only under three rather special conditions. These were, firstly, when the expenses incurred within the manor were so heavy that the income for the year had to be supplemented from a source that was not generally used.⁴ Secondly, in years when revenue from other sources was low, and particularly when grain sales were small, timber was sold to make up the deficit.⁵ In both these circumstances, the demesne woods formed a reservoir

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1. These included charcoal, sheep hurdles, oak bark (presumably for tanning), firewood, and cart wheels and spokes: eg. in 1295-6, 80 qts. of charcoal, 200 faggots of firewood, and 6 pairs of wheels made from demesne wood were sold, 5072; in the following year, 12d. was received from the sale of oak bark, 5064; in 1337-8, 200 spokes were sold, 5078; while in 1342-3, 62 sheep hurdles made from wattles cut in the manor were sold in Thame, 5087.
 2. The sales included 301 quartron¹ of wood, 130 trees in Turville Dene, 1,100 faggots cut in the Park, 100 spokes for cart wheels and 28½ qts. of charcoal from the Park, 5057.
 3. M.W. Beresford, op. cit., 6.
 4. In 1294-4, when the 400 trees in Westgrove were sold, they accounted for about one quarter of the total income in that year, and to some extent balanced the cost of building the windmill, 5062. Similarly, in 1355-6, a large sum was spent on repairing the mill, and in the same year a large amount of timber, mainly ash trees in the Park, was sold to provide more than one fifth of the total income, 5102.
 5. In 1349-50, crop sales were poor, and so again large amounts of ash were sold from the Park, accounting for more than one quarter of the cash income for that year, 5095. Other years in which grain sales were low and the sale of timber and timber products large were 1337-9 and 1354-5. (App.J.

of resources, a reserve of capital that could be exploited when needed. The third occasion on which timber sales were large, was after the exceptionally high winds of 1363-4, when many trees were blown down.¹

The woods of Ibstone were also a source of materials for the College in Oxford, and for those Merton College manors in the Vale, where there was little woodland of any kind. Firewood,² charcoal,³ moss⁴ and cart wheels⁵ were sent to Oxford, sometimes specifically to the "High Hall",⁶ while firewood,⁷ hurdles,⁸ wheels⁹ and, on special occasions, boards and timber,¹⁰ were sent to the College manors in the Vale. When the wood required was not available from the demesne, it was bought in the locality by the manor.¹¹ There was also quite a large local demand for timber. Plough frames, cart bodies and wheels were made for use in the manor.¹² Small timber was used for hurdles,¹³ and cut as wattles for the walls of new buildings, and for repairs to existing buildings.¹⁴ For more elaborate construction beams,

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1. Sale of this wood, and of charcoal and cart wheels made from it, provided a steady income for the following nine years, more than 20% of the total manorial revenue during that period coming from the sales, 5109-17. Sales included more than 40 cartloads of charcoal.
 2. As in 1342-3, 5087.
 3. As in 1356-7, 5103. The provision of fuel from the manor for the College was still important in the sixteenth century. In 1570-1 and 1576-7, for example, large quantities of charcoal were made for the College, 5198.
 4. As in 1341-2, 5086. Moss was used in building operations: eg. in Ibstone, it was collected for repairs to the barn in 1341-2, 5084.
 5. As in 1294-6, 5063, 5072.
 6. eg. in 1356-7, firewood and charcoal were sent to the High Hall, 5103.
 7. In 1341-2 and 1349-50, firewood was sent to Holwell, and in 1354-5 to Cuxham, 5086, 5095, 5101.
 8. eg. in 1344-5, 17 hurdles were made and sent to Cuxham for the sheep fold there, 5089.
 9. eg. in 1296-7, two pairs of cart wheels were sent to Cheddington, 5066.
 10. The bailiff of Cheddington visited Ibstone to select timber in 1298-9, 5067; in 1358-60, large amounts of beech, oak and ash planks were sent for the mill at Cuxham, 5104-5; and two years later, 19 beeches and 9 oaks were sent for the mill at Holwell, 5108.
 11. eg. in 1341-2, wattles were bought in Ibstone and sent to Cuxham, while charcoal bought in the parish was sent to Oxford, 5086.
 12. As in 1299-1300, 5068.
 13. eg. in 1298-9, 50 hurdles for the sheep fold were made from wattles of the manor, 5067.
 14. eg. in 1338-9, wattles were cut in the woods for a new house, 5082; and in the following year, rods were collected for the walls of a new cowshed, 5083.

planks and boards were sawn from local wood,¹ but special timbers had to be brought in from distant forests to meet particular requirements. Before the windmill could be built, the carpenter had to search for a "standard" for three days in the woods around Wokingham, and boards and other timber were brought from Surrey.² Some local wood was used, but more was sold to help pay the building costs.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, therefore, felling in the manor did not follow a regular pattern. The kind of woodland farming based on a systematic rotation of cutting, that was found in some townships in the northeast Chilterns, did not exist here. Perhaps there was less danger of over-cutting in Ibstone, because the woods were more extensive, and so there was less need for strict management. Wood was cut whenever it was needed. Nonetheless, cutting was being controlled, by the early sixteenth century, to ensure a continuing supply of young growth. When timber in Turville Dean was sold for felling, in 1508, a condition of the sale was that no beeches, oaks or ashes less than thirty inches in circumference were to be cut.³ Where the woodland was thin, trees that were larger than this were to be left, the purchaser to be recompensed with smaller timber from where the growth was thicker.

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1. As in 1297-8, when boards were sawn for a new granary, 5066.
 2. 5062. Timber also had to be brought from Malden in Surrey for a new house in 1338-9, and for the mill in 1348-9, 5082, 5094.
 3. 2750.

Heathland:

Although the woodlands in Ibstone were not commonable, common waste did exist in the township. This was mainly the area of heath on a patch of Clay-with-flints in the northern tip of the parish. Grazing rights there were the subject of a dispute, in 1323, between the Abbot of Abbingdon and his men of Lewknor on the one hand, and the Scholars of Mertonhall and their tenants of Ibstone on the other.¹ The latter claimed that they had held, from time immemorial, right to common grazing "in the pasture called Ibstonehathe", the right pertaining to their tenements in Ibstone. By the early sixteenth century, the number of beasts allowed to graze this common was being stinted. In 1505 two tenants were presented for overstocking the common.²

There was probably some settlement around the edge of the Heath in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but it was not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that extensive encroachments were made. There were then numerous presentments for ploughing-up and enclosing pieces from the waste, and for erecting buildings on the common.³

There was also an area of rough pasture at the lower end of the Ibstone ridge on Copsdon. In 1295, the reeve claimed to have rights of common grazing there.⁴ The land was still unenclosed at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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1. 5216.
 2. 5240.
 3. 5241, 5243-6, 5248.
 4. 5211.

Grazing Problems and Practices:

Livestock rearing was an essential part of all forms of farming in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, because of the dependence on animal power for farming operations, and because the application of manure was, with a frequent fallow period, the main way of maintaining soil condition. But the size of the flocks and herds was limited by the availability of fodder for them, particularly in winter, when free grazing was impracticable, and also during the summer months, when crops were growing, and the arable fallow and pasture were therefore less extensive.

Pasturage was scarce in Ibstone, even though there were large areas of uncultivated land, and winter feed was in especially short supply. There was no meadowland in the parish, because there were neither marshy hollows nor permanent running water, such as might encourage the growth of grasses suitable for mowing. Hay had to be brought in from outside and, in the early account rolls, this was a frequent, and sometimes costly item.¹ After 1337, the carts taking firewood or moss to Oxford or Cuxham usually returned with a load of hay.² Sheaves of oats were also sometimes fed to the ewes and lambs in late winter.³ Winter feeding was a problem even in the years after 1349, when the area of fallow land was often more than doubled, when complete demesne fields were turned over to pasture for a few years and others were leased-out as summer or winter pasture,⁴ and when the tenant holdings that remained unoccupied were also used for pasturage.⁵ Little of the uncropped land was suitable for hay - only the grass of a vacant tenement was mown⁶ - and it still had to be bought for the demesne farm.⁷

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1. eg. in 1280-1, 7s. was spent on hay, and in the following year. 5s.,
: 5056-7. The largest sum spent was £1.14.6. in 1299-1300, 5068.
 2. eg. in 1342-3 and 1344-5, 5087, 5089.
 3. eg. in 1346-7, 90 sheaves of oats were fed to the ewes and lambs, 5092.
 4. See above, p.252.
 5. The accounts for 1348-53 record the sale of pasture in vacant tenements, 5094-5, 5097-9.
 6. In 1349-50, 5095.
 7. In 1356-7, fodder for the beasts in winter was bought in Stokenchurch, 5103

Grazing land was also limited before 1349.¹ There is no evidence that the extensive woodlands were ever regularly used as pasturage other than swine pannage. The woods were thick - they were not open scrubland such as might be the product of continuous grazing - and there was little undergrowth within them that was suitable for beasts other than pigs. More important, the woods were a valuable source of income, acting in particular as a reserve of capital that could be drawn on in time of financial difficulty, and grazing would only have damaged them.

The main source of common pasturage within the township was the Heath, but according to the sixteenth century evidence, the lord and tenants of Ibstone also had grazing rights outside the parish - they intercommoned with other townships in an area of wood and heath which lay to the north, in Astor Rowant and Stokenchurch.²

Apart from the commons, the arable fallow and stubble was the only extensive grazing open to the tenants. Probably all the arable pasturage was in severalty - there is no evidence of rights of common grazing over any of the cultivated land - and the pasture in each field was confined to the animals of its holder, unless other stock was accepted on payment of a rent, or unless the fallow was leased-out as pasturage. Tenant swine, for example, were occasionally allowed to forage in the stubble and fallow of the demesne fields - in 1345-6, dues were received for the pannage of 38 pigs in the stubble "in autumn and after"³ - while after 1349, complete fields of demesne fallow were leased-out to tenant grazing for a season or two. The demesne pasture was also supplemented by green crops in many years. Grazing within the larger demesne fields was controlled by the use of hurdles.⁴ Manure

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1. Pasture outside the manor sometimes had to be rented for the demesne beasts. In 1298-9, pasture in Fingest was acquired for the sheep, 5067; in 1346-7, grazing was rented for both horses and cows, 5092; and in the following year, pasture had to be obtained for cows and lambs, 5093.
 2. By an agreement of 1576, Adrian Scrope of Hambleton was allowed to enclose one third of the common, in return for which he surrendered his rights to the remaining two thirds, 2631.
 3. 5091.
 4. See above, p.251.

from the flock could thus be concentrated in one part of the field, and where a field was divided into plots under different crops or in more than one cropping course, folding was essential. The same practice was probably also adopted on the tenant holdings, particularly when the entire farm lay as only one or two fields.

Settlement:

By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, settlement in this part of the Chilterns was in nucleated villages and hamlets, such as Turville,¹ Fingest² and Skirmett,³ down in the valley bottoms; in isolated farmsteads or small hamlets on the valley slopes, such as Harecramp⁴ and Chequers Manor⁵ in the township of Abbfield east of Ibstone, and Studridge⁶ in Stokenchurch to the north; and in loose conglomerations that were strung along ridge-tops, as Ibstone itself, or lay around the patches of common waste, such as Cadmore Heath⁷ (Fig.42). All these five facets were represented within the township of Ibstone itself (Fig.43).

There was no close nucleation of settlement entirely within the parish. Rather, the pattern was one of farmsteads and cottages strung out along the crest of the Ibstone ridge. In so far as there was a village or hamlet called Ibstone, this was it. Probably, already in the thirteenth century, there were some cottages around the edge of the Heath, but more were to be built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁸ Apart from the loosely-knit settlement on the hill, there were a number of outlying farmsteads within the township. The demesne farm, with its complex of buildings, was

1. 2443.

2. 2453.

3. V.C.H.Bucks., 3(1925), 51.

4. 2454.

5. V.C.H.Oxon., 8 (1962), 105.

6. Mentioned in an agreement of 1254 concerning rights of common pasture, H.E. Salter (ed.), "The Feet of Fines for Oxfordshire, 1195-1291", ORS, 12 (1930b), 240.

7. 5106.

8. See above, p.260.



FIG. 42. Ibstone - settlement.
Source:- 1st. ed. O.S. One-
Inch Map.

on a spur extending south from the main ridge; there was also an isolated farm or small hamlet called Lipenor;¹ another lay at Twigside;² while a third farm or hamlet was at Gravesend.³ The windmill, built in 1293-4 on Copsdon,⁴ also stood apart from the main line of settlement.

Even at this early date, the manor of Ibstone included a large part of the small village of Turville,⁵ the other part being in the parish of that name. Turville was not the only village in this area to be divided between two parishes. The main nucleation in Fingest, nearby, was split between the parishes of Fingest and Hambleden. It seems probable that the earliest settlement in this part of the Hills had been in small agglomerations down on the floors of the larger valleys, where water supply was less of a problem,⁶ where the better agricultural land is located, and where fields and settlement are less exposed - near Ibstone, the villages of Turville and Fingest, and the hamlet of Skirmett were all situated near the junction of three valleys. With the subsequent clearing and colonisation of the surrounding ridges and upland surfaces from these centres, a pattern of isolated farms, hamlets and small villages was established, many of them lying around the patches of waste left there. But the later parish boundaries tended to follow the valley floors, with the result that the

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1. Members of the family called "de Lipenor" were frequently referred to in charters, court rolls and account rolls.
 2. This was probably the house held by Robert Thuig about 1240, 2446.
 3. Stephen de Gravesend held a croft in Ibstone in 1329, 5218.
 4. 5062.
 5. About 1240, all the land between Copsdon and the church of Turville had been granted to the lord of the manor of Ibstone, 2441. A message held by Merton College, in 1286, was described as being in Ibstone near the church of Turville, 2434; in 1313, six tenants of the same manor were ordered to maintain the well at Turville church, 5216; in 1329, Robert the clerk held a cottage in Turville and a cottage in Ibstone, 5218; while by 1380, a tenant was able to claim four cottages in Turville, 5226. Three hundred years later, a list of twenty freeholders in the manor included seven cottages and tenements in the village, 5243.
 6. Frequent references to wells in the court rolls and charters show that surface water was not readily available, eg. 2438, 5211, 5216.

original small nucleations were divided between two parishes. The churches of both Fingest and Turville are only a few yards from the limits of their respective parishes.

The pattern of settlement in Ibstone, at the end of the thirteenth century and later, was not a static one. Changes were constantly taking place. New dwellings were being built, and others were being left to fall into ruins. After 1349, change was almost entirely towards a reduction of settlement. Until then, tenants and lord had been erecting houses, cottages and other buildings. On the demesne, new sheds were built from time to time and old buildings were pulled down and replaced.¹ Amongst the tenants, parents wishing to provide for their children obtained permission to build cottages for them, sometimes on their own land and sometimes on land given to the children.² Occasionally, tenants pledged themselves to construct a new dwelling when they entered a holding,³ but these orders were often ignored.⁴ Most such stipulations probably represented attempts by the manor to arrest a decline in settlement.

In fact, decay of settlement was far more prominent than the little new building that was taking place. As early as 1295, a tenement was lying in ruins.⁵ Frequently, in subsequent years, men entering a holding were ordered to rebuild the house or cottage on it,⁶ or to erect a new dwelling on the plot where a house had once stood⁷ - on one occasion a tenant bought an old cottage from the manor for this purpose.⁸ Tenants for land were

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1. A new house was made in 1294-5 (5063), only to be pulled down and replaced in 1338-9 (5082); a new cattle shed was made in 1296-7 (5064), and again in 1339-40 (5083); and a new sheep shed was made in 1337-38, 5078.
 2. See above, p.239.
 3. eg. in 1294, the reeve obtained land on behalf of his son and committed himself to building a new house there within one year, 5211.
 4. When Robert Aleyn entered two tofts in 1329, he was "to make a new house in the said tofts", but two years later he still had not complied with this order, 5218.
 5. 5211.
 6. eg. in 1315, Robert the vicar of Turville was ordered to rebuild the messuage that he entered, 5216.
 7. eg. in 1329, Robert Aleyn was ordered to build a new house in the two tofts that he entered, 5217; while in 1333, John atte Pulle was ordered to build on an empty plot, 5218.
 8. This was John atte Pulle.

difficult to find. The cottage called Bishops became vacant in 1332,¹ and it remained empty for four years because of a lack of tenants.² Many men had been acquiring the lands and buildings of a number of holdings, and where sub-tenants were not available for the dwellings they were left vacant, eventually tumbling down. The cottage formerly held by John Couper had disappeared a few years after his land had been obtained by the parson.³

The history of the windmill, during the first half of the fourteenth century, reflects the changing conditions affecting settlement in the parish at this time. The mill was built, at considerable expense, in 1293-4.⁴ Timber and craftsmen were brought from Surrey and Berkshire, while mill stones were imported from Europe through London. Thirty years later, however, the building had become ruined.⁵ Tenants had carried away planks and boards, and the windmill was described as being in an extremely bad state "because of the lack of a roof and several other defects". Extensive repairs were undertaken in 1339-40,⁶ but six years later, a tenant could not be found for it for the full year.⁷ The mill continued to grind, on and off until 1349, worked sometimes by the manor and sometimes by a lessee.⁸ Issue of the mill was then said to be small "because of the death of men",⁹ and during the following years, the mill was often vacant,¹⁰ until it was burnt down in 1370-71.¹¹ Only a few bits of machinery were salvaged, but by 1400, it had been rebuilt once again.¹²

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1. 5218.
 2. 5219.
 3. He sold the cottage in 1313, 5216. By 1335, there was only a vacant croft, on which Robert Aleyn was ordered to build, 5218.
 4. 5062.
 5. 5216.
 6. 5083.
 7. 5091.
 8. As in 1346-7, 5092.
 9. 5094.
 10. The mill was vacant between 1349 and 1356, 5094-102. Very extensive repairs were carried out in 1355-7, accounting for nearly one third of the total expenses in that year, 5102. In the following year, the mill was leased-out, 5103.
 11. 5116.
 12. It was leased-out for twenty years then, 1531. There is still a windmill on the hill.

The existing trend towards a reduction of settlement in the parish was accentuated by the large number of deaths occurring in 1349. Orders to mend ruined cottages and to rebuild on vacant plots became more numerous,¹ while tenants were told to live on the land that they had acquired or to forfeit it.² But such orders had little effect,³ and although, occasionally, a tenant was still willing to rebuild a dwelling,⁴ decay continued throughout the fifteenth century.⁵ When Richard Oxslade died in 1436, his daughter, who lived with her husband in Henley, inherited his messuage and lands.⁶ A sub-tenant was found, but by 1441, the house had fallen down.⁷ As late as 1507, a cottage in the parish was partly ruined - the walls were still standing but the roof, windows and doors had disappeared.⁸

In spite of these changes, the pattern of settlement within the parish remained basically the same. At least one isolated farmstead, Gravesend, had vanished by the nineteenth century, while there had been a greater concentration of houses and cottages along the edge of the Heath in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Otherwise the present pattern in Ibstone is, in all essentials, the same as that of the late thirteenth century.

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1. In 1356, Robert le Clerk was ordered to mend the ruined houses that he held, 5225; but in 1358, he still held a house without a roof and a ruined cottage, *ibid.*. In 1390, John Oxslade held a messuage and had allowed the house and closes to become ruined, while in 1398, five ruined tenements, two without roofs, were presented at the manorial court, 5226.
 2. In 1380, it was claimed that John Penne, who held a cottage, lived outside the lordship. The building was ruined and was seized by the manor, *ibid.*. One year previously two other cottages had been forfeited for the same reason, *ibid.*.
 3. The five tenements that were ruined in 1398, had not been repaired by 1401, although the manorial court had ordered their repair, *ibid.*.
 4. William Nemour was given permission to build a cottage on a vacant plot in 1388, *ibid.*.
 5. There were references to ruined dwellings at the courts of 1436, 1437, 1440, 1441, 1447, 1451 and 1458. In both 1437 and 1458, three ruined tenements were mentioned, 5228-31, 5234-5, 5237.
 6. 5228.
 7. 5231.
 8. 5240.

Conclusions.

By the end of the thirteenth century, the field pattern of Ibstone consisted entirely of closes held in severalty. There may once have been a common field in the township - if so it had been enclosed by the manor. Many of the closes were large, a reflection of the emphasis on arable farming, and some, especially the demesne fields, were divided into a number of pieces growing different crops and lying fallow. At times, individual closes contained, contemporaneously, land in all three cropping courses, with the land of each course divided between a number of crops. Sheep were folded on the fallow pieces and on fodder crops within the large subdivided fields. The chief advantage of this fairly complex system of cropping was the flexibility that it allowed. Crop acreages could be varied considerably from year to year without difficulty, a factor of some importance in a manor where the main emphasis in demesne farming was on the production of grain for sale.

Assarting had ended by the mid-thirteenth century, to leave extensive private woods. But the significance of these should not be overstressed. Income from the woods supplemented that from farming rather than dominating it, while the existence of woodland did not mean that there was abundant pasturage in the township. The woods were too thick to give much herbage, and their role as a reserve of capital was too valuable to risk damaging them by grazing. They were used only for swine pannage. Winter fodder was also scarce, mainly because there was no meadowland within the township.

It is clear that the flexible pattern of succession and inheritance that existed in Codicote was not confined to a few Hertfordshire manors, for it also existed here, at the other end of the Hills. Inheritance was by a single son, but, through the use of various devices, men could decide who should succeed them in their holdings, and they could provide for all their children before they died. Partible inheritance occurred under certain circumstances, but there is no evidence that it ever led to any division of property.

The settlement pattern of the parish included a part of the village of Turville, the hamlet of Ibstone strung along the ridge, a cluster of dwellings around the Heath, and isolated farmsteads or hamlets. Here, as in the central and northeast Chilterns, there was a decline in settlement during the later Middle Ages, but the basic pattern was unchanged.

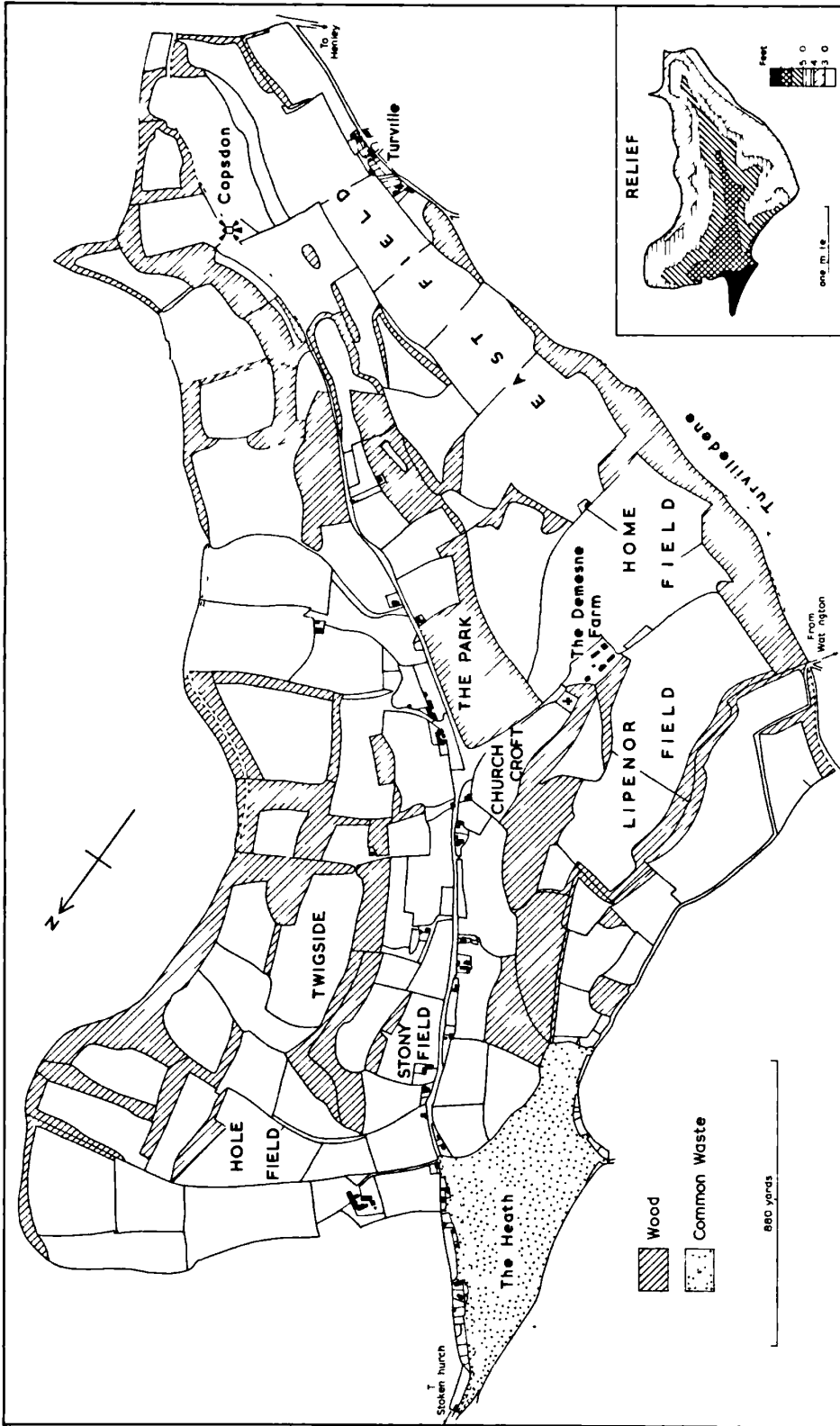


FIG. 43. Ibstone - the parish.
Source:- the Tithe Map.

CHAPTER VI

FIELD SYSTEMS IN THE CHILTERNES: c.1200 - c.1550.

1. THE SETTING

Social Organisation and Economic Change

Whereas there are significant variations in topography within the Chilterns, social organisation was fairly uniform throughout the area during the Middle Ages. Thirteenth century Chiltern society was strongly manorialised,¹ with free and villein tenants owing rents and services to a lord, based on the standard customary holdings, the virgate, half virgate, ferlingate and cotland.² The structure of society was constantly changing. In 1086, there was no substantial body of free men on any Chiltern manor. By 1300, about half of the tenants of a typical manor might be freeholders.³ The remainder

(1) Free tenants usually owed suit of court, as at King's Langley in 1291, PRO SC11/279; at Amersham in 1299, PRO C133/92/8; and at Wigginton in 1306, PRO C133/118/17. Villein tenants were liable to the usual obligations such as heriot, relief, merchet etc. and on many manors also to other customary dues such as garsheve and rypsilver, as at Codicote; madshep at Wigginton, PRO C133/118/17; and malt silver, wood silver and garsanese at Caddington, St. Paul's WD16 Liber I, f.115d. They were also sometimes liable to be tallaged at will, as at Codicote and Chesham, PRO C132/31/1. Villeins could not acquire free land without permission from the manor - there were fines and presentments for attempting to do so at Ibstone and Codicote; and at Chesham, BuCM C.A., St. Mathew 6E.II; Great Gaddesden, HRO 2625; at Abbots Langley, Sidney Sussex James Ms. 1; and Bramfield, HRO 40702-3 - and all transactions in villein land had to take place through the manorial court.

(2) These were usually about 50a., 25a., 12a and 5a. respectively, as at Codicote and Ibstone, but there were considerable local variations. Some recorded sizes include a virgate of 80a. in King's Langley in 1291, PRO SC11/Roll 279; a half virgate of 19a. in Caddington in 1299, St. Paul's WD16 Liber I, f.127d; and one of 20a. at Abbots Langley in 1349, Sidney Sussex James Ms. 1; and a ferlingate of 10a. in Bramfield in 1333, HRO 40703

(3) Again there were often considerable local variations. On a Little Gaddesden manor in 1306, there were 23 free tenants and only nine bond tenants; PRO C133/118/17; whereas on a neighbouring manor in Great Gaddesden six years later, there were ten free tenants compared with 91 customers, PRO C134/73/5. Similarly, the greater part of the tenants of Caddington, in 1299, were free holders while villeins predominated on the neighbouring manor of Kensworth, which was held by the same lord, St. Paul's WD16 Liber I, ff. 115d-127.

were classed as villeins and cottagers, although there were probably also many landless men and sub-tenants who never appear in the manorial extents. Labour services from freeholders, where demanded, were nominal,¹ while the services owed by the average villein for a half virgate or a ferlingate were not particularly heavy² - week work, for example, was becoming increasingly rare³ - were often optional to the payment of a money rent,⁴ and were in varying stages of complete commutation.⁵ Demesne farms were worked by permanent labour,⁶ supplemented by tenant works, particularly at harvest time, and by seasonally hired labour.⁷

(1) Often, freeholders payed only money rent, as at Amersham in 1299, PRO C133/92/8; Chesham in 1264, PRO C132/31/1; Great Gaddesden in 1259, PRO C132/23/9; and at Little Gaddesden in 1306, PRO C133/11/17. Light works were demanded from free tenants at Flamstead in 1264, PRO C132/31/3; and at Caddington and Kensworth in 1299, St. Paul's WD16 Liber I, ff.115d-127.

(2) They were usually seasonal labours, such as ploughing and harrowing, harvesting and carrying grain and hay, together with some weeding and hoeing and autumn boon works to be claimed at the lord's will. Works demanded of villein half virgaters often amounted to no more than a dozen man/days a year, as on the Missenden Abbey manors at Great Missenden, Lee and Fastnidge BM Harl. Ms. 3688; and at Flamstead in 1264, PRO C132/31/3. But again, there could be considerable local variations. Villein services at Caddington, in 1299, were much heavier than those at Kensworth, op. cit..

(3) It survived at Caddington in 1299, *ibid.*; at Wheathampstead in the early thirteenth century, BM Add. Ch. 8139; at Flamstead in 1278, VCH Herts., 2 (1908), 195; and on the manor of Stagenhoe in Pauls Walden in 1316, PRO C134/47/12.

(4) e.g. The value of works sold are a regular feature of the early fourteenth century accounts for King's Langley, income from this source rising from 22s.6d. in 1297 to 70s.9½d. in 1325, PRO DL29/40/740, SC6/866/13-29; while at Hemel Hempstead in 1304, tenants works accounted for ploughing only 23s. of an arable demesne of 240a., PRO C133/97.

(5) Money rents were an important item in manorial income. At King's Langley in the early fourteenth century, where an annual rental of £30 was usual, income from rents always exceeded that from the sale of produce, and was sometimes worth more than twice as much, op. cit.; at Berkhamsted in 1296, rents provided more than half of the manorial income, L.M. Midgeley, op. cit.; while at Hemel Hempstead in 1249, and again in 1304, rents were worth £75-80, PRO SC6/863/2 and C133/97.

(6) Payments to permanent servants figure in all manorial accounts.

(7) e.g. At Chesham, in August and September 1270, the autumn works comprised 170 tenant services and 430 hired works, PRO SC6/760/1.

Although free alienation was not a villein right, bond tenants were, in fact, usually able to dispose of their land as they wished, unobstructed by custom or lord,¹ provided that they did so through the manorial courts.² The only practical restraint was the expense involved. Free tenants could do as they wished with their property, and the peasant land market expanded during the thirteenth century, to reach a peak at the turn of the century. Free and villein tenants alike were buying and leasing small pieces of land.³ One result was a greater flexibility in the pattern of land holding. Some customary holdings were broken-up by sale from them, while others were supplemented by the acquisition of strips and closes on lease or by purchase.⁴ Some men were able to build-up substantial holdings for themselves almost

(1) At Codicote before 1355, villein leases for two years or less did not even have to be enrolled at the manorial court, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.83d.

(2) There may have been a few exceptions. At Caddington, there had been almost no alienation from villein holdings by 1299, whereas in the neighbouring manor of Kensworth there had been widespread alienation of villein land, *op. cit.*.

(3) As the numerous charters and entries in court rolls testify.

(4) At Caddington in 1299, where there was widespread disintegration of free holdings, only 19 of the 97 tenant holdings comprised a single customary unit unaltered in any way. All other holdings consisted either of a few acres, often held on lease, or of a customary holding modified by the addition or subtraction of land to or from it. Almost all the half virgate of John Bunsere was held in seven separate lots by seven tenants, while, on the other hand, John le Carpenter and William Hakeney had enlarged their holdings, based on a quarter and a half virgate respectively, but about 50% through the addition of small amounts of land acquired from a number of separate tenures. Again, John Durant's holding of c.450a. included the greater part of six virgates, three half virgates and four quarter virgates, together with numerous smaller units. In Caddington, almost all alienation was from free holdings. In neighbouring Kensworth, the same kind of pattern had resulted from the active villein land market, *op. cit.*. On the St. Albans Abbey manors of Codicote, Abbots Langley (Sidney Sussex James Ms. 1), Sandridge (HRO 40700) and Bramfield (HRO 40702-3) a few years later, the pattern of land holding had become so confused that tenants were asking the manor to determine who held land from their holdings, and to apportion the rents and services attached to this land.

entirely through their activity in the land market,¹ others were consolidating the land of their holdings, and some were acquiring property in a number of townships.² Subletting in return for money rents was widespread.

Nonetheless, the economic structure of society was strongly stratified. In most manors there was a marked contrast between the half virgaters, holding 25 acres or more, and a large body of small tenants. The proportion of the latter varied from place to place, according to the local opportunities for employment. On the purely agricultural manor of Caddington, in 1299, nearly half of the 97 tenants held five acres or less, while almost one third (32) owned a holding of twenty acres or more - of this third, the greater part (21) held between twenty and thirty acres.³ The pattern in the neighbouring manor of Kensworth, at this time, was very similar. On the other hand, at the market centre of Codicote thirty years later, the proportion of small holders was even greater, while at Ibstone, with only its woods and farmland, they were relatively few. Nearly everywhere the small tenants were drawn from both free and villein groups. The picture.

(1) As at King's Walden and Codicote in the northeast. In the central Chilterns, in the early thirteenth century, Robert the clerk of Kingshill, and a son of a smith, built-up a free holding for himself in this way, J.G. Jenkins (ed.), "The Cartulary of Missenden Abbey, I" RBBAS, 2 (1938), 113, no.119, 117-19, nos. 122-4, 123-4, nos. 127-8, 126, nos.130-1; while Walter the Merchant of Wycombe enlarged the holding that he had acquired in Kingshill by marriage, *ibid.*, 117-8, nos.122-3, 126, no.130, 127, no.132, 138-44, nos.145-51.

(2) In 1222 and 1299, a number of tenants held land in both Kensworth and Caddington, while men from the borough of Dunstable, were prominent in both manors, W. Hale (ed.), "The Domesday of St.Pauls of the Year M.CC. XXII etc.", Camden Society Publications, 69 (1858), 1-14, and St. Pauls WD16 Liber I, ff.115d-127; BM Add. Ch. 19941. As seen above, a merchant of Wycombe was investing in land in Kingshill in the thirteenth century, while some Codicote tenants also held land in Welwyn and in Knebworth (Appendix F).

(3) St. Pauls WD16 Liber I, ff.115d-127.

about 1300 was, therefore, of a fairly complex society and economy. The importance of money rents rather than services, and the active land market, suggest that production for sale had an important place in the local farm economy, demesne and tenant alike, stimulated no doubt by proximity and access to London.

The first few decades of the fourteenth century saw the beginning of a period of economic depression, declining population and more rapid social change throughout the Chilterns, that was to continue until the end of the century. Appearing first in the more marginal townships of the south-west, and only later in the better agricultural areas of the northeast, the early signs of depression were accompanied by an upsurge of activity in the land market, mainly transactions of a few acres and no more.¹ Then, as tenants became increasingly difficult to find, and more and more holdings were left vacant, transfers of entire holdings became far more numerous. By the 1320's, individual tenants throughout the Hills were able to acquire a number of complete holdings. Demesne land was also being leased-out on an increasing scale, as an adequate labour force became scarce.² Land values fell, and remained depressed until the sixteenth century,³ These trends were accentuated by the epidemic of 1348-50, which reduced the population in some townships by one half or two thirds.⁴

(1) As at Codicote, Abbots Langley, Sandridge, Bramfield and King's Walden.

(2) e.g. at King's Langley in 1315, about one third of all rent received came from leased-out demesne land, PRO SC6/866/20-1.

(3) The extents of the inquisitiones post mortem show a drop in land values during the fourteenth century from an average of 3d.-4d. the arable acre to 1d.-2d. the acre. There was a smaller decrease in the value of meadowland. Claims that land lay stony and in bad condition became increasingly frequent as the century progressed, viz. in 1327 at Offley, in 1334 at Missenden, in 1335 at Amersham, in 1336 at Chesham, Chenies and Knebworth, in 1338 at Missenden, in 1347 at Little Gaddesden etc., PRO C134/101/10, C135/44/6, C135/32/28, C135/37/22, C135/42/16, C135/44/6, C135/51/3, C135/81/10.

(4) As at Codicote. At Abbots Langley, 71 tenants of the manor died, and c.900a. changed hands, Sidney Sussex James Ms. 1; 22 deaths are recorded in the court book for the small manor of Bramfield, involving c.260a. of land, HRO 40703; and on a Chesham manor, in 1350, twelve holdings lay vacant, BuCM C.A., St. Martin 24E,III. There is reference in a King's Langley extent to "the common pestilence in the country", to which was attributed the fact that arable was worth only half of its former value, PRO C135/100/16

Some demesne¹ and tenant² land went out of arable cultivation for a few years, but tenants were soon found in most cases. Engrossment of holdings proceeded even more rapidly. Land holding became concentrated into fewer hands. Where tenant services still existed, the years after 1350 saw the commutation of all but nominal works, and the final dissolution of the old social orders.

During the fifteenth century, individual holdings continued to be enlarged, often by men who had obtained separate properties in several parishes scattered over a wide area³, and by the sixteenth century the large class of small tenants of the early fourteenth century had all but disappeared, at least as direct holders of land. The old peasantry had been replaced by a body of new men, many of whose names had first appeared in individual townships in the late fourteenth century and the fifteenth century, who often held several farms in one parish, and whose interests often ranged over wide areas. Subletting, usually of complete farms, was widespread, and, in fact, modified the apparent engrossment of holdings.

(1) As at Ibstone; and at Welwyn, where, in 1360, the demesne of Mardeley included 120a. of uncultivated land which was in a bad condition, was pasture, and lay in common - 100a. of several arable was in cultivation, PRO C135/145, C135/144(9).

(2) As at Codicote and Ibstone.

(3) As at King's Walden; at Knebworth, where men from Welwyn, Hitchin and Kimpton were acquiring land in the parish in the fifteenth century, HRO 21888, 21890, 21920, 21923; at Offley, where men from London, Kimpton Luton, Caddington, Lilley, Hitchin were buying land in the second half of the fourteenth century, HRO 28756, 28762, 35500-1, 24066, 28826, 28868; and at King's Langley, where men from London and Markyate are recorded in the court rolls, PRO SC2/177/48, Nat. be. Marie 18R.II.

Crops and Livestock

Mixed farming with an emphasis on crop production, was ~~was~~ the basis of medieval field systems in the Chilterns. Throughout the region, and particularly on the demesne holdings, the agricultural bias was towards growing grain for sale. Livestock rearing had only a secondary role. This was not an area of extensive pastoralism.

Physical conditions within the Hills are not uniform, the main contrast being between the higher and more dissected southwest, with heavy clay or thin Chalk soils, and the lower northeast, with loamier soils developed from the Brickearths. The differences were not reflected in the level of crop production - yields on the demesne farms were fairly uniform throughout the Hills (Table XXI) - but rather in

TABLE XXI

Crop yields on some demesne farms
(quarts for every quart sown)

Manor	Wheat	Mixed corn	Oats	Barley	Dredge
<u>In the Chilterns.</u> ¹					
Ibstone, 1281-1358	3.3	2.8	2.6	2.9	2.7
West Wycombe, 1200-1449	3.3	2.8	2.5	4.0	3.1
King's Langley, 1313-24	2.9	-	3.0	3.6	3.8
Knebworth, 1405-7	3.1	-	2.7	3.1	2.2
<u>Outside the Chilterns.</u> ²					
Cuxham (in the Vale), 1289-1359	6.4	-	3.1	5.8	4.4
Nine manors of the Bishop of Winchester 1200-1450	4.1	-	2.7	3.9	-
Norwich Cathedral Priory Estate	4.7	-	2.8	3.3	-

(1) For Ibstone, see Table XIX; for West Wycombe, W. Beveridge, "The yield and price of corn in the Middle Ages", Economic Journal, Economic History Supplement, 1 (1927), 156; for King's Langley, PRO SC6/866/16-28; for Knebworth, HRO K108, 110, 112, 116.

(2) For Cuxham, P.D.A. Harvey, op. cit., 240; manors of the Bishop of Winchester, W. Beveridge, op. cit., 156; Norwich Cathedral Priory Estates, H.W. Saunders (ed.), "An Introduction to the Obedientiary and Manor Rolls of Norwich Cathedral Priory", (1930), 60.

differing emphases on the various crops. At the same time, there were considerable variations in crop and livestock production over a period of years on a single farm, in response to changing economic conditions and the development of more advanced cropping techniques. But differences, both in space and in time, were essentially differences of detail. In all parts and at all times, arable husbandry remained as the basis of farming. Although most evidence relates to the demesne farms, the few references to crops and livestock on peasant holdings suggest that on these, too, the balance in agriculture was essentially the same. London was the main outlet for farm produce from the Chilterns during the three centuries after 1200, as in the sixteenth century and later.¹

On most of the manors for which medieval accounts survive, the income from grain sales usually far exceeded that from the sale of livestock produce. Yields in the Chilterns were comparable with those in other regions (Table XXI). Wheat was the only winter-sown crop in the northeast of the region (Appendix M), but towards the southwest, where conditions of climate, soil and slope were less favourable to cultivation in general and to wheat in particular, the poorer mixed corn became important - frequently the acreage under mixed corn exceeded that under wheat. A large proportion of the demesne wheat was usually sold, and it formed the basis of farm income during the thirteenth century.²

(1) At West Wycombe, 170qt. of wheat and 100qt. of oats were sent to Southwark in 1208, at least part of the consignment going by river, HaRO Eccl.2/159270. The Bishop of Winchester kept a special boat for this and similar purposes, *ibid.*, 159278; and tenants of West Wycombe owed carrying services to London, although these appear to have been commuted for a money payment by the end of the thirteenth century, *ibid.*, 159317. The early thirteenth century tenants of Wheathampstead owed carriage of grain to London once a week, BM Add. Ch. 8139. By the fourteenth century, the corn merchants of towns such as St. Albans, Hertford, High Wycom and Great Marlow were supplying London with grain bought in local markets, N.S.B. Gras, "The Evolution of the English Corn Market from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century", (1915), 165.

(2) e.g. At West Wycombe in 1208, sales of wheat provided £34 of a total farm income of just under £40, and in 1299, provided £21 of a total farm income of just under £40, HaRO Eccl.2/159270 and 159318. At Hemel Hempstead in 1249-50, wheat accounted for nearly £24 of the £30 realised from sales of farm produce, and at King's Langley in 1304-4, £11 of the farm income of £17.10s. came from wheat sales, PRO SC6/863/2 and SC6/866/15.

Oats was the most important single spring crop, but a greater variety of crops was sown in the spring than in the autumn - on most demesnes, some land was usually devoted to barley, dredge, pease and vetch.¹

During the fourteenth century, the balance of crops in the spring course was shifting away from the overwhelming dominance of oats, that characterised thirteenth century production, towards a more equitable distribution with the other crops.² Everywhere, areas under barley and dredge, and to a lesser extent pease and vetch, expanded at the expense of oats, although this remained the most important spring crop. The distribution of the various spring crops within the Hills was more uniform than that of the autumn grains, but a greater proportion of farmland seems to have been under barley than dredge in the southwest, while dredge was the more important in the centre and the northeast. Oats were usually grown for use on the manor, particularly as horse feed, while barley and dredge were the main spring cash crops. In the fourteenth century, sales of these last two, and of malt made from them, frequently exceeded wheat sales in value. Pease and vetch had been mainly forage crops³, but again with increased acreages in the fourteenth century, substantial quantities were sold. These crops appear to have been grown on tenant holdings in similar proportions.⁴

The same type of problem arises when assessing the pattern of rearing and breeding, as that which makes a true analysis of crop distributions difficult, namely that livestock numbers often varied from manor to manor for no apparent reason, and that the size of flocks and herds could fluctuate considerably from year to year (Appendix N). Nonetheless

(1) There is no evidence that any of these crops were sown in autumn in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. At Flamstead in 1341, the spring sowing comprised dredge, pease and oats, Cal. Inq. Misc., II, 439; while at King's Langley in 1321, it is clear that dredge (which included barley), pease, vetch and oats were all sown in spring, PRO SC6/866/24-5.

(2) Similar trends have been noted in Leicestershire and Kent in the fourteenth century, R.H. Hilton, loc. cit. (1954), 160-1, and T.A.M. Bishop, loc. cit. (1938), 43.

(3) Often less seed was harvested than sold.

(4) As at Ibstone and King's Walden. A 12a. Bramfield tenant holding included, in 1332, 1a. of wheat 1½a. of rye and 3a. of oats, HRO 40703, St. Mark 5E.III. Wheat and oats were the main crops at Flamstead rectory in 1341, but dredge and pease were also sown, Cal. Inq. Misc., II, 439, no.1774; while wheat, oats, dredge, barley, pease and vetch all figure in a Caddington subsidy of 1297, PRO E179/71/5.

the overall pattern of production is clear. Demesne flocks were often substantial - the largest recorded was more than 1,000 sheep on the West Wycombe demesne in 1356 - and flocks of more than 200 sheep frequently appear in the manorial accounts. But the demesne flocks were also more liable to large and rapid fluctuations in numbers than any other livestock. The number of sheep on the West Wycombe demesne dropped from nearly 900 in 1208 to only 213 two years later, while the size of the manorial flock at King's Langley varied in six years between 18 and 200 sheep. Many demesnes were without flocks for a number of years. It is clear from the presentments for trespass at the manorial courts, that tenant flocks were also substantial by the fourteenth century. It was not unusual for a single tenant to have more than 100 sheep, and many smaller flocks are recorded.¹ No significant variations are apparent in the general distribution of sheep within the Hills. Sheep rearing was just as important in the southwest and centre, where grazing on the common wastes was more extensive, as in the northeast, where there was more arable grazing. Sheep were reared mainly for wool, although cheeses made from ewes' milk were frequently sold by the manor.² Sales of live beasts were not usually important, and only diseased and old stock, and lambs not needed to maintain or build-up the flock were sold. There were some exceptions, however, for at both Great Gaddesden and Knebworth, towards the end of the fourteenth century, wethers were bought for fattening and later sold.³

Cattle herds were not large. The average demesne herd numbered about twenty beast, and rarely more.⁴ Most manors kept their own bull to replenish the herd and keep the cows in milk, but, as with sheep, the sale of beasts was confined to diseased and infertile stock, and calves not required on the farm. Most of the cheese and butter was sold.

(1) e.g. At Chesham in 1332, flocks of 100, 15, 16 and 16 sheep are recorded. BuCM C.A., St. Andrew 5E.III; while at Wheathampstead in 1383, some tenant flocks contained 40, 12, 20, and 20 sheep, Westm. 9841, Sept. 6R.II.

(2) e.g. At King's Langley, PRO SC6/866/20.

(3) HRO 2632, K108.

(4) There were some exceptions: e.g. West Wycombe, with its extensive parkland pasturage, where the herd frequently exceeded fifty head.

Although tenant herds of ten or more cattle are sometimes recorded in the court rolls, the majority of peasant farmers owned two or three beasts at the most.¹ Horses, and not oxen, were the main source of power on the demesnes, and probably also on tenant farms by the thirteenth century.² Two plough teams of six geldings each, and a couple of cart horses, was the usual complement on the manor farms. Horse breeding was almost unknown and old stock had to be replaced with beasts bought outside the Chilterns. Swine tended to be most numerous on those manors where there was abundant pannage in demesne woods or common wastes, but there were some surprising anomalies. At Berkhamsted and Penn, both townships with extensive woods, the manorial accounts that survive make no reference to a demesne herd of swine.

Demesne farming in the Chilterns was, therefore, mixed farming, with a greater emphasis on crop production than on rearing and breeding, at least before 1350. The same kind of crops were grown on tenant holdings, and the same types of animals were kept, in proportions similar to the manor farms. But what is more important, is that the balance between crops and livestock was much the same on peasant as on demesne farms. This is suggested by the few medieval accounts of tenant stock, and it is confirmed by the sixteenth century probate inventories.

(1) e.g. At Fawley, tenant herds of 3, 1, 1, 6, 2, 1, 8, 1 and 2 beasts were recorded in cases of trespass in 1366, BM Add. R. 27021.

(2) Oxen were used for ploughing on demesnes in High Wycombe and Kensworth in the twelfth century, at Caddington and West Wycombe in the early thirteenth century, and at Penn at the end of the fourteenth century, see Appendix N. Horses frequently figure in heriots of villein land.

Inheritance and the Fragmentation of Land

Partible inheritance (that is inheritance by more than one heir) could, through the subdivision of compact holdings, produce a pattern of open strips. In England the medieval strip fields of Kent,¹ of the East Riding of Yorkshire² and of parts of East Anglia³ have been explained, at least in part, by a process of division following the death of a landholder. Some of the open fields of medieval Wales, it has been suggested, originated in the same way,⁴ while in Continental Europe an hypothesis of subdivision through inheritance has been presented to explain the great areas of German Gewannflur.⁵ This is the relevance of inheritance customs to a study of field systems.

Forms of Inheritance

In the Chilterns, in the thirteenth century and later, inheritance followed the custom of primogeniture, which was applied equally by free and villein tenants.⁶ A single son, and where detailed evidence exists it is clear that it was the eldest son,⁷ inherited the land held by the parent at death. Until the eldest son had a child, inheritance passed down through his brothers. Daughters inherited in the absence of male heirs, in which case all sisters received an equal share in the property.

(1) e.g. A.R.H. Baker, "Open fields and partible inheritance on a Kent manor", EHR second series, 17 (1964), 1-23.

(2) T.A.M. Bishop, "Assarting and the growth of open fields", EHR, 6 (1935), 13-29.

(3) e.g. G.C. Homans, loc. cit. (1937-38), 54.

(4) e.g. G.R.J. Jones, "Medieval open fields and associated settlement patterns in North-West Wales", Annales de l'Est, 21 (1959), 313-28.

(5) e.g. A. Krenzlin and A.V. Reusch, "Die Entstehung der Gewinnflur nach Untersuchungen im nordlichen Unterfranken", Frankfurter Geogr. Hefte, 35 (1961), Part 1, 110.

(6) Apart from the evidence of King's Walden, Codicote and Ibstone, there are numerous examples of single son inheritance in the court books of Abbots Langley, Sidney Sussex James Ms. 1; Bramfield, HRO 40702-3; and Sandridge, HRO 40700; and in court rolls for Chesham, BuCM C.A.; King's Langley, PRO SC2/177/47, 52-55; and Wheathampstead, Westm. 8937A-42.

(7) As at King's Walden and Codicote. At Missenden, Henry the eldest son of John de la Westhall was his heir, J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 93, no. 97.

Partible inheritance under these rather special circumstances was practised in all parts of the Chilterns, and on free and villein land alike.¹ At Chesham, for example, four daughters inherited the messuage and 15 acres of Richard le Wat when he died in 1327,² while a statement made at the manorial court of Bramfield, in 1334, is particularly striking in this respect - it was said that "all inheritances in Bramfield whether Mollond or Werkelond ought to be partible between two daughters when there are no male heirs".³ The widow could usually claim a dower right of one third in her dead husband's estate, at least in the case of free land.⁴ These were the only two conditions under which anything approaching partibility in inheritance was found. Otherwise impartibility was the rule.

But the system of impartible inheritance was flexible. Customs similar to those practised at Ibstone and Codicote, were followed on manors throughout the Hills. They were realistically adapted to the needs of the family because inheritance laws were applied only in cases of intestacy, and because the tenant was usually free to dispose of his land before death to any member of his family or to someone unrelated to him, in any proportion that he wished.⁵ Such transfers had sometimes been standardised

(1) The possibility of joint inheritance by daughters has also been noted by K.G. Feiling, "An Essex manor in the fourteenth century", Eng.H.R., 26, (1911), 37; and by G.C. Homans, loc. cit. (1942), 123, 195.

(2) BuCM C.A., St. Mathew 6E.II.

(3) HRO 4702, Ascension 7E.III. Apart from Ibstone, there are examples from Goring, T.R. Gambier-Parry (ed.), "A Collection of Charters Relating to Goring, Streatley and the Neighbourhood", ORS, 13 (1931), 114, no.162; Missenden, see below, p.288-9; Studham, where the four daughters of Robert de Studham held land jointly c.1230, BM Harl. Ms. 1885, f.13d and HRO 17465; Great Gaddesden, Cal. Close Rolls, 1323-27, 293; and for Ayot St. Peter, VCH Herts., 3 (1912), 63.

(4) e.g. There are numerous cases concerning a dower third in M.W. Hughes (ed.), "A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for the County of Buckingham, 7R.I to 44H.III", RBBAS, 4 (1940).

(5) e.g. Lucia Beryman gave a cottage in Chesham to her daughter, BuCM C.A., St. Mathew 6E.II; while Richard Hikeleys gave a messuage and 10a. there to his son, ibid., St. Michael 4E.III.

as wills,¹ but neither the use of wills nor the practice of death-bed surrender were widely adopted until the late fourteenth century. Before this, most Chiltern peasants were content to rely on the established forms of transfer by charter or surrender through the manor, when determining succession to their property. They were helped by the appearance of two refinements during the thirteenth century. These were joint tenure² and conditional surrender,³ and they allowed a tenant, free or villein, to

(1) A disputed will is mentioned in the manorial court records for Abbots Langley as early as 1256, Sidney Sussex James Ms. 1; the legality of villein wills had been accepted at Swyncombe by 1279, Record Commission, "Rotuli Hundredorum", 2 (1818), 758a; while death-bed wills were being made at High Wycombe before 1300, L.J. Ashford, op. cit., 46. A particularly early form of will was the charter made by a Missenden widow gaging her son as her heir, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 167, no.178.

(2) As at Ibstone and Codicote, joint holdings were usually between husband and wife, or between parent and child, but also sometimes between brothers and sisters. Tenants surrendered land to the joint holding of themselves and the partner, e.g. the surrender by William Moryng of Chesham of a homestead and 5a. to himself and his wife, BuCM C.A., Easter 1R.II: or related partners entered newly acquired land together, e.g. the joint holding by John Setlebir and his wife in Wheathampstead, Westm. 8937A, St. Valentine 4E.I; of Alexander Friday and his wife in Chesham, BuCM C.A., Easter 18E.II; and by John atte Welles, his wife and son in Offley, HRO 28787. In both cases, when one died, the property automatically passed to the other, e.g. the daughter and husband of Xpina Whiting entered 4a. of her holding when she died, BuCM C.A., Easter 7E.II.

(3) By conditional surrender, a tenant transferred his land to the person or persons that he had chosen as his successor, on condition that he be allowed to retain use of this land until death; e.g. Joan, widow of Henry Smith, surrendered her villein tenement in Chesham to Robert White, who was not to take possession until she died, *ibid.*, Easter 1R.II; John, son of Laurence granted his free holding in Little Hampden to Thomas de Luton, who then leased the land back to John for the rest of his life, BuCM 552/39. An alternative form that was sometimes adopted, was for the former tenant to be clothed, fed and housed for the rest of his life, perhaps retaining a part of the house or an outbuilding for his own use: e.g. when Margaret Lyne surrendered all her land in Wheathampstead, it was on condition that she was provided with a room in the messuage, and with a piece of garden opposite the room with free entry and exit, Westm. 8941, St. Barnabus 7R.II; while at Bramfield in 1340, Adam Person surrendered his messuage and 13a. to his son, on condition that Adam should keep a room next to the garden, a cow and two pigs to be kept with those of his son, and that he would have sufficient firewood and straw for his room, three sheaves of grain and a woollen garment each year, HRO 40703, St. Dionisius 13E.III. But, as Homans has noted, legal possession of land itself offered greater security G.C. Homans, loc. cit. (1942), 130.

choose his successors, while ensuring his possession of all or part of his property until he died.¹ In theory, therefore, there was no obstacle to the division of a holding by its tenant amongst his children before he died, and devices for conveying property may even have facilitated such arrangements. Partible succession to land was possible even when impartible inheritance was the rule.²

In fact arrangements for the disposal of an entire family holding between a number of relatives were rarely, if ever, made. Certainly no evidence of it survives. Large scale fragmentation of the average half virgate or ferlingate was impracticable during the thirteenth century period of population pressure,³ and where the basic family holding was disposed of before death; it was usually to a single successor. The general pattern was that one son received the main parental holding, probably a customary tenurial unit, either through inheritance or by a disposition by the parent in his favour, while the other children received a small amount of land, often a cottage and a few acres bought, it would seem, specifically for that purpose.⁴ These gifts were not usually subtracted from the basic holding. During the thirteenth and

(1) Apart from the Codicote and Ibstone evidence, there are numerous examples of both joint tenure and conditional surrender in the court books for Abbots Langley, Bramfield and Sandridge, op. cit..

(2) A good example is from Dunstable, not strictly in the Chilterns but on the dip-slope of the Lower Chalk. There, about 1230, Ralf, son of Alexander, divided his estate between his two sons before he died. The elder son (primogenitus) received the chief messuage with its croft, while the other son received the house and croft next to it. All the other property was divided evenly between the two, and was mainly shops and rents. BM Harl. Ms. 1885, f.68d.

(3) Even in the regions, such as Kent and parts of Leicestershire, where partible inheritance was followed, actual succession to land was often modified to meet the realities of an economic farm size, A.R.H. Baker, loc. cit. (1964), 20-1, and R.H. Hilton, loc. cit. (1954), 170.

(4) e.g. Simon atte Lane, who had at least two sons, gave his daughter a strip in one of the common fields of Wheathamstead, Westm. 8937A, St. Valentine 3EI; and at Missenden, John de la Westhall, whose heir was his eldest son Henry, gave a messuage and curtilage to his daughter Isabel, J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 93, no. 97. Laurence, a free tenant of Little Hampden, had at least two sons and two daughters. One son, John, eventually inherited, while the other son and a daughter were given $2\frac{1}{2}$ a. and $\frac{1}{2}$ a. respectively, Laurence having bought this 3a.. The other daughter was later given $\frac{1}{2}$ a. by her brother John, BuCM 547/39, 549/39, 558/39.

and early fourteenth centuries, many non-inheritors joined the ranks of the smallholders, either finding employment on the manor as hired farm labour or as small traders and craftsmen, or, if resources were limited and opportunities such as these few, leaving the manor to work elsewhere, as they did at Ibstone. The more fortunate, or the more ambitious of these smallholders could, in time, build up substantial holdings for themselves by leasing or buying small pieces of land.¹ After about 1320, the problem of providing land for children was less critical, as more and more complete holdings became vacant, although many small tenants were still precluded from acquiring larger holdings by the expense involved.

The Fragmentation of Land

Wherever custom was such as to allow partibility in succession, the division of property was a possibility. The possibility was, of course, strongest when partible inheritance was customary. This might take one of three forms - co-heirs could work the parental holding as partners, and so maintain its integrity; the holding might be divided as a whole into equal portions, each of which was claimed by one of the heirs; or the individual units of land, which together comprised the holding, were each divided between the heirs in order to ensure a fair apportionment of land of all types.² In theory, one of these three could apply whenever there were divided claims to inherited land, circumstances which arose in the Chilterns only in the case of the widow's dower right, or when daughters were heirs.

In practice, the widow usually released her life interest to the holder of her dead husband's property, or she held the land jointly with the inheriting son. The need for physical partition rarely arose, because the dower claim was usually nothing more than a legal right. It rarely existed as a physical entity, but, when it did it could result in the actual fragmentation of land. At King's Walden, partition of a

(1) See above, p.273-4.

(2) See above, p.170.

croft into three pieces by the existence of a dower strip within it, was perpetuated by the alienation of this strip outside the family.¹

Land inherited by daughters was sometimes held jointly by the sisters, and sometimes divided between them. Four daughters of Robert de Studham were freely transferring land as partners in the early thirteenth century,² while the three women who held a virgate jointly in Kensworth, in 1299, were probably sisters.³ On the other hand, agreements were drawn-up dividing the manorial demesnes of Great Gaddesden⁴ and of Applehanger in Goring,⁵ in each case between two inheriting sisters. At Great Gaddesden, individual units of land, and even buildings, were to be halved, whereas the property at Goring was allotted, wherever possible, on the basis of complete fields and woods. It is not clear whether, in fact, either of the proposed partitions was ever effected. There is strong circumstantial evidence in thirteenth century Missenden charters, however, of actual fragmentations as a result of partible inheritance by the four daughters of Geoffrey de Missenden.⁶ Woodland groves,⁷

(1) The assignment of dower at Offley to Margaret, widow of Thomas de Ho, gave her some complete buildings at the manor together with one third of a croft, but there is no evidence as to whether the division was ever effected, HRO 28744.

(2) Op. cit..

(3) St. Pauls WD16 Liber I, f.123d.

(4) Cal. Close Rolls, 1323-27, 293.

(5) T.R. Gambier-Parry, op. cit., 114, no.162.

(6) Geoffrey was otherwise known as Geoffrey Swart, J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 111, no. 117, 117-21, nos. 122-25, 139, no. 146. The daughters were Isabella, *ibid.*, 140, no. 147; Alice, *ibid.*, 113, no. 119; Matilda, *ibid.*, 137-39, nos. 144-46; and Mary, *ibid.*, 140, no. 147. No sons are mentioned in the charters. An editor's note in the transcript suggests that there was a son, Peter (*ibid.*, 139), but it is clear from charter no. 120 that he was the son of Mary - land held by William Famel of Berkhamsted and his wife Matilda (daughter of Walter the merchant of Wycombe, *ibid.*, 115, no. 120, 140, no. 147, 142, no. 149) had been inherited by Matilda after the death of her brother Peter.

(7) Geoffrey, son of Gervase of Hughenden, granted to Walter de Wycombe all his share of the grove of la Frithe, which had descended to him by right of inheritance. Geoffrey's mother was Alice, one of the four sisters, *ibid.*, 113, no. 119. He also granted land in the great grove next to the holding of his aunt Matilda, *ibid.*, 138, no.145.

arable closes, common field strips¹ and meadows² may all have been individually subdivided between at least some of the sisters, although much of the land was eventually acquired by the husband of one of them.³

Sometimes, when a complete holding was partitioned, subdivision and apportionment of land was by a system of sun or shade division, reminiscent of the Scandinavian solskifte. When a half virgate at Knebworth was divided in 1228, the claimant was given "that half which everywhere lies towards the sun",⁴ while the part of a thirty acre holding in Chesham that was granted away in 1241, was described as "a moiety of all lands as it lies everywhere in the fields towards the shade".⁵ In neither case is a reason given for division.

Property was also occasionally divided as a result of the disposal of part of it before death. Land granted to the joint holding of brothers or sisters was sometimes split between the two,⁶ although it was more usual for one partner to release his right to the other, or for the property to remain in their joint holding. Again, children were occasionally given a small plot in a close of the parental holding, on which to build a cottage.⁷ But the property fragmented in these ways was small in amount, and most usually only dwellings were involved. Where a gift was made to a dependent from the family holding, it was usually of a complete close or a few acres in a strip field. Subdivision of a compact unit of land into strips or open blocks through partible succession, either by inheritance or by disposition before death, occurred only exceptionally in the Chilterns, partly because partible succession was infrequent, and partly because it took a different form when it did occur.

(1) Matilda granted to Walter de Wycombe, husband of her sister Mary, 1¼a. in Longefurlong in Eldefeld, which lay between land that had passed to Mary; ¼a. in Ruggedfurlong between land held by Walter and that of her sister's son, Geoffrey; and a small piece of land and her share in Chalvecroft, *ibid.*, 139, no. 146.

(2) The meadow of Shadwell, once held by Geoffrey Swart, was divided between Walter de Wycombe and Geoffrey son of Gervase de Hughenden, husband and son respectively of two of the four Swart daughters, *ibid.*, 117, no. 122, and 113, no. 119.

(3) Walter the merchant of Wycombe.

(4) PRO CP 25(1)/84/12/114.

(5) M.W. Hughes, *op. cit.*, 77.

(6) As at Codicote.

(7) As at Ibstone and Codicote.

In fact, the most likely cause of land fragmentation in the Hills was not necessarily connected in any way with customs of inheritance, or succession in general. It was the alienation, by gift, sale or lease, of pieces of land from formerly compact units to one or more tenants.¹ Alienation and fragmentation could take one of several forms. At Codicote, closes were leased-out or sold in parcels to more than one tenant at the same time, or a close was released by one tenant to another in a number of pieces and over a period of years. There is further detailed evidence of this at Abbots Langley² and Bramfield³ during the early fourteenth century.

Land of all types was involved. Woods were subdivided into blocks, which were sometimes fenced-off from each other;⁴ assarts large and small, were broken-up by the alienation of parcels within them to different tenants;⁵ a strip of common field land in a single tenancy was sometimes split by the surrender of a part of it;⁶ but fragmentation occurred most frequently in the arable closes. At Caddington, in 1299, a 3½ acre croft, which had formerly been in one holding, lay divided into three pieces held by separate tenants,⁷ while a 5¼ acre close at Kensworth was likewise divided in three.⁸ Ploughing units may sometimes have been used as a basis for the tenurial fragmentation of enclosed fields - they provided ready-made physical units for land transfers.⁹ Many closes were divided only temporarily,¹⁰ but others, particularly larger fields

(1) Division of enclosed land by alienation other than inheritance has been noted in other parts of medieval England - e.g. the Midlands, R.H. Hilton, loc. cit. (1954), 166 (for Leicestershire), and "The Stoneleigh Leger Book", Publications of the Dugdale Society, 24 (1960), lvii (for the West Midlands).

(2) Sidney Sussex James Ms. 1.

(3) HRO 40702-3.

(4) See below, p.354.

(5) See below, p.299.

(6) To some extent this counterbalanced the effects of strip consolidation. Apart from Codicote, there are examples from Welwyn, HRO 59117, 59120C, 59124; and Kensworth, BM Add. Ch. 19939-40.

(7) St. Pauls WD16 Liber I, f.116d. The croft was formerly held by Ralph Hicheman. There were two 1a. pieces, and a piece of 1½a..

(8) Ibid., f.122d. It was the close formerly held by John le Seler. The pieces were of 3½a., 3r. and 1a.

(9) e.g. A thirteenth century grant in Little Missenden consisted of three selions in Fulkescroft, J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 136, no.142.

(10) As at Codicote.

where land had been sold to a number of tenants, remained subdivided, with the different units either surviving as open pieces, or being fenced-off to form a network of smaller closes.¹ In the area around Kingshill, strips formed by alienation were enclosed at the time of subdivision or soon afterwards.² The tenants of land in subdivided closes may sometimes have pastured in common until the pieces were enclosed.³

Although it is difficult to distinguish subdivided closes from common fields in the thirteenth and fourteenth century descriptions of land, the two were, in fact, quite distinct. The divisions in the closes had neither the regular size nor systematic organisation into furlongs of the common field strips; the subdivided closes were usually much smaller than the common fields- they were divided into five to ten parcels at the most - and most were only features of a few years, whereas the common fields survived more or less intact for several centuries.

(1) This may have been the origin of a croft called Withiweg, said to lie in the great field of William de Turville in Penn, M.W. Hughes, op. cit., 16.

(2) Geoffrey Taylifer held a portion of land in two fields belonging to Missenden Abbey, his land being separated from the Abbey's land by a hedge, J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 174, no. 187; while the piece that another Geoffrey granted away in his Suthfeld had been marked-out by a newly made ditch - the land concerned lay the full length of the field, *ibid.*, 161, no.171. Closes in this area were being subdivided by alienation before the end of the twelfth century - in 1196 two acres in the top part of a field had been granted away, M.W. Hughes, op. cit., 8. Further examples of fragmentation in the Missenden area include the grants to Missenden Abbey, by William de Missenden of 15a. evenly divided between his three culturae in Missenden, J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 36, no.30; by Geoffrey, son of Ralf, of 2a. in three fields of his inheritance in Kingshill, *ibid.*, 85, no.86; and by Robert del Broc of 3a. evenly allocated from his three culturae in Chesham, *ibid.* (1946), 9, no.279.

(3) e.g. A Bramfield tenant was allowed, in 1332, to enclose land in Clayfield to free it from the right of common pasture that Elias Thurston claimed on it. Clay field may have been the Clay croft, which had once been in the single holding of the Thurston family, but part of which they had subsequently alienated in parcels, HRO 40703. Another example may be the enclosure, by Thomas Mantel, of land that he held in Kingshill from Robert Byl. The purpose of the enclosure was so that Thomas could not claim pasture rights beyond the ditch, on what was presumably the land of Robert (Thomas had free entry and exit over the land of Robert, probably to reach this newly enclosed holding), J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 128, no.133.

Colonisation and Clearance

The Progress of Settlement and Clearance.

By the tenth century, the main Chiltern valleys may have been occupied continuously by farming communities for more than one thousand years. The better agricultural land is in the valleys, and a permanent water supply was assured there. The larger valleys were the centres of Romano-British occupation in the Hills,¹ and the few finds of Anglo-Saxon goods have been made chiefly within them.² Although there is no evidence of a continuity of settlement between the two periods, it is a possibility.³ Early farmsteads were probably clustered in villages and hamlets - later the dominant settlement forms along the valley floors - and villages may be more closely spaced in the north-east because physical conditions there were more favourable for early agriculture and settlement than further southwest. As the waste was cleared in the tributary dry valleys and on the heavier soils of the ridge-tops and plateau surface above, a pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads was established. Perhaps as early as the eighth century, and certainly by the tenth century, isolated farmsteads had been built in the area around Bix, and the hamlets of Stonor and Assendon had grown-up in a steep sided valley, in what was one of the

(1) Almost all villa sites discovered in the Chilterns are located in valleys, although there is some evidence of settlement on parts of the plateau surface (eg. at Hazlemere above High Wycombe). The extent of Romano-British settlement in the Hills was probably small - the main concentrations of sites in the area are outside the Chilterns, along the Ickmeild zone at the foot of the scarp and along the Thames terraces. J.F.Head, "Early Man in South Buckinghamshire", (1955)80-87; VCH Herts., 4(1914), 119-24; VCH Oxon., 1,(1939), 267.

(2) J.F.Head, *op.cit.*, 88-96; VCH Herts., 1 (1902), 251; VCH Oxon., 1 (1939), 347. A notable exception is the pagan burial on Christmas Common near to the crest of the Hills, VCH Oxon., 8 (1964), 138.

(3) A continuity of settlement, with the Roman field pattern reflected in medieval field systems, has been suggested for the Wymondleys in the Hitchin Gap. S. Applebaum, "Agriculture in Roman Britain," AHR, 6 (1958), 73,79, 82.

least accessible and most deeply dissected parts of the Hills.¹

There were ridge-top and plateau settlements throughout the region by 1806,² and although some, such as Ibstone, were independent townships, many were tied to the villages in the larger Chiltern valleys or along the loam belt at the foot of the escarpment. Some hamlets acquired the status of chapelries dependent on a mother church and eventually became the centres of independent parishes, while others remained linked with the parent village, although perhaps retaining some measure of economic freedom.³ Large areas of woodland survived

(1) The evidence is a charter dated 774, but written in the tenth century, which refers to Stanora and Assundene, as well as to "the rough dairy farmstead", and "the deep shedding with a house attached to it". The charter is discussed in G.B. Grundy (ed.), "Saxon Oxfordshire. Charters and Ancient Highways", ORS, 15 (1933), 43, and M. Gelling and D.M. Stenton, "The Place-Names of Oxfordshire", English Place-Name Society, 23 (1945), 86-87.

(2) H.C. Darby and E.M.J. Campbell, op.cit., in particular Figs. 5, 21, 50, 64. The fact that a settlement is not separately recorded in Domesday Book does not mean that it did not exist. In Oxfordshire in particular, many Chiltern hamlets may have been concealed in the large entries for townships at the foot of the scarp (see E.M. Jope and I.B. Terret, "Oxfordshire", being chapter 5 of H.C. Darby and E.M.J. Campbell, op. cit., 196). Pottery finds at Pishill suggest a settlement by the eleventh century, and part of Woodcote church dates from the same century, but the names are not recorded for the first time until 1195 and 1109 respectively, E.M. Jope, Oxoniensia, 17-18 (1952-53), 221-2; VCH Oxon., 7, (1962), 94; and M. Gelling and D.M. Stenton, op. cit., 84 and 157.

(3) As late as the seventeenth century, Bovington and Flaunden were dependents of Hemel Hempstead, PRO/LR2/216; Sandridge, originally a chapelry of St. Peters, became a separate parish in the fourteenth century, VCH Herts., 2 (1908), 432; Ippollitts was once attached to Hitchin, VCH Herts., 3 (1912), 25; and in Studham parish, Bareworth, sometimes described as villa, was a chapelry of the mother church of Studham, which survived as a semi-independent unit until the nineteenth century, BM Harl. Ms.1885, f. 53. Some of the small hamlets of King's Walden and Offley, which were also recognised as distinctive units, may have represented the earliest phases of settlement. By the eleventh century, villages along the Ickneild belt frequently included extensive areas on the dip-slope within their territory. These lay either as a Chiltern extension of a Vale parish or as an isolated outlier. Many of the hamlets and farmsteads built there remained tied to a parent village in the Vale, at least until the nineteenth century reorganisation of parish boundaries, e.g. Abefeld and Achamstead were outliers of Lewknor, A.M. Davies, "Abefeld and Achamstead", RB, 15 (1950), 166-71; the hamlet of Woodcote was part of South Stoke parish, although it was usually distinguished as a separate unit in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and sometimes as villa, H.E. Salter (ed.), "The Boarstall Cartulary", OHS, 88 (1930a), 22, no.51; H.E. Salter (ed.), "Eynsham Cartulary", OHS, 49 (1907), 206, no. 290; H.E. Salter (ed.), "The Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham", OHS, 50 (1908), 109, no.667; and T.R. Gambier-Parry, op. cit., 107, no.151:

at the time of the Domesday survey. The Hills were much more heavily wooded than either the clay lands of the Vale to the north-west, or the riverine and glacial gravels to the southeast. Within the Chilterns, there was far more woodland in the southwest and centre than in the northeast.¹

Clearing for cultivation proceeded rapidly during the following century and a half, and in some townships it was massive.² Flamstead, for example, had been thickly wooded in the eleventh century - according to the Domesday Book it was one of the more densely wooded townships in the

and Shortgrave was the Chiltern hamlet of both Eaton Bray and Totternhoe in the first half of the twelfth century, BM Harl. Ms. 1885, f.25. But the larger hamlets - usually those with chapels of their own - eventually broke away to form separate parishes, e.g. Stonor from Pyrton, VCH Oxon., 8 (1964), 141-2; Pishill from Pyrton and Watlington, *ibid.*, 131-2; Stokenchurch from Aston Rowant, *ibid.*, 16; Lee from Weston, J.G. Jenkins, *loc. cit.* (1938), 216, nos. 244-5; and Whipsnade from Eaton Bray, BM Harl. Ms.1885, f.53. The formation of Hill parishes through detachment of upland portions of Vale townships occurred, in particular, southwest of the Wye valley, where there were few early village centres on the dip-slope itself to act as foci for secondary colonisation.

(1) H.C. Darby and E.M.J. Campbell, *op. cit.*, Figs. 13, 28, 57, 69.
 (2) In the Missenden area, assarts were being granted to the newly founded abbey, and were being transferred between lay tenants, J.G. Jenkins, *loc. cit.* (1938), 40, no. 33, 41, nos. 34-5, 45, no. 40, 50, no. 46, 51, no.47, 54, no. 50, 154, no. 163, 174, no. 186; J.G. Jenkins, *ibid.* (1946), 18, no. 245. Nearby, at Chesham in 1205, rent was being paid for a single clearing of 200a., M.W. Hughes, *op. cit.*, 28; while further northeast, at Caddington in 1222, at least 80a. of tenant land had been brought into cultivation during the time of the last farmer of the manor, and in the neighbouring manor of Kensworth in the same year, 330a. of land held by the tenants was described as assart, of which 44a had recently been cleared, W. Hale, *op. cit.*, 1-14. Much of the former wood of Bovington was under cultivation by 1250 - in 1249-50, the manor of Hemel Hempstead received rents from 42a. of assart in Bovington and entry fines from another 104½a. of new assart, PRO SC6/863/2. Evidence for Bovington also shows that assarting could sometimes realise an immediate and large profit through the sale of timber - more than £85 was received for timber cut from 101a. of the assart land, *ibid.*.

Chilterns, with pannage for more than one thousand swine¹ - but little remained by the second half of the thirteenth century. The manorial demesne then contained only thirty acres of woodland,² and the largest area of wood in the township was in the grounds of a small nunnery near to the parish boundary.³

This was the final stage of medieval colonisation in the region. Large scale clearing had ended in many townships by 1250, and in almost all parts by 1300.⁴ Specific agreements to end assarting were even made in some manors.⁵ The main reason was probably that the woods and wastes were becoming more valuable. Timber was increasingly important as a source of income - many woods that were enclosed were never felled, but were left standing as private woodland - and there was greater pressure on the surviving commons, as the overall area of wastes was reduced. Some new land was brought into cultivation after 1300, but the amounts involved were small.⁶

(1) VCH Herts., 1 (1902), 325.

(2) PRO C134/15/3.

(3) HRO 17465 - 7.

(4) At Ibstone in the southwest, at Berkhamsted and Abbots Langley in the central Chilterns, and at King's Walden, Codicote and Bramfield in the northeast, all of them townships for which there is detailed documentation, there is no evidence of extensive assarting after the mid-thirteenth century. Only 12a. was described as assart in a Kensworth extent of 1299 compared with the 330a. 77 years earlier, St. Pauls WD16 Liber I, ff.121d-127d. At Caddington, the figure was higher. In 1299, there was more than 40a. of assart (ibid., ff.115-121d), compared with 80a. 77 years earlier (W.Hale, op.cit.).

(5) At Wyfold in 1211, the monks of Thame Abbey, having already created extensive private woods for themselves, agreed not to destroy the surviving common woods, H.E. Salter (ed.), "The Thame Cartulary", ORS, 25-26 (1947-48), 124, no.177; while a similar arrangement, in 1227, was aimed at preventing further clearing in the woods of Saunderton, M.W.Hughes, op.cit., 57

(6) eg. a garden was cleared from woodland in Berkhamsted Park, PRO SC6/863/8; while 5a. in Kings Langley was assarted "to enlarge the arable land", PRO SC6/866/27. Occasionally, too, small building plots and gardens were taken from patches of common waste: eg at Wheathampstead, where plots of land were granted for building purposes from Bamfield Wood and Harpenden Green in 1304, 1305, 1307 and 1383, Westm.8938, St. Barnabas 32E.I, St. Michael 33E.I, St. Mary Magdalene 35E.I; and 8941, Dec. 6R.II, March 6R.II.

Twelfth and thirteenth century clearing saw a continuation of the general pattern of secondary colonisation in the Hills. The wastes were now attacked from the more recent upland settlements, as well as from the older villages and hamlets of the valleys and the Vale - assarts and increments to established holdings were attached to farmsteads in the valleys and on the plateaux alike. The recent nature of colonisation in some areas was indicated by an occasional confusion as to the territorial limits of different townships. Parish boundaries had not yet been fully defined.¹ At the same time the basic pattern of settlement in the Chilterns was being completed. Four small religious houses were founded high up in the midst of wastes near to the Hertfordshire border with Buckinghamshire, and were granted woods and assarts there. The Priory of St. Giles-in-the-Wood was typical. It was built for 13 nuns in a small clearing in the woods that remained in a corner of Flamsstead parish, and was subsequently endowed with woodland, extensive assarts, and money tithes from "the fines of the new ruding".² New farmsteads and cottages, too, were built on assart land,³ while, in Missenden, a hamlet appears to have been established by a lord in a clearing on his land.⁴ As assarting ended, and the boundaries of the surviving areas of common waste became stabilised, settlement began to accumulate around the edges of the commons, to form the waste-side hamlets that have since become one of the most characteristic features of settlement patterns in the Chilterns.

(1) e.g. The hamlets of Kingshill, which lay on the plateau between the Hughenden valley and the valley of the Misbourne, were referred to as a township (villa) in the early thirteenth century, although at a later date they were simply divided between the parishes centred on the valley settlements of Hughenden and Missenden, J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1946), 30, no. 310.

(2) HRO 17465. The other houses were Markyate Priory, referred to as "de Bosco", and founded in Caddington in 1145, H.C. Maxwell Lyte, op. cit., 66, and M. Gibbs (ed.), "Early Charters of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London", Royal Historical Society, Camden Series, 58 (1939), 119, no. 15; the nunnery of St. Margarets de Bosco at Nettleden in Ivinghoe, founded c. 1160, W. Dugdale, "Monasticon Anglicanum", 4 (1846), 268; and Ashridge College founded c. 1285, L.M. Midgeley, op. cit., Xiii.

(3) e.g. The house of a twelfth century tenant of Aldbury that lay next to Aldbury Wood, and an early thirteenth century farmstead in Ellesborough described as situated "above the stony assart above Mordena", had both probably been erected on recently reclaimed land, J.G. Jenkins (ed.), "The Cartulary of Missenden Abbey, III", BRS, 12 (1962), 172, no. 795, 52, no. 615.

(4) By an agreement of 1234, Roger de Wimberville obtained timber "for

Assarting and Assarts.

The form of assarting and the nature of assart land can be described with some degree of accuracy only for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that is for the period immediately prior to the cessation of medieval colonisation. Land brought into cultivation then was essentially of two types, namely that held in severalty and that lying in strip fields.

By the twelfth century, much of the land being cleared from the waste was taken directly into severalty, a situation that had probably already existed for several hundred years. There are numerous references to complete assarts lying undivided and in a single holding.¹ Many were attached to established customary holdings,² but in some townships there were complete half virgates that consisted entirely of assart closes.³ Few details survive of the ways in which these closes were formed. Sometimes an area of waste was marked out, and subsequently cleared and enclosed - Missenden Abbey acquired a plot of "waste and uncultivated land" at Peterley, which they surrounded with hedges and ditches and brought into cultivation⁴ - and sometimes woodland was

building his houses on the land of la Rudenge", M.W.Hughes, op.cit., 64; and about the same time a chapel dependent on the mother church of St.Peter as Missenden was established in la Ruding, J.G. Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 83, no.84.

(1) e.g. "all the great assart" together with smaller assarts, that were granted to St.Giles-in-the-Wood in Flamstead in the twelfth century, HRO 17465; assarts in Missenden in 1164 and c.1234, J.G. Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 45, no.40 and 50, no.46; land called la Rudinge next to Peterley wood in Kingshill c.1200 and land called la Niwelande next to Kingshill heath, *ibid.*, 39, no.32, 174, no.186-7; the two assarts next to Charlewood in Studham c.1200, BM Harl. Ms.1885, f.13d; the "whole assart" in a Gaddesden fine of 1203, M.W.Hughes, op.cit., 21; assarts of 200a. and 12a. in Chesham in 1205, *ibid.*, 28; "all the assart of Pednor" in Chesham about 1200, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1946), 18, no.295; and the field called le Neweridyng in Hemel Hempstead, HRO 17465.

(2) at Kensworth and Caddington in 1222, W.Hale, op.cit., 1-13; in the Missenden area, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 51, no.46; in Studham, where a half virgate was granted with appurtenant rights and with "assarts, ditches, groves and hedges", BM Harl.Ms.1885, f.13d; and at Kings Langley, where assarts attached to holdings were known as "forlondes", PRO SC11/Roll 279.

(3) At Kensworth and Caddington in 1222, both new and old assarts had been organised into customary quarter and half virgate holdings, although the individual small plots were far more numerous, W.Hale, op.cit., At Berkhamsted; too, some assart land was described as complete half virgate holdings.

(4) J.G. Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 154, no.163. The grant was by

enclosed prior to its clearance, the decision whether to assart all or part of it, or to leave it as a private wood, being taken only subsequently¹. Alternatively, some land was not fenced-in until well after clearance, even though it lay in severalty. Assart land in a single holding on the plateau at Hazlemere in High Wycombe, in the early thirteenth century, was "to be so ditched and enclosed that the commoners' beasts may not enter there!"² This, and another Wycombe agreement that refers to all the assarts before a croft,³ suggest that cultivated land was being extended beyond a nucleus of older closes. At first the new assarts formed an unenclosed belt between the older arable and the waste, but they were, in turn, fenced off to prevent beasts straying onto the land from the adjacent commons. Again, some assarting may have been accomplished simply by the extension of an existing close or closes. The addition to a twelfth century croft in Missenden - the whole was surrounded by a ditch and fences - may have been made from the waste,⁴ while a four acre increment to a virgate there, was specifically stated to have been taken from the wood, although it is not clear whether the addition was of a plot of woodland or of land cleared from wood.⁵ E.C.Vollans has suggested, on the basis of this and other evidence, that, in the Missenden area, "increment were made by working out from existing holdings", and that a network of small closes was often produced when the fences made around successive enclosures were maintained rather than being left to decay.⁶

Pharamus de Peterley "which the canons have surrounded with ditches and hedges and which, before Pharamus gave them the seisin of it, lay waste and uncultivated". The implication is clearly that the Abbey had brought the land into cultivation. A charter granting waste land to the Abbey in Chesham is headed as a grant of assart land. Again the land may have been marked-out before clearance, or an assart may have reverted to waste. It all depends on whether the heading to the charter in the cartulary was made at the same time as the grant or, as often happened, was added subsequently. J.G. Jenkins, *loc.cit.* (1946), 18, no.295.

- (1) See below, p.251-2.
- (2) Cat. Anc. Deeds, I, A404.
- (3) Ibid., A410.
- (4) J. G. Jenkins, *loc.cit.* (1938), 40, no.33.
- (5) Ibid., 41, no.34.
- (6) E.C.Vollans, *op. cit.*, 210, 222.

Undoubtedly the most characteristic product of post-Domesday clearing in the Chilterns was a mosaic of small closes, each surrounded by hedges and ditches, and scattered amongst patches of woodland. This was the pattern over most of the ridges and plateaux in the southwest and centre, and on the higher land in more remote corners of parishes in the north-east.¹ Some small closes may have been formed during the actual process of assarting, perhaps sometimes in the manner that Vollans has suggested, while others were created by the subdivision of larger units of assart land.² Some big assarts were also preserved as large arable fields.³

Land brought into cultivation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries also sometimes lay as strip fields. These were of two types - once compact units subdivided by alienation of land with them, and common fields. Assarts held in severalty by a single tenant could, like any other piece of land, be broken up into a number of open pieces by the sale, lease or gift of land from them. By 1299, the eight acre assart owned by John Poleyn in Caddington had been subdivided into three parcels of three acres, four acres and one acre, leased-out to separate tenants,⁴ while an 18 acre assart, called le Rudyng, had probably been divided in this or a similar way - it had once been in a single tenure, but, by 1299, lay in eight pieces all held by different men.⁵ There is no evidence that assarts subdivided by alienation were ever incorporated with the common arable land. Like subdivided closes in general, subdivided assarts were quite distinct from the common fields, and were probably only

(1) See below, p.312-14.

(2) e.g. at Bovington, more than 100a. of former woodland cleared by the manor was leased-out to a number of tenants, PRO SC/863/2.

(3) e.g. the demesne of the Priory of St. Giles-in-the-Wood in Flamstead included a great assart, which lay between the lawn of the convent and the hamlet of Cheverells End; another large enclosure of 74a. which lay between the great assart and land in Studham parish; and a 30a. field between Cheverells End and a marl pit, HRO 17465.

(4) St. Pauls WD 16 Liber I, f.116.

(5) Ibid., f.117d. Another example in Caddington was the 2a. and 6a. held by William Hakeny in a new assart that had formerly been in a single holding, *ibid.*, f.116d. Subdivision of a new 4a. assart in King's Walden (see above, p. 125) and of the larger enclosure in Codicote known as Reding field (see above, p. 174) through alienation by sale and lease has been followed in even closer detail.

temporary features. The separate pieces may have been brought back into a single tenure within a few years, or they may have been fenced-off from each other to make a number of smaller closes.

Common arable was, however, still being formed from freshly cleared land in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For this there is abundant circumstantial evidence but little direct proof. Some existing common fields were enlarged by the addition of strips of reclaimed land, while some completely new common fields may have been created up on the ridges and plateaux, where most assarting was now concentrated. The new Heydon field in Codicote was probably a recent extension of the old Heydon field, brought about through clearance in the wooded northern tip of the parish, while the small and regular size of much of the assart land referred to in the 1222 survey of Caddington, suggests that it had been added to the common fields there.¹ Common fields that were formed entirely during the later phases of woodland clearance were quite distinct from the older areas of common arable along the valleys below. Generally, they were smaller and less regular, and they were scattered amongst closes and patches of woodland. Their names were often suggestive of fairly recent clearings from the waste,² while others were named after families who were prominent land holders in the district in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³ This supports Vollan's suggestion that the later common fields may have been formed through the division of assart land by a lord amongst

(1) Thirteen of the 19 separate references to assarts were of units $1\frac{1}{2}$ or less in size, and of the 13 five were only one rood, W. Hale, op. cit., 1-7.

(2) There were Reding fields in Knebworth, King's Walden and Berkhamsted, Inning fields in Flamstead and King's Walden, a Stocking field in Welwyn, and a Brach field in Knebworth, see Figs. 29 and 41; HRO 21871, 21877, 21857, 21847, 21861, 59120C; BM Add. Ms. 6035.

(3) As at King's Walden. At Knebworth, three small common fields which formed a group next to the village, were known as Betons field, Laurens field and Polles field, HRO 21860, 21866. Margaret Beton and John Laurence both had holdings in Knebworth in the fourteenth century, while the Polle family had land in the neighbouring parish of Codicote, HRO 21860, BM Stowe Ms.849. Sampsonsbrech in Amersham, in which Henry Sampson held land, may be another example, J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1946), 30, no. 311.

his dependent tenants.¹

Colonisation and clearance in the Chilterns was ending during the thirteenth century to leave a pattern of cultivated land, waste and settlement that was to remain basically unchanged until the sixteenth century. It also left sharply contrasted landscapes within the Hills, in particular the contrast between the fairly open lands of the older settled valley slopes and bottoms, and the ridges and plateaux, where assarting had taken place last, and where there was an intimate intermixture of arable closes, small strip fields, woods and waste.

(1) E.C. Vollans, *op. cit.*, 233.

CHAPTER VII

FIELD SYSTEMS IN THE CHILTERNES: c.1200 - c.1550.2. THE FIELDS SYSTEMS AND ASSOCIATED FEATURESSettlement

Wherever a detailed reconstruction of settlement is possible from the medieval evidence, it is clear that the pattern was essentially the same as that shown on the early nineteenth century maps.¹ At Knebworth, on the northeastern slope of the hills, farmsteads and cottages were in the village, and in hamlets such as Broadwater to the east, and Three Houses, Crouch Green and Rusling End in the west of the parish.² At the other, the southwestern, tip of the Chilternes, the main settlement features were hamlets grouped around the edge of the great heaths, Woodcote Heath³ and Goring Heath,⁴ and large isolated farmsteads, such as the Wyfold grange of the monks of Thame,⁵ and the manor farm of Elvendon, which nestled in a steep valley cut into the scarp-face.⁶ Again, in the central Chilternes, settlement around Missenden was very much the same in the thirteenth^{centh} century as in the nineteenth. Down on the valley floor were the village with the Abbey,⁷ and scattered buildings such as Deep Mill,⁸ and what is now Ditchlands Farm;⁹ up on the plateau surface lay isolated farmsteads,¹⁰ some of them monastic

(1) As in the four detailed parish studies.

(2) HRO 21833, 21835, 21841-2, 21847-8, 21857, 21861, 21873, 21875, 21877-8 21889.

(3) H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1907), 192, no.265; H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1930a), 25, no.60; and T.R.Gambier-Parry, loc. cit. (1931), 107, no.51.

(4) Ibid., 58, no.72, 114, no.162; T.R.Gambier-Parry (ed.), "A Collection of Charters Relating to Goring, Streatley and the Neighbourhood, 1181-1546", ORS, 14 (1932), 167, no.151.

(5) H.E.Salter, loc.cit. (1947), 124, no. 177.

(6) T.R.Gambier-Parry, loc.cit.(1931), 33, no.37; *ibid.*(1932), 161, no.225.

(7) J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 35, no.30, 55, no.52, 56, no.53, 88, no.90 96, no.100, 101, no. 107.

(8) *Ibid.*, 132, no. 137.

(9) cf. the virgate called Dichelands held by the Abbey, J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1962), 226, no. 907.

(10) eg. possibly at Pirenor and at Waltringden, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 168, no. 179, 181, no. 195.

granges¹ - and wasteside nucleations.²

The pattern of mediaval settlement was, therefore, one of small towns and villages, of hamlets and isolated farmsteads. The creation of new settlements was ending during the thirteenth century, although existing centres continued to expand for a little longer. Wasteside hamlets, in particular, were enlarged,³ while some of the valley villages, especially those on main routes through the Hills, developed as local market centres. There were only three medieval towns, in the sense of boroughs with burgage tenements, within the Chilterns, and these three - High Wycombe,⁴ Amersham,⁵ and Berkhamsted - were all situated in the three largest valleys across the dip-slope. Market charters were also acquired for a few of the larger villages, as at Flamstead,⁶ Codicote and Chesham.⁷ Weekly markets, and sometimes an annual fair,⁸ were held; small traders and craftsmen were attracted; and for a while the village might experience a moderate prosperity and growth as a local market, one step above the ordinary village that existed at the centre of most Chiltern parishes.

By the second decade of the fourteenth century, even this growth and prosperity was ending to herald the beginning of a protracted period of declining settlement throughout the Hills. The first signs of contraction had appeared in some townships by 1300.⁹ As the fourteenth century progressed so references to decayed and ruined buildings increased. Peasant

(1) eg. the Abbey farm at Honor, *ibid.*, 178, no.192.

(2) The nine tenements held by the Abbey in Lee were probably around the common waste there, J.G.Jenkins, *loc.cit.* (1962), 226, no. 907; the house of Richard Sperling may have been the later Spurland End, a hamlet at Wycombe Heath, J.G.Jenkins, *loc.cit.*(1938), 130, no.136; while a house next to common wood in Little Missenden is also recorded, *ibid.*, 136, no.142. For a further account of settlement here, see E.C.Vollans, *op.cit.*, 214-16.

(3) eg. at Wheathampstead, at the turn of the century, small plots of wood and common field land were being granted to tenants for building purposes, *Westm.* 8938-9.

(4) L.J.Ashford, *op.cit.*.

(5) PRO C133/92/8. There were 57 Burgage tenements in 1299.

(6) Cal. Charter Rolls, II, 479.

(7) There was a new market place at Chesham in 1264, PRO C132/31/1.

(8) As at Codicote, at Flamstead, where the fair lasted seven days, and at Ayot, where the fair was held on St. Laurence's day, PRO C135/251/9.

(9) In the southwest, as at Ibstone and also at Woodcote in 1270, H.E.Salter *loc. cit.* (1907), 274, no.402.

cottages¹ and manor farms² alike were left untenanted and soon tumbled down; manorial mills fell into disuse and disrepair,³ their machinery stolen by thieves or damaged by vandals;⁴ while the workshops and stalls around many a small market place slowly fell to ruins.⁵ The initial reason for this decline was increasing economic stagnation. It was becoming more and more difficult to find tenants for land, and empty buildings on unoccupied holdings soon became dilapidated. Even when a tenant was found for a vacant holding, its farmstead or cottage often remained untenanted, because the new holder already had a dwelling and was more interested in the land to enlarge his existing farm, a situation which the manor sometimes tried to prevent, without much success, and sometimes accepted by granting licences for the removal of buildings.⁶ The plague of 1348-50, with its drastic and dramatic reduction of an already declining population, merely accentuated existing trends. Settlement contracted even more rapidly and on an even larger scale, and perhaps continued to contract throughout the fifteenth century until the first few decades of the sixteenth.⁷ Certainly there are continued references throughout this time to decayed and ruined tenements, and to plots where houses had once stood. In spite of this shrinkage, however, the pattern of settlement in the Hills remained basically

(1) Apart from the four parish studies, there are examples at Fawley, BM Add R.20702: West Wycombe, in 1346 and most subsequent years, particularly after 1350, HaRO Eccl.2/159356: at Chesham, BuCM.C.A., St.John the Baptist 5E.II, Easter 7E.II, Easter 4EIII, St. Barnabus 2R.II: Kings Langley, PRO SC2/177/47, St.Hillary 6R.II, Pentecost 7R.II, SS. Simon & Jude 8R.II; SC2/177/48, Annuc.b.Marie 6R.II: SC2/177/53, Pentecost 12H.IV; SC2/177/54, Concep.b.Marie 9H.VI, Annunc.b.Marie 10H.VI; SC2/178/47, Pentecost 24H.VI: Abbots Langley, particularly after 1330, Sidney Sussex, James Ms.1: at Offley, Welwyn and Knebworth, HRO 48401-2, 64390, K6: and at Bramfield, where the first example is in 1310, HRO 40702-3.

(2) As at Little Missenden in 1311, where all the buildings of the demesne farm of Holmer were in ruins, PRO C134/22; at Amersham in 1364, PRO C135/177/8; and at Wigginton in 1347, PRO C135/81/10.

(3) eg. at Ayot in 1355, PRO C135/127/17; and on the Bassetbury manor in High Wycombe in 1411, L.J.Ashford, op.cit., 50.

(4) As at Ibstone.

(5) As at Codicote and Berkhamsted.

(6) As at Codicote and at Bramfield, HRO 40703.

(7) There seem to have been some exceptions to this general picture of decay. At Amersham, a new house and farm buildings had been erected by 1420 to replace the manor house, chapel and outbuildings that lay in ruins on the demesne, PRO DL43/14/4.

the same. Some isolated farmsteads and a number of hamlets disappeared completely,¹ and many other hamlets, villages and towns shrank considerably, but they survived.² By the second half of the sixteenth century settlement was once again beginning to expand.

(1) eg. in Codicote and King's Walden; the hamlet of Horsenden in High Wycombe, L.J.Ashford, *op. cit.*, 4; Fastnidge near Wendover, BM Harl. Ms. 3688; and Syresfield in upper Watlington, VCH Oxon., 8 (1964), 225.

(2) As Berkhamsted and Codicote.

Meadow and Pasture

Meadow

One of the main problems in the type of mixed farming that was practised over much of lowland England during the Middle Ages, was difficulty in finding adequate winter fodder for the livestock. The Chilterns were no exception. Good quality grassland was as scarce in the Hills in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as it was in sixteenth century and later, and meadowland suitable for mowing for hay was in particularly short supply. The most extensive meadows were along the floodplains of the main rivers. Only there were they sufficient to meet, or even surpass, local needs.¹ Even along the floodplains, however, the quality of grass varied from place to place, and from time to time.²

(1) According to manorial extents and accounts, the demesnes with the largest amounts of meadowland were all situated in valleys with permanent streams. In the late fourteenth century, hay in excess of the requirements of the demesne of Great Gaddesden was sold, HRO 2632. The hay was mown along the floodplain of the Gade - an extent of 1322 records 42¼ a. of mowing meadow in severalty, PRO C134/73/5; while three years later there was said to be 59a., Cal Close Rolls, 1323-27, 293. Similarly, in Chenies, where the demesne included more than 20a. of meadow down by the Chess (PRO C135/44/6), hay sales were large, PRO SC6/761/4. At King's Langley, demand for winter fodder on the demesne varied considerably from year to year. In some years part of the hay crop was sold, eg. in 1307-8, 1321-22 and 1323-24, PRO SC6/866/17,26,28; while in other years winter fodder had to be bought to feed animals in the parks, eg. in 1305-6, 1312-13 and 1313-14, PRO SC6/866/16,18,19. The ideal balance seems to have been maintained at Knebworth, in the northeast, at the end of the fourteenth century. Fifteen acres of demesne meadow, situated along the floodplain of the Rhee and in a few marshy hollows, met the requirements of the manor, but none was left for sale, HRO K100,108,110,112,116. Other valley manors with substantial areas of meadow in demesne included Amersham, with 15-20a., PRO C133/92/8, C135/48/2, C135/225/9, C135/177/8; Hemel Hempstead, with 13a. in 1285, PRO C133/97; and West Wycombe, where large hay sales were also sometimes made from the demesne as in 1324, HaRO Eccl.2/159337. Labour services in these manors often included mowing, tossing, lifting and carting of hay.

(2) eg. at Great Gaddesden in 1327, and at Ayot in 1355, meadows were said to be reedy and swampy, Cal. Close Rolls, 1323-27, 293, and PRO C135/127/17; whereas at Berkhamstead, in 1357, some were dry and stony, PRO SC11/271-2.

A good harvest was not always assured.¹ A few townships in the southwest, that were situated near to the lower limit of the dip-slope, included large areas of meadowland along the Thames floodplain.² Otherwise amounts were very small. Occasional marshy hollows were sufficiently moist to support a few acres of grass suitable for mowing, as at King's Walden, but elsewhere even these did not exist, and there were many Chiltern townships that contained little or no meadowland at all.³ The most reliable indication of this scarcity was the high value that meadow commanded.⁴ Although fluctuating considerably from time to time and from place to place, meadow was consistently assessed as worth four or five times as much as arable land,⁵ and it was not affected by the fourteenth century depression of land values to the same extent.

As in the sixteenth century, the riverside meadows were usually divided between closes held in severalty and common meadows.⁶ No early evidence survives to show how the common meadows were organised. Presumably

(1) eg. at West Wycombe, hay had to be bought in a dry year such as 1299, HaRO Eccl.2/159318.

(2) eg. the demesne of the manor of Medmenham contained nearly 50a. of mowing meadow in 1264, PRO C132/31/1; while there was 32a. on the Hambleden demesne in 1368, PRO C135/196/8. These quantities were considerably larger than on most demesne holdings within the Hills.

(3) eg. at Lillie, Kensworth and Caddington in the northeast, situated high up near the crest of the escarpment, and at Ibstone in the southwest - in none of the fairly numerous documents relating to these townships is there any reference to meadowland. At Ibstone, hay was bought for the demesne farm year after year, and frequently sheaves of oats were fed to the sheep flock before winter was over. At Penn, oats were bought specifically for that purpose, BM Add. R.660.

(4) cf. the similar situation in Leicestershire, R.H.Hilton, loc.cit.(1954), 74

(5) At its highest value, meadow was worth sixteen times as much as arable land in the same holding. This was at Amersham, where meadow was valued at 4s. the acre in 1337 compared with 3d. an acre for arable land, PRO C133/48/. At its lowest value, meadow was worth one and a half times as much as the arable: eg. at Hemel Hempstead in 1304, when demesne meadow was worth 6d. an acre compared with 4d. an acre for the arable, PRO C133/197.

(6) eg. at Codicote, meadow along the floodplain of the Rhee lay both in hedged closes and in strip fields, as did the meadows of Kings and Abbots Langley along the Gade, PRO SC2/177/47-55 and Sidney Sussex James Ms.1. In High Wycombe, West and East Meads were common meadows in the thirteenth century, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1962), 114, no.710, 116, no.712, and A.Clark(ed.) "The English Register of Godstow Nunnery near Oxford", Early English Text Society, 129(1905), 117, no.131. At Chesham in 1332, 4a. of demesne meadow lay in severalty only during the growing season, PRO C135/28/17.

they were thrown open to common grazing after haymaking, but the first references to this practice are not until after 1500. The right to graze demesne meadows held in severalty was also often leased out to tenants.¹ Meadow closes and strips were sometimes held by men living in all parts of a township, as at Codicote, even although the rest of the holding was two or three miles away at the other end of the parish,² further proof of the demand for meadowland.

Pasture

For the ordinary peasant farmer, pasture (that is grassland for grazing rather than for mowing as hay) was almost as scarce. The greatest amounts lay within the parks, the character of many of which was the same as in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Grass "lawns" surrounded a manor house and often extended between areas of woodland, and smaller stands of timber were scattered in dells and groves, the whole being enclosed by wooden fences or by hedges.³ The number and area of the medieval parks was not as great as it was later to become, because many of the later parks were still being cultivated as arable demesne intermixed with small woods.⁴ Nonetheless, the total area of enclosed parkland throughout the Chilterns must have been considerable, even as early as 1300, and during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries imparkment of fresh land was continuing.

(1) As at West Wycombe in 1296 and 1346, HaRO Eccl.2/159315, 159356; Chenies PRO SC6/761/4; at Great Gaddesden, HRO 2632; and Hemel Hempstead, PRO SC6/863/2.

(2) Similarly, tenants of land at Kingshill, on the plateau above Missenden had meadow holdings down on the floodplain of the Misbourne, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 113, no.119,115, no.120,117, no.122, 119, no.124.

(3) eg. at Chesham, PRO C132/31/1, C135/28/14; Penn, PRO C134/97/4; West Wycombe, HaRO Eccl.2/159339; Kings Langley, PRO SC6/866/25; Knebworth, HRO K108; and Ibstone.

(4) eg. Beechwood in Flamstead, HRO 17466-7; the park in Great Gaddesden, Cal. Close Rolls, 1323-27, 293; and the park of King's Walden Bury.

both to extend existing parks and create new ones.¹ This pasture was usually reserved for beasts of the chase,² but sometimes demesne herds and flocks were grazed, as at Ibstone, and rights to pasture were leased out to tenants.³

Apart from the parks, the main pastures were the patches of poorer grassland along the floodplains that were unsuitable for hay,⁴ some of which were open to common grazing.⁵ There were also extensive grassland pastures lying in closes on the upper dip-slope, perhaps on land unfit for continuous arable cultivation, and which were quite distinct from the open common downs of the scarp-face and actual summit of the escarpment.⁶ Sometimes, however, pasture closes were also open to common grazing for

(1) As at Fingest, Great Hampden and Ashridge, see below, p.353; and at Elvendon in upper Goring in 1350, T.R.Gambier-Parry, loc.cit. (1931), 121, no. 173.

(2) eg. pasture in the park at Penn was without value in 1316 "because beasts of the chase exist in the said park and depasture the said pasture", PRO C134/97/4; and at Chenies, grazing in the park supported only deer, PRO C135/44/6. Occasionally, even parkland pasturage was insufficient for these animals: eg. at Chesham in 1332, PRO C135/28/27; and at Kings Langley, where hay was sometimes bought to feed animals in the parks, as in 1312-13 and 1313-14, PRO SC6/866/18-19. For a time these included a camel, for which fodder was bought especially, as in 1322-23 and 1325-26, PRO SC6/866/27, 29.

(3) eg. dues received from this source are a regular feature throughout the fourteenth century accounts for West Wycombe and Knebworth. At Kings Langley, a limited number of tenant livestock was allowed in the parks in some years, eg. 1305-6, PRO SC6/866/16; while in others they were excluded entirely, eg. 1312-13, PRO SC6/866/18.

(4) eg. the 43a. of pasture on the demesne of Hemel Hempstead in 1304, PRO C133/97; and the 24a. of several pasture in the Great Gaddesden demesne in 1322, PRO C134/73/5, were probably in closes along the floodplains of the Bulbourne and the Gade. The Codicote demesne included pasture alongside the Rhee that was quite distinct from the meadow there, while at Medmenham, the large area of Thameside pasture was clearly distinguished, in an extent of 1326, from the 30a. of meadow on the demesne, PRO C134/98/1.

(5) eg. the Moor along the Chess at Chesham was common land in the fourteenth century, BuCM C.A., St. Nicholas 10R.II; and was first mentioned as early as c. 1190, when it was said to lie next to marsh, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1946), 1, no.266. The common pasture called the Rye, along the Wye at High Wycombe, is mentioned in an early thirteenth century charter, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1962), 119, no.716; while the 29a. of pasture in Great Missenden, that was described in 1333 as lying in common, was probably another moor, PRO C135/32/28.

(6) eg. the manorial demesne of Buckland, centred in the Vale below, included 40a. of "stony land above the hill in Chiltern", part of which

at least part of the year - a pasture called Southull in Offley lay in severalty from February to August, while four acres on the Chesham demesne was enclosed from March to August.¹

In many Chiltern townships, amounts of permanent pasture, especially that available to the ordinary farmer, were small. Often, the only permanent grass of any kind was in small closes and orchards near to the farmsteads and cottages, and in hedgerows, greenways and roadside verges.² As with meadowland, the general scarcity of grass pastures is best indicated by the relatively high values that the better ones commanded. Enclosed pastures were often worth twice as much as arable land on the same farm, and sometimes much more.³ The common pasture of the riverside "moors" and the poor quality grassland closes of the upper dip-slope were, on the other hand, low in value.

The general shortage of pasture was relieved temporarily from time to time, and from place to place, during the fourteenth century. The manor was experiencing increasing difficulty in finding tenants for land which had reverted to it, and vacant holdings were often turned to pasture and leased-out.⁴ The greatest increase in pasture occurred in the years

lay in severalty and was valued as pasture, PRO C135/37/22. There was another large enclosed pasture, called Launde, in Offley, high up on a ridge near to the Chalk crest, PRO C134/101/10; HRO 28836.

(1) PRO C134/101/10

(2) eg. at Caddington in 1222, there was said to be no pasture except that in woods and ways, while in neighbouring Kensworth even this was absent, W.Hale, op.cit. 1 and 7. Eight acres of the 14a. of pasture on the manor farm of Lee in 1332 lay in hedgerow pieces, a roadside verge and in a woodland grove, while the manor farm at Dundridge contained neither meadow nor pasture in that year, BM Harl. Ms.3588. The only pasture on the 130a. demesne of Wigginton, a few years later, was in a close next to the farm buildings, PRO C135/81/10. At West Wycombe, the manor leased-out grazing in hedgerows, footpaths and roads as well as in the park and on the meadow after mowing, eg. in 1346, HaRO Eccl. 2/159356.

(3) eg. at Hambleton in 1319, demesne pasture was worth eight times as much per acre as the arable, PRO C134/63/10.

(4) eg. at Kings Langley in 1324, PRO SC6/866/25.

after the epidemic of 1348-9. Large areas of arable land tumbled to pasture throughout the Chilterns - complete demesne fields that were left uncropped for several seasons, and complete tenant holdings retained by the manor, were leased-out as pasturage.¹ But, in most manors, the leases were made on an annual basis. Tenants had usually been found for vacant holdings within a few years, and demesne fields were either farmed-out permanently or returned to arable cropping.

(1) As at Codicote and Ibstone.

The Arable Fields.

The evidence of the four detailed parish studies is that the medieval pattern of arable fields in all parts of the Chilterns was essentially the same as that in the sixteenth century. In particular, the large areas of enclosed arable land, and the multiplicity of relatively small common fields, were both long-standing features. In 1250, this fairly complex pattern had only recently evolved, and in some cases was still evolving. By 1550, it had been firmly established for several centuries, and was on the verge of gradual disintegration. This, perhaps, is the crux of any study of Chiltern field systems.

The Enclosed Arable Fields.

Land cleared from the waste during the later stages of medieval colonisation was often enclosed directly into severalty, and by the thirteenth century the field pattern in many townships comprised both common arable land and substantial amounts of enclosed arable.¹ Some demesne and tenant holdings were entirely enclosed, while others combined several with common arable. The proportion of arable in severalty was greatest in the southwest, where a few townships contained only enclosed land, while common arable became more prominent towards the northeast, where more than half of the arable in some townships was in common fields, a difference that reflected the generally later date of clearance towards the southwest.

Most often, arable closes were scattered amongst the surviving woods and wastes. A mixture of enclosed arable and wood had become the dominant pattern of land-use in many parts of the Hills. This was the landscape of much of the southwest, of the plateaux surface and ridge-tops of the central Chilterns, of the higher and more remote parts of townships in

(1) Enclosed arable had appeared in documents for many townships before the end of the twelfth century: eg. the whole cultura next to Nuffield church in the southwest c. 1180, T.R.Gambier-Parry, loc. cit.(1931), 1, no.1 and 55a. lying in four crofts in Langley in the northeast c. 1200, PRO CP25(1)/84/4/41.

the northeast, and of areas near to the Chalk crest for the whole length of the Hills. At the southwestern end of the region, the intimate intermixture of arable and wood that characterised the area around Wyfold¹ and Hawe² near the boundary between dip-slope and gravel terraces, was also found on the scarp-face and crest, around Elvendon and Applehanger, a few miles away, where heathland was yet another element.³ The woods and heaths here were far more extensive than the cultivated area. Arable closes formed an island of cultivation surrounded by woods in upper Pyrton, while at Ibstone, where some customary units of tenure were a single close, wood and arable sometimes lay together in one enclosure. Common fields were strung along the slopes and bottoms of the valleys of the Wye⁵ and the Misbourne,⁶ and were also found in some tributary valleys,⁷ but on the intervening plateau surface almost all the arable was enclosed, and scattered amongst extensive woods and wastes.⁸ An intermixture of closes and woods was the landscape, too, of the ridge south of the Bulbourne in Berkhamsted, of the higher northwestern part of Flamstead around the Priory

(1) H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1930b), 192; loc.cit. (1947), 115, no.163,124, no.177, 125, no.178.

(2) Hawe is in upper Goring east of the Heath (cf. present Haw Farm), T.R.Gambier-Parry, loc.cit. (1931), 38, no.44, 114, no.229.

(3) Ibid., 1, no.1, 3, no.2, 25, no.28, 27, no.30, 64, no.80, 80, no.104, 88, no.118, 105, no.148, 107, no.151, 122, no.176, 124, no.177.

(4) Around the hamlet of Lauenora (cf. present Lauenders), H.E.Salter, (ed.), "Cartulary of Osney Abbey, Vol.IV", OHS, 97 (1934), 421-3, nos.396-7.

(5) J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1962), 114-9, nos.710-16,122,no.720; CCA Cap. I/15 DRO 83/1/15.

(6) See below, p.321.

(7) eg. at the junction of three valleys north of Hughenden, E.C.Vollans, op.cit., 200, 210-12.

(8) The intermixture of wood and enclosed arable is particularly clearly illustrated in the district of Kingshill, where fairly large woods, such as Kokkeswude, Nairdswode, Peterley wood and Prestwood, lay next to cultivated land and other wood, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1938),39, no.32,67, no.66, 130-3, no.136-7, 152, no.160, 166, no.177, 173-4, nos.185-6. For further details, see E.C.Vollans, op.cit., 206-16.

of St.Giles,¹ and of the higher northern end of Codicote; in other words in all those areas where land had been brought into cultivation during the final phases of woodland clearance.

The intermixture of enclosed arable and woodland was nowhere more marked than in the features that E.C.Vollans has termed "cultivated groves", that is an intermixture of cultivated land and wood in a single enclosed unit.² E.C.Vollans has suggested that they were a product of selective clearing within an area of woodland enclosed from the waste - the better land was taken into cultivation, while the steeper slopes were left under wood. Many cultivated groves were situated on valley slopes and, while they occurred throughout the Chilterns, they were most numerous in the centre and the southwest.³

The manorial extents and accounts also stress the importance of enclosed arable land in the medieval field pattern. The arable was completely enclosed on twelve⁴ of the 19 demesne farms for which there are detailed descriptions of the cultivated area, while on the remaining seven, where common and several arable were combined, proportions in the latter were often high.⁵

Two distinct types of closes had appeared on most manors by the thirteenth century. On the one hand, huge demesne fields, each sometimes 50-100 acres or more, often occupied some of the best land in a township. Their size reflected the importance of arable cultivation in demesne farming. The 840 acre arable demesne at Flamstead, in 1264, was divided

(1) HRO 17465.

(2) E.C.Vollans, *op.cit.*, 220.

(3) eg. a pasture grove at Lee, BM Harl. Ms.3688; an arable grove in High Wycombe, J.G.Jenkins. *loc.cit.*(1962), 119, no.716; and various Ibstone examples.

(4) Stonor, PRO SC6/1248/16; Ibstone; West Wycombe, eg.HaRO Eccl.2/159295 Fastnidge, BM Harl. Ms.3688; Lee, *ibid.*; Dundridge, *ibid.*; Penn, BM Add.R. 659-60; Chenies, PRO SC6/761/4; Berkhamsted; Flamstead, PRO C132/31/3; Kings Langley, PRO SC6/866/18-29; and Cissevernes in Codicote.

(5) Great Missenden, see below, p.345; Shortgrave in upper Totternhoe, BM Harl.Ms.1885,f.76d; Kinsbourne in Harpenden, Appendix O; Offley, PRO C134. 101/10; King's Walden; Knebworth, Appendix O; and Codicote.

into three great fields of approximately equal size,¹ but this was exceptionally large. More typical, was the average size of the arable fields on the Missenden Abbey demesne at Lee in 1335 - this was fifty acres, individual fields ranging from twelve to twenty acres.² On most demesnes, after about 1300, the larger enclosed fields were usually subdivided into a number of blocks or strips for cropping purposes. A single field might contain land under a variety of crops and in two or three different courses.³

On the other hand, there were the small hedged tenant closes, usually less than five acres in size, and rarely larger than ten acres. These lay around the settlements, but also extended across more substantial areas in most townships, particularly towards the southwest. Like the demesne fields, they were sometimes subdivided for cropping, and they were also sometimes broken down into a pattern of open strips in mixed ownership through alienation of land within them, usually by gift, sale or leases, but also occasionally as a result of inheritance or succession to land. Subdivision was generally only temporary, although smaller closes were sometimes formed when the alienated parcels were fenced-off. Strip fields formed in this way were quite distinct from the common arable fields.

By the sixteenth century, many of the great demesne enclosures had been broken-up into a network of smaller closes, although these were still substantially larger than the body of tenant closes (Table II). Little evidence of the actual divisions survive - at Berkhamsted the main change was not until about 1600.

(1) PRO C132/31/3.

(2) BM Harl. Ms. 3688. Sizes of some other enclosed demesne fields include an average of 12a. at Dundridge and 25½a. at Missenden in 1335, *ibid.*; of about 100a. at Berkhamsted; and 28½ a. at Codicote in 1332. At Kings Langley, Home field, Haylond and Great field contained at least 108½ a., 59a. and 56a. respectively, while at Chenies, Benorethgrove, Park field and Michelfield were at least 52a., 44a. and 57a., Appendix O.

(3) See below, p.343.

(4) See above, p.291.

The Common Arable.

Identification and Distribution:- The distribution of common arable land in the Chilterns c. 1300 was essentially the same as that c.1600. Some common fields had been enclosed by the beginning of the sixteenth century but the amounts involved were small when compared with the extent of enclosure after 1550.

The identification of common field land in the medieval evidence is complicated by at least three factors. First, there is the problem of interpreting statements in the extents of the inquisitiones post mortem to the effect that unsown arable demesne was open to common grazing, a formula that has sometimes been accepted as indicating the existence of common fields.¹ If this interpretation is adopted for the extents of Chiltern manors, then the area of common arable in the Hills in the fourteenth century would appear to be significantly greater than in the sixteenth century. For example, a Wigginton inquisition of 1347 describes the entire 120 acre arable demesne as lying in common when unsown,² yet there is no later evidence of common fields in the township. Similarly, one third of the 180 acre arable demesne of the manor of Amersham was said, in 1341, to lie common every year - there was no reference to any land in severalty³ - whereas the amounts of common field land in Amersham by 1600 were small.⁴

(1) eg. by H.P.R.Finberg, "Open fields in Devon", 23 (1949), 185; and P.F.Brandon, "The common lands and wastes of Sussex", University of London Ph.D. Thesis, (1957), 218. Gray himself was very careful in his interpretation of these statements. He concluded that if the arable demesne was described as lying one half or one third fallow each year, with the fallow land commonable, this can be taken as evidence of a two- or three-field system. But he made the important provision that such an assumption was only warranted if "other testimony shows the system to have been characteristic of the region in question", H.L.Gray, op.cit., 46. This was not the case in the Chilterns.

(2) PRO C135/81/10.

(3) PRO C135/92/8.

(4) A similar pattern emerges from a comparison of fourteenth century Chesham extents (according to an extent of 1332 only 4a. of meadow was in severalty, while the 100a. of arable was in common, PRO C135/28/17) and fifteenth and seventeenth century rentals, BM Cotton Ms Galba Eiii; BuCM 76a/48, 15/56; and G.Eland (ed.), "The Shardeloes Muniments", RB, 14 (1941-46), 210-35.

But it is clear, from comparisons of inquisitions and other contemporary evidence that statements that demesne arable lay in common, or was subject to common grazing, are not usually reliable indications of the amount of common arable land. A 200 acre farm at Stonor was in common for the whole year, according to an extent of 1355,¹ whereas manorial accounts for 1388 suggest that this land was entirely enclosed.² There are two possible explanations. On the one hand, the statements of the inquisitiones post mortem may be false. They are notoriously unreliable as a source of information,³ and the fact that common arable was usually lower in value than arable in severalty would be an incentive for falsification. On the other hand, the phrase "in common" may not necessarily have referred to land in common strip fields - tenants may have held rights of common pasture over the demesne fallow even although this was enclosed, as was certainly the case on some manors in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁴ For whatever reason, the statements of the inquisitions are often ambiguous, and they can be relied upon as evidence of common arable land only when land in severalty and that in common are clearly distinguished.⁵

A second factor which tends to confuse any assessment of the real extent of common and enclosed arable, and of the number of common fields in a township, was a frequent ambiguity in the use of terms to describe arable land. In particular, as is clear from the parish studies, cultura, quarentena and furlonga were applied indiscriminately to enclosed fields, common fields and units of strips within the common fields alike. The whole cultura (tota cultura) that lay "on the hills of Whipsnade", and that was leased-out in its entirety in the early thirteenth century, was an enclosed field;⁶ the Longfurlongs in Great Gaddesden⁷ and Studham⁸

(1) PRO C135/128/11.

(2) PRO SC6/1248/15.

(3) cf. R.H.Hilton, loc.cit. (1954), 162.

(4) See below, p.335-6.

(5) As at Offley in 1327 and 1336, PRO C134/101/10, C135/42/18.

(6) BM Harl.Ms.1885,ff.46 and 60d. Another example is the cultura called Budewe in a single holding in Knebworth in the thirteenth century, HRO K149d

(7) HRO 1163, 12668.

(8) BM Harl.Ms.1885,ff.54,58,60d. The field was also known as Longyard. Another example is the reference to Schalcroft in Knebworth as quarentena, in 1408, cf. HRO 21920 with 21872, 21861, 21890 and 21923.

were complete common fields; while other furlongs, such as Middle furlong in Dene field in Chesham,¹ were just as clearly subdivisions within a larger field. In many cases, however, it is not clear whether the common arable cultura described a common field or a unit within one,² or even if the land was enclosed or in common.³ Again, terms such as "selion" or "headland" need not apply to common arable land - these were ploughing units, and as such were to be found in arable of all types - while "croft" and "field" were used for both enclosed and common fields, often even for the same unit.

Thirdly, strip fields were not always common fields. Some were closes subdivided by alienation or for cropping, and it is often difficult to distinguish these from the common fields in the documentary evidence. The problem is complicated further when the land involved was a selion or a headland, or is described as lying in a cultura, with all the ambiguities that the occurrence of these terms imply. Thus the plot of land in the cultura called Sampsonesbrech in Amersham,⁴ or the selion in Fulkescroft

(1) J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1946),22,no.302. Other examples include furlongs in three common fields in High Wycombe, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1962), 114-116, nos.710-12; the stadium called Northden in Sedcop field in Wheathampstead, Westm.8941,Nov.8R.II; the cultura called Crokesdane in Bradewater field in Knebworth, HRO 21893; and Longfurlong in Eldfeld in Hughenden, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 139, no.146.

(2) eg. land in the cultura called Mynnesburgh and Hungerhill in Offley, HRO 28869; Goswellforlong in Hemel Hempstead, J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit.(1962), 73, no.381; Ruggedfurlong near Missenden, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1938),139, no.146; and le Hambechforlong and the cultura of Fittenham in Hampden, BuCM 548/39, 558/39. A similar confusion has been noted in the West Midlands and Lancashire, R.H.Hilton, loc.cit.(1960),lv; and G.Youd, "The common fields of Lancashire", Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire 113 (1961),8.

(3) eg. groups of three culturae in Missenden, Kingshill and Chesham, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1938),36, no.30 and 85, no.86; and *ibid.*, (1946),9, no.279; a cultura called Critwelland in Chesham, *ibid.*, 20,no.298; the quarentena called Six Acres at Missenden, *ibid.*, (1962),225,no.906; the cultura called Redingham in Little Gaddesden, PRO CP25(1)/84/85; and Restchemereforlong in Knebworth, HRO K149d.

(4) J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1938), 30, no.31.

in Little Missenden,¹ may have been pieces of land in common fields, or the grants may have been alienations in enclosed fields that had previously lain in single holdings. Often, it is even difficult to distinguish strip fields from undivided closes, because land in both types of fields was described in the same way.²

The existence of a common arable field can be established in each case only after a careful examination of the available evidence. One reference is not usually enough, unless the field is specifically described as a common field, or can be identified with a later common field. Otherwise a sequence of references to different small, but fairly regular, pieces of land in varied ownership, in a single unit, is necessary. Any attempt to delimit areas of common arable in the Chilterns largely on the basis of terminology cannot be realistic.

After taking these various factors into consideration, it is clear that the basic distribution of common arable land in the Hills in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was essentially the same as that described in the Tudor and Jacobean surveys, court rolls and deeds. The extent of the common fields was fairly constant at all times between 1250 and 1550, in all those townships for which there is detailed evidence.³

(1) Ibid., 136, no.142.

(2) In particular, phrases such as "land in a field called....." were used to describe enclosed fields as well as land in common fields, eg. at Codicote, 3a transferred in 1291 was described as "in le Wocroft", while less than a year later the same land was referred to as "one croft which is called le Wowecroft and lies between the land of the lord Abbot and the highway between Codicote and Hitchin", BM Stowe Ms.849, ff.21-21d. Similarly, "2a. lying in le Brach" is recorded in 1291, but in 1336 "one croft called le Brach" is referred to, and it is clear from an entry in 1370 that le Brach was simply a two acre croft - it was described as "one croft enclosed by hedges and ditches containing 2a. called le Brache", *ibid.*, ff.20d, 62, 100.

(3) At King's Walden, Codicote, Knebworth, Bramfield, Kings Langley, Abbots Langley, and possibly Welwyn and Great Gaddesden.

The Nature of the Common Arable:- The common arable strips were tenurial units, and as such they could comprise one or a number of plough ridges.¹ One acre and half an acre were the most usual sizes for strips throughout the medieval Chilterns, although any combination of roods less than one acre occurred widely. Only four of the 34 separate strips that are described in thirteenth and fourteenth charters for Knebworth were larger than one acre,² while 16 out of twenty strips that are described for Offley were one acre or less,³ and at Great Gaddesden, only one out of eleven pieces exceeded this size.⁴ Strips were often grouped into furlongs, but the evidence relating to these is confused,⁵ and the most important combination of strips was usually the common field.

As three of the parish studies clearly show, the common arable of a typical township was divided into numerous, relatively small fields, which can often be identified individually with the sixteenth century common fields.⁶ The thirteenth century pattern was very much that of the sixteenth

(1) See below, p.332.

(2) HRO K149d, 21842, 21847-8, 21857, 21860, 21869, 21877.

(3) HRO 28711, 28725, 28734, 28756, 28787, 28869, 35500, DE138; and BM Add. Ch. 28756.

(4) HRO 12667-8, 12670-1, 12673.

(5) See above, pp.317-18.

(6) eg. there were at least 14 common fields at Bramfield viz. Bradecroft, Brodefeld, Gorwellefeld, Goswellehullfeld, Hillesmerefeld, Rowecroft, Ruecroft, Sandesputtefeld, Sharpecroft, Shitesdell, Slidedellfeld, Spruntesfeld, and Tonmanfeld, HRO 40702-3: at least ten in Welwyn c.1300, viz. Hynewi (cf. the seventeenth century Hennok field, HRO 49151), Fincheshoe (Finchley) Grondehelle (Groundell), Welwe, Stocking, Crabtree, Lynch, Stonydene, Keteshul, le Frith and Wylkenescroft, HRO 59116-17, 59119, 591920A,B,C, 59123-35, 59412A, 59042, 63718, 64390: 16 of the common fields mentioned in sixteenth and seventeenth century court rolls for Knebworth can be traced in medieval charters, viz. Blackpit (Blackwell), Bradecroft, Haynesdell (Houndesdell), Redinghale (Rotynghale), Brache, Chalvecroft (Chalkcroft, Schalcroft), Dene (Dane, Dann), Bradeleye, Stonecroft, Manersdell (Masedell), Bradewater, Madwell, Rowecroft, Pollesfield, Betonscroft and Laurensfield, HRO K149, 21833, 21835, 21840-1, 21847-8, 21851, 21877-8, 21875, 21871-3, 21857, 21860-1, 21866, 21889-90, 21893, 21920, 21923, and 21941 (cf. HRO K7-20 and 46655B, 4725-9 for the sixteenth and seventeenth century common fields): thirteenth century common fields in Offley were as numerous as those three centuries later, BM Add. Ch. 28756; HRO 28711, 28723, 28725, 28734, 28756, 28787, 28869, 35500-1, 48402, DE138, DE140: at least 15 of the sixteenth century common fields in Wheathampstead-cum-Harpenden are named in fourteenth century court

century - even anomalies in the sixteenth century arrangements had sometimes already existed for 300 years.¹

There were two types of common arable fields in the Chilterns about 1300. On the one hand, larger, more regular units made up the fairly extensive tracts which stretched along the valley slopes and the lower land, and, in parts, extended to the edge of the plateau above. They had simple descriptive names, although these were sometimes changed for more

rolls and accounts, viz. Rileys, Settecoppe (Sedcop), Heath, Pyrecroft, Mandelond, North, Brode, Oxcroft, West, Thorp, Fosters, Blakenhalecroft, Longcroft and Wig fields, Westm. 8810, 8937A, 8938-42: the common arable of Kings Langley lay in seven fields in the fourteenth century as in 1555, PRO SC2/177/47-55, cf. HRO 20123: at least a dozen common fields are named in the Abbots Langley court book, Sidney Sussex James Ms. 1: 12 of the 17 or more common fields that existed in Great Gaddesden in the sixteenth century are described two centuries earlier, viz. Birchleye, Netherferthing, Longfurlong, Rowepit (Pitcroft?), Stony, Mill, Birch, Halfhide, North, Down, (Dunn), Tagsend, Geremere (Garmore, Chermore) fields, HRO 12667-8, 12670-3 2624-6, 1163: and there were at least five common fields in Great and Little Hampden c. 1300, viz. Belle (Ball), Frith, Folkerdene, South, Hopemannveld and Grenemile fields (some of these fields were probably enclosed with the creation of the park in 1447), BuCK 547/39, 549/39, 551/39, 558/39. It is difficult to link the numerous common fields of medieval Chesham, but Dene field, White Hawridge, Westdene and Church field can be traced in the seventeenth century, BuCM C.A. and 126/36; BM Cotton Ms. Galba Eiii; J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1946), 16, no.293, 22, no. 302.

(1) eg. at Kensworth, the individual common field appears to have been unimportant in the late thirteenth century, as in the early seventeenth century - descriptions of common arable at both periods make no reference to fields, BM Add.Ch. 7373, 19939-44; Cat.Anc.Deeds, I, C607-8, 621, 744, 1056, 1074, 1095, 1451, 1541; II, X2532; III, C3006. In addition, a large number of individual common fields can be identified with sixteenth or seventeenth century common fields, such as the fourteenth century Smith field in Kimpton, cf. BM Add. Ch. 1989 with HRO 48439; le Haut in Luton West Hide, cf. Cat. Anc. Deeds, I, C1325 with HRO 41419; Longfurlong (Longyard), Pedley field, Haycroft, (Haydon?) and Feldmere in Studham, cf. BM Harl. Ms.1885, ff.13d, 54, 52d, 58, 60d with BdRO DD.BW 972, 966-9. The early thirteenth century Clenemesfield in Amersham was the Claremore field of the Enclosure Map, J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1946), 30, no.310, and BuRO IR/12a; while Heaven field and Wide field in Great Missenden appear in both fourteenth and sixteenth century documents, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1933), 68, no.67; Bod.Mss.Ch.Bucks.1339; BM. Harl. Ms.3688; PRO E315/405, ff.27-30 and E315/406. There was a common field on the crest of the Hills above Totternh Down in the fourteenth century as in the nineteenth, BM Harl.Ms.1885, f.76d and Tithe Map.

complex forms in the thirteenth century or later,¹ and they were probably some of the first land in the Chilterns to be brought into continuous cultivation. Towards the southwest, the size of the common fields in the valleys was often severely limited by steepness of slope and constriction of the valley bottoms. At High Wycombe, common arable land extended along the steep slopes on both sides of the Wye and penetrated up tributary dry valleys - Haw field stretched in this way on to the plateau surface - while the most difficult slopes were left under wood. As a result there was a series of elongated common fields.²

On the other hand, smaller, less regular common fields were scattered over the plateaux and ridge-tops amongst the closes, woodlands and wastes there. In the thirteenth century, these fields had probably been cleared for cultivation only recently.³ The distinction between the two types of common fields is particularly strong at King's Walden, while in the Missenden area, the small Hiconescroft⁴ and Ruicroft,⁵ which may have lain on the plateau south of the Misbourne, contrasted with the belts of common arable along the valleys of the Wye and the Misbourne, and with the minor cluster of fields in the Hughenden valley.⁶ Differences such as these were becoming blurred by 1600.⁷

(1) eg. the early thirteenth century West field in High Wycombe had become Gynaunts field before the end of the century, CCA Cap.I/15, DRO 83/1/15.

(2) CCA Cap. I/29/7, ff.2-60.

(3) See above, p.300.

(4) J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 156, no.165.

(5) Ibid., 171, no. 183.

(6) See above, p.313.

(7) But the pattern was still clear at Flamstead in the seventeenth century, where small common fields were scattered along the high land rising towards the parish boundary in the southwestern part of the township, while the common fields lower down the slope towards the Ver and in the northeastern half of the parish, were generally larger and more regular, BM Add.Ms.6035. At High Wycombe, small common fields on the plateau south of the Wye were still distinct from the tract of common arable along the fairly steep valley slopes. One of the small common fields, Great Asheridge, lay next to a block of closes known as Riddings, CCA Cap. I/29/7, ff. 2-60.

Thirteenth and early fourteenth century evidence suggests that the numerous common fields in some townships had once been, and perhaps still were, organised into separate and distinct groups. These might be based on hamlets, which had retained some measure of economic independence, or on manors. The evidence for King's Walden has already been examined in detail - there the central area of long-cultivated arable was divided into the fields of the village and three hamlets. At Knebworth, the hamlet of Three Houses was a distinct subdivision with eight common fields in the west of the parish;¹ another group of fields, on the eastern side of the parish, was probably part of the field system of the hamlet of Broadwater;² while the village of Knebworth itself held only three common fields immediately south of the settlement.³ As late as the eighteenth century, individual common arable holdings in the parish were confined to only one of these three sets of fields.⁴ Similarly, the village of Offley,⁵ and four hamlets,⁶ may each have had common fields of their own within the parish of Offley, while the division of Studham parish that was known as Bareworth, and that had its own chapel may also have contained a common field system independent from that of Studham itself⁷ - there were still

(1) Two pieces of land granted in 1332 by John ate Threhous, were described as lying "within the parish of Knebworth in diverse fields of le Threhous", HRO 21877; while, in 1312, John de Kyrketon had granted away all his land of le Threhousland, which lay in five of the eight common fields, HRO 21871. The five were Redinghale, Brache, Chalvecroft, Blackwell and Dene fields. The remaining three fields of Three Houses were Houndesdell, Bradeleye and Manersdelle, HRO 21841. The settlement was also distinguished as the "hamlet of Threhous of the parish of Knebworth" in 1337, HRO 21842.

(2) They included Broadwater field, HRO 21840, 21893.

(3) viz. Betons, Laurens and Polles field, HRO 21860, 21866.

(4) See above, p. 44.

(5) HRO DE135.

(6) The hamlets are Putteridge, Mangrave and Wells. There are fourteenth century references to land "in the field of Potherugge", BM Add. Ch.23756; "in the field of Manesgrove in the parish of Offley", HRO 35500; and "above Arnoldesbrade in the field of Welles in the parish of Great Offley", HRO DE13 DE140. Land in Putteridge, Mangrave and Godley (another Offley hamlet) was described in 1240 without reference to the parish, suggesting that the hamlet themselves were the more important units, PRO CP25(1)/84/18, nos. 251, 262.

(7) BM Harl. Ms. 1885, ff.13d, 60d. The common fields of Bareworth were those in the southern half of the parish.

two groups of common fields in the parish in the nineteenth century, with no tenant holding land in both.¹ Again, there is some evidence that the hamlets of Felden in Hemel Hempstead² and Stoke in Amersham³ were associated with distinct areas of common arable within their respective parishes. At High Wycombe, on the other hand, the common fields along the slopes of the Wye valley may have been grouped within separate manors, rather than hamlets. The manor known as Gynaunts Fee contained three complete common fields,⁴ which may have been the basis of a simple three-field cropping arrangement within the manor.⁵

The early subdivision of a township into a number of territorial units, each with their own set of common fields, was linked with the pattern of colonisation in the Chilterns. The most likely sequence of events was

(1) See above, p.44.

(2) A grant to Missenden Abbey c. 1225 comprised 4½ a. "in the field of Feldende". This included pieces in the common fields called Mulefeld (Mulnefeld) and Sudfeld (Suthfeld), and in Golswelleforlong, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1946), 73, no 381; cf. also ibid., 70, no.376, 72-5, nos. 379-84.

(3) Ibid., 30, no. 310.

(4) Grants made by Elias Gynaunt to Missenden Abbey c.1200, refer to land in his three fields called East field, Middle field and West field. It is clear, from the descriptions of land, and in particular from references to furlongs within the fields, that these were typical common fields. It is equally clear that the three fields which belonged to this manor, were only a few of many along the Wye valley in the parish - they were probably the fields known in the early seventeenth century and later as Pinions, Guinions and Long fields. J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1962), 114-6, nos. 710-12, 118-9, nos. 715-6; CCA Cap. I/15, DRO 83/1/15, Cap.I/29/1.

(5) Similar multiple field systems existed in some of the Vale parishes in the Middle Ages. In Chinnor parish, there were three sets of open fields, namely the two or three fields of Chinnor itself, the three fields of Henton hamlet, and the two fields of Wainhill hamlet; in Aston Rowant parish, Kingston and Aston each had their own common field systems; while in Lewknor parish, Lewknor village had two, and later three common fields, and Postcombe had three open fields, VCH Oxon., 8 (1964), 28, 66-7, 105. In Goring parish, Gathampton and Goring each had their own separate group of fields, T.R.Gambier-Parry, loc.cit. (1931), 13, no.14, 62, No.78; ibid., (1932), 188, no.259,191, no.262; and Stoke and Woodcote in South Stoke parish had separate field systems, H.E.Salter, loc. cit. (1908), 118-34, nos.673-4.

that the earliest clearing emanated from numerous small settlements along the main valleys, so that each village and hamlet had its own separate area of common arable land contiguous with that of neighbouring settlements. Sometimes the common arable was in a single field, as perhaps in some of the hamlets of Offley; sometimes a three-field system existed, as in Gynaunts Fee; and sometimes the common arable was divided between a larger number of common fields, as the eight of Three Houses in Knebworth. Differences in field numbers may have reflected different phases of colonisation. The common arable in Gynaunts Fee was early cleared valley bottom and valley slope land,¹ whereas the numerous common fields of Three Houses were probably a product of the later phases of forest clearance.² The groups of common fields in a township, that are sometimes discernible in the sixteenth and seventeenth century surveys of land holding, had survived from early patterns such as these in at least some parishes.

A multiplicity of common fields was, then, a long-standing feature of Chiltern field systems by 1550, and was the product of a slow and piecemeal enclosure from the waste. Within a township, the oldest common fields were often centred on a number of different hamlets rather than around the village, and the pattern was complicated by the appearance, during the later phases of woodland clearance, of numerous small common fields scattered amongst woods, wastes and closes, and sometimes, too, connected with one particular hamlet.

The Changing Common Fields:- Between about 1250 and 1550, the basic distribution of common fields in the Chilterns was fairly stable. The formation of fresh common arable had ended by the mid-thirteenth century at the latest, and the common fields did not begin to break-up on a large scale until the mid-sixteenth century. But it was not a static pattern. The organisation of the common arable into fields was often flexible, and the individual common fields themselves could be poorly defined. At both King's Walden and Codicote, small common fields were occasionally considered as part of larger fields, and sometimes as units in their own right,

(1) The simple names East, West and Middle fields, which were subsequently superseded by more complex forms, also suggest an early origin.

(2) The names Redinghale and Brache are suggestive of fairly late clearing.

a vagueness which suggests that, for cropping and grazing, the individual common field alone was unimportant by the fourteenth century. Again, the common arable in some townships was modified in detail, although the basic outline remained the same. At King's Walden, an attempt was made during the fourteenth century, to rationalise part of the common arable by amalgamating four small strip fields to form a single large field, while a number of small fourteenth century common fields at Codicote had been absorbed into larger fields by the sixteenth century. The opposite process was taking place at Missenden¹ and Berkhamsted, where the subdivision of a common field, that was later to become one of the main features of the disintegration of the common field system, had already started by the second half of the fourteenth century.

Consolidation and Enclosure:- The extent of the medieval enclosure of common arable land was small compared with that in the sixteenth century and later, and the nature of the enclosure also differed. Whereas enclosure after 1550 was essentially piecemeal,² and was carried out by landholders of all types, most medieval enclosure was by the manor alone, and was usually of a complete common field, which was incorporated into the demesne. Reding field in King's Walden was taken into the demesne of one of the manors during the fourteenth century, while Church field had been enclosed into the Codicote demesne by the sixteenth century. There may have been a common field called East field in Ibstone. If so, it was enclosed to form part of the manor farm by 1300.³ Manorial enclosure was accomplished through the acquisition,

(1) Great Widefield in Great Missenden was already distinguished separately in 1379, Bod.Mss.Ch.Bucks. 1339; while Little Millfield in Little Missenden was described in 1429, Cat.Anc.Deeds, III, A5710.

(2) Small blocks of strips were fenced-in so that an entire field was only gradually taken into severalty.

(3) At Berkhamsted, where at least one complete common field was taken into severalty during the fifteenth century, the nature of enclosure is not clear. Common fields were also probably enclosed at Great Hampden when 600a. of land was imparked in 1447, Cal Charter Rolls, VI, 33, no.26. At least four of the thirteenth and fourteenth century fields cannot be traced in the seventeenth century, viz. Frith, Folkerdene, Hopemannveld, and Grenemile fields, see above p.321..

by purchase and exchange, of land outside the demesne farm.¹ The enclosure of a complete common field would significantly alter the field pattern in a manor only in the southwest Chilterns, where the extent of common arable land was small. In townships of the centre and northeast, the disappearance of one or even two common fields made little difference to the basic outline. There are very few unambiguous references² to piecemeal peasant enclosure before 1500.³

Enclosure was for continued arable cultivation and not for conversion to pasture, and its main purpose, whether performed by manor or tenants, was to free land from communal obligations, in particular those of common pasturing. When, for example, three Chesham tenants raised a ditch at Colesfield in 1331, it was claimed that other tenants "cannot enter the said field to pasture their common in the same field".⁴

(1) eg. Reding field in King's Walden was enclosed by John de Dokesworth after he had obtained, over a period of years, all the land in the field that was not already part of his demesne.

(2) The earliest of these, dating from the first half of the thirteenth century, is the permission granted to Robert de Kingshill to enclose his land at Maldeforlong and Putforlong in Hughenden, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1938), 113, no.119. Later in the century, at Wheathampstead, William de Aqua made an enclosure in the common field called le Doune by raising a fence of dead branches there, Westm. 8938, St.Barnabas 32E.I; and eighty years later, another tenant of Wheathampstead had enclosed a piece of land in Longcroft, Westm.8941, St.Barnabas 9R.II. Both were ordered to lay open their enclosures, as was the Fawley farmer who had made a fence enclosing the common field, BM Add.R.27027.

(3) This was in strong contrast to the West Midlands, where field systems were otherwise very similar, and where tenant enclosure was taking place on a significant scale during the later Middle Ages, R.H.Hilton, loc.cit.(1959), 275 and 282.

(4) BUCH C.A., Easter 4E.III. Again, when Thomas Mantel agreed to ditch and enclose land in Kingshill in the mid-thirteenth century, it was so that he could not claim the right to pasture beyond the ditch, and so that his holding should be freed from all other claims, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1938), 128, no.133; and in 1332, a tenant of Bramfield was given permission to enclose his land in Clayfield with hedges and ditches to prevent another tenant from taking common pasture on it, HRO 40703. The nature of the arable land is not clear in either example. Enclosure was probably of parcels alienated from a larger unit in a single holding - the fact that in each case only one man claimed common pasture suggests this - but in both cases it was to free the arable from rights of common grazing.

Although they were not enclosing common field land on a significant scale, peasants throughout the Chilterns were actively consolidating their common arable holdings during the thirteenth century and later.¹ The evidence of court rolls and charters is the same. Free and villein tenants alike were buying land next to the strips and pieces that they already held in order to achieve a more efficient distribution of their holdings. The relative ease with which property could be alienated facilitated this activity, the effects of which are best seen in the general increase in strip sizes by the sixteenth century.² At both Berkhamsted and King's Walden for example, the number of strips larger than the average of half to one acre was considerably less in the thirteenth century than after 1550. The aim of peasant consolidation was the rationalisation of the arable holding, particularly within the strip fields, and was followed-up by enclosure in only one recorded case.³ Holdings were frequently highly fragmented, especially in the northeast. Fifteen acres of common arable in Knebworth, in 1407, lay in twenty separate pieces dispersed in four fields,⁴ while a seven acre holding was scattered in six pieces in three fields in Ayot and Welwyn.⁵ Fragmentation on this scale must have lowered the efficiency of farming considerably, and the desire to overcome it was probably sufficient

(1) As at King's Walden, Codicote and Berkhamsted, and also at Bramfield, HRO 40702-3: Knebworth, HRO21841, 21888, 21890: Welwyn, HRO5927, 59135: Offley, HRO 28711: Kensworth, BM Add.Ch. 7373, 19942; Cat.Anc.Deeds, I, C346: Abbots Langley, Sidney Sussex James Ms.1: Great Gaddesden, HRO 2626, 12670: Chesham, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1946), 16, no.293, 21, no. 300: and the Hampdens, BuCM 546/39, 548/39, 558/39. Exchanges are also recorded for Offley, HRO 48401; Wheathampstead, Westm. 8939, St. Gregory, 35E.I; and Kensworth and Studham, Cat. Anc. Deeds, I, C346 and III, D222.

(2) As in Codicote, the reverse process could take place - a common arable unit in a single holding was sometimes divided by alienation of a part of it by gift or sale. There are examples from Welwyn, HRO 59117, 59120C, 59124; and Kensworth, BM Add.Ch. 19939-40. Nor was consolidation always permanent - Robert de Kingshill, having acquired 1½ a. next to his holding in Maldefur-long, later granted away the same 1½ a. to Bissenden Abbey, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 123-4, nos. 127-8, 119, no. 124.

(3) This was by Robert de Kingshill, ibid., 113, no. 119, 123, no.127.

(4) HRO 21889

(5) HRO 59130.

incentive for tenant activity.

It is not clear why piecemeal enclosure failed to follow from this consolidation before 1500. Certainly the possible advantages of enclosed arable land, namely a greater freedom and flexibility in cropping and grazing, must have been obvious to all, particularly as there were large areas of it throughout the Hills, and as most tenants had two or three closes at least. Demesne arable that lay in severalty was consistently assessed more highly than the common arable. There are three possible explanations why only the manor was enclosing. Firstly, rights of common grazing over the common fields may have been so firmly entrenched that the manor alone was able to override them. The small tenants in particular, of whom there were large numbers on many manors, would oppose any loss of grazing land. A second possibility is that it was only on the demesne farms that the scale of farming was sufficiently large, and commercial production sufficiently important, for enclosure to offer any serious advantage. On the average tenant holding of twenty to thirty acres or less, farming was small in scale, while cropping was sufficiently flexible on most farms, through the combination of enclosed and common arable land, to minimise any handicap arising from the fixed rotation of the common fields. The benefits accruing from enclosure of a few acres of common arable would be small. Thirdly, the main advantage of enclosed arable land over the common arable, namely freedom of cropping, may, in fact, never have existed on tenant holdings. Fourteenth century evidence from both Ibstone and Codicote suggests that the manor enforced a three-course rotation over all the tenant arable, common and several alike. If these phenomena occurred throughout the Hills then the incentive for the small farmer to enclose would be even less.

Whatever the reason for the absence of peasant enclosure in the medieval Chilterns, it is clear that conditions had changed by the second half of the sixteenth century. Manorial organisation was no longer strong enough to prevent tenant enclosure - orders to remove fences were usually ignored - while holdings had gradually been enlarged during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, so that the once large class of small land holders

had virtually disappeared by 1500. The yeomen farmers, who were prominent by the sixteenth century, were farming on a larger scale and with a greater interest in commercial production. Given an incentive to change these men would not be interested in maintaining the old order. Such an incentive was provided in the Chilterns, not by the introduction of new crops in place of the fallow course, nor by the greater profitability of sheep farming, but by the growth of the London food market, for centuries one of the main outlets for grain from the Hills. The aim was more efficient farming, and widespread piecemeal enclosure followed from about mid-century to reach a peak in the seventeenth century. Enclosure was no doubt facilitated by the three centuries of consolidation that had preceded it.

Ploughing

Evidence of the types of ploughs common in the Chilterns relates almost entirely to equipment used on the demesne farms. Throughout the Hills this was a heavy wheeled plough, made of iron, with coulter attached and drawn by a team of six horses,¹ the type of plough in fact, which, according to M.Bloch² and others,³ produced a pattern of long narrow strips grouped into furlongs. In the Chilterns, it is true, many enclosed demesne fields were very large, and could be ploughed as strips if necessary, but the same demesnes often also included small closes which were sown with crops, the type of fields which, it has been suggested, were produced by the use of a light wheelless plough. There is no trace of a light plough in use in the Chilterns.

(1) eg. at Stonor, PRO SC6/1248/14; Ibstone, Merton College Mss.5662; West Wycombe, HaRO Eccl.2/159337; Chesham, PRO SC6/760/1; Berkhamsted, L.M.Midgeley op.cit.; Great Gaddesden, HRO 2632; Flamstead, HRO 17466; Kings Langley, PRO DL29/40/740; and Knebworth, HRO K116.

(2) M.Bloch, "Les Caracteres Originaux de l'Histoire Rurale Francaise", (1931), 51-7.

(3) eg. R.G.Collingwood and J.N.L.Myres, "Roman Britain and the English Settlement", (1936), 210-11. H.Nightingale has also stressed the importance of the plough and ploughing in determining field shape, M.Nightingale, "Ploughing and field shape", Ant., 105 (1953), 20-6.

Co-aration must have been practised on peasant farms. The few details of tenant stock that survive from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the sixteenth and seventeenth^{century}/probate inventories, together suggest that few tenants had sufficient beasts for ploughing purposes, and that many had no plough. On some manors, tenants were liable to ploughing service only if they owned a plough - those without were to perform other works.¹ Co-operative ploughing could not have been confined to the strip fields alone, for over the Hills as a whole these probably accounted for no more than one half of the total peasant arable. If co-aration had ever been a factor in the formation of a pattern of strips in mixed ownership² in the Chilterns, it had long ceased to have this effect by the thirteenth century.

Ploughing did produce the characteristic ridges - the selions and headlands referred to in medieval documents - with intervening furrows on both enclosed and common arable, but in the Chilterns the ridges never reached the magnitude that they acquired in the poorly drained claylands of the Vale, and few have survived in the present landscape.³ Kalm, writing of the area around Little Gaddesden in the eighteenth century, noted that "The arable fields in this district, which stood sown with wheat, were for the most part laid out in Stitches or Four-thorough-land: that is, that the whole field was laid out in small ridges, each of the ridges only of four furrows between all the ridges.....The ridges, or Stitches, were so made that they lay highest in the middle, and sloped after that on both sides towards the water furrows". Cross-ridges, or headland pieces, were formed

(1) eg. at Codicote, BM Add. Ms. 40734; Caddington and Kensworth, St. Pauls WD16 Liber I, ff. 117d and 122d; Wheathampstead, BM Add. Ch. 8139.

(2) As Seebohm suggested. F. Seebohm, *op. cit.*, 113-14, 120-1.

(3) W.R. Mead, "Ridge and furrow in Buckinghamshire", *GJ*, 120 (1954), 34-42; and the unpublished work of M.J. Harrison on ridge and furrow in Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire.

at the ends of the fields where the horses were turned.¹ In the common arable fields, the plough ridge was probably the basis for the tenurial units, the strips. The average common arable strip of a half acre may usually have comprised a single ridge, but strips also quite often consisted of a number of ridges. An early thirteenth century grant to Missenden Abbey included ten selions in Suthfeld in Hemel Hempstead, of which two groups of two selions formed two separate units of tenure, while the remaining six selions were each distinct holdings.² The headland ridge was usually a single holding. A plough ridge may also sometimes have been the unit for alienation within a subdivided close.³

Field Boundaries

By the thirteenth century, closes,⁴ common fields,⁵ meadows,⁶ woods,⁷ parks,⁸ and gardens⁹ were all surrounded by, and separated from each other by hedges of living wood,¹⁰ and often by ditches as well. Hedges were sold

(1) J. Lucas, *op. cit.* (1946), 204-5.

(2) J. G. Jenkins, *loc. cit.* (1946), 74, 383.

(3) See above, p. 281.

(4) *eg.* at Harpenden in 1218, Withifeld was said to be enclosed by living hedges, PRO CP25(1)/34/8. The initial grant to Missenden Abbey, made in 1133, included the buildings with adjoining land within the ambit of the ditches and hedges, J. G. Jenkins, *loc. cit.* (1938), 36, no. 30; while a twelfth century grant in Flamstead included "the close which lies between its hedges and ditches," HRO 1746.

(5) *eg.* at Hampden, a hedge was appurtenant to land in Ball field, BuCM 55/39; and at Hughenden, a hedge separated Eldefeld from the road, J. G. Jenkins, *loc. cit.* (1938), 113, no. 119.

(6) *eg.* at Chesham c. 1160, meadow and pasture was said to be enclosed by hedges and ditches, J. G. Jenkins, *loc. cit.* (1946), 4, no. 271.

(7) *eg.* at King's Walden and Ibstone.

(8) As at Ibstone, and also at Kings Langley, PRO DL29/40/740.

(9) *eg.* at Kingshill, tenements were surrounded by hedges and ditches in the early thirteenth century, while a messuage with garden and croft there were described c. 1275 as enclosed with hedges and ditches, J. G. Jenkins, *loc. cit.* (1938), 130, no. 136, and 156, no. 165.

(10) The terms "sepes" and "haiae" have been interpreted as meaning hedges, rather than the fences of dead wood that Vollans favours, E. C. Vollans, *op. cit.* 221-2. There is no evidence, in the thirteenth century manorial accounts, of any large scale construction of brushwood fences, but only of hurdles for the sheep fold. Nor is there evidence of the large annual repairs that would have been necessary if fences were widely used. At Jest Wycombe, in fact, there is record of thorns being planted above a ditch, HARO Eccl. 2/159339. Again, it is

or leased as individual items,¹ while strips of land alongside a hedge were transferred for the purpose of making a ditch.² Disputes concerning hedges, or rent from them, are frequent items in many manorial court records.³ As in the sixteenth century and later, hedgerows were valued for their timber⁴ and as a source of pasturage.⁵ Brushwood fences may sometimes have been used instead of a hedge,⁶ but the use of temporary fences was usually confined to the hurdles necessary for controlled grazing within the larger arable fields.⁷ Some parks, such as that at Berkhamsted,⁸ were at least partly enclosed by palings, although the expense of building and maintaining these was often considerable.

Open boundaries also existed. Woodland designated for clearance or enclosure may sometimes have been marked-out by signs,⁹ while recently cleared land lying in severalty was not always immediately fenced-off from the surviving waste.¹⁰ Sometimes too, arable land was separated from an adjacent private wood by no more than an open ditch¹¹ - possibly the relative position of cultivated land and wood had not been fully stabilised - while different

unlikely that there was sufficient timber for the erection and maintenance of more than a small number of fences, particularly in the northeast Chilterns.

(1) As at Codicote and King's Walden.

(2) eg. at Kingshill, Geoffrey Taylifer surrendered all claim to a hedge in favour of Missenden Abbey, and granted away five feet of his land beyond the hedge, so that a ditch could be made the whole length of Kingshill Heath, J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 174, no. 187.

(3) eg. at Codicote, Abbots Langley and Bramfield, op. cit.

(4) As at Shortgrave and Amersham, Bi Harl. Ms. 1885, f.76d; and PRO DL43/14/4.

(5) eg. at West Wycombe, Haro E ccl.2/159356.

(6) eg. a grant of a croft in Hampden was accompanied by sufficient wood to fence it, J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 181, no. 195.

(7) See below, p.336.

(8) See above, p.215.

(9) E.C.Vollans, op. cit., 219.

(10) See above, p.296-7.

(11) eg. in the Missenden area in the second half of the thirteenth century, a piece of land was granted for the purpose of making a ditch between Nairdwood and the fields to the south, J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 62, no. 61.

tenures within a single wood were often demarcated by ditches.¹ The open units of the strip fields may have been individually marked in some way, but there is virtually no indication in the medieval evidence as to the nature of these.

Grazing Practices on Arable Land

Grazing on the arable fallow and stubble was an important feature of medieval field systems in the Chilterns. Its value was two-fold. Firstly, the application of manure in this way was the most usual method of maintaining soil fertility. Other means of improving soil condition, such as marling² and the growth of legumes,³ were widely practised, but in scale of operation and ease of application they did not rival the use of dung. The most practicable way of spreading dung was to allow the livestock to graze the uncropped arable. Manure from stables and cowsheds,⁴ litter collected from the streets of towns and villages such as High Wycombe,⁵ and dead leaves and deer droppings gathered from the parks, as at Berkhamsted,⁶ were also spread over the arable, but again the areas involved were relatively small and the effort needed was great compared with manuring by animals on hoof. The value of the latter is

(1) See below, p.354.

(2) Marl pits are mentioned at King's Walden, where there was one in Royden field and one in Fogenham field, BM Add.Ch.35577, 35610; Codicote, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.3d; Abbots Langley, Cat. Anc. Deeds, III, A5461; Flamstead, HRO 17465; Studham, BM Harl. Ms.1885, f.39; Kensworth, St.Pauls WD16 Liber I, f.126; Missenden, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1938),62,no.61,66,no.65,113,no.119; and at Medmenham, where in 1227 Walter the priest fell into a marl pit in the fields and died, J.G.Jenkins (ed.), "Calendar of the Roll of the Justices on Eyre, 1227" RBBAS, 6 (1942), 48, no.526. Marled land is described at Kensworth, W.Hale, op.cit. 7; and Studham, BM Harl.Ms.1385, f.60d. On the West Wycombe demesne, where special marl carts were maintained at the beginning of the thirteenth century, 28a. had been marled in 1208, and 21 pits were dug in 1226, HaRO Eccl.2/159270-159281. The labour services of Wheathampstead cotlanders at this time included marling 6a., BM Add. Ch.8139.

(3) See Appendix O.

(4) As at Ibstone. At West Wycombe, dung was sometimes bought from tenants for the demesne farm, HaRO Eccl.2/159357; and a great dung cart was maintained, *ibid.*, 159339.

(5) A.Clark, op.cit., 100, no.104; M.W.Hughes, op.cit., 49.

(6) See above, p:221.

implicit in the King's Walden grant of 100 sheep for the manorial fold for two years.¹ Secondly, the arable fallow and stubble was one of the main sources of pasturage in the Hills. Good grazing land and winter fodder were in short supply, and cropping arrangements were such that land lay fallow one year in every two or three. One of two methods was usually followed for grazing this and the harvest stubble, namely common grazing by the flocks and herds of a number of men, or pasturage in severalty by the livestock of the individual tenant.

Common Pasturing:- The earliest evidence² is of very generous rights extending over all arable land, both common and enclosed, and often over woods and wastes as well. Tenants of the manor of Flamstead, for example, were free to graze their beasts in common over the entire demesne, and perhaps over the whole manor, in the first half of the twelfth century. A grant of land by the lord to the Priory of St. Giles, included "common pasture in my land, in wood and in field, such as others of my men (have)".³ Similarly, when Turstin Mantel granted arable and wood in the Missendens to the Abbey there, in 1161, he also gave the right to pasture livestock over all his land,⁴ and it is clear from later evidence that this included both woodland and common arable.⁵ The earliest specific reference to common pasturing on the arable fallow is an agreement made in the 1170's. By it, Alexander de Hampden granted rights of pasture "in wood and field" for a stated number of animals to Missenden Abbey, which, in return, allowed him and his men common grazing on one of the three fields of the Abbey's farm at Honor, when it was fallow - the field was probably in severalty.⁶ No distinction is made in any of these twelfth century grants of common pasture between land in enclosed and common fields.⁷ Where common arable lay within the area specified in

(1) See above, p.145.

(2) These were grants of common rights to lords and their tenants, or agreements between individuals concerning grazing over the land of each other.

(3) HRO 17465.

(4) J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1933), 66, no. 65.

(5) More than a century later a dispute arose over these pasture rights, which were said to extend over le Depefeld, le Horelond and the wood called Hydegrove, *ibid.*, 68, no. 67. Deepfield was possibly a common field, BM Harl. Ms. 3688, extent of

(6) J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1933), 178, no. 192. (1335.)

(7) cf. a grant of land in Amersham, in 1168, to the Abbey. The men living on the land were to have common rights "in wood and field, in pasture and ways

the grant, as in the Mantel grant at Missenden and probably in the Hampden grant to the Abbey, then it would be subject to common grazing. Conversely, common rights were not confined to the common fields, but also extended over enclosed arable land. Common pasturing continued to be practised over the arable demesnes of some manors well into the fourteenth century. The main evidence is the extents of the inquisitiones post mortem, according to which the arable demesnes or all the demesne fallow of at least eight manors were said to lie in common.¹ Part of this land may have been in common fields, but it is unlikely that all the demesne arable of any Chiltern manor was entirely unenclosed. A reasonable explanation is that both enclosed and common arable, where this latter existed, were open to common pasturing of some kind.

The thirteenth and fourteenth century evidence of common grazing within the common fields alone is less ambiguous. It has been seen that these were open common pasturage in the sixteenth century and later, and that they were probably included in the wide-ranging twelfth century grants of common grazing. Thirteenth and fourteenth century references are more detailed than those of the twelfth century, but they are less numerous and less precise than those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some of the earlier accounts describe arrangements between individuals or groups of individuals, and concern relatively small areas. An agreement, made in 1230, shows that Pinnocks field in Whitchurch (still a common field in the eighteenth century)² was open to comm^{on} grazing - 33 men decided to remit their pasture rights in the field and in all the land of the Thame Abbey grange at Wyfold in return for

and water". Again, there is no indication of the nature of the arable fields, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1946), 33,no.315. Similarly, the grant by Eynsham Abbey to Roger de Hida, in 1252, specified common of pasture "in the township, fields and wood of Stoke and Woodcote" without giving further details, I.E.Salter, loc.cit;(1907), 216, no.308.

(1) The phrase "in common" has been accepted as meaning that the land referred to was open to common grazing. The other possibility is that it meant that the land lay in common arable fields. This point has already been discussed at length, see above, p.316. The eight manors were Amersham, PRO C135/225/9; Stonor, PRO C135/123/11; Chesham, PRO C135/28/17; Wigginton and Little Gaddesden, PRO C135/81/10; Luton Woodcroft, PRO C135/18/24; Lilley, PRO C135/35/33; and Watton, PRO C135/17.

(2) ORO QSD/A Vol. C, facing p.54.

common of pasture elsewhere.¹ By the fourteenth century, however, there is also clear proof that common grazing was being followed over wider areas of common arable land. Evidence from Offley is unmistakeable - common pasturing was practised throughout the common fields of the township. The arable demesne of the manor of St. Ledgers contained 310 acres. Of this, 96 acres was described as lying in severalty, while the other 204 acres "lies in common for the whole year", that is it was scattered amongst the open strips of the township. This land had no value when unsown "because it lies in common", that is it was subject to common grazing.² A later extent of the same manor confirms the accuracy of this evidence.³

Probably all the common fields in the Hills were grazed in common. In view of the shortage of good pasturage in many townships and the need for manure on the arable, it is unlikely that the fields were left ungrazed, and the easiest and most logical way of pasturing land in a field that was divided into a large number of separate holdings would be to throw it open to the common flocks and herds at an agreed date. Closes divided temporarily by alienation of parcels within them, may also have been pastured in common by their tenants.⁴

The history of grazing rights, from the twelfth century until final enclosure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was one of ever increasing restriction. They were being limited in extent, and the numbers

(1) W.H.Turner (ed.), "Calendar of Charters and Rolls Preserved in the Bodleian Library", (1878), 315, no.53.

(2) PRO C134/101/10.

(3) Nine years later, the arable demesne had been enlarged by the addition of 64a. in severalty. The amount lying as common arable was virtually unchanged, and was again described as without value when fallow "because it lies common for the whole year", PRO C135/42/10. There are also a number of more ambiguous fourteenth century references to common pasturing on arable land, which do not specify whether the land was enclosed or in common fields. At Chesham in 1331, three tenants were accused of raising a ditch at Colesfield so that the commoners were unable to enter the field for common pasture, BuCM C.A., Easter 4E.III. At Codicote, arable fallow in the township was said to be subject to common grazing, but again without indication as to whether or not this was confined to common fields. The same was true of the grant of sheep pasture, separate and common, in King's Walden. Grants of common field land in Welwyn were sometimes made with common of pasture attached, which may have been in the common fields or the common wastes or both, HRO 59120 A&B.

(4) See above, p.290.

of livestock allowed to pasture in common was constantly reviewed, restrictions which were further indication of the early and increasing scarcity of good grazing in the Hills. The grant by Alexander de Hampden, of common of pasture to the monks of Missenden for a specified number of beasts in field and wood, was revised about forty years later. The land involved was confined to two localities, and in one of these the number of animals allowed to graze was limited to 100 sheep.¹ Similarly, the unlimited right of common grazing that Turstin Mantel had granted over his land to Missenden Abbey, was reviewed at least twice before 1300,² and both parties agreed to forgo rights of pasture over the arable of the other. Elsewhere, as at King's Walden and Codicote, stints rationing the number of animals the tenant could pasture in a common field had already been introduced by the fourteenth century.

Grazing in Severalty:- Common grazing was only one aspect of pasturing on the arable land and, except perhaps in the twelfth century and earlier, and in the northeast, it was the less important aspect. Large areas of enclosed arable throughout the Hills were held and grazed in severalty by the thirteenth century. Where this land lay in small hedged closes, pasturing on the stubble and fallow presented no problem, but special arrangements had to be made where the fields were large and under a variety of crops, as was often the case in the larger demesne fields, and particularly where crops of different seasons were grown in one field at the same time. Cattle were no doubt tethered, while the sheep were often folded. The expense of making and repairing hurdles is a frequent item in manorial accounts,³ while tenant services at Ibstone included an obligation to help move the hurdles. Where tenant holdings were concentrated in one or two large closes, as at Ibstone, arrangements for cropping and grazing were probably similar to those in the

(1) J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 184, nos. 198-9. The original grant had been of pasture for 100 sheep, 10 oxen, 10 cows and their young, and 40 swine op. cit.

(2) Ibid., 67, no.66 and 68, no.67.

(3) eg. at West Wycombe in 1324-26 and 1346, HaRO Eccl.2/159337-9, 159356; at Kings Langley in 1318, 1320-22 and 1324, PRO SC6/866/22-6,28; and at Knobworth, HRO K108, 112.

the demesne fields. Even where the demesne arable was not subject to common pasture rights of any kind, grazing on the fallow and stubble was quite often leased-out to tenants when the demesne was understocked.¹

Cropping

The Rotations;- All available evidence is that cropping on the medieval Chiltern holding was so organised as to leave a regular and frequent fallow, at least before 1350. This was as vital a part of the system of husbandry in the totally enclosed townships of the southwest, as in townships in the northeast, where a large proportion of the arable was in common fields, and it was, in fact, one of the few features common to field systems throughout the Hills. The value of a regular fallow was threefold. It was a safeguard against over-cropping and consequent soil exhaustion; the uncropped arable was an important source of grazing; and the manure from livestock pastured on the fallow helped to maintain and improve soil condition. The usual practice was to leave one third to one half of an holding fallow each year, although the exact proportion might vary considerably from time to time, even from year to year. Of the two, the more frequent combination of fallow period and sown land was the three-course rotation and its approximations, whereby the holding was divided into three parts, each about the same size, and each subject to the triennial sequence of fallow, winter-sown crops and spring-sown crops.

Three-course arrangements, usually considered to indicate more progressive farming than the system of biennial fallowing, had appeared in the Chilterns as early as the twelfth century.² Eighty acres of demesne arable

(1) eg. at Ayot, PRO C135/127/17; at Knebworth, HRO K112; at Kings Langley, where arable grazing was sometimes leased-out for pigs and sometimes for all beasts, PRO DL29/40/740, SC6/866/15-19,21,23-5,28; and at West Wycombe in most years after 1208 (eg. HARO Eccl.2/159270) except when all this grazing was needed for the demesne flocks and herds (eg. HARO Eccl.2/159315).

(2) This is some of the earliest evidence of a three-course rotation in England as a whole. In the open fields of the Vale the change from a two to a three-field system sometimes did not take place until after 1300: eg. the thirteenth century two-field system in Lewknor had been replaced with a three-field arrangement by the sixteenth century, VCH.Oxon., 8 (1964), 105; while a biennial fallow was still being practised in the open fields of Edlesborough and Sundon in the fourteenth century, PRO C135/74/5 and C135/1968.

at Kensworth was left fallow in 1152, and the two sown courses each contained seventy acres.¹ Twelfth and thirteenth century Missenden Abbey charters imply the existence of three-course rotations on holdings at Chesham, High Wycombe, Missenden and Honor in Hampden,² while the three-field division of the Flamstead demesne in 1264,³ and the fact that tenant ploughing services were owed in equal amounts at each of the three cropping seasons, suggest that there, too, one third of the arable was left fallow.⁴ A three-course rotation was widely practised on both demesne and tenant holdings by the early fourteenth century.⁵

But it was not universally applied. Two-course arrangements were followed at times on some demesne farms, as at Chenies and Chesham Bois.⁶ Soil conditions may have been a significant factor in determining the proportion of arable to be left fallow - at Chenies, land was said to be "in an extremely bad state and very stony".⁷ Similarly, Northale manor farm in Edlesborough included arable "supra montes", which was "white land

(1) W.Hale, *op. cit.*, 128.

(2) By suggesting simple three-field arrangements of the holdings, see below

(3) PRO C132/31/3.

(p.342.

(4) PRO C134/15/3.

(5) At Codicote, it was operating on villein land before 1300, while at Ibstone fifty years later, this was the rotation enforced by the manor on tenant holdings. One third of the arable demesnes at Lilley in 1334 (PRO C135/35/33) and at Amersham in 1341 (PRO C135/225/9) were left fallow; at Codicote and Missenden, the arable of the manor farms was apportioned between three courses in somewhat similar amounts - at Missenden, there were three "seysons" of 156a., 135½a. and 129a., BM Harl. Ms. 3688; while at Lilington 80a. of the 120a. arable demesne had been sown with both winter and spring grains by May 1347, PRO C135/81/10.

(6) In both cases this is suggested by a comparison of manorial extents and accounts. The Chenies demesne was extended at 300a. in 1336, PRO C135/44/6; whereas in 1323-24, only 142½ a. of the demesne had been sown, PRO SC6/761/4. The Chesham Bois demesne included 180a. of arable t.E.II and again in 1340, PRO C134/21/7, C135/60/7. In 1341, no more than 92a. of this land was cropped, PRO SC6/1120/10.

(7) On the other hand, the same statement was made at Lilley, in 1334, when a three-course rotation was in force, PRO C135/35/33.

in bad condition and stony", and on which a biennial fallow was followed,¹ while at Little Gaddesden, where it was claimed that the soil was very poor, no more than thirty acres of the 100 acre arable demesne had been sown by the middle of May in 1347.² But both here and at Ayot, where less than half of the 400 demesne acres was under crops in June 1355,³ the large extent of unsown land may well have reflected deteriorating economic conditions, in particular the difficulty of finding sufficient farm labour. Throughout the Hills in the middle decades of the fourteenth century, abnormally large proportions of arable were being left fallow, and sometimes turned over to grazing for a few years. At Ibstone, the average annual sown acreage of the demesne was reduced by more than one half, and at West Wycombe by about one quarter (Appendices K and M). Probably, a simple two-course rotation was not practised at either Little Gaddesden or Ayot. Rather some of the land of the two farms remained fallow for a number of years, to be brought into cultivation only occasionally and in small proportions, as happened at Ibstone. Poor soil condition may also have been related to the worsening economic climate, for, with a shortage of labour, land may not have been adequately prepared before sowing.

On the larger holdings, two or three-course rotations were, by the thirteenth century, no more than long-term approximations, valid only as averages taken over a number of years.⁴ The proportion of the demesne arable that was left fallow often varied markedly from year to year. The sown land was rarely divided evenly between winter and spring crops, and sometimes the difference between the two was considerable (Appendix M).

(1) It was said that the arable "will not be sown nor can be sown except every other (year) and the greater part lies uncultivated", PRO C135/74/5.
 (2) PRO C135/81/10. The Wigginton demesne nearby was held by the same lord but had a three-course rotation that year, *ibid.*
 (3) PRO C135/127/17. At Kings Langley, only 30a. of the 133a. of arable on Bulstrodes Tenement was sown in 1349, PRO C135/100/16.
 (4) *eg.* at Kensworth in 1299, the total arable demesne of 223a. was divided as 111a. in winter-sown crops, 54a. in spring-sown crops and 58a. fallow, while at Caddington, 245a. of arable lay in the proportions of 60a., 80a. and 105a.. St. Pauls WD16 Liber I, ff.115d and 122.

One course might remain larger than the other for a number of successive seasons, as at West Wycombe in most years after 1264, or the amount of land in a particular course might fluctuate widely from year to year, as at Kings Langley. Annual variations in the amounts of land sown, and in the types of crops grown, no doubt reflected changing demands, and above all changes in weather from season to season. A long wet winter, which limited ploughing and sowing, would be followed by a growing season in which a large amount of land was left uncramped. Similarly, a good autumn and a bad spring could result in an excess of the winter-sown crops over the spring-sown course.

The Arrangement of the Rotations:- The rotations followed in the Chilterns were fairly straightforward, but evidence of the ways in which arable land was organised into these, reveals a pattern of increasing complexity. Twelfth and thirteenth century methods were uncomplicated. The three-course rotation was often translated into a simple three-field arrangement, both on enclosed and on common arable land. Field and cropping course were one. The arable of the Missenden Abbey farm at Honor in Hampden probably lay in three enclosed fields about 1170 - all the land in a single field was fallow at the same time.¹ An early twelfth century grant of 15 acres, evenly allotted between the grantor's three culturae in Missenden,² and an early thirteenth century grant of three acres, lying as one acre units in the grantor's three culturae in Chesham,³ both to Missenden Abbey, may also represent early three field arrangements for cropping. In neither case is it clear whether the land involved was enclosed, or whether, in fact, the three culturae were common arable units.

At High Wycombe, another three-field arrangement was clearly of common arable land. The common arable furlongs of the manor of Gynaunts Fee were grouped into the east, middle and west fields, and a three acre grant to Missenden Abbey was taken in equal proportions from each field.

(1) J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 178, no.192. Alexander de Hampden and his tenants were allowed common pasture in the third field next to Grims Ditch when it was unsown.

(2) Ibid., 36, no.30.

(3) J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1946), 9, no.279.

On the other hand, a peasant holding at Kingshill, which seems to have been simply divided into three fields at the beginning of the thirteenth century, was probably entirely in severalty,¹ while the three-field system in force on the Flamstead demesne in 1264 undoubtedly comprised enclosed arable land - the 340 acres were divided into three great fields, two of which each contained 290 acres, while the third was 260 acres in size.² At West Wycombe, at about the same time, the organisation of the demesne rotation was only slightly more complicated. There the arable of the manor farm, also completely in severalty, lay in eight fields, which were divided into three groups, each group representing a single shift of the rotation. The same combination of fields recurred year after year. Different crops were grown in fields in the same group, even within individual fields themselves, but they were always crops of the same season (Appendix O). In so far as there is evidence of a three-field system in the Chilterns in the thirteenth century, it is of the three-field division or three-fold grouping of individual holdings that were completely enclosed. Some common arable land within a township may also have been arranged in this way, but there is no evidence of a single three-field system, or anything resembling it, extending over an entire parish.

By the first half of the fourteenth century, a variety of crops growing in a single field at the same time was a common feature of demesne farming. More complex arrangements were being introduced throughout the Hills, and within a few decades there is no further suggestion, in the evidence available, of the earlier organisations based on three separate fields, or on groupings of fields. Demesne closes were sometimes broken-up into smaller units, as at West Wycombe, although these were still considerably larger than any tenant close. They were often subdivided internally into plots growing crops of different seasons, so that a single

(1) J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1938), 85, no. 86.

(2) PRO C132/31/3.

field might contain land in more than one cropping course, and sometimes even in all three shifts of the rotation. Sown and fallow land might lie side by side in the individual demesne field. At Chenies in 1323-24 and at Penn fifty years later, two fields included part of both sown courses; on the Stonor demesne, Mill field contained acreages of both wheat and oats in 1388; while at Knebworth, at least one of the fields in which wheat was sown also included a spring crop in 1404-5 and 1407-8 (Appendix O).

There was rarely any clear grouping of fields, but rather a bewildering variety of combinations, with one course comprising different plots within a single field as well as land in a number of fields. The same shift might be followed in one field for many successive seasons without interruption, presumably on separate pieces of land - at Knebworth, Papenhamscroft contained a spring crop for four consecutive years. Cropping could be rotated within a single large demesne enclosure as well as between a number of fields. The main advantages of these more sophisticated systems was the greater flexibility that they allowed. They were appearing at a time when the trend on the arable demesne was towards greater diversification of crops grown.¹ Acreages under the different grains were no longer tied to fixed field areas. Instead, they could be varied easily from year to year. A fixed routine, with the same courses following each other at regular intervals for year after year, was no longer important; a particular sequence of cropping was rarely repeated; and annual variations in the relative sizes of the two sown courses became more and more marked.

Fourteenth and fifteenth century references to cropping practices in the common arable are few. There is no evidence of three-field arrangements such as may have existed in some townships in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, nor of the combination of the common fields of a township into three groups for cropping, as was certainly practised in many parishes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But it is clear that cropping was usually uniform within the individual common fields. As in the sixteenth century and later, a variety of crops might be grown in a single common

(1) See above, p.280.

field, but they were almost always crops of the same season, sown and harvested at about the same time. At Kinsbourne in Harpenden in the 1320's, land in Church field, North field and Brode field was confined to a single cropping course, although Church field contained a variety of spring crops when in that course. Land in each field was left fallow once every three years, and wheat always followed the fallow season (Appendix O). Similarly, at Codicote and Great Missenden¹ in the 1330's, demesne holdings within the individual common fields lay in only one shift of the farm rotation - no field was represented by land in two courses. In this respect, cropping within the common arable was far less complex than in many demesne enclosures. No doubt the need to throw the former open to common grazing at a predetermined date precluded any variation from the common routine. A distinctive feature at Kinsbourne was that the manor farm included both common and several land in at least two fields.² Probably some of the demesne had been fenced-off, while the rest was scattered amongst open strips. The result was often two courses in the one common field, only part of which in fact followed the communal rotation.

Where a holding included both enclosed and common arable, as many did, these were combined, both in a single farm rotation and within the individual cropping courses. At Great Missenden in 1335, all three shifts of the demesne rotation included both types of arable land,³ just as at Codicote, three years earlier, two of the three courses on the manor farm had contained common arable. Cropping patterns could be extremely complex on demesne holdings with land in both enclosed and common fields. At Kinsbourne, enclosed and common arable were represented in a single shift of the rotation; one crop was grown in a number of fields, enclosed and common; enclosed fields were divided into pieces under a variety of crops

(1) BM Harl. Ms.3638.

(2) These were Reyleys and "the field before the gate", Appendix O.

(3) BM Harl. Ms.3638. In the first course of 156a., at least one field, Brereleye, was a common field, cf. Bod. Mss. Ch. Bucks. 1339; in the second course of 135½ a., Widefield and possibly Deepfield, together containing 95½ a., were common arable, cf. Bod. Mss. Ch. Bucks. 1339, and J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit (1938 68, no.67; and in the third course, 25a. in Groynefeld may have been common arable, cf. *ibid.*, 242, no.13.

and representing different courses; more than one crop was sometimes grown on strips in the same common field; and individual fields contained open and enclosed land (Appendix O).

There is little evidence relating to cropping on the peasant holdings at this time. What there is, suggests that tenants, too, were dividing closes into land under different crops, although never to the degree on demesne holdings.¹ Tenant cropping in the common arable probably followed the same pattern as that on the demesnes, with all the land in the individual fields confined to a single shift.

Land Holding

The bases of peasant land holding were the customary units of tenure, in particular the half and the quarter virgates, which contained 20-50 acres and 10-15 acres respectively.² By 1300, these areas had frequently been modified considerably as a result of the active market in land and, to a lesser extent, by the addition of assart land. In many townships, there were two main groups of tenant holdings in terms of total size, namely small holdings of less than five acres, and larger farms of 20-30 acres that were based mainly on the half virgate.³ The proportions in each group varied from place to place, according to the local social and economic conditions. Demesne farms ranged from the 840 acres of Flamstead in 1264, to less than 100 acres on some of the smaller subsidiary manors found in many townships. On the whole, manorial holdings in the Chilterns were fairly large - a sample of twelve thirteenth and fourteenth century demesnes had an average area of 310 acres,⁴ that is, twice as large as the average demesne in Leicestershire at the end of the thirteenth century.⁵ During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the size of individual tenant holdings was increased by engrossment, while some demesne farms

(1) As at King's Walden and probably at Ibstone.

(2) See above, p.271.

(3) See above, p.274.

(4) BM Harl. Ms.3688, extents of 1535; Harl.Ms.1885, f.76d; Stowe Ms.849, f.124; Add.Ms.40734, f.1-2; Add.Ch.35915: PRO C133/95, C134/101/10: Cal.Clos Rolls, 1323-7, 293; W.Hale, op. cit., 1 and 7.

(5) R.H.Hilton, loc. cit. (1954), 173.

were reduced through leasing-out to tenants.¹

Many holdings, peasant and demesne alike, included a little meadowland or pasture, and often also a patch of woodland, but the major constituent of all farms was the arable land. There are no detailed manorial surveys or rentals before the second half of the fifteenth century, and so earlier evidence as to the nature of arable holdings in the Chilterns as a whole is scant. The little that there is, however, is sufficient to support the conclusions reached in the parish studies, namely that the mediaval pattern of land holding was essentially the same as that revealed in the Tudor and Jacobean surveys. Enclosed arable land was an important element in the majority of holdings. In some townships in the southwest, such as Ibstone, most farms were entirely enclosed, and while the numbers of these decreased towards the northeast,² and common arable became an ever more important part of the individual holding, a significant proportion of the arable was still often in severalty.³ In comparison with peasant lands, a greater percentage of the demesne farms consisted of closes alone. Demesnes at Berkhamsted and Flamstead,⁴ for example, contained no common arable, even although a relatively high proportion of the tenant land in both townships lay in the common fields. When demesne farms did include common arable, the proportion was often not as large as that usual on the average tenant holding, particularly in the northeast. Fragmentation of arable holdings, therefore, varied considerably within the Hills. In the southwest, the tenant quarter virgate might be a single field;⁵ some manorial demesnes lay together in a single block in a few giant closes;

(1) As at King's Walden and probably at Ibstone.

(2) But there were still tenant holdings that were completely enclosed, as at Codicote, and also at Bramfield, where in 1324 a messuage and 10a. lay in four closes, HRO 40702.

(3) eg. at Abbots Langley, Sidney Sussex Ms.1; and Kings Langley, PRO SC2/177/47, 52-5. A Hemel Hempstead holding contained 80a. of several arable and 52a. in common fields in 1367, PRO E142/81(2).

(4) PRO C132/31/3.

(5) As at Ibstone.

while in the northeast, some tenant farms consisted almost entirely of small strips scattered in a number of common fields.

The individual common arable holding might lie in just one field, or it might be in a number of fields. In either case, the holding was rarely in more than a small proportion of the total number of common fields in the township. It was concentrated in only a section of the common arable of the township, and even then in only some of the fields in that locality. Further, the holding was divided unevenly between the fields in which it did lie and, if the limited evidence of cropping on demesne holdings was also representative of tenant farms, its distribution between the common arable cropping courses was also irregular.¹ Nonetheless, a rational system of cropping was maintained on the holding through combinations of enclosed and common arable in the individual courses of the rotation practised on it, the former being used to counterbalance the irregular apportionment of the latter.² Where there was insufficient enclosed arable for this purpose, the distribution of the common arable holding between a large number of fairly small fields, was itself probably sufficient to allow the flexibility in cropping necessary to avoid any undue imbalance in the rotation.

In general, the arable holding as a whole lay in only one part of the township and in the common fields there, usually near to the homestead of its tenant, be that in village or hamlet, or an isolated farmstead. At Knebworth in the northeast, for example, the strips held by families living in the three hamlets in the western part of the parish were confined to a group of eight common fields in that part of the township, while the small amounts of enclosed arable that they had, also lay there.³ The small holding

(1) As at Codicote. At Great Missenden in 1335, the possible common arable in the Abbey demesne lay in three cropping courses in the proportions of 24a., 95½ a. and 25a., BM Harl.Ms.36^o8; while the common arable on the Kinsbourne demesne in Harpenden usually lay in only one cropping course, Appendix O.

(2) As at Codicote, Great Missenden and Kinsbourne.

(3) The hamlets were Three Houses, Crouch Green and Rustling Lad. The families from the hamlets were named respectively "atte Threhous", "ate Crouch" and "de Ristlinge". These are the names that are most prominent in the charter recording land transfers in this area, as parties in transactions, as witnesses to transactions, and in the abbutals described within the charters, HAO 21^o69 21866, 21890, 21920. The holding known as Threhousland was confined to these fields in 1312, HRO 21871.

attached to a cottage in Broadwater in the east of the parish lay in Broadwater field,¹ while land in the three small common fields next to the settlement of Knebworth itself was held by the villagers.² Similarly, in the central Chilterns, the holdings acquired by Robert de Kingshill³ and Walter de Wycombe⁴ lay on the plateau surface around Kingshill and in the small area of common arable in the Hushenden valley nearby. There is no evidence that arable holdings of any kind were ever dispersed throughout an entire parish or manor, nor of the simple division of a township into two or three physical entities for cropping and grazing, that might have made such a distribution necessary. Any arrangement such as this would also have implied an almost exclusive nucleation of settlement, which certainly did not exist in the Chilterns.

In fact, the thirteenth and fourteenth century patterns of arable land holding and of settlement were probably linked together as products of the slow and piecemeal process of clearance and colonisation, which was ending during the thirteenth century. Expansion of the cultivated area of a parish from a large number of relatively small settlement centres, some agglomerated in village and hamlet and some dispersed in single farmsteads, would mean that the individual holdings were concentrated around these centres in one part of the township, rather than focusing on a central nucleus and being dispersed throughout the parish. The survival of this pattern in the fourteenth century, although much modified by the growth of the land market, is most evident where hamlets were distinguished as units of some importance in their own right.⁵ It may also have been reflected in the groupings of common fields that can be detected in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century patterns of land holding in some manors.⁶

(1) HRO 21839. Also HRO 21993.

(2) HRO 21860, 21866, 21941.

(3) J.G.Jenkins, *loc.cit.* (1938), 117, no.119, 117-9, nos.122-4, 125-4, nos.127-8

(4) *Ibid.*, 117-8, nos.122-3, 126, no.130, 127, no.132, 138-44, nos.145-51.

(5) See above, p.323-5.

(6) See above, p.43-4.

Woods and Wastes

In spite of widespread clearing for cultivation since the eleventh century, large uncultivated tracts were still characteristic features of the Chiltern landscape about 1300. Throughout the Hills woods, heaths and open downland had a role of some importance in the local economy. But in the early fourteenth century, as it had been in the eleventh century, and as it was to be in the sixteenth century and later, uncultivated land was more extensive in the southwest and centre of the region than in the northeast. Clearance had progressed further in the northeast by the time that assarting was ending.

The Woods in General

Woodland was scattered in small groves and in larger woods which, southwest of the Gade valley, were concentrated on the plateau surface, on the steeper valley slopes and at the heads of dry valleys.¹ Towards the northeast, where the area of woodland was less, much was located in the highest parts of the individual townships, near to the parish boundary, where assarting had taken place last.²

Beech was the most important single species in the southwest and central Chilterns,³ although it was often mixed with oak and ash in the

(1) eg. in the area around Missenden in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Frithesgrove, Hydegrove, the wood called Senreden and groves in Rameshurst and Wilekinesdell were on the steep valley slopes or at the plateau edge; Skinnersgrove and the wood at Pyketh were probably at the head of a dry valley; while the larger Prestwood, Peterley wood, Nairdwood, Koidkeswude and the wood at Birchmere all lay on the plateau surface west of the Misbourn E.C. Vollans, *op.cit.*, 200, 204-5, 207, 212-3; and J.G. Jenkins, *loc.cit.* (1938), 39, no. 32, 62, no. 61, 68, no. 67, 119, no. 124, 130, no. 136, 132, no. 137, 140, no. 147, 143, no. 150, 144, no. 151, 145, no. 152, 152, no. 160.

(2) As at King's Walden and Codicote.

(3) In 1299, a 100 a. wood in Kensworth and 200 a. wood in Caddington were both beech woods, St. Pauls WD16 Liber I, ff. 115d and 122 (in 1222, there was said to be a great beechwood of c. 300a. in Caddington, W. Hale, *op.cit.*, 1). Beech was also the main tree in the 700a. of Berkhamsted Frith, and in the common Booker Wood in West Wycombe, eg. HARO Eccl. 2/159356, 159358. Three thousand beeches were to be cut down in Bledlow Wood according to an order of 1310, VCH Oxon., 8 (1964), 159; while a century and a half later, 500 beeches were sold from Greenfield Wood in the upper part of Watlington parish

smaller woods and groves.¹ These latter two were predominant in the north-east.² Many woods comprised both tall trees, and the small timber and scrub called underwood, but in some, particularly the beech woods, the stands of full-grown timber were so dense that they restricted all types of undergrowth by their shade.³

Tenurially, the woods were of two types, those held privately and those lying in common. The way in which some woods came to be enclosed, while others in the same area remained in common, is well illustrated by changes in ownership in the woods of Wyfold, a hamlet in the upper part of Checkendon and Rotherfield Peppard parishes. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, this southwestern tip of the dip-slope was still largely covered by heath and wood, with only small patches of cultivated land surrounded by the waste.⁴ The territory of Wyfold had been granted to the

Cat. Anc. Deeds, VI, 168, C5065. There are numerous fourteenth century references to smaller beech woods too: eg. six small woods at Amersham, PRO DL43/13/4; a 20a. wood on the Chenies demesne, PRO C135/44/6; the common Chipperfield Wood in Kings Langley, PRO SC2/177/51, Pentecost 1H.IV and All Saints 2H.IV; a 25a. common wood at Medmenham, PRO C134/98/1; and a 12a. demesne wood at Great Missenden, PRO C135/51/3.

(1) eg. at Caddington in 1299, there was a 6a. wood of oak and beech on the demesne, St. Pauls WD16 Liber I, ff. 115d; a tenant wood at Chesham contained 65 oak, ash and beech, BuCM C.A., St. Barnabus 2R.II; while demesne woods at Ibstone contained all three species.

(2) eg. at Knebworth: HRO K100, 108, 110, 112, 116 for the demesne woods, and K4 and 6 for ash on tenant holdings. Ash and oak grew throughout the Hills: eg. there were two small oak woods of 12a. on the Caddington demesne in 1222, W. Hale, op. cit., 1; in demesne holdings at Flamstead, HRO 17466; at Great Gaddesden, where maple is also mentioned, HRO 2632; at West Wycombe HaRO Eccl. 2/159338; and at Stonor, Cat. Anc. Deeds, VI, C7094: and on tenant holdings at Kings Langley, PRO SC2/177/47-55; and Offley, HRO 48401-2.

(3) eg. a thick wood in Stonor in 1365 contained "nothing else because of the shade of the trees", PRO C135/128/11; for the same reason a 120a. beech wood in Medmenham contained no undergrowth of any value in 1264, PRO C132/31/1; and a 100a. wood in Amersham had no underwood "because of the great trees", PRO C135/225/9 and C135/177/8. There are similar statements for Ayot, a beech wood in Chenies, and a 10a. wood in Sarrat, PRO C135/127/17, C135/44/6, E152/175/197

(4) The woods of Checkendon, Mongewell, Stoke and Caversham all lay adjacent to the arable land and woods of Wyfold, H.E. Salter, loc. cit. (1930b), 192; loc. cit. (1947-48), 115, no. 163 and 124, no. 177.

monks of Thame Abbey in 1153, and they eventually built a grange there.¹ At first, the Abbey and its tenants shared common rights in the woodland around this farm with the lord and men of Rotherfield Peppard, but then, in 1211, Walter Peppard, the lord of Rotherfield, renounced his pasture rights in the common and pastures near to the grange, and the land was enclosed by a hedge.² In return, he and his tenants were allowed full rights of common pasture, housebote and haybote in the woodland beyond the hedge, which totalled 350 acres fifty years later, and which the Abbey agreed not to overcommon or otherwise destroy. In 1263, another lord of Peppard disclaimed all rights in a further fifty acres of woodland in favour of the Abbey "so that the Abbot may keep those acres in severalty and enclose with hedges and ditches and make his profit therein as he wills."³ Further, more complicated arrangements gave the Abbey sole rights over most of the remaining woodland in the west of the hamlet, while the woods in the east were confirmed as belonging to the manors of Rotherfield and Harpsden, although the Abbot and his tenants of the hamlet retained common of pasture and mast for all their beasts there. This area was still called common wood at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁴

Enclosure of woodland could be a lengthy,⁵ and sometimes ill-defined process - on occasions the royal courts had to decide whether a wood was commonable or in severalty.⁶ The creation of private woods in this way

(1) Ibid., 115, no.177.

(2) Ibid., 124, no.177.

(3) H.E.Salter, loc.cit. (1930b), 192.

(4) BH Ms.Surveyors' Drawings for 1st ed. O.S. One-Inch Map. There is also a fourteenth century reference to common in Kingswood, Cat.Anc.Deeds, V, 119, C4696.

(5) eg. the enclosure of Hydegrove at Missenden. The wood had once been intercommoned by manors in Great and Little Missenden along with other land, was subsequently divided between the two in the latter part of the twelfth century, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 67, no.66; and eventually enclosed in 1284 ibid., 68, no.68. Common rights had first been limited and then extinguished.

(6) eg. in 1227, tenants at Radnage claimed rights of pasture in woods there whereas the Prior of Leighton claimed that common of herbage and pasturage were no more than a gift from him, the woods being part of his demesne, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1942), 25, no.287.

had already been taking place for several hundreds of years,¹ and was finally ending during the thirteenth century in the face of the increasing pressure of common rights on the wastes that remained. There was one important exception, imparking of woodland, which continued throughout the later Middle Ages.² Enclosure of woodland other than by imparking revived in the early sixteenth century.³

Private Woods

The largest areas of private woodland in the Chilterns were usually part of the manorial demesnes,⁴ and, in the northeast, lay mostly within the parks.⁵ Larger woodlands were often divided-up into a number of separate woods and groves held by different men - there are numerous descriptions in twelfth and thirteenth century charters for the Missenden area, for example, of adjacent woods in separate tenures⁶ - and internal

(1) The Readnoran charter, dated 774, refers to Clacc's woodland, presumably a wood in a single holding, near Stonor, op.cit..

(2) In 1286, the Earl of Cornwall was allowed to enlarge his park at Ashridge by enclosing land from the woods of Berkhamsted and Ashridge, Cal.Pat.Rolls, 1281-92, 231; the Bishop of Lincoln's wood at Fingest was imparked in 1330 together with 300a. of arable land, *ibid.*, 1330-4, 16; while 100a. of wood and 500a. of other land were enclosed into Hampden Park in 1447, Cal.Charter Rolls, VI, 83, no.26.

(3) eg. Abbott's Wood in the upper part of South Stoke parish was described in 1536 as 'now being inclosed and copped', H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1908)241, no. no.79.

(4) eg. the demesne of the manor of Medmenham included 120a. of wood in 1264 PRO C132/31/1; while 100a. of the 320a. demesne at Stonor, ninety years later was described as thick wood, PRO C135/128/11. Again, much of the woodland in Flamstead parish lay in the demesne of the Priory of St.Giles-in-the-Wood, HRO 17465-6.

(5) eg. the largest areas of several wood in Berkhamsted; Great Gaddesden, Cal.Close Rolls, 1323-27, 293 and HRO 2632; Kings Langley, PRO SC2/177/47-55, SC6/866/13-29; and Knebworth, HRO K100,108,110,112,116 cf. K149d, were in the parks.

(6) A grove lay next to Honor Wood, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1958), 169,no.180; There was land and wood next to Prestwood, *ibid.*, 164,no.175; a wood in Pylet lay alongside Skinnersgrove, *ibid.*, 119,no.124; and a grove in Rameshurst was next to another wood there, *ibid.*, 125,no.129. In High Wycombe, a grove lay next to a grove, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1962), 125, no.724.

divisions were often marked by hedges and ditches.¹ Initially, subdivided woods had probably been formed through the enclosure of the waste by different men, but by the second half of the twelfth century, plots of wood were being granted, sold and leased in the same way as arable land or meadow, and as a result woods, like the closes, were being divided by partial alienation within them.² In King's Walden, and in other Chiltern townships, men were able to consolidate and enlarge woodland holdings through the acquisition, by purchase and exchange, of wood next to that they already held, in the same way as others were consolidating holdings of arable land. In Hughendon, for example, Walter de Wycombe exchanged his share in a grove for part of another grove next to woodland already in his holding.³ Consolidation counterbalanced the effects of fragmentation.

Apart from the larger woods, innumerable small groves scattered throughout the Hills were also held in severalty by all types of men, lords and peasants alike. Some were attached to farmsteads and cottages, but

(1) Adjacent woods in Missenden were separated by "le Scires hegge", J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit.(1938), 60,no.58; while areas of woodland in Ibstone, Codicote and King's Walden were divided physically in the same way.

(2) eg. the original grant to Missenden Abbey, in 1133, included "a certain portion of woodland", *ibid.*, 36,no.30; while in the second half of the same century, Robert de Saunderton granted away part of his woodland in Saunderton to Thame Abbey, H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1947-48), 84,no.112, and 85, no.112A. At Missenden, a grant by Ingram de Betun to the Abbey, early in the following century, included an additional piece (*incrementum*) out of his wood of Peterleystone, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 132,no.137; and Ralf de Scaccari divided his wood called Senreden, on Kingshill, by granting away part of it to Walter de Wycombe, *ibid.*, 144,no.151. Other examples include the grant to Boarstall Abbey, c.1280, of 3a. in Ipsden wood, H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1930a 34, no.96; a grant to the nuns of Goring, c.1195, of part of the grove of Chalcora, T.R.Gambier-Parry, op.cit.,3, no.2; and the gift to Osney Abbey by Henry de Lauenora of all his wood between his stony croft in Lauenora (ie. Lauenders) and his wood of Pyrton - the two woods may already have been separated, in which case alienation merely accentuated the existing division. H.E.Salter, loc.cit. (1934), 421, no.396.

(3) J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 126, no.130.

most lay within or between the fields.¹

Although some woodland was left because the land was unsuitable for cultivation,² the survival of private woods was, to a greater extent, a reflection of their economic value. Woodland enclosed into severalty was not always cleared for cultivation because woodland itself was a useful resource, providing timber that was used locally for a variety of purposes,³ and timber products that were sold in the Vale⁴ and in London. Most wood was sold for fuel rather than for construction,⁵ and most timber was taken from the underwood rather than from the full-grown trees.⁶ Relatively good communications with the two main markets was an important factor in this trade. The markets of the Vale were fairly close to the main sources of supply, while the Thames was the chief means of transporting bulky products to London from the southwest Chilterns. During the early thirteenth century, for example, large amounts of firewood cut in West Wycombe were regularly sent down river from Marlow to Southwark - in 1218, a boatload of 14,000 bundles went in this way.⁷ Ease of access to markets for timber distinguished the Chilterns from some of the other heavily wooded parts of southern

(1) As at Codicote and Ibstone, and also at Kings Langley, PRO SC2/127/53, St. Margarets 11H.IV.

(2) eg. woods perched on steep slopes, at the heads of dry valleys, and along the plateau edge where soils are thin.

(3) In tools and equipment, in local building and for fuel as firewood and charcoal, as at Ibstone.

(4) eg. much of the wood used on the demesne of the Vale manor of Cuxham came from Chiltern woods, P.D.A.Harvey, op.cit., 113.

(5) The most valuable sales of demesne timber were usually for firewood.

(6) Underwood, together with loppings and fallen branches from the large trees, were the main source of wood for most purposes - for small timber for hurdles, for faggots for firewood and charcoal, and it was from the underwood that the main sales of timber were made. Woods were usually valued in the manorial extents for their underwood alone and not for the large timber.

(7) HaRO Eccl.2/159275. Other annual exports about this time were 3,800 bundles in 1208, 5,100 in 1221, 4,800 in 1225 and 8,700 in 1226, Eccl. 2/159270, 159277, 159280-1. Wood exports from West Wycombe later declined, and the main annual sale came to consist of dead wood and timber that had been blown down, although in some years the sale of charcoal, firewood and other timber still brought in substantial sums: eg. in 1346-47, when a large number of faggots and an amount of charcoal were sold, and in 1355, when 134 beeches were sold, HaRO Eccl. 2/159356-7, 159366.

England, where assarting sometimes continued well into the fourteenth century,¹ and probably accounts for the fact that large areas of Chiltern woodland were enclosed and preserved. Generally, the purpose of felling, in the second half of the thirteenth century, was the provision of timber for sale, and not the clearing of land for cultivation.

Woodland management varied from manor to manor according to the amount of wood available. In the southwest and central Chilterns, where a regular supply of timber for local use was assured from the great common woods and extensive private woods, felling for sale occurred at infrequent intervals, but it could be heavy when it did take place. Here the pattern of production was very much as that in West Wycombe after about 1250. Small annual sales were based on fallen or dead wood, on products in excess of local requirements, on underwood cut for firewood or made into charcoal, and on the loppings, trimmings and bark from trees cut for local construction. Substantial sales of large timber were made only occasionally and under special circumstances.² Even in this thickly wooded part of the Hills, care was taken, when trees were cut, to ensure that the woods were not permanently damaged.³

In the northeast, where the area under timber was considerably smaller, a more systematic and more intensive form of management, based on a cycle of underwood felling, was followed on many manors during the fourteenth century. Four acres of wood in Offley was cut once every seven years,⁴

(1) eg. the Weald of Sussex, where woods were preserved in the timber exporting areas near to tidewater, while large scale assarting continued elsewhere until 1350, P.F.Brandon, *op.cit.*, 126-9.

(2) Manorial income from the sale of trees was always high after a particularly stormy year such as 1362, as at Ibstone and Berkhamsted. At Ibstone, important timber sales were also made when the income from crops was low, or when heavy expenses were incurred; at Stonor, wood sales were not large until the arable demesne was leased-out in 1425, PRO SC6/1248/14-17; and in Berkhamsted, large scale felling in the demesne woods was authorised only when cash was needed to repair the Castle and the fence around the Park.

(3) eg. the sale of timber from half the manor of Bosmere in Fawley, Hambledon and Turville in 1480, concerned only appletrees, pear trees, crabtrees and other trees thicker than ten inches, Cat.Anc.Deeds, VI,245,C5623. Two years later, when a wood in Stonor was sold, the purchaser agreed to cut no trees "but yf he bee above 20 ynches at brest heyth of man", and he would ensure that "non young vode be stryrd and specially that no colyers nor oder destruy nat the young spryng", C.L.Kingsford (ed.), "The Stonor Letters and Papers, 1290-1483", Royal Historical Society, Camden Series, 29 (1919), 141, no.507.

(4) PRO C135/22.

and ten acres in Paul's Walden was also cut at steady intervals.¹ Sometimes the rotation followed was such that a regular amount of small timber was available every year.²

Private woods in the Hills were occasionally used for pasturage. They were a source of swine pannage, and pannage in demesne woods was sometimes leased-out to tenants in years when the mast crop was heavy.³ Some private woods were also valued for their herbage, which was rented at times by tenants, but the quality of woodland grazing was generally poor. Undergrowth was restricted by the shade of tall trees - a wood in Ayot was worthless as pasture "because of the shade of the trees"⁵ - and grazing animals were probably also excluded from many woods held in severalty because they would have damaged the growing timber. Underwood

(1) PRO C134/47/12.

(2) eg. in Shortgrave, the dip-slope part of Totternho parish, 93a.3r. of woodland lying as four different woods was divided into seven units, each containing 13a.1½r., and each of which was cut in succession once every seven years, BM Harl.Ms.1885, f.76d. Even hedgerow timber was included in this cycle - hedge wood was also valued at Amersham, PRO DL43/14/4. A similar rotation was followed on a tenant holding in King's Walden, while the regular annual sales of faggots, loppings, trimmings and fallen timber from Knebworth during the second half of the fourteenth century, and the frequent felling of underwood to fire the tile and brick kilns there, suggest that timber in the Park was subject to a regular cycle of cutting, HRO K100, 108, 110, 112, 116. In 1400, for example, 2,500 faggots were sold, as were about half of the 35,810 tiles that were made.

(3) Mast crops were heavy only once every few years. A frequent entry in the accounts for West Wycombe is that pannage in the demesne woods was not leased-out because no mast had fallen: eg. in 1327, 1346, 1348-50, HARO Eccl. 2/159340, 159356, 159358-60. Woodland pannage was usually valued in the manorial extents only for those years when mast should fall. At Berkhamsted and Missenden, this apparently occurred only once in seven years, PRO C135/95 E152/8, C135/32/28.

(4) eg. at Hemel Hempstead, PRO SC6/863/2; and at West Wycombe, HARO Eccl. 2/159339.

(5) PRO C135/127/17.

in particular might be harmed, and this was the most valuable woodland resource. The best pastures were in open glades.¹

Common Woods

Some of the largest woods were in fact common woods. Berkhamsted Frith, which contained more than 700 acres at the end of the thirteenth century, was probably the biggest in the Chilterns, but large common woods existed in all but the northeastern part of the Hills.² The majority, which lay for the most part on the plateau surface, were in exclusively Chiltern parishes, but near to the crest of the dip-slope, and in some places on the scarp-face itself, the common woodland was often within the strip parishes that extended up from the Vale below.³ In the northeast, the amounts of common woodland in a township were usually much less than elsewhere - in Codicote no woodland was common - and the individual woods were small.⁴

It would seem, from the limited evidence available, that the common woods had not yet degenerated to the open scrub and semi-heath that many were to become by the seventeenth century. Kensworth and Caddington woods, for example, undoubtedly consisted of fairly dense stands of timber at the beginning of the thirteenth century; the later Bretons Heath in Bix was woodland in the twelfth century;⁵ while the "greens" of King's Walden were still woods in the early fourteenth century. But already many common woods were more open in character than private woodland - often little or no

(1) A grove in Missenden comprised wood and pasture, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 65, no.64; a 12a. beechwood there included 12a. of several pasture, PRO C135/51/3; and a grove in Lee contained 3a. of grassland, BM Harl.Hs.368.

(2) eg. in Oxfordshire, Exlade Wood in the upper portion of South Stoke parish comprised 348a. in 1366, H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1908), 127; the common woods in Kensworth and Caddington in Hertfordshire each contained more than 300a. of beeches in 1222, W.Hale, op.cit., 1 and 7; and there was 245a. of unenclosed woodland in Bovingdon in 1289, VCH Herts., 2 (1908), 222.

(3) Buckland included a 100a. common wood on the Hills above the village, PRO C135/37/22; the wood in Princes Risborough called "le Hellework" was held in common by tenants of the manor, PRO C133/95; while the common wood of Eaton Bray was at Shortgrave on the dip-slope, Cat.Anc.Deeds, II, C2910.

(4) Brachewood and Wanwood in King's Walden were typical.

(5) T.Madox, "Formulare Anglicanum", (1702), 237, no. 415.

underwood remained in them¹ - because of continual timber collecting and grazing.

Chiltern wastes in general, and the common woods in particular, fulfilled a role of some value in the economies of both Hill townships and villages below the Chalk escarpment. For many, especially the smaller tenants, rights of firebote and housebote must have been the main source of fuel and timber,² although rights of collecting wood were restricted in some manors, presumably to prevent overcutting.³ Swine pannage was not usually a free common right, unless explicitly granted as such⁴ - tenants had to pay pannage dues for the privilege of driving their pigs into the woods when mast had fallen⁵ - but common pasture was generally available in the common woods of a manor to all its tenants,⁶ and haybote

(1) eg. the underwood in Buckland wood had been cut down and devastated by 1335, PRO C135/37/22; while a 20a. common wood in Little Gaddesden in 1347 contained only large trees, and was without herbage and underwood, PRO C135/3/10.

(2) eg. a grant of land in Missenden, in 1164, was accompanied by the right to take wood for house timber and fuel, J.G.Jenkins, loc.cit. (1938), 45, no.40 when Geoffrey de Kingshill was granted a tenement, he also received rights to take stakes and fencing in Kingshill wood for himself and his men on the tenement, for their fences and timber for repairing their houses, ibid., 122, no.126; while the Abbot of Missenden claimed fencing and firewood from woods in Wendover for all his tenants living on the demesne at Lee and for his guest house there, J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1962), 227, no. 907.

(3) eg. at Studham, tenants were allowed a fixed number of cartloads of wood from Charlewood every third year, PRO C135/10/24; while no tenant of Shirburn "or Chiltern" was to cut trees for firewood within the common wood of Shirburn except one week in every year, and even then the amount taken was closely supervised, Bod. Ms. Top. Oxon. C206, f.98.

(4) eg. the grant to Ashridge and its tenants of free pannage in Berkhamsted Frith, see above, p.214.

(5) eg. dues were paid for pannage in the common Chipperfield Wood in Kings Langley, PRO SC6/366/17, 19; and in common woods in Medmenham, Missenden and Penn when the mast fell, PRO C134/98/1, C135/32/28, C134/97/4. Pannage dues are frequently referred to in the manorial extents as the only source of profit from common woods.

(6) eg. pasture in a 100a. wood near Penn was described, in 1316, as "common to all men of the country", PRO C134/97/4.

(the right to collect undergrowth for fodder) existed in most.¹ Herbage seems to have been more abundant than in woods held in severalty, probably because common woods were generally more open than the private woods. In many manors, rights such as housebote and haybote were attached to standard holdings and transferred with them.²

Other Common Wastes

Most of the Chiltern heaths - referred to in medieval descriptions as bruera or hethe - remained unenclosed because they occupied land that was generally unfavourable for cultivation, while the distinction between heath and common wood was sharper than in the seventeenth century, because the latter had not yet degenerated to heath-like formations. Essentially an edaphically determined feature, the extent and distribution of heathland reflected the location of the Eocene sands and gravels, the Plateau Gravels and, in the northeast, the glacial deposits to which they were mainly confined. The common wastes on these formations, that were referred to as heathland in the sixteenth century and later, were already heath in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.³ In some townships, in fact, the

(1) eg. at Little Gaddesden and Wigginton, PRO C133/118/17; in Chipperfield Wood in Kings Langley, PRO SC2/177/51, Pentecost 1H.IV; and at Exlade in South Stoke, H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1908), 127. In every case reference is to rights of both housebote and haybote.

(2) Charters recording the sale of land in the open fields of Pitstone below the Chalk escarpment sometimes refer to appurtenant rights in the woods on the dip-slope above, BuCM P.25/15; rights in Studham Charlewood were attached to specific holdings, BM Harl. Ms.1385, f.14; while tenants of customary units in the neighbouring manors of Kensworth and Caddington were said, in a survey of 1299, to take freely in the woods according to the nature of their holding, St. Pauls WD16 Liber I, ff.115d-127d. This was still the case at Kensworth in 1509, St. Pauls A62.

(3) eg. there are numerous references to Goring Heath and Woodcot Heath, situated on an Eocene outlier at the southwestern end of the Chilterns, from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1907), 192, no.265, and 216, no.303; H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1908), 109, no.567, and 134, no.674; H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1930a), 25, no.62; F.R.Gambier-Parry, loc.cit.(1931) 19, no.22, 71, no 90, 107, no.151, 114, no.166, 122, no.176; *ibid.*, (1932), 138, no.196: the location of the Heath in Berkhamsted in 1300 was exactly the same as in the early seventeenth century: the seventeenth century Redbourne Heath was described as such in the early thirteenth century, F.Walsingham (ed.H.T.Riley), "Historia Anglicana: Gesta Abbatis Monasterii Sancti Albani. Ypodigmia Neustriae", 3 (1876), 257-9; and part of Studham Common was heath c. 1200, BM Harl. Ms. 1385, f.60d.

the largest tracts of common waste were those under heath, while at Ibstone in the southwest and at Codicote in the northeast, heathland was almost the only common waste in the township. Heaths were undoubtedly open to common grazing,¹ but the nature of further rights over them are not clear from the pre-sixteenth century evidence.

The same is true of the other common wastes, which occupied smaller areas in the Hills, namely the downs, greens and moors. Open downs extended across parts of the Chiltern scarp and crest in the Middle Ages, as in the sixteenth century and later. There are early references to downland in at least four townships.² Some of the later greens on the dip-slope were also described as such in the early fourteenth century,³ but others were as yet patches of woodland, which had still to degenerate to open land⁴ - it is perhaps significant in this respect that many "greens" appear in place names for the first time as late as the fifteenth century.⁵ The common grass pasture, known as moors, were also found along some of the river floodplains.⁶

Intercommuning

The Chiltern wastes were subject to a variety of often conflicting claims by the thirteenth century. These claims had arisen in a number of ways. In the first instance, the fact that many commons were inter-parochial would have made any clear delimitation of rights within them virtually impossible.⁷ Again, villages below the escarpment, where amounts of woodland and waste were small, claimed rights in the woods and heaths

(1) e.g. at Ibstone; Woodcote, H.E. Salter, loc. cit. (1907), 216, no.308; and Redbourne, F. Walsingham, op. cit..

(2) These were Kensworth, *Cat. Anc. Deeds*, II, C1963; Whipsnade, *ibid.*, C2910; Totternhoe, BM Harl. Ms. 1005, f.76d; and Ellesborough, J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1962), 47, no. 606.

(3) e.g. Whipsnade Green, *Cat. Anc. Deeds*, II, C.2706; and Bramfield Green, HRO 40702, SS. Philip & James 24E.I.

(4) As at King's Walden. Mangrove Green in Offley was also once wood - the name has been interpreted as "thicket in common use", J.E.B. Gover, A.Mawer, and F.M. Stenton, op. cit., 19.

(5) *Ibid.*.

(6) See above, p.309.

(7) e.g. the heath at Kingshill in Missenden and High Wycombe, and Nomans Common between Wheathampstead and Sandridge. J.G.Jenkins, loc. cit. (1933) 242, no.19, and J.E.B.Gover, A.Mawer and F.M. Stenton, op. cit., 58.

of townships that were entirely within the Chilterns,¹ as well as sharing the Hill commons that lay within the strip parishes of the Chalk edge. Special grants of common rights to individuals or to ecclesiastical institutions complicated still further the complex of claims - Ashridge College and its tenants, for example, held, by special grant, common rights in Berkhamsted Frith that were more liberal than those held by the men of Berkhamsted themselves.² Finally, the expansion of population and cultivated land before 1300, synonymous with a reduction of the unenclosed waste, resulted in ever increasing pressure on commons that survived. By the thirteenth century, therefore, most of the larger heaths and unenclosed woods were intercommoned by townships, and by individuals and institutions who had received special grants.³

There were frequent disputes. Ibstone contested the supposed rights of Lewknor to common pasture on Ibstone Heath; lengthy litigation resulted from the claims of Dunstable Priory to common pasture in Caddington and Kensworth;⁴ and a dispute between the lords of Caddington and Flamstead over common rights in Caddington Wood was eventually settled, in 1206, by division of the wood.⁵ Sometimes, anomalous situations were clarified by

(1) eg. the claims of the men of Lewknor in Ibstone Heath, and possibly the rights of the men of Pyrton in commons at Pishill - they had rights of way to Pishill for their sheep and cattle, Cat. Anc. Deeds, II, C2278.

(2) See above, p.214. Other examples include the grant to Boarstall Abbey of common for 8 oxen and 16 pigs and their young in Ipsden Wood c.1280, and of common pasture, housebote and haybote in a grove in Checkendon in 1383, H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1930a), 34, no.96, and 31, no.84; the grant to Thame Abbey of pannage for 30 pigs in the woods of Saunderton c.1150, H.E.Salter, loc.cit. (1947-48), 84, no.111 and 86, no.114; the grant of common to Roger de Wimberville and his tenants in Suthwode in Missenden in 1234, M.W.Hughes, op.cit. 64; and the grants of common in Studham, Caddington, Kensworth and Shortgrave to Dunstable Priory, BM Harl.Ms.1885, ff.25d, 39d, 60d, 101d.

(3) eg. the two villis of Stoke and Woodcote, and the monks of Caversham shared rights in Exlade Wood, H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1908), 127; the men of Wyfold, Rotherfield Peppard and Harpsden commoned together in the woods of Wyfold, H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1930b), 192; H.E.Salter, loc.cit.(1947-48), 124, no.177: two woods in Princes Risborough were intercommoned by the men of four townships, PRO C133/95: and the swine which commoned in the woods of Chepping Wycombe were allowed free pannage in the woods of Penn, Cat.Anc.Deeds, I, A404.

(4) VCH Herts., 2 (1908), 231.

(5) Ibid., 108. More than a century and a half later, the lord of Flamstead was involved in another dispute, this time with the Abbey of St. Albans, concerning common rights on the heath in the Abbey's manor of Redbourne.

mutual agreement between two parties without recourse to the courts.¹

Common Waste and Settlement

Many common wastes were already centres for settlement by the thirteenth century - settlement next to common wood in Flaunden was being described as early as 1199² and many of the wasteside hamlets of the sixteenth century and later can be identified in the thirteenth and fourteenth century evidence. There were dwellings around parts of Goring Heath³ and Woodcote Heath,⁴ and around Booker common wood in West Wycombe,⁵ while the hamlet at Chipperfield Wood in Kings Langley is well documented.⁶ At King's Walden, cottages were clustered around patches of common wood that were later to become open greens but at Whipsnade the green already existed as the focus of the hamlet. Some of the commons were also centres for brick and tile making, which no doubt encouraged further settlement on plots cleared from the waste.⁷ But most waste-side settlements had probably grown up during the final phases of medieval colonisation and clearance. When assarting was ending and the extent of the commons had become more or less stabilised, these must have been the only areas where continued expansion of settlement was possible on any significant scale. By no means all the waste-side dwellers were humble cottagers. Some were substantial landowners who played an active part in the peasant land market.⁸

The claims of Flamstead were dismissed, F. Valsingham, *op.cit.*, Nomans Common lay across the boundary between Wheathampstead and Sandridge, and it was not until 1429 that the lords of the two manors resolved their different claims by agreeing to intercommon there, VCH Herts., 2 (1908), 295.

(1) eg. before the end of the twelfth century, Missenden Abbey had surrendered rights of housebote, haybote and pannage in the woods of Hugh de Noiars in return for a grant of land, J.G. Jenkins, *loc.cit.* (1938), 39, no. 32; and had arranged the division of a common wood along the boundary of Great and Little Missenden, which had previously been intercommoned by the Abbey and Robert Mantel, between their respective manors in the two townships, *ibid.*, 67, no. 66.

(2) VCH Herts., 2 (1908), 224.

(3) H.E. Salter, *loc.cit.* (1907), 192, no. 265; T.R. Gambier-Parry, *loc.cit.* (1931),

(4) *Ibid.*, 107, no. 151.

(58, no. 72.

(5) eg. Haro Eccl. 2/159358.

(6) eg. PRO SC2/173/47, Pentecost 29H.VI and October 27H.VI.

(7) eg. at Cadmore, Merton College Ms. 5106; at Nettlebed, W.G. Hoskins and E.M. Jope, "The medieval period", in A.F. Martin and R.W. Steele (eds.), "The Oxford Region", (1954), 116; and at Penn, J.G. Jenkins, *loc.cit.* (1935), 52-4.

(8) eg. some of the Codicote families who lived in a heath hamlet.

CHAPTER VIIICONJECTURES, CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARIES

The distinctiveness of Chiltern field systems in general, and the differences between field arrangements within the Hills can both be related, as Gray suggested, to the local topography. There was little variation in basic social structures either within the Chilterns, or between the Hills and the adjacent lowlands. The pattern of fields in the Chilterns before 1850 reflected an historical development that had been profoundly influenced by the physical environment. Clearing of the waste for cultivation had been a lengthy and piecemeal process because of the hilly, inaccessible and heavily wooded nature of the country. There is a strong correlation between field systems and settlement on the one hand, and stages in colonisation on the other.

The earliest permanent settlement was in the main valleys, where water was readily available and where the better soils are located. Evidence of cultivation in Roman times has been found in many of these valleys, although there is no clear link between Romano-British agriculture and the later field systems. A possible sequence of development suggested by the later evidence was as follows. Early settlement was in the form of numerous small nucleations, around many of which there existed a pattern of open strips divided amongst a number of relatively small common fields. With expansion of the cultivated area along the valleys, the common arable of the individual villages and hamlets frequently coalesced to form a more or less continuous belt on the lower slopes and valley bottoms, usually bisected, along the floodplains of the permanent stream, by a strip of meadow or pasture. A number of these early settlements each with their common fields, were later incorporated in a single parish, although some hamlets retained a separate identity within this framework until well into the fourteenth century. Dispersal of the primary settlement in numerous small centres probably reflected the difficulties of settling a hilly and thickly wooded area, rather than any peculiarity of tribal organisation. In the northeast, where

relief is more subdued and conditions for agriculture generally more favourable, early colonisation and the pattern of common fields associated with it, were more extensive than in the deeply dissected centre and southwest.

Subsequent secondary colonisation saw the expansion of settlement into the smaller tributary dry valleys, and up onto the plateau surface and ridge-tops, where new hamlets were created, and isolated farmsteads appeared. Land was usually cleared directly into severalty to produce a network of small hedged closes, but some common fields, even smaller than many of those in the valleys, were still being formed. Areas of woodland, large and small, were also fenced-in for private profit. Assarting and enclosure were ending during the thirteenth century, in response to increasing pressure on the surviving wastes and the increasing value of timber. Fairly extensive woods and heaths were left unclaimed in the centre and southwest, where clearing was less advanced. New settlement then began to accumulate around the edges of the stabilised wastes to form hamlets. The net result of these later phases of colonisation was a pattern of hedged closes and occasional small common fields, interspersed with woods and wastes on the higher land and in the more remote parts of a township, and associated with linear ridge-top settlements, waste-side hamlets and isolated farmsteads. It was a landscape that contrasted, often sharply, with the more open field pattern and the closer settlement nucleations of the larger valleys.

There is no clear evidence as to how common fields were formed in the Chilterns, because the great majority came into being centuries before adequate documentation. The use of a heavy wheeled plough was perhaps a factor of significance in the formation of arable strips, although not in the dispersal of these amongst many tenants; and while some common fields may have been pre-Saxon survivals, many might have been a product of co-operative ploughing in a closely-knit tribal community during the earlier stages of post-Roman settlement. Certainly coaration was still being practised in the thirteenth century, although it must have been followed in enclosed fields as well as in the common fields. Common arable strips in scattered ownership may also have appeared through the division of once compact units in association with some form of partible inheritance or partible succession to

property, but there is very little evidence of this. The customs of primogeniture were widely followed in the Hills by the thirteenth century and, although modified to allow the disposal of land before death, they rarely produced either large scale fragmentation of holdings or the subdivision of individual units of land. All cases of partibility in succession can be traced to exceptional circumstances - either joint inheritance by daughters, some form of transfer before death, or, occasionally to widow's dower. Finally, some common arable may have been created by the allocation of freshly cleared land from a lord to his men. The small common fields formed in the later stages of colonisation may, in particular, have appeared in this or a similar way. Certainly the names of a few imply that they were associated with one of the larger land holding families.

The Chiltern common fields were probably, in fact, formed as a result of a variety of processes. Different factors operating at different times could produce similar patterns. One thing is clear, however - the most extensive areas of common arable were where settlement and cultivation had been established longest. During the later stages of colonisation, the common field forming processes no longer always operated. Land cleared from the waste was usually taken directly into severalty. By 1300, fields were being subdivided on a significant scale only through partial or diverse alienation of land within them, or for cropping purposes. In both cases the resulting features were quite different from the common fields.

The pattern of fields, land-use and settlement that had emerged in the Chilterns by the mid-thirteenth century remained basically unchanged for 300 years. In the southwest and centre, private woodland played a part of some importance in the local economy, acting in particular as a reserve of capital to be drawn-on when needed. But the woods were always subsidiary to farming, which was the main source of subsistence and income in all townships. The emphasis in farming, on the manorial demesnes at least, was on the commercial production of grain, especially wheat. Good grazing land and winter fodder were in short supply. Common woods, heaths and downs were extensive in all but the northeast, but the quality of pasturage on them was poor, and the demands made on it were heavy. The large areas under parkland and private woodland were not open to grazing by farm stock on any significant scale.

The only important sources of winter fodder were common meadows and meadow closes along the narrow floodplains of the principal streams. In many townships, meadow was limited in extent or even non-existent. Consequently, crop production and not livestock rearing was the economic basis of thirteenth century field systems in the Chilterns.

In most townships, the typical pattern of arable fields comprised both common arable land, and substantial amounts of enclosed land held in severalty. The proportion of this latter was greatest in the southwest Chilterns, where a few townships were entirely enclosed, while common arable land became more prominent towards the northeast, where more than half of the arable of some townships was in common fields. There were two distinct types of arable closes on most manors. On the one hand, huge domesne fields, each sometimes 50-100 acres or more, usually occupied some of the best land in a township, while on the other hand, small hedged tenant closes of about 5 acres were interspersed with patches of woodland on the higher ridges and in the more remote parts of a township, where assarting had taken place last.

Common fields in the individual townships were numerous and small, and they were often of two types; larger fields occupied much of the lower land around the main settlements in a parish, whereas smaller and less regular common fields were scattered among the closes on the higher land. The basic unit within the common fields was the strip, usually of an acre or less. Strips were grouped into furlongs, but the distinction between field and furlong, and between fields themselves, was often blurred. This, together with the multiplicity of common fields, probably reflected a slow and piece-meal enclosure from the waste. It was inevitable, where common fields were so numerous, that there should be confusion as to the nature of some of them. In a few townships, particularly in the northeast, the village of a parish and a number of outlying hamlets were each still clearly associated with separate groups of common fields in the thirteenth century, while elsewhere, sixteenth and seventeenth century surveys similarly suggest distinct grouping of the common fields within a parish.

The strip pattern and scattered holdings of the common fields were reproduced on a smaller scale by the division, between two or more tenants, of closes held in severalty. Such divisions most often resulted from the

alienation by gift, sale or lease, of land in a close to a number of different tenants, or from partial alienation by one tenant to another. Although it is difficult to distinguish subdivided closes from the common fields in medieval descriptions of land, in fact the two were quite distinct. Most closes were usually back in a single holding after a few years, but occasionally division was more permanent, in which case the separate units of land were usually fenced-off. Assart land and established closes alike were subdivided in this way, as were woods and meadows, and, occasionally, common field strips.

The practice of grazing the arable fallow and stubble was an integral part of medieval field systems in the Chilterns, important both as a means of augmenting the restricted supply of pasturage and of manuring the land. It seems probable that common fields throughout the Hills were subject to common grazing, although unambiguous references to this practice are few before 1500. Sometimes, the arable of enclosed demesne holdings was open to common grazing, but more often, tenant livestock were pastured there only in limited numbers and for a rent. Sheep were folded in the larger enclosed fields.

A three-course rotation, whereby one third of an arable holding was left fallow each year, was widely followed on both tenant and demesne farms by 1300, and had been enforced on at least some holdings since the mid-twelfth century. In practice, however, this was often little more than a generalisation valid over a period of years, particularly on the larger holdings, for there might be fairly wide annual variations in the amount of land cultivated and in the two sown courses. Two-shift systems were also found at times. Within these broad frameworks, the cropping arrangements on individual farms varied widely. By 1300, the uncomplicated arrangements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were giving way to more sophisticated systems. The former had included simple three-field divisions of enclosed holdings, and, in at least one example, of common arable land, as well as triple groupings of enclosed fields. Gradually, more varied crop ranges appeared on the demesne farms, and more complex cropping routines were introduced. The larger enclosed fields were often subdivided for cropping,

and, by the fourteenth century, it was not unusual for a single demesne enclosure to contain land under a variety of crops, with crops rotated within the individual fields as well as between a number of fields. Fixed rotations were followed in the common fields, enforced by the need to clear the crops before the land was thrown open for pasturing, and although more than one crop might be grown in a single common field, these were usually the crops of a single season. There is no medieval evidence as to how the common arable of a township was organised as a whole for cropping and grazing, but during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the numerous common fields of some parishes were divided into three groups, between which the triennial sequence of cropping rotated. On holdings with common arable land, this was simply combined in one rotation with the enclosed arable, in which case a single cropping course could comprise land in both several and common fields.

The basis of most tenant farms, free and villein alike, was a half virgate of 25 to 30 acres, or its fractions, the ferlingate and the cotland. Many demesne and peasant holdings were entirely enclosed, but many more combined enclosed and common arable land in varying proportions. The typical common arable holding was located in only a few of the many common fields in a parish, usually those near to the farmstead or cottage of the holding. There was no regularity in the distribution of this land among the common fields in which it lay, between groups of common fields, or even between the common arable cropping courses. In practical terms, irregularity was possible because the individual tenants could, by using permutations of enclosed arable and land in a variety of common fields, adjust the cropping on their own land to suit the triennial fallow by necessity enforced in the common fields. Cropping on the holding was not tied to the rotations of the common arable. Irregularity had no doubt arisen in the first place through the slow and piecemeal nature of colonisation, and was, in many cases, subsequently accentuated by medieval consolidation of holdings. Similarly, the localisation of individual holdings within a township had evolved in association with the clearing of the waste from numerous small centres of settlement, and was also later modified by the operation of the land market. For this reason, land in the common arable fields was held from isolated

farmsteads, and from farmsteads in hamlets, villages and town alike. The existence of common field arrangements in the Chilterns did not imply a nucleation of settlement.

The first few decades after 1300 saw the beginning of a period of economic depression and social change throughout the Hills that was to continue for another two centuries. During this time, population declined sharply, demesne holdings were farmed-out on an increasing scale, while engrossment of tenant holdings was widespread. These changes were particularly marked after the epidemic of 1348-50, when the population of some townships was reduced by more than one half. But in spite of changing socio-economic conditions, there was surprisingly little alteration in the nature of the field systems during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The changes that were made, were essentially of details. Cultivated land was not extended on any significant scale, and, in fact, the area under crops generally decreased during the fourteenth century. The proportion of an arable holding left fallow each year was often increased from a third to a half or more. A massive conversion of arable to grazing land occurred after 1350, when demesne and tenant holdings were left uncropped for a few seasons and were leased-out as pasturage. Usually the change was only temporary. Most land was brought back into cultivation after five or six years.

Within the common fields, peasants and lords were consolidating strips by purchase and exchange, in the thirteenth century, and continued to do so, although on a reduced scale after about 1350. Enclosure rarely followed, however, and when it did occur, it was usually by an improving lord, with a complete field or a large part of a field being incorporated into the demesne. Piecemeal tenant enclosure of a few strips was rare. Rationalisation of the lands of a holding alone was the primary aim of peasant consolidation. The number of common fields in a township was also sometimes reduced by the amalgamation of smaller fields to form a single large field, probably for greater convenience in cropping and grazing. Conversely, larger fields were sometimes broken-up into small units before 1500, a process that was later to occur on a much wider scale.

The most marked result of the fourteenth century decrease in population, and of the amalgamation of individual holdings that often followed, was a shrinkage of settlement. From the beginning of the fourteenth century, dwellings were being abandoned and were falling into ruins on an increasing scale. By mid-century, complete hamlets had disappeared, and villages and towns were depleted. But again the basic pattern of isolated farmsteads, hamlets, and villages was not altered.

Field systems in the Chilterns about 1500 differed very little in organisation from those of about 1300. By 1600, these old-established patterns were changing rapidly, and by 1800 they had almost disappeared. Widespread enclosure of common field land occurred. It was a private and piecemeal enclosure movement. Common arable strips were gradually hedged-in, sometimes as a single consolidated block and sometimes as a group of strips in different ownership, while the rest of the field remained open to common grazing. All types of land holders; large and small, participated, although the former predominated. Large-scale private agreements were few. By 1600, complete common fields had already been enclosed through the attrition of individual action, but in many cases final enclosure of an entire field was not accomplished until the nineteenth century, often by Act of Parliament and usually several hundred years after the first strips had been fenced-off from it. At the same time as enclosure was taking place, the number of common fields in many townships remained constant or even increased, because of the accompanying division of common fields into smaller units that were also called "fields". Within the common arable that remained unenclosed, the routine of centuries continued, often with little modification. The average strip size was larger, and there was a wider variety of sizes, while some strips were laid down to ley grasses, although never on any significant scale. Otherwise, common pasturing and a three-course rotation was still practised on the common arable. The former was characterised by ever increasing restrictions on the numbers of animals allowed to graze. Many holdings now contained a greater proportion of enclosed arable land, but the irregular distribution of a holding among the common fields of a township was just as marked as in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

After about 1550, the extent of cultivated land in the Chilterns was being increased on a significant scale for the first time since 1300. Private woods were grubbed-up for cultivation, and some large areas of waste were cleared after being enclosed by private agreement - other enclosed wastes were incorporated in parks or became private woods - an activity that reached a peak with the Enclosure Acts of the first half of the nineteenth century. Clearing was to some extent counterbalanced by the imparking of arable land after 1600. Enclosure of the common field strips, enclosure from the common waste and cultivation of former woodland, all produced distinctive patterns of hedged closes. At the same time, the pattern of old enclosed farmland was changing. The great demesne fields of the thirteenth century had been divided into smaller enclosures by 1600, but these remained substantially larger than the body of tenant closes. The lay-out of the latter was also being rationalised, with small closes amalgamated into larger units, and larger fields divided-up.

These broad changes in the traditional Chiltern field systems began in the sixteenth century, stimulated by the growth of the London food market. There was little conversion of arable to pasture, either in the existing closes or on land taken from the common fields, except where arable was imparked. Rather there was an intensification of the traditional arable husbandry. The emphasis in Chiltern farming remained, as it had long been, on the production of grain for sale, and the expansion of the London market in the sixteenth century was an incentive for more efficient farming. During the first half of the eighteenth century, the introduction of root crops and new techniques further stimulated change, and within another 100 years, the disintegration of the old Chiltern field systems was virtually complete.

APPENDIX A (i)

Crops in some 16th and 17th century probate inventories

Name	Parish	Date	Crops	Total
John Bolter	Bix & Nettlebed	April 1613	36a. wheat; 14a. rye 56a. barley 69a. oats; 5½a. vetch; 4½a. pease	205a.
Richard Hill	Harpenden	May 1598	60a. wheat, rye & barley 80a. lent corn	140a.
Richard Young	King's Walden	May 1598	40a. wheat & barley 40a. pease & oats	80a.
William Barkmaster	Knebworth	April 1598	40a. wheat & rye 30a. oats & pease	70a.
Richard Aldwyn	Little Missenden	May 1566	30a. wheat 40a. oats, barley & pease	70a.
John Ovier	Greenfield (Watlington)	1614	14a. wheat; 11a. rye 15a. oats; 11a. barley; 9a. pease	60a.
Nicholas Dutte	Harpenden	April	20a. wheat 12a. oats; 12a. pease & vetch	44a.
? Howden	Little Marlow	?	11a. rye; 10a. wheat 7a. barley, 6a. oats & 2a. pease	36a.
John Halsey	Markyate	May 1671	7a. wheat; 3a. ley grass 14a. pease, oats & grass	24a.
Richard Gate	Chesham	June	15a. wheat 16a. rye	31a.
Richard Wright	Hughenden	May 1604	14a. wheat & rye 12a. oats, pease & vetch; 7a. barley	33a.
John Bird	Melvyn	March 1670	7a. wheat & rye 9½a. 'edge sown' 3a. 'barley tilth'	19½a.

APPENDIX A (i)

(Contd.)

Name	Parish	Date	Crops	Total
John Sawell	Nettleden	August 1604	9a. wheat 10a. lent corn & pease	19a.
Robert Carey	Stevenage	June 1671	9a. wheat & barley 9a. pease & oats	18a.
Richard Brokett	Ippollitts	August 1604	9a. 3r. wheat & barley 7 1/2a. oats & lentils	17a. 1r.
Thomas Hall	Welwyn	May 1699	4a. wheat; 7a. barley; 3a. pease & oats	14a.
William Strode	Medmenham	June 1574	7a. wheat & rye 4a. barley & oats	11a.
Henry Axtell	Berkhamsted	April 1625	4 1/2a. wheat & rye 5 1/2a. lent corn	10a.
George Heath	Stevenage	July 1639	3a. wheat & barley 5a. pease & oats	8a.
Richard Wigenton	Wigginton	May 1580	3a. wheat 3a. oats, pease & vetch; 1 1/2a. barley	7 1/2a.
? Smithes	Nettleden	June 1588	2a. wheat; 1a. rye; 1/2a. barley 4a. oats & pease	7 1/2a.
Thomas Polts	Offley	June 1571	3a. wheat & rye 3a. 'egge grain'	6a.
Laurence Rolf	Amersham	June 1611	4a. wheat 2a. oats	6a.
John Halle	Amersham	June 1566	3a. wheat 3a. oats	6a.

APPENDIX A (i)

(Contd.)

Name	Parish	Date	Crops	Total
Robert Hammon	Great Marlow	May	1a. wheat; 4a. barley; 1r. pease	6a.
William Mathews	Kimpton	May 1588	3a. wheat; 1a. barley 3a. oats & pease	7a.
John Bibsworth	Ippollitts	June 1610	3½a. wheat & barley 2a. oats & pease	5½a.
Edward Dearmer	Ippollitts	May 1699	2½a. barley; 1a. rye; 1½a. oats	5a.
John Hareson	Amersham	April 1621	2½a. wheat 2a. oats	4½a.

APPENDIX A (ii)

Livestock in some 16th and 17th century probate inventories

<u>SHEEP</u>		<u>CATTLE</u>	
Size of flock	No. of flocks	No. of animals	No. of owners
1 - 10	22	1 - 5	38
11 - 20	14	6 - 10	12
21 - 40	14	11 - 20	6
41 - 60	4	More than 20	2
61 - 80	4		
81 - 100	1	Median herd is 4 beasts	
101 - 150	1		
More than 150	3		

Median flock is 16 sheep

<u>HORSES</u>		<u>PIGS</u>	
No. of animals	No. of owners	No. of animals	No. of owners
1 - 5	25	1 - 5	28
6 - 10	3	6 - 10	16
11 - 20	3	11 - 20	8
		More than 20	4

Proportion of farmers with different classes of livestock
Number in the sample is 70.

	Sheep	Cattle	Horses	Pigs
Number of owners:	63	58	31	56
Percentage of total:	90.	83	44	80

Sources:- (i) For Oxfordshire, Bod. W.O. 44, 137; and for Bucks. and Herts., L.R.O. Inv. 45/42, 89, 51/72, 56/309, 61/248, 457, 64/123, 76/201, 209, 221, 80/151, 90/136, 140, 145, 99/43, 47, 108/14, 80, 132, 124/64, 129/363, 137/404; H.R.O. Boxes 62-67.

(ii) For Bucks. and Herts., as above and also L.R.O. Inv. 26/348, 42/7, 48/188, 51/33, 47, 64, 209, 56/302/314, 61/267, 290, 64/125, 128, 135, 76/207, 212, 213, 216, 80/143, 146, 85/278, 90/149, 107A/74, 108/19, 21, 81, 91, 105, 107, 134, 114/108, 387, 122/119, 126/60, 129/309, 134/237, 137/400, 401, 442. Similar figures are given for Oxfordshire in M.A. Havinden, op. cit., 145, Table 17.

APPENDIX B (i)

A list of parishes that contained common arable land after 1550
(sequence from S.W. to N.E.)

Location (by parish)	Date	Reference
Bix	1602	Bod. Ms. Top. Oxon. c55, f.192
Swyncombe	1609	PRO LR2/196, ff.185d-187
Hambleden	1633-4	BuCM 397/22/13-17
Fingest	1601	LRO Ter./15/61
Stokenchurch	1675	Bod. Ms. Top. Bucks. B7, f.63
Crowell (upper)	1840	Tithe Map
Bradenham	1607	BuRO D/A/GT
Chepping Wycombe	1626	CCA Cap.I/29/1
Hughenden	1664	BuRO D/MH/14/10
Great Hamrden	1553	BuCM 57/51
Little Hampden	1553	BuCM 57/51
Ellesborough (upper)	c.1650	BuRO AR 27/62
Great Missenden	c.1550	PRO E315/406, ff.9-13
Penn	1595	J.G. Jenkins, loc. cit. (1935), 70
Amersham	1674	BuCM A5/15/56
Chesham	1565	BuCM Ca
Berkhamsted and Northchurch	1555	HRO 66511
Flaunden	1622	PRO LR2/216, ff.39-70
Little Gaddesden	1557	HRO 601
Great Gaddesden	1557	HRO 28
Studham	1550	BdRO DD.BW 966
Hemel Hempstead	1589	HRO 19706
Kings Langley	1556	HRO Uncatalogued
Abbots Langley	1611	PRO SC2/177/46
Whipsnade	1625	LRO T7, f.269
Kensworth	1571	BM Add. Ch. 25979b
Caddington	1554	St. Pauls Press B No.12
Flamstead	1555	HRO 17252
Redbourne	1655	HRO 38396
St. Michaels	1574	HRO X B31
Harpden	c.1560	Westm. 8894
Wheathampstead	1558	Westm. 8972
Sandridge	1607-8	HRO 41211
Luton (West Hide)	1614	HRO 41569
Kimpton	1625	LRO T7, f.250
Paul's Walden	c.1600	St. Paul's WC6
King's Walden	1552	BM Add. Ch. 35989
Lilley	1554	HRO 47564

APPENDIX B (i)

(Contd.)

Location (by parish)	Date	Reference
Offley	1553	HRO 72351
Iprollitts	1579	HRO 47903
Langley	1812	HRO 2436
Knebworth	1552	HRO K12
Codicote	1546	BM Add. Ms. 40735
Ayot St. Lawrence	1800	LRO Glebe Terrier
Ayot St. Peter	1636	BM Add. Ms. 33575, f.23
Welwyn	1570	HRO 59091
Datchworth	1573	HRO 22040
Stevenage	1553	HRO 22623
Bramfield	1555	HRO 40750

APPENDIX B (ii)

A list of parishes where common arable was enclosed by Act of Parliament
(sequence from S.W. to N.E.)

Parish	Date of Award	Reference
Hughenden	1855-9	BuRO IR/80-81
Penn	c.1855	BuRO IR/77
Amersham	1815	BuRO IR/12a
Northchurch	1864	HRO R14
Little Gaddesden	1846	HRO C2/55
Kensworth	1801	EdRO Enc. Docs.
Caddington	1798	EdRO MA/46
Offley and Lilley	1769	HRO C4/S5
King's Walden	1802	HRO C2/S4, E/67, 67083
Ippollitts	1818	HRO C3/S6, R11
Knebworth and Datchworth	1867	W.E. Tate (1945-9), 27.
Ayot St. Peter, Welwyn and Codicote	1810	HRO C.a/S2F
Stevenage	1854	HRO R16

APPENDIX C

A list of references to common pasturing on the common arable
(the nearest reference to 1550 is given - sequence from S.W. to N.E.)

Location (by parish)	Date	Reference
Bix	1608	PRO LR2/196, f.186d.
Swyncombe	1608	PRO LR2/196, ff.185d-187a
Hambleden	c.1650	BuCM 88/21
Chepping Wycombe	c.1540	R.W. Greaves, op. cit..
Great and Little Hampden	c.1600	BuCM 416/39
Berkhamsted	1513	PRO SC2/177/16
Little Gaddesden	1559	HRO 602
Great Gaddesden	1521	HRO 21
Studham	1578	BdRO DD.BW 966
Kensworth	1518	St. Pauls Press B No.12
Caddington	1518	St. Pauls Press B No.12
Flamstead	1581	BM Add. Ms. 6035, f.1
Harpden	1629	Westm. 14049
Wheathampstead	1628	Westm. 14049
Lilley	1513	HRO 47553
Offley	1522	HRO 48405
King's Walden	1515	BM Add. R. 35960
Ippollitts	1627	HRO 47925
Knebworth	1596	HRO K19
Datchworth	1541	PRO SC2/178/62
Stevenage	1652	HRO 49151

APPENDIX D

Cropping in the common fields of Little Gaddesden as indicated
by manorial court orders concerning fences.

At Little Gaddesden, the four common fields were split into three groups for cropping. This rotation has been reconstructed below from orders made at the manorial courts concerning fences. At a number of sixteenth century courts, and at practically every court held between 1626 and 1657, it was ordered that the hedges, fences, mounds and gates of one or more common fields were to be repaired by a certain date. In May 1559, for example, the court ordered that all tenants with land in South field were to mend their fences by the 8th of the month,¹ while at the October court of 1607, the order was that "all the hedges in the North field shall be made up by the owners of the land before All Saints Day next and so maintayned through the season".² An explanation of these orders is given in a court roll for 1721, which contains the following significant phrase - "The fences belonging to the comun feildes in Little Gaddesden of the wheat sesones are to be mended on or before All Holond Day next and the fences belonging to the lent corn sesones on or before Ladyday next".³ In other words, the fences of the common fields within which the wheat crop was to be sown were to be repaired by the 1st November (All Holonds Day), and those of the field to be cultivated with a spring sown crop (lent corn) were to be mended by the 25th March (Lady Day). When the court ordered that the fences of a particular field be made up by an autumn date, then that field was to be sown with wheat; when the date was between March and May, the field was sown with a spring crop; and the remaining fields, about the fences of which no order was made, were fallow. It is possible to cross-check, when court orders concerning pasturing the common arable name the fields affected by the orders in a particular season. For example, it was ordered, at the April court of 1637, that no sheep were to enter North field, Church field, the Hale or the Iye until ten days after the harvest had been collected.⁴

-
1. HRO 626
 2. HRO 677
 3. HRO 1029
 4. HRO 719.

These were therefore the fields that were being cropped in the 1636-37 season, while South field lay fallow - exactly the same conclusion as reached from the orders about fences made at the courts of October 1636 and April 1637. Such checks can be made a number of times between 1626 and 1657.

Court	Fields in which fences to be repaired	Last date	Cropping in each field
Oct. 1626	North	10th Oct.	N. = wh.
April 1627	South	5th April	S. = 1c.
Oct. 1627	Church & Lye	13th Oct.	Ch. & L. = wh. Ch. & L. = f.
April 1628	North	24th April	N. = 1c.
Oct. 1628	South	1 Nov.	S. = wh. S. = f.
April 1629	Church & Lye	20th April	Ch. & L. = 1c.
Oct. 1629	North	4th Oct.	N. = wh. H. = f.
April 1630	South	20th April	S. = 1c.
Oct. 1630	?	?	(Ch. & L. = wh.) Ch. & L. = f.
April 1631	North	21st April	N. = 1c.
Sept. 1631	South	8th Oct.	S. = wh. (S. = f.)
" "	Church & Lye	30th March	Ch. & L. = 1c. N. = f.
Oct. 1632	North	7th Oct.	N. = wh.
April 1633	North & South	3rd May	N. & S. = 1c. Ch. & L. = f.
Oct. 1633 to Oct. 1636 no orders re fences.			
(1633-34 S. = f.; 1634-35 N. = f.; 1635-36 Ch. & L. = f.)			
Oct. 1636	Church & Lye	10th Oct.	Ch. & L. = wh.
April 1637	North	20th April	N. = 1c.
No sheep in North, Church, the Hale or Lye fields until 10 days 'clean!.			
Oct. 1637	South	6th Oct.	S. = wh. S. = f.
April 1638	?	?	(Ch. & L. = 1c.) (N. = f.)
" "	North	3rd Sept.	N. = wh.
Oct. 1638	North	4th Oct.	N. = wh.
April 1639	South	?	S. = 1c. Ch. & L. = f.
Oct. 1639	Church & Lye	5th Oct.	Ch. & L. = wh.
April 1640	North	20th April	N. = 1c.
Oct. 1640	South	20th Oct.	S. = wh. S. = f.
April 1641	No cattle in S., Ch. & L.		Ch. & L. = 1c. N. = f.
Oct. 1641	North	25th Oct.	N. = wh.
April 1642	The common feilde	20th April	(S. = 1c.) (Ch. & L. = f.)
Oct. 1642	?	?	(Ch. & L. = wh.)
April 1643	North	27th April	N. = 1c.
Oct. 1643	South	20th Oct.	S. = wh. S. = f.
April 1644	Church & Lye	10th May	Ch. & L. = 1c. N. = f.
Oct. 1644	North	15th Oct.	N. = wh.

Court	Fields in which fences to be repaired	Last date	Cropping in each field
April 1645	South	18th April	S. = 1c. Ch. & L. = f.
Oct. 1645	Church & Lye	15th Oct.	Ch. & L. = wh.
April 1646	North	18th April	N. = 1c. S. = f.
Oct. 1647 to April 1648, no orders re fences (1646-7 N. = f.; 1647-8 Ch. & L. = f.)			
April 1648	South	20th April	S. = 1c. Ch. & L. = f.
Oct. 1648	Church & Lye	27th Oct.	Ch. & L. = wh.
April 1649	North	16th April	N. = 1c. S. = f.
Oct. 1649	South	20th Oct.	S. = wh.
April 1650	No cattle in South, Church or Lye fields		N. = f.
Oct. 1650	-	-	(N. = wh.)
April 1651	South	14th April	S. = 1c. Ch. & L. = f.
Oct. 1651	-	-	(Ch. & L. = wh.)
April 1652	North	14th May	N. = 1c. S. = f.
Oct. 1652	South	next Sunday	S. = wh.
April 1653	-	-	(Ch. & L. = 1c.) N. = f.
Oct. 1653	North	26th Oct.	N. = wh.
April 1654	South	10th April	S. = 1c. (Ch. & L. = wh.) (Ch. & L. = f.)
Oct. 1654	-	-	(N. = 1c.) S. = f.
Oct. 1655	South	9th Oct.	S. = wh. (Ch. & L. = 1c.) N. = f.
Oct. 1656	North	21st Oct.	N. = wh. (S. = 1c.) Ch. & L. = f.
Oct. 1657	Church & Lye	18th Oct.	Ch. & L. = wh. Ch. & L. = f.
" "	North	25th March	N. = 1c.
wh. = wheat; 1c. = lent corn; f. = fallow			

Sources:- HRO 596-770, 798-802, 805, 807-99, 943-46, 994-1012, 1017-20, 1023-26, 1029-1129.

APPENDIX E

Society and the land market in King's Walden before 1600.

Social Organisation:

When the Domesday survey was made, there was no significant free element in the population of King's Walden. The entries for Walden, Wavenden, Flexmere and Le Lega, all of which were in the later parish, show a total of four sokemen, 36 villeins, 15 bordars, 11 cottars and six serfs.¹ By the early fourteenth century, a substantial number of landholders in the parish was free. Generally, only freeholders could grant land by charter without reference to the manor, or could witness charters, and during the twenty years from 1307 to 1327, about thirty different names occur frequently, either as witnesses or as one of the parties to a transaction in King's Walden. The number of holders in bondage at this time is not known, but less than a century later, there were, in the two main manors, 47 free tenants and 35 tenants in villeinage.² Twelve of the free tenants owed homage and suit of court.

Week work had once been demanded - at a court of 1295, the jury claimed that Edmund Bray owed one work each week to his lord, which ought to be performed "on Monday or on another day of the week and he is to work until the ninth hour and to go to his house for dinner and he will then be quit of his work for that day"³ - but by the early fourteenth century, the heavier labour services had generally been commuted in favour of a money rent.⁴ Thomas Orchard, for example, claimed, in 1298, to hold a messuage and 3½ acres by service of 14d. and five autumn works.⁵ By 1329, no heavy services

1. VCH Herts., 1 (1902), 302, 304.

2. BM Add. R. 35932-3.

3. BM Add. R. 35925.

4. Free land sometimes owed labour services - it was claimed, at a court of 1291, that of all the tenants, bond and free, none had appeared at the autumn sowing and mowing, BM Add. R. 35922; while as late as 1359, 4½a. of free land was leased-out at a rent of 2s.10d. and two autumn works, BM Add. Ch. 35720.

5. BM Add. R. 35926.

remained on the de Neville manor. The works owed to the manor, and listed in an inquisition post mortem of that year, were 24 plough works, 24 weeding works and 460 autumn works, while one customary tenant also owed 24 small works,¹ a collection of services that was exceptionally light, even in comparison with other manors in the northeast Chilterns at that time. Their total annual value was only £4.0.6., compared with a fixed rent of £16 from free and bond tenants. Money rents were clearly more significant than labour services by the first half of the fourteenth century.

Twenty years later, those services still remaining were generally ignored, and the whole system tying a holder in bondage to a particular lord was rapidly disintegrating. Two tenants were able to claim, when presented in 1346 for failing to carry out the works they owed, that "no customary tenant performs ploughing service".² Only four autumn works, with an annual value of 1s.6d. were owed to the Dokesworth manor when it was farmed-out in 1418.³ In comparison, the annual assize rent of the manor amounted to nearly £3.⁴

Another symptom of the social disintegration of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was the large number of villein alienations that were made without reference to the manor - of the seven cases concerning land transfers at a court of 1417, three were seizures by the manor of land alienated without licence.⁵ At the same time, an ever increasing number of villeins were leaving the manor and living elsewhere without the lord's permission. In 1411, there were five such fugitives,⁶ and by 1417, their numbers had increased to 13.⁷ The history of the Richard atte Lee must have been typical of many at that time.⁸ When Richard died in 1413, his son Nicholas was living near

1. PRO C135/16/11.

2. BM Add. R. 35931.

3. BM Add. R. 35934.

4. The last evidence of the exaction of labour services was a presentment of arrears of five autumn works at a court of 1431, BM Add. R. 35941.

5. BM Add. R. 35935.

6. BM Add. R. 35933.

7. BM Add. R. 35935.

8. BM Add. R. 35774, 35933.

Graveley, while his brother John, uncle to Nicholas, "now lives in London and is called John atte Lee of London, chandeler". Before going to London, John had first worked as a kitchen boy in the manor house of King's Walden, and subsequently in the kitchen of Lady Margaret Blomville near Chelsfield. As neither Nicholas nor Robert would return to inherit the land of Richard atte Lee, the family property and lands were seized by the lord.

With the final disappearance of the links binding a man to his lord by the mid-fifteenth century, the social distinction between "free" and "villein" became increasingly blurred. Both became tenurial forms, attached to specific holdings and pieces of land, rather than to specific tenants, and the term "villein by blood" had fallen into obeyance by the mid-fifteenth century. Already in 1411, 22 of the 37 holders in villeinage held their land by rod and suit of court, while only 15 tenants were villeins by blood - these were the men who were fleeing the manor. Two of the free tenants also held land in villeinage, and Thomas Chapman held free land as well as land in both forms of villein tenure.¹

By the mid-sixteenth century, only two forms of tenure were named in the manorial rentals and surveys, namely freehold and copyhold tenure, and a large number of tenants were holding in both forms. A rental of 33 tenants in 1529-30, described 14 as holding both free and copyhold land, 11 holding by copy of court roll alone, and eight with only freehold land.² The proportions in a survey of 1575 were slightly different.³ Thirteen of the 38 tenants of Sir William Burgh's manor of King's Walden held both freehold and copyhold land, 16 held copyhold land only, and nine held only freehold land. But this simple division into freehold and copyhold land probably concealed considerable leasing and sub-letting by the tenants. In 1575, half of the 18 tenants who held a messuage and lands, had two or more such tenements with their associated lands. William Brokett, for example, had a tenement with 26 acres and a tenement with 32½ acres copyhold, and a tenement and 130 acres freehold. There was no indication that any of his three houses were ruined. They must, therefore, have been leased-out.

1. BM Add. R. 39932-3.

2. BM Add. R. 35940.

3. BM Add. R. 35998.

The Land Market:

An active peasant land market was operating in King's Walden by the mid-thirteenth century, reaching a peak at the turn of the century, and declining during the fourteenth century. There are 110 charters recording transfers of land and rent in the 120 years between 1217 and 1337.¹ In comparison, for the 180 years from 1337 to 1517, just over half of this number of grants and leases survive. According to this rough guide, the two or three decades in the mid-fourteenth century were the most significant as a divide between a period of considerable activity on the land market and a period of stagnation.

Land was being granted and leased in return for a money payment, before the end of the twelfth century. By a charter dated between 1190 and 1216, Osbert de Lamare granted to Beringarius, his clerk of Letchworth, the whole of Hoscroft "for his service and for 12d.", Beringarius to pay annually 6d. in lieu of all services.² Grants such as these were to become commonplace by the second half of the thirteenth century. Substantial sums were being paid for small pieces of land - 18s. for two acres in Pedderscrofte,³ 30s. for one acre in Flexmore and Biltnall fields⁴ - in transactions between lord and peasant and between peasants themselves. Generally, the payment was rather less - figures such as a half mark for one acre in Flexmore field,⁵ or 4s. for half an acre in the same field⁶ were more usual.

The practice of sub-letting land was also widespread by the second half of the fourteenth century. Sometime before 1250, Philip de Hoo released to Walter de Neville the one mark annual rent which Walter had paid to Philip for the land that he had held from Philip in King's Walden.⁷ The same land had, in turn, been held from Walter by two other tenants, one of whom had himself received a rent of 12d. for three acres in the common fields.⁸ A

1. Most of the charters assigned to the reign of Henry III were probably made in the last twenty years of the reign, so that in fact nearly all the charters dated before 1337 were made in a period of less than 100 years.

2. BM Add. Ch. 35542.

3. BM Add. Ch. 35595.

4. BM Add. Ch. 35616.

5. BM Add. Ch. 35569.

6. BM Add. Ch. 35574.

7. BM Add. Ch. 35554.

8. BM Add. Ch. 35553.

single holding might rapidly pass through a number of hands as a result of such arrangements. Annabill the widow of John de Flexmere, who had remarried outside the parish, leased her right in her former husband's free holding to Richard de la Corner, who in turn sub-let the same land on condition that a grain rent was paid to Annabill by the new tenant.¹ The numerous grants of money rent from land, often in return for money payments, show how widespread the practice of letting land for a fixed rent was becoming during the second half of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth. Eleven of the 110 charters dated between 1217 and 1337 included grants of rent. It is not always clear whether the rents were from free or villein land, but in either case their value as a source of income is clear.

One of the outstanding features of the land market, before 1337, was that land was usually bought and sold as small individual pieces, only rarely as large blocks or complete holdings. The average amount of land involved in each transaction during the 120 years after 1217 was two acres. At the same time, buying and selling of land was not confined to a few substantial landholders. The lords of the two main manors were naturally very prominent, but so too were a large number of peasant families. Between 1217 and 1337, 105 different people transferred or received land in King's Walden. Peasants were able to build-up a holding during their lifetime by the selective purchase of small pieces of land. Richard de la Corner, for example, enlarged his holding considerably in this way (Table XXII). Other tenants were usually buying on a smaller scale and only in one locality within the parish. Walter de Stoppegh bought a messuage at Breachwood together with six acres in the crofts and common fields round about 1315,² and soon afterwards, added a nearby croft of 1½ acres.³ Similarly, John son of Herwi added pieces in Flexmore field⁴ to the messuage, croft and two acres of common arable that he had bought near Flexmere for 36s.⁵

-
1. BM Add. Ch. 35636. Annabill resumed her right in the property a few years later, for in 1307 she granted the same land to John de Dokesworth for her lifetime for the same rent, BM Add. Ch. 35653.
 2. BM Add. Ch. 35672.
 3. BM Add. Ch. 35674.
 4. BM Add. Ch. 35374.
 5. BM Add. Ch. 35592.

TABLE XXII

The activity of Richard de la Corner on the land market.

From:-	<u>Land acquired</u>
John de Beyford	- 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ a., which Richard's father held of John, of the land which had belonged to Robert de Astholt:- one piece in Burdeyns field, $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Ley field, 2a. and a marl pit in Fognam field, 2a. in the old assart.
Robert son of Richard de Flexmere	- 3r. between a croft and a grove, 1r. between the 3r. and a grove. (t.H.III - E.I.)
"	- 2a. in Stoking croft. (t.H.III - E.I.)
Alice widow of Richard de Flexmere	- 1a. in Piriecroft, $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Flexmore field (t.E.I.)
Agnes widow of Fulcon ad Aquam	- dower in 1a., which Richard had from Fulcon:- 1a. near le Fouleslo (t.E.I.)
"	- 2a. in Pedderescroft in the field of Wandon (t.E.I.)
John son of Fulcon ad Aquam	- 1a. in Couildichfeld (t.E.I.)
John de Nevile	- 5r. in Stortecroft, in exchange for 3r. in the same field. (t.E.I.)
John de Nevile	- one messuage, 36a. land, $\frac{1}{2}$ a. wood, $\frac{1}{2}$ r. land and one messuage (for life). (1293)
Annabill de Flexmere	- $\frac{1}{2}$ messuage, land and wood in the hamlet of Flexmere (lease). (c.1297)
To:-	<u>Land alienated</u>
Marie de Flexmere	- a lease of the land which Annabill de Flexmere leased to Richard. (1297)
John de Nevile	- 4s. rent. (t.E.I.)
John de Dokesworth	- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Ashcroft, 1r. in the field called Gromesgate, 1a. in Flexmore field. (1309)

Sources:- EM Add. Ch. 35595, 35599, 35606-7, 35627-8, 35636, 35641, 35659.

During the second and third decades of the fourteenth century, land values were falling. In 1313, the arable of the de Neville manor was worth 6d. an acre;¹ by 1329, it had fallen to 4d. an acre;² and fifty years later arable was worth only a 1d. an acre,³ the lowest level that prices were to reach. At the same time, the number of land transfers quickly declined, while the average amount of land involved in each transaction increased. An average of 7½ acres was now mentioned in each deed, whereas previously the figure had been two acres. Grants of an entire holding comprising a messuage and lands became far more numerous - they accounted for twelve of the 64 freehold transfers between 1337 and 1600 - and tenants often grouped together in threes and fours to acquire property. Robert Wells, John Wells and Thomas Prodaum, for example, bought a messuage and five acres and half a rood from John Punckard in 1471,⁴ while on the same day John Punckard sold Thomas Prodaum and John Wells one acre in Darley field.⁵ The first joint purchase was in 1404,⁶ the last in 1533.⁷ Between those two dates, 28 out of a total of 41 deeds recorded joint selling or buying.

A greater proportion of land changing hands in the late fourteenth century and in the fifteenth century in King's Walden was being bought by men from adjoining parishes, than in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. With the breakdown of strong manorial ties, personal holdings were being extended over much wider areas than previously, and at the same time, direct land holding was becoming concentrated into fewer hands. Whereas in the thirteenth century the holdings of the larger peasant farmers were essentially parochial, by the fifteenth century, the yeoman farmers, as the more substantial freeholders were beginning to style themselves, were buying up land well beyond their home parish. The thirteenth and fourteenth century peasant freeholders seem to have disappeared as tenants holding directly from the lord in the face of these fifteenth century newcomers. ~~Possibly only~~

1. PRO C134/32/24.

2. PRO C135/16/11.

3. Col. Inc. Misc., IV, 121; V, 102; Cal. Close Rolls, 1381-85, 136-7; BM Add. Ch. 35777.

4. BM Add. Ch. 35759.

5. BM Add. Ch. 35761.

6. BM Add. Ch. 35736.

7. BM Add. Ch. 35795.

Possibly only three of the families named in a list of tenants of 1411¹ were represented among the 33 tenants in a manorial rental of 1529-30.² The old peasant families may have remained as sub-tenants leasing land from the main tenants of the manor, but sixteenth century surveys and rentals do not satisfactorily reveal the extent of sub-letting.

The few court rolls that have survived from the fifteenth century, suggest that land in villein tenure was changing hands more rapidly and in smaller amounts than freehold land during the same period. Certainly more land was being leased-out by the lord, as distinct from land transferred from tenant to tenant by the long established practice of surrender and admission. Former demesne was being let - the Dokesworth demesne was farmed-out in 1418, initially for ten years³ - and land was being forfeited to the lord by tenants, either because they had alienated land without licence or because they had fled the manor. If there had ever been a standard unit of villein tenure, no trace of it remained by the end of the fifteenth century. The land of the average copyhold tenant, by that time, consisted of pieces acquired from a variety of holdings. Thus the thirty acres held by Thomas Crawley just before he died in 1512, comprised land obtained from ten different copyhold tenures.⁴

The land market had revived considerably by the mid-sixteenth century. Land prices were soaring. From the low of 1d. an acre in 1388,⁵ the value of a common arable acre had risen to 4d. by 1424,⁶ a figure that was maintained throughout the fifteenth century. By 1575, the value of common arable had shot up to 20d. an acre,⁷ a large increase even after allowing for the monetary inflation of the sixteenth century.

(1) BM Add. R. 35932-3.

(2) BM Add. R. 35940.

(3) BM Add. R. 35937.

(4) BM Add. R. 35954. The lands were one tenement formerly Normans, 1/2a. formerly John Bene, 1 1/2a. formerly Nicholas Freberne, 1 1/2a. formerly Fryer's, 2 1/2a. formerly Fryer's formerly held by John Cropyll, 1a. formerly Lyvott's, 18a. formerly held by Robert Stoppesley, 2a. formerly Hurst's, 2a. formerly held by Robert Chapman, and 1a. formerly Dalling's in the tenure of Thomas Bene.

(5) Cal. Inq. Misc., IV, 121; V, 102; Cal. Close Rolls, 1381-85, 136-7; BM Add. Ch. 35777.

(6) BM Add. R. 35938.

(7) BM Add. R. 35996.

APPENDIX F

Society and the land market in Codicote in the thirteenth
and fourteenth centuries.

Social Organisation and Economic Change:

The manor of Codicote was held by the Abbot and Monks of St. Albans from the early eleventh century until the Disolution of the Monasteries.¹ By the twelfth century, the small subsidiary manor of Cissevernes, which lay in the southeast part of the parish, had appeared.²

The Domesday entry for Codicote included 16 villeins, 1 Frenchman, 3 cottars and 4 serfs.³ There was no mention of any free or semi-free tenants. By the early fourteenth century, there was a number of free tenants, but there is no precise statement as to the number of all tenants in the manor after that of 1086.

In 1286, the Abbot was granted the right to hold a weekly market at Codicote,⁴ and four years later a three day annual fair was acquired.⁵ By the end of the century, a small market centre had become established, attracting a variety of craftsmen and small traders.⁶ These men were granted no special status, but were mostly villein tenants holding plots in and around the market place on lease directly from the manor, and in return for a money rent.

1. VCH Herts., 2 (1908), 345.

2. Ibid..

3. VCH Herts., 1 (1902), 314.

4. Cal. Close Rolls, II, 112.

5. Ibid., 183.

6. In addition to craftsmen such as the smith, the carpenter, a thatcher, the miller and the baker, to be found in any village, the names of more specialised workers and traders occur in the court book. These included a cutler, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.12; a colier, ibid., f.7d; a cooper, ibid., f.52d; a dyer, ibid., f.40; a fish merchant, ibid., f.11; a linen draper, ibid., f.59; a mat maker, ibid., f.73; a potter, ibid., f.9; a spice merchant, ibid., f.31; a tailor, ibid., f.24; a tanner, ibid., f.11; a tinker, ibid., f.12d; an upholsterer, ibid., f.43d; a vintner, ibid., f.15d; a turner, ibid., f.37; a weaver, ibid., f.7. Special parts of the market place were set aside for fish sellers (eg. a stall in the Fish Row ibid., f.27) and for leather workers (eg. the Letherkernes Shameles, ibid., f.53).

The basis of villein land holding in Codicote had been the half virgate and fractions of it, namely the ferlingate, the cotland and the coumbeland. The services which were attached to these customary holdings had once included week work, but this had disappeared by the middle of the thirteenth century.¹ At the same time, other services were also being commuted - the obligation of the whole township to perform two boondays at Bradeway was substituted for a money payment by 1294² - and, occasionally, the services attached to a customary holding had been abandoned and the land was considered as free.³

Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, villein tenants were buying freehold property with the permission of the manor,⁴ and conversely freeholders were acquiring substantial villein properties. The distinction between villeins by blood and villeins by rod was being made by the third and fourth decades of the fourteenth century.⁵ Increasingly, the emphasis in villeinage was shifting from personal status to a form of tenure.

The growth of the land market in Codicote stimulated the commutation of labour services. Money rents rather than services were generally paid for small pieces of land alienated from the customary holdings,⁶ and holdings

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1. In 1247, the reeve paid 2s. for 9a. of land "for the works which used to be done for it, namely one work in each week", *ibid.*, f.2d.
 2. In 1294, the township agreed to revert to the old arrangement during the lifetime of the incumbent Abbot. The township also owed two boondays on the land of Cissevernes, *ibid.*, f.22d.
 3. The half virgate held by Robert Chamberleyn had, in 1249, owed 11s. 6d. in rent and only harvest works, *ibid.*, f.4. This was much lighter than on other half virgates. This land was not included in the 1332 extent of customary holdings, and a few years later it was mentioned as free land, *ibid.*, f.88d.
 4. eg. in 1245, William de la Hulle paid for permission to enter 2a. of free land, *ibid.*, f.1d; Walter atte Strate bought 11a. from a free tenant of the manor in 1283, *ibid.*, f.17; while by 1332, Hugo Cok had acquired 15½a. of free land and only 9 a. of villein land, *Bi Add. Ms.* 40734.
 5. When John Poleyne died in 1335, he was said to hold 10 tenements in bondage by rod, *Bi Stove Ms.* 819, f.60. In 1350, a new subsidy was imposed on "all villeins and villein tenants", *ibid.*, f.78. When the land of John Poleyne was extended in 1359, it contained 101½a. of free land and 105¼a. in villeinage held by rod, *ibid.*, ff.88d-90d.
 6. eg. in 1335, 13a. had been alienated from the half virgate formerly held by Thomas le Driver. This alienated land and the land retained by Thomas's son owed only money rents, *ibid.*, ff.59d-60. There are numerous examples, in the extent of 1332, of pieces of land alienated from a customary holding and owing only money rents, *Bi Add. Ms.* 40734, ff.1-16d.

built-up entirely by the acquisition of the small pieces owed only money rents.¹ But there was also ever increasing pressure from tenants in bondage individually to rid themselves of their obligations without having to pay a rent. Tenants were failing to fulfil all their labour services,² villeins were buying free land without licence from the lord³ and were attempting to sell land amongst themselves by charter,⁴ and almost every year, land was seized because its holder had attempted to lease it without permission.

The situation in the manor by 1332 is summarised in an extent of that year.⁵ The value of rents and dues was nearly £17,⁶ while the services owed by tenants were worth about £15.⁷ Of the 98 villein tenants named in the extent, 44 owed labour services of some kind. The main works due to the manor included 172½ plough works for 172½ acres,⁸ whereas the total area of demesne arable in that year was 462 acres⁹ - customary services therefore accounted for the ploughing of less than half of the demesne. There must have been a substantial reserve of hired labour. Other works were 1425 small works, 106 reap works and 360 autumn boon works. In addition, all customary tenants were to mow and lift the lord's hay, to hoe for one day in autumn, while all those

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1. eg. in 1332, the holdings of Hugo Cok, Roger le Helder and Henry le Carreter, *ibid.*, ff.12d,13 and 14.
 2. eg. in 1285, three tenants were presented for arrears of harvest boon works, *BM Stowe Ms. 849*, f.18; in 1288, four tenants were presented for arrears in the same service, *ibid.*, f.19; and in 1312, Richard Wyntridie was five years in arrears in plough works, *ibid.*, f.34d.
 3. eg. in 1287, Reginald Poleyn claimed villein land to be free, *ibid.*, f.18; in 1309, Nicholas atte Stile acquired free land in Welwyn without permission, *ibid.*, f.32; and in 1314, John atte Strate claimed villein land to be free, *ibid.*, f.36.
 4. eg. in 1316, Walter le Swone and Thomas Martin sold land between themselves without permission, *ibid.*, f.38d; and Godfrey Whitecock sold Roger le Helder free land without licence, *ibid.*, f.38d.
 5. *BM Add. Ms. 40734*, ff.1-16d.
 6. The dues included sharselver, rypselvere, garsheves, Christmas love, *firma coquine*, sheriff's aid, coumbepenny and carrying service.
 7. *BM Add. Ms. 40734*, ff.15d-16.
 8. *Ibid.*, f.15d.
 9. *Ibid.*, ff.1-1d.

with a cart and horses were to carry the lord's grain for one day in autumn, and all villeins with ploughs were to attend the manorial ploughing an extra two times a year.¹ The degree to which services had been commuted varied considerably from tenant to tenant. Holdings of about the same size often had very different burdens of services attached to them. At the same time, the payment of a money rent was an alternative to many works.² In practice, therefore, the performance of labour services may have been less widespread than the extent suggests.

The extent also provides the only account of the size of villein holdings. By 1332, the pattern of land holding had been modified considerably by tenant activity on the land market. Some customary holdings had been broken-up, and some tenants had recently acquired all the land of more than one holding. Of the tenants with more than one house or cottage, about half held 10 acres of land or more. These figures are not a complete guide to holding sizes, however, for it is clear, from charters for Welwyn and Knebworth, two parishes next to Codicote, that even in the early fourteenth century, many peasants with land in Codicote also had a holding in a neighbouring township.³

During the second decade of the fourteenth century, there appeared the first signs of a growing economic malaise, the symptoms of which were to multiply in the succeeding decades. Presentments for arrears of all kinds, money rents and services, increased; heirs were failing to enter their inheritance; tenants were grinding their own corn rather than using the lord's mill;⁴ many more tenements were being allowed to deteriorate by their tenants; and the number of tenants fleeing the manor was increasing. It was

1. *Ibid.*, f.16d.

2. In 1332, tenants could pay 6d. an acre in lieu of ploughing services, 1d. for a man for a day at autumn boonworks and 4d. an acre for reaping and binding services owed, *ibid.*, f.2.

3. John de Kirketon and John Cok were buying and selling land in Knebworth in 1311, HRO 21871. Both men held land in Codicote at that time, BM Stowe Ms. 849, ff.33,34. Egidius de Hoo of Abbots Walden held land in both parishes, HRO 21841, 21875; and BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.56. Similarly, Reginald de Frobelehath, Edward atte Hathe, Robert de Monewode, and John de London all held land in Welwyn in addition to their holdings in Codicote HRO 59120A, 59120C, 59123-4; and BM Stowe Ms.849, ff.40d, 67,48,45. These were villein tenants of Codicote, some of whom held free land in Knebworth and Welwyn.

4. Many tenants were using hand mills without permission from the lord. In 1312, for example, 3 tenants were presented for this misdemeanour, *ibid.*, f.43.

recorded at a court of 1322,¹ for example, that Lucia Bray had fled to Knebworth with her goods, that Margaret Blostine had caused damage in her tenement to the value of 12d., and that John Raven had carried out no customary services and had allowed his tenement to decay. Tenement Schortegrave had also been devastated. A few months later, four tenements which had come into the lord's hands were still retained by the manor.² Tenants were difficult to find. Seven villeins were living outside the manor without permission by 1346.³ By 1349, therefore, the manor of Codicote had already experienced thirty or more years of economic decline, a background to a continually changing social scene, with the trend always towards the commutation of labour services.

Seventy three villein tenants died in 1348 and 1349.⁴ The average annual tenant death rate in the manor during the previous twenty years had been 2.7 per annum, while the number of villein tenants holding land in the manor in 1332 had been 98.⁵ A number of families disappeared and many more were represented only by minors. Tenants could not be found immediately for 20 of the 69 holdings which became vacant. In some cases heirs failed to come forward, in others they could not be traced, while in a few cases the heir was a minor for whom a guardian was not available. Within two years, tenants had been found for most of this vacant land, mainly from within the parish.⁶ Only two new tenants entered the manor immediately after 1349.⁷ - nearly all the empty farms were occupied by men already holding land there. The number of fugitives was less after 1349 than before. Not until 1356 had their numbers reached the same level as in 1346.⁸ Proclamations were made year after year ordering that fugitives be brought back forcibly, but nothing happened, and by 1415 there were 11 villeins living outside the manor without permission.⁹

1. Ibid., ff.45d-46.

2. Ibid., f.46d.

3. Ibid., f.72.

4. Ibid., ff.74-8.

5. BI Add. Ms. 40734.

6. BM Stowe Ms. 849, ff.78-81.

7. One of these tenants, Thomas Blacklak, was described as "liberus et adventicus", *ibid.*, f.82.

8. *Ibid.*, f.85.

9. *Ibid.*, f.124d.

There seems to have been little immediate change in the social status of the tenants after 1349. Many of the old restrictions attached to land in villein tenure were still enforced. Villeins were not allowed to lease land without the lord's permission,¹ nor could villein land be transferred by charter.² After 1349, however, most of the remaining labour services were rapidly commuted in favour of a fixed rent.³ Generally, only harvest boon works were left. By the end of the fifteenth century, there had been little change.

The Land Market:

There were neither manorial nor customary restrictions on the alienation of villein land, providing that the transfers were made through the manorial court. During the 175^{years} for which the court book provides a record of the villein land market in Codicote, three types of transactions between peasants or between lord and peasant were widely used. They were the leasing of land from a tenant for a fixed period, the surrender of property on behalf of another tenant (ie. sale or gift), and the sale or lease by the lord to tenant.

Peasant leasing for a named period was recorded in Codicote as early as 1245, when 3 acres were rented for a period of nine years.⁴ The length

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1. There was a memorandum to this effect in 1355, *ibid.*, f.83d.
 2. Villein land which John Poleyn had alienated by charter to five different tenants was seized in 1356, *ibid.*, f.84d.
 3. In 1359, the toft and 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. formerly held by Thomas Whitecock was leased-out for 9 years at a rent of 7s. and 6 autumn boonworks each year, *ibid.*, f.88d. The same land owed only 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. rent in 1332, and the remainder in services, BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.14d. In 1360, the ferlingate formerly held by Richard le White was leased for 9 years at an annual rent of 4s.6d. and 6 autumn boonworks, BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.92d; while in 1332, the same land owed only 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., in rents and the remainder in services, BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.5d. In 1361, the cotland formerly held by Roger Lorugh was leased for 9 years at an annual rent of 6s.8d. and a man at each autumn boonwork, BM Stowe Ms.849, f.93d - in 1332, the same land owed only $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in rents, BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.3d. In 1362, the half virgate formerly held by Roger le Carpenter was leased for 9 years at an annual rent of 14s. and one man at each boonwork, BM Stowe Ms.849, f.94d; while in 1332, the same land owed only 3s.5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in rents and the remainder in services, BM Add. Ms. 40734, f.14d.
 4. BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.1d.

of the lease was stated either in years or in terms of the number of cropping courses to be taken from the land, and it varied from 2 years to 21 years or more¹ - the length which occurred most frequently was 8 or 9 years. Peasant leases involved land of all kinds, from small pieces of land to complete holdings. Although the first recorded example of surrender and admission was in 1246,² the procedure had not become standardised until the last quarter of the century. This was the main way by which villein land was passed from tenant to tenant, and again land of all types was involved. At first, granting or leasing by the lord was mainly of plots within the village, with the occasional lease of demesne land, but during the fourteenth century an increasing number of complete holdings were being leased-out, as more and more tenant land reverted to the manor. All three kinds of land transfers involved the payment of substantial sums to the lord in the way of fines. For the peasant, the transfer of land could be an expensive business, but apart from the cost there was no limitation on this activity.

The growth of the villein land market, and fluctuations in the volume of activity within it are summarised in Figure 44. There were four periods when transfers were at an unusually high level. Following a steady increase during the thirteenth century, the peak of the 1280's marked the period of maximum activity before the fluctuations and depressions of the fourteenth century. The very large number of land transfers between 1315 and 1324 was a reflection of unstable conditions rather than of a high level of economic activity. Other evidence shows that the second decade of the fourteenth century saw the beginning of a long period of slow decline that was to last for the rest of the century.³ On the one hand, many more holdings were being seized by the lord, either because the tenant had fled or because he had allowed his holding to deteriorate, and this land was being leased-out by the

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1. Before 1355, leases of less than 2 years did not have to be enrolled at the manorial court, *ibid.*, 83d.
 2. *Ibid.*, f.1d.
 3. Presentments for arrears of all kinds, money rents and services, increased; heirs were failing to enter their inheritance; many more tenements were being allowed to deteriorate by their tenants; and the number of tenants fleeing the manor was increasing.

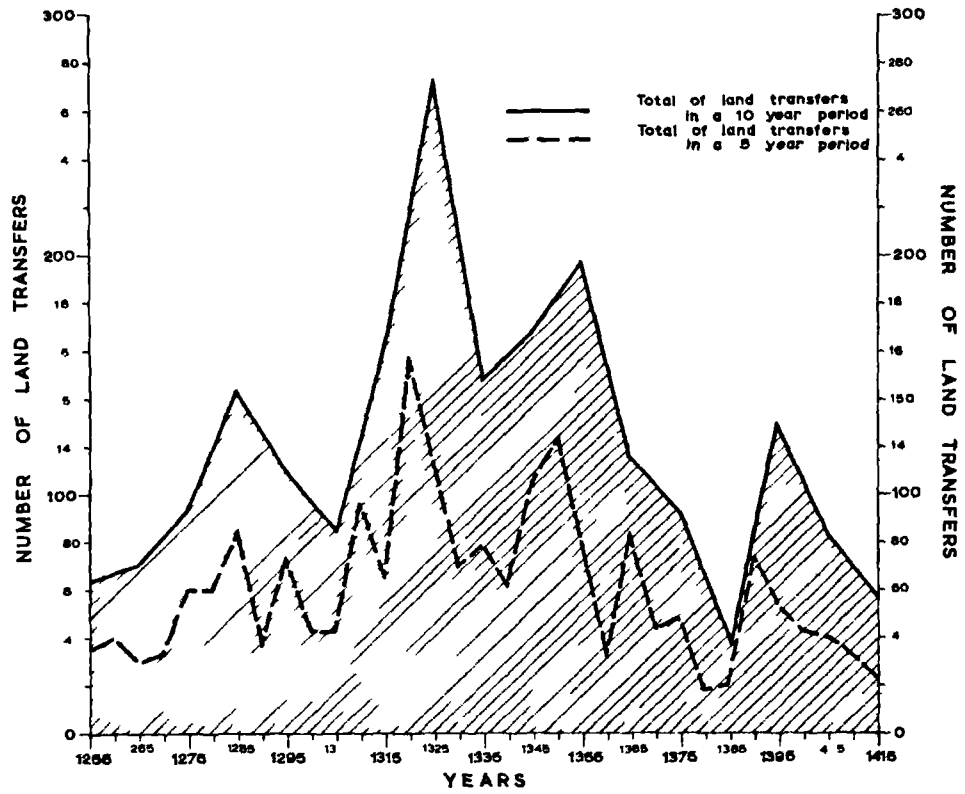


FIG. 44. The tenant land market in Codicote, 1255-1415.
 Source:- BM Stowe Ms. 849.

manor. On the other hand, more tenants were themselves leasing-out their land and permanently alienating property. That land was changing hands so rapidly, suggests a certain instability and lack of confidence in the future. The peak about 1350 represents land that had become vacant in the previous two years - more than 600 acres changed hands - and the subsequent readjustment of a greatly reduced demand to a greatly increased supply. Finally, the apparent revival of the land market between 1385 and 1395 was partly due to the renewal of leases by the manor, and partly to the alienation of property by only a few tenants.

During the 175 years for which a complete record survives, the nature of the land market changed considerably. The scale of activity in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was comparatively small. Apart from the entries to complete holdings on the death of a tenant, transfers during this period were generally of small pieces of land or of small holdings of a cottage and a few acres. Nonetheless, men were able to build-up substantial holdings for themselves by acquiring a large number of small pieces of land on lease or permanent surrender. Roger le Helder and Roger May, starting from very small beginnings, amassed considerable holdings in this way, while the holding of Reginald Kynne was composed almost entirely of land that he held on lease (Tables XXIII-XXV). Other men were adding to their farms by buying and renting land, and some villein tenants were acquiring freehold property in the neighbouring parishes.¹ Conversely, the customary holdings of some tenants were reduced considerably by the alienation of a large number of small pieces of land from them. The half virgate of Thomas le Driver, for example, was reduced by almost one half during his lifetime (Table XXVI). The situation had become so confused by the 1330's, that tenants were asking the manor to determine who held land from their holdings, and the nature of the rents and services owed.² The standard customary holdings were being broken-up.

1. They included John de Kirketon and John Cok in Knebworth, HRO 21871; and John de London in Welwyn, HRO 59124.

2. eg. the apportionment of the rents and services of the half virgate formerly held by Thomas le Driver in 1335, B1 Stowe Ms. 849, ff.59d-60; the apportionment for Horiceslond and Bedelleslond in 1336, *ibid.*, f.61; and other apportionments in 1330 and 1333, *ibid.*, ff.53d,57.

During the third decade of the fourteenth century, the number of complete holdings that were transferred increased. After about 1320, more holdings were seized by the lord. These were being granted to other tenants who, in turn, often sub-let a messuage and land. In this way, a particular holding might pass through a number of hands in a short time,¹ while some tenants acquired all the land of a number of holdings.² Similarly, more tenants were inheriting property and then leasing or surrendering the holding rather than working it themselves.³ Of the fifty tenants who held 5 acres or more in 1332, only 14 had a single complete customary unit with no land added to or subtracted from it,⁴ a reflection of the disintegration of some holdings and the engrossment of others.

The events of 1349 merely accentuated these trends. More than 600 acres formerly held by 69 tenants, suddenly became vacant.⁵ Tenants were found immediately for about 60% of this land. The rest remained unoccupied, and in the hands of the lord, for at least a year, but it was eventually leased-out by the manor for terms of as much as twenty years, although short term leases of about ten years were still general. The reservoir of villein land retained by the manor was added to in subsequent years as more tenants fled the manor or died without heirs. By the end of the fourteenth century, lifetime leases and fifty year leases had appeared,⁶ and the engrossment of holdings was often considerable. In 1352, for example, the manor leased Stephen May all the lands formerly held by four tenants for 8½ years.⁷

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1. The cotland called Bischopesland passed through the hands of 5 tenants between 1315 and 1343. Cristina Bishop surrendered the holding to Thomas Polle in 1315, *ibid.*, f.37; and a year later, the land passed to Reginald Aleyn, *ibid.*, f.39d. He held the cotland on lease from the manor until he died in 1341, *ibid.* f.66. Thomas Dyer was elected as the new tenant, *ibid.*, f.66d; but he, too, died only two years later, *ibid.*, f.69; and so John atte Pirye was elected to the holding, *ibid.*, f.69.
 2. e.g. in 1332, Reginald Aleyn held the half virgate that he inherited from his father, except for 4/a. alienated from the holding, two cotlands, a coumbeland and two crofts, BM Add. Ms. 40734, ff.4-4d.
 3. When Edward atte Pathe died, in 1341, his lands were inherited by his son John (BM Stowe Ms. 849, f.67) who surrendered all his inheritance at the next court (*ibid.*, f.68).
 4. BM Add. Ms. 40734, ff.1d-15d.
 5. BM Stowe Ms. 849, ff.73d-77.
 6. In 1414, *ibid.*, f.124.
 7. *Ibid.*, f.80d.

TABLE XXIII

The holding built-up by Roger le Helder and his activity
in the land market.

Granter	Date	Property Transferred	Nature of Transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
John de Ravnesach	1294	4d. rent from a ten.	S & A	Roger	22d
Margaret Finchold	1295	a messuage	S & A	"	23
" "	1295	half a messuage	S & A	"	23
Peter le Bedell	1295	a messuage	S & A	"	23d
Roger	1295	a house and wick	S & A	Roger atte Strate	23d
Alexander Morice	1295	all his ten. in town	S & A	Roger	23d
Roger Ernold	1299	a cottare	?	"	24d
William Broune	1305	a plot in market place	S & A	"	27d
Nicholas atte Stile	1308	1r. in Pilgrave field	S & A	"	31
Edward atte Hurne	1310	1a. in Pulford field	8 L crops	"	32d
Walter Broune	1311	a stall	S & A	"	33
John Miller & wife	1314	a messuage	S & A	"	36
John Haukyn & wife	1314	a messuage	S & A	"	36
Godfrey Whitecock	1314	1a. in Littlecroft	S & A	"	36
" "	1315	1a. in Pulford field with hedge & 1/2a. in Littlehamstale croft with hedges	S & A	"	37d
" "	1315	5r. & half a hedge in Broad croft	S & A	"	37d
" "	1315	1a. in Broad croft	S & A	"	38
	1316	Godfrey Whitecock sold is seized	Roger free land which		38d
John le Reveson	1316	1 1/2a. in Hamstalecroft & 1 1/2a. in Bromcroft	S & A	Roger	38d
" "	1316	2a. in Broad croft	12 L crops	"	40d
John atte Strate	1319	1/2a. in Ash field	S & A	"	42d

TABLE XXIII
(Contd.)

Grantor	Date	Property Transferred	Nature of Transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
Reginald Aleyn	1320	a piece in Ash field for a piece in same	E	Roger	43d
" "	1321	a piece in Ash field	S & A	"	44
Wm. le Carpenter	1321	1a. in Longcroft	S & A	"	44
John le Reveson	1321	1½a. in Bromcroft	S & A	"	44.
" "	1321	1½a. in Bromcroft	9 years I	"	44
Reg. de Froberhale	1321	1½a. in Dellcroft	S & A	"	44
" "	1321	3r.	7 years I	"	44
Reginald Aleyn	1321	½a. in Heyden field	S & A	Roger	44
Wm. le Carpenter	1321	½a. in Longcroft	S & A	"	44
John atte Strate	1321	½a. in Ash field	S & A	"	44
Reginald Aleyn	1322	a piece with a hedge in Ash field	S & A	"	44d.
Robert Smith	1322	½a. in Ailriche field	S & A	"	44d
John le Reveson	1322	1½a. in Hamstalecroft	12 I crops	"	44d
Reg. de Froberhale	1322	1½a. in Dellcroft	9 yrs. I	"	45
Wm. le Carpenter	1322	½a. in Longcroft	S & A	"	46
John le Reveson	1322	½a. in Bromcroft	S & A	"	46
" "	1322	½a. in Bromcroft	S & A	"	46
Reginald Aleyn	1323	1½a. in Heyden field	S & A	"	47
Robert le Smyth	1323	1a. in le Rudyng	S & A	"	47
Reginald Aleyn	1323	½a. in Heyden field	S & A	"	47
" "	1324	3r. in Ash field	S & A	"	48d
John le Reveson	1324	a piece in Broad croft	S & A	"	48d
Margaret Haukyn	1325	3r. in Longcroft	S & A	"	48d
John le Reveson	1325	1a. in Broad croft	S & A	"	49
The manor	1328	a chop in market place	G	"	51
William Cok	1328	1a. in Ailriche field	S & A	"	51d

TABLE XXIII

(Contd.)

Granter	Date	Property Transferred	Nature of Transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
William Cok	1328	1 ¹ / ₂ in Feydon field	12 L crops	"	51d
John le Reveson	1329	3a. in Hamstalecroft	3 L crops	"	52
William Col-	1329	1a. in Ailriche field	S & A	"	52d
John Nichol	1331	a cottage and curtilage	S & A	"	54
	1332	Roger holds 3 shops, 3 messuages, 4 ¹ / ₂ a. formerly held by John le Reveson in two crofts, 1a. in Redlynche, 2 ¹ / ₂ a. in Longcroft, 1 ¹ / ₂ a. in Ash field, 1r. called Barlilond, 2 ¹ / ₂ a. in Ailriche field, 2 ¹ / ₂ a. in Broad croft, 1 ¹ / ₂ a. in Hamstalecroft, 1a. in Pulford field, 4 ¹ / ₂ a. formerly held by Reginald Aleyn, 1 ¹ / ₂ a. formerly held by John atte Strate, 1r. of the half virgate held by Alexander le Mareschal.			Extent
	1335	Roger dies and his son William inherits			58d

S & A = surrender and admission; L = lease; E = exchange; G = grant.

Sources:- All references are to the court book (op. cit.) except that to the extent of 1332 (op. cit.).

TABLE XXIV

The holding built-up by Roger May and his activity
on the land market.

Granter	Date	Property Transferred	Nature of Transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
Thomas atte Pirye	1321	1a. in Ash field	S & A	Roger	44
John le Reveson	1322	1a. in Bromcroft	S & A	"	46
" "	1323	1a. in Bromcroft	S & A	"	46d
" "	1324	a piece in Bromcroft	S & A	"	48
Margaret Haukyn	1324	1a. in Ailriche field	S & A	Roger & wife	48d
John le Reveson	1325	3r. in Longcroft	S & A	"	48d
" "	1325	1r. in Homcroft	S & A	Roger	49
" "	1326	1r. in Homcroft	S & A	Roger & wife	49d
William May	1326	a plot of land	S & A	"	49d
	1327	William May dies and his son Roger inherits a messuage			50
Roger	1327	a messuage	S & A	Roger & wife	50
Roger & wife	1328	5r. in Ailriche field	S & A	Walter atte Strate	51
Robert Smith	1331	2a. in Rudyng field & 1/4a. in Ailriche field	S & A	Roger & wife	54
	1332	Roger holds a messuage & 1a., 1a. in Ash field, 3/4a. in two crofts near the Heath, 1/4a. in Ailriche field, one parcel in his croft next to his messuage taken from the highway.			Extent
Margaret Palmer	1335	27a.	6 L yrs.		59
	1336	Roger dies and his land passes to his wife			59d

S & A = surrender and admission; L - lease

Sources:- All references are to the court book (op. cit.) except that to the extent of 1332 (op. cit.).

TABLE XXV

The holding of Reginald Kyne, composed largely of land held on lease.

Granter	Date	Property Transferred	Nature of Transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
	1287	Reginald holds one tenement of Roger Poleyn			18d
	1287	Reginald is in arrears of 4d. rent for a messuage which Adam Smith holds			18d
Beatrix Colsmith	1292	1/2a. in Heyden field	S & A	Reginald	21d
Henry Cokreth	1292	1a. in Heyden field	5 L crops	"	21d
Thomas Whitecok	1302	1a.	9 L yrs.	"	25d.
Godfrey Whitecok	1304	1a. in Pulford field & 1/2a. in Whitecokescroft	4 L yrs.	"	26d
" "	1306	1a. in Pulford field	6 L yrs.	"	28
" "	1308	1a. in Whitecokescroft	12 L yrs.	"	31
The manor	1308	a plot in market place	G	"	31
Godfrey Whitecok	1308	1a.	without L licence	"	31
The manor	1309	a stall in market place	12 L yrs.	"	31d
Godfrey Whitecok	1311	2a. in Pulford field	4 L crops	"	32d
" "	1311	1 1/2a. in Godfrey'scroft	6 L crops	"	32d
" "	1311	1a. in Whitecokescroft	9 L yrs.	"	33d
" "	1312	1a. in Pulford field	6 L crops	"	34
" "	1313	3r. in Whitecokescroft	5 L crops	"	35d
The manor	1315	3a. in Pulford field	20 L crops	"	38

S & A = surrender and admission; L = lease; G = grant.

Source:- All references are to the court book (op. cit.).

TABLE XXVI

Alienation of land from his holding by Thomas le Driver.

Grantor	Date	Property Transferred	Nature of Transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
	1285	Thomas enters the half virgate that his father held			18
Thomas	1288	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ r. in Ash field	S & A	Walter atte Strate	19
"	1289	1a. in Ailriche field	6 $\frac{L}{}$ crops	Henry de Cokreth	19d
"	1290	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in 3 parcels	9 $\frac{L}{}$ yrs.	Hugo Cok	20
"	1290	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ a. in Longcroft, 1r. nr. Huntewynhall & 3p. of meadow	S & A	Walter atte Strate	20
"	1290	1r. land and moor	S & A	Roger le Carpenter	20
"	1290	2a. land & 1r. meadow	S & A	Walter atte Strate	20
"	1291	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Ailriche field	S & A	Robert Smith	20d
"	1291	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Heyden field	S & A	Reg. Carnifex	20d
"	1292	3r. in Longcroft & 1r. in Hafeld	S & A	Walter atte Strate	21d
"	1293	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Crabbeden croft	6 $\frac{L}{}$ yrs.	Robert Smith	22
"	1299	1a.	4 $\frac{L}{}$ crops	Walter Blöstine	24
	1302	Thomas is presented for not repairing his tenement			25
"	1303	Ayescroft	5 $\frac{L}{}$ yrs.	Walter atte Strate	25d
"	1306	a piece to make a ditch between two tenements	S & A	John Poleyn	28d
"	1308	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Ash field	9 $\frac{L}{}$ yrs.	Hugo Cok	30d
"	1313	1r. in his croft	S & A	his daughter Agnes	35d
"	1315	1r. in Ashfield	S & A	Simon de Childmere	37

TABLE XVI
(Contd.)

Granter	Date	Property Transferred	Nature of Transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
Thomas	1315	1/2a. in Ailriche field	12 yrs. ^L	Reginald Aleyn	37d
"	1316	1a. in Heyden field & Ailriche field	12 crops ^L	Richard Baurhel	38
"	1316	2r. in Heyden field	S & A	Richard atte Strate	39d
"	1316	1/2a. in Ailriche field	S & A	Simon de Childemere	40d
"	1322	a piece in Ailriche f.	S & A	John de London	45
"	1323	1a. in Heyden field & Ailriche field	S & A	Richard Baughel	47
"	1324	1/2a. in Ailriche field	S & A	John Laurence	48
"	1325	a messuage & all his land in villeinage	S & A	his daughter Margarot	49

S & A = surrender and admission; L = lease.

Source:- All references are to the court book (op. cit.).

APPENDIX G

Succession to land in some villein families in Codicote in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

The study of a few family groups will show how, in Codicote, the combination of two factors - the ease with which tenants could transfer land and flexibility in the succession to land - reacted in practice. The families chosen range from that of a half virgater to that of a small craftsman.

When Richard atte Pirye died, he left a widow, two sons and a daughter. The half virgate passed to his widow - they probably had a joint holding - who remarried in 1284, and whose husband took his wife's family name. Juliana's second husband probably died about 1310, for in the following year she surrendered the family half virgate to her son Thomas, on condition that she could live on the holding until she died. Soon afterwards, she remarried. The other son had already received, from his mother, a croft on which to build a cottage. She now gave him another croft with two cottages. The daughter had been provided for with a messuage and five acres in 1281. The family of Thomas, the eldest son is in turn interesting. When he died in 1344, the half virgate that he had inherited passed to one of his four sons. Of the other three sons, Simon, who appeared to have no other land at this time, received a croft from his father immediately before Thomas died. The other two sons, Richard and Robert, had both amassed substantial holdings for themselves well before their father's death. The basis of Robert's holding had been a messuage and five acres that he had leased from his father for twelve years. These two younger sons had built-up holdings for themselves entirely independently of the family lands. (Table XXVII).

The basis of the holding of Henry Cokreth was the ferlingate that he inherited from his father in 1253. During his lifetime, he added to his holding, but also occasionally leased-out land or surrendered a few pieces. Henry, the eldest son, inherited when his father died in 1303. For a number of years, he had been buying and selling land, following the acquisition of a messuage and five acres in 1284. The other son was given a messuage by his father and later appears as a chaplain,

while the daughter was given a messuage and three acres by her father, and probably married soon afterwards. (Table XXVIII).

The family of Edward le Couherd was typical of that of many small tenants holding only a few acres of land. Only two children appear in the court records. Thomas, inherited from his father, when he died in 1316. The daughter had already received a cottage and close from her father three years previously. When she died without issue in 1322, it was her brother who inherited this property. (Table XXX). Similarly succession to the land of Osbert the miller was typical of that amongst the families of the small craftsmen of the manor. His holding was small and near to the mill that he worked in the southwest of the parish, but all four children were given pieces from their father's land. The two daughters, for example, received three acres and a messuage respectively from their father in 1279. Alice, the daughter who obtained the cottage, had already married and acquired a messuage and one acre independently of her family. John, the younger son, was given a messuage and two acres. In all three cases, the surrender by the father was made on condition that he retain the use of the property until he died. When Osbert eventually died in 1293, the other son, Martin, who had received no land from his father during his lifetime, now claimed the five acres still held by Osbert. (Table XXIX).

It made little difference to the method of succession to land whether the property involved was a standard customary holding or comprised a large number of small pieces acquired on the land market. The pattern of succession was basically the same. Between 1294, when his name first appeared in the court records, and his death in 1333, Roger le Helder built-up a substantial holding entirely by his own efforts. He does not appear to have received any parental land. Property was acquired on lease and permanent release from a variety of tenants. He died, leaving two sons, one of whom inherited all this property. (Table XXIII). The other son had no holding until his brother gave him a cottage near the Heath.¹ On the other hand, where a holding had been amassed entirely

(1) BM. Stowe Ms. 849, f.66.

by leasing from fellow villeins and from the lord there was no permanent holding to be inherited. The son of Reginald Kynne,¹ for example, became a chaplain² while the daughter was provided with the message that her mother had received from her father.³

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- (1) See Table XXV.
(2) BM Stowe Ms.849, f.42d.
(3) Ibid., f.28d.

TABLE XXVII

Succession to property in the family of Juliana atte Pirye and her son Thomas, and their activity on the land market before 1350.

Granter	Date	Property transferred	Nature of transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
<u>1. Juliana atte Pirye</u>					
Juliana	1283	1½r	S&A	Walter atte Strate	16d
"	1284	a half virgate	S&A	Henry de Burton	17d
Henry Blostine	1285	Potters croft	S&A	Henry atte Pirye	18
Matilda Blostine	1289	Laycroft	S&A	" "	19d
Henry & Juliana atte Pirye	1305	Pesecroft (Richard will build on it)	S&A	Richard s.of Richard atte Pirye	27d
Juliana	1311	A half virgate (Julia. will live on for life)	S&A	her s. Thomas	33
	1311	Juliana marries Geoffrey Pope			33
	1311	croft with 2 cottages called Malmecroft	S&A	her s. Richard	33d
	1311	Juliana to receive annually 6bu.wheat & 1qt. oats from her s. Thomas and s.Richard for life for land they hold from her		2bu. wheat from her	33d
<u>2. Her children:- Celestria</u>					
Richard le Rede	1281	A messuage & 5a. except a house & small messuage which Richard retains for life	S&A	Celestria	15d
<u>Richard</u>					
Henry & Juliana atte Pirye	1305	1a. called Pesecroft (Richard will build on it)	S&A	Richard	27d
Juliana atte Pirye	1311	croft with 2 cottages called Malmescroft (Juliana retains for life)	S&A	"	33d
Richard	1315	a messuage & 2a. called Pesecroft	S&A	Robert Poleyn	37
"	1316	3½a.called Malmescroft & 1d. rent for a hedge	S&A	Richard atte Strate	38d

(continued on the next page)

Granter	Date	Property transferred	Nature of transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
The manor	1308	Potterscroft	?	Thomas	30
Thomas	1309	Potterscroft	S&A	Thomas & wife	32
Juliana atte Pirye	1311	a half virgate	S&A	her s. Thomas	33
Thomas	1313	the cotland called Redeslond	S&A	Thomas & wife	35
Robert Poleyn	1316	Pesecroft	S&A	Thomas	39d
Thomas	1319	1/2a in Ash field	12 ^L yrs	Robert Baughel	42
"	1319	3 pieces of land & 1 piece of meadow in Broadfield	S&A	Ralph Miller	42d
The manor	1320	custody over the land formerly held by Wm.le White		Thomas	43
Thomas	1321	1a. in Ash field	S&A	Roger May	44
	1332	Thomas holds a half virgate (except 3/4a.), a cotland, Welcroft, Potterscroft, 1/2a. in Ailriches field and a ferlingate			Extent
	1332	Thomas's custody in Whiteslond ends			59d
Thomas & Wife	1344	Pesecroft (Thomas & w. to hold until death)	S&A	their s. Simon	70d
	1345	Thomas is dead and his messuage & half virgate are inherited by his son John			71
3. <u>The children of Thomas:- Simon</u>					
Thomas atte Pirye	1344	Pesecroft	S&A	his s. Simon	70d
Alice atte Pirye	1349	a messuage & half virgate (Alice to have a room in the house & 1qt. wheat & 1/2qt. barley a year for life)	S&A	Simon	76d
<u>Robert</u>					
Richard atte Pirye	1337	a messuage & 5a. called Moriceslond	12 ^L yrs.	b. Robert & w.	52d
Walter Cokreth	1341	a messuage & ferthing-lond called Raveneslond	S&A	Robert	56
John Lorugh jn.	1342	a plot	S&A	"	
	1349	Robert is dead and his messuage & 2 ⁴ a. are seized until the heir comes forward			76d.

(continued on the next page)

Granter	Date	Property transferred	Nature of transfer	Recipient	Folio no.
				<u>Richard</u>	
Wm.de Brutayght	1335	a cotland	S&A	Richard	59
John le Lord	1336	a messuage & ferlingate	S&A	Richard & wife	61d
Richard	1337	a messuage & 5a. called Moriceslond	12 ^L yrs.	his b. Robert	62d
Richard & wife	1341	A messuage & 13a.	12 ^L yrs	Geof.atte Thorne	67
The manor	1349	custody of the land of his great nephew Robert (i.e. a messuage & 10a.)		Richard	
				<u>John</u>	
The manor	1332	Whitecokeslond	L	John	55d
John	1334	Whitecokeslond	9 ^L yrs.	Hugo Haleward	57d
The manor	1343	the cotland called Gunylodelond	L	John	69
	1345	Thomas atte Pirye dies and his son		John inherits a messuage and half virgate	71
The manor	1345	Redeslond (which John's father held)	E	John	71d
	1349	John dies and his daughter Alice inherits a messuage and half virgate			75

S&A = surrender and admission; L = lease; E = elected.

Sources:- All references are to the court book (op.cit.) except those to the extent of 1332 (Op.cit.).

TABLE XXVIII

Succession to property in the family of Henry de Cokreth and their activity on the land market.

Granter	Date	Property transferred	Nature of transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
1. <u>Henry de Cokreth</u>					
	1252	Henry enters the land that his father held and is given permission to marry			5
Thomas Whitecok	1257	2½a.	S&A	Henry	7
John Morice	1263	1a.	S&A	"	8d
The manor	1270	1r. next to market place	G	"	11d
Thomas Whitcok	1272	1a. at the mill of Ayot. 1a. in Thomas's croft, (6 crops) meadow at le Wallingwell	L	"	
John le Reveson	1277	1a. in West field	S&A	"	.13d
Osbert Wheeler	1281	2½a.	S&A		16
The manor	1283	all the tenement formerly held by Ralph Blostine (6 years)	L	"	17
Ralph Smith	1283	a plot of pasture in Aldemade, a plot of meadow in Brodemade	Exchange	"	17
Thomas Whitecok	1283	a meadow called Aldemade	L	"	17
Henry	1283	a messuage in Oxwik	(4 yrs.) S&A	his s. Walter	17
Walter le Swone	1284	2a. above Henhull	S&A	Henry	17d
Roger Astill	1284	1a. above Henhull	S&A	"	17d
Henry Blossine	1286	1a. in Heyden field	S&A	"	18
Henry	1292	1a. in Heyden field	L (6 crops)	Reg. Kynne	21d
"	1294	a messuage and 3a.	S&A	his'd. Sibilis	22d
"	1302	a piece in Church field	S&A	Walter atte. Strate	25
"	1302	½a. near le Dammeshende, which of Roger Astrild, is returned to Cristina d. and heir of Roger.			25
	1303	Henry Cokreth jn. enters all the land that was held by his father Henry			25d

(continued on next page)

Granter	Date	Property transferred	Nature of transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
<u>2. His children:- Sara</u>					
	1278	Sara, d. of Henry Cokreth marries William Hardiman of Bridelle			14d
<u>Sibillia</u>					
Henry de Cokreth	1294	a messuage & 3a.	S&A	Sibillia	22d
<u>Walter</u>					
Henry de Cokreth	1283	a messuage in Oxwik	S&A	Walter	17
Walter, capellanus	1303	a plot in the market	S&A	Geoff. atte Hurne	25d
<u>Thomas</u>					
	1316	Thomas son of Henry de Cokreth is elected to the land that Geoffrey Whitecok held			39d
<u>Henry (H. de Cokreth jn.)</u>					
Hugo s. of Roger	1284	a messuage & 5a.	S&A	Henry	17d
Thomas le Driver	1289	1a. in Ailriche f.	6 crops ^L	"	19d
Hugo s. of Roger	1290	Wowecroft (3a.)	S&A	"	20
Henry	1291	Wowecroft (3a.)	9 yrs. ^L	Reg. Carnifex	20d
"	1292	Wowecroft	S&A	Walter atte Strate	21
"	1296	a cotland called le Smethelond	S&A	Wm. le Newman	23d
"	1303	Henry de Cokreth jn. enters all the land that was held by his father Henry			25d
"	1304	1a. in West field & a piece of meadow	S&A	Mgt. d. of Roger le Carpenter	26d
"	1304	12d. rent from Walter le Swone	S&A	Ralph de Thikeney	27
"	1305	Henry has sold 2a. of meadow outside the manor without licence			27
"	1311	3r. near le Estelong	S&A	Robert le Swone	33
William Cok	1316	Wodecroft & 1/2a. in Fincheso field	S&A	Henry	39d
Henry	1316	Oxeyewick croft	S&A	William Cok	39d
"	1324	a piece of meadow	S&A	Reginald Doget	48
"	1329	1r..	S&A	John le Mulward	52
	1322	Henry dies and his son Hugo enters his ferthinglond			56

S&A = surrender and admission; L = lease; G = grant

Source:- All references are to the court book (op. cit.).

TABLE XXIX

Succession to property in the family of Osbert the Miller and their activity on the land market.

Granter	Date	Property transferred	Nature of transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
<u>1. Osbert the Miller</u>					
Nicholas Long	1253	1r.	S&A	Osbert	5d
Peter de la Hulle	1254	½a.	S&A	"	6
Nicholas Long	1256	3r.	S&A	"	6d
Nicholas Sael	1258	1 perch	S&A	"	7d
The manor	1264	land formerly held by Nicholas de Corewe	G	"	8d
Osbert	1278	a messuage & 2a. (Osbert to hold till death)	S&A	his s. John	14
"	1279	3a. (Osbert to hold till death)	S&A	his d. Matilda	15
"	1279	a messuage (Osbert to hold till death)	S&A	Nicholas Sael & his d. Alice	15
<u>2. His children:- John</u>					
Osbert the Miller	1278	a messuage & 2a. (Osbert to hold till death)	S&A	John	14
John & wife	1314	a messuage	S&A	Roger le Helder	36
John atte Strate	1325	a piece in West mead	S&A	John	48d
Margaret Haukyn & Beatrix Col Smyth	1325	1r. in West mead	S&A	John & wife	48d
	1332	John, his wife & his son Osbert hold a messuage, 2a., and 2 pieces in West mead			Extent
<u>Martin</u>					
	1292	Martin son of Osbert the Miller claims 5a. that his father held			21d
Martin	1294	½a.	S&A	his d. Matilda	22d
	1295	Martin had wasted his tenement			23
"	1306	a small piece of land	S&A	John le Lord	28
"	1307	a hedge & 5ft. of land to dig a ditch	S&A	Robert le Swone	29d
	1311	Martin is in arrears of rents & services and has wasted his tenement. The land is seized and leased-out by the lord to John Lough for six years			

(CONTINUED on next page)

Granter	Date	Property transferred	Nature of transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
Martin	1312	1a. (John to provide Martin with a house until death)	S&A	John Lorugh	34d
				<u>Alice</u>	
Geoffrey atte Thorne	1275 1294	a messuage & 1a. Alice is absent from suit of court and her land is seized by the manor	S&A	Alice	13 22d
				<u>Matilda</u>	
Osbert the Miller	1279	3a. (Osbert to hold until death)	S&A	Matilda	15
Martin the Miller	1294	1/2a.	S&A	his d. Matilda	22d

S&A = surrender and admission; G = grant

Sources:- All references are to the court book (op. cit.) except that to the extent of 1332 (op. cit.).

TABLE XXX

Succession to property in the family of Edward le Couherd

Granter	Date	Property transferred	Nature of transfer	Recipient	Folio No.
1. <u>Edward le Couherd</u>					
Edward	1309	a plot enclosed by hedges	S&A	his d. Sara	32
"	1309	a cottage next Ayotestrat	S&A	"	32
	1316	Edward dies and his son Thomas enters the holding			40
2. <u>His children:- Sara</u>					
Edward	1309	as above		Sara	32
	1322	Sara dies and her brother Thomas enters her curtilage			44d
<u>Thomas</u>					
	1316	Edward le Couherd dies and his son Thomas enters the holding			40
	1322	Sara le Couherd dies and her brother Thomas enters her curtilage			44d
	1327	Thomas dies and his son William enters the holding			50d
S&A = surrender and admission					

Source:- All references are to the court book (op. cit.).

APPENDIX H

A list of the references which suggest a reduction of settlement in Codicote, 1240-1415.

Date	Nature of reference	Folio No.
1270	The messuage that Walder de Lidewell held had deteriorated.	11
1288	John Wigod is presented for not maintaining his tenement.	19
1289	Walter atte Strate damaged the tenement of Richard Aleyn which he had in custody.	19d
1295	Martin Miller presented for waste in the tenement which was his father's.	23
1300	The land of Richard atte Hathe is seized because he destroyed a house.	24d
1301	Roger damages the tenement that was his wife's.	24d
1302	Thomas le Driver is presented for not repairing a tenement.	25
1306	Stephen atte Hulle is presented for destroying a house.	28
	Emma Thurbern is presented for waste on her tenement.	28
1311	Cristina Osberne and John Priores are both presented for damaging their tenements.	33d
1313	Maurice Blostine is presented for waste on his tenement.	35d
	William White obtains permission to move a house from the tenement of Maurice Blostine to his own land.	35d
1314	William Gyle is presented for waste on the tenement that he held.	36
	The stall of Richard Raysoun is in ruins.	36d
	John Lorugh is presented for waste in the land and messuage of Martin Mitpese.	
	William Goman is presented for waste on his wife's tenement.	36d
	William White is presented for waste on his tenement.	36d
1316	Isabelle Martin obtains permission to move a house from tenement Polleslond (Polleslond was in Abboteshay, f.65).	40d
1320	Agnes Cok is presented for waste on her tenement.	43
	John le Daye obtains permission to move a building from the tenement formerly held by John le Weylshe. John must repair and maintain the other house on the tenement.	43

(Continued on next page)

Date	Nature of reference	Folio No.
1322	Richard le Sheperd has moved a cottage on tenement Blostine. He is to build another house.	45
1322	Simon Cok has damaged the tenement that his mother held. Margaret Blostine is presented for waste on her tenement. John Raven has allowed his tenement to decay. Tenement Schortegrave has been devastated.	45 45d 45d 45d
1323	The tenement of William Schortegrave is seized because of waste on it.	46d
1323	Richard Baughel has permission to cut down trees in Whitecock's garden which has been vacant for nine years.	47
1330	William Terri enters the land of tenement Schortegrave and is to rebuild the tenement.	53d
1332	1a. formerly built on with two cottages, namely land taken from the demesne in Cokreth field. ½a. formerly built on and taken from Cokreth field. A cottage formerly held by Sibille Cokrethe and now assarted. A vacant plot in the market place on which a shop had once been built. Another vacant plot in the market place where there had once been a shop. Three tenants pay rents for shops where there are now no buildings. There is a block of seven shops where the roof has fallen in because of a lack of tenants.	
1335	Whiteslond contains 9a. of land and a plot where the messuage had once stood.	59d
1336	A waste plot opposite a tenement near Abbotshay.	61d
1338	A grant by the lord of two waste plots in the market place.	63-63d
1340	The cottage and curtilage of Hugo de Thikeney is waste.	65
1341	William Terry is presented for waste in tenement Beroldyn. Richard Styward and his wife receive tenement Beroldyn and are allowed to move the house and buildings.	66 66

(continued on the next page)

Date	Nature of reference	Folio No.
1342	Robert Steward obtains permission to move a shop.	67d
1344	Grants by the lord of 14 empty plots in the market place.	70
1347	The tenement that is not built on called le Webbelond.	73
1350	Thomas le Smyth enters the tenement formerly held by Walter atte Hathe and has permission to move the buildings on the land.	77d
	John atte Hulle enters a cottage and curtilage in Abboteshay and has permission to move the cottage.	79
1351	Adam Sawyn is ordered to rebuild his tenement.	80
	John Lorugh obtains permission to move a ruined cottage.	80
1352	John Snake obtains permission to move a house on his tenement in Abboteshay.	80d
	Stephen May enters four tenements and is given permission to move the house on one to mend the tenement on another, which tenement he is to maintain.	80d
1353	Walter atte Dane obtains permission to remove a ruined house to repair other houses with it.	81d
	John Lorugh is ordered to repair tenement atte Hulle.	81d
	John de London is presented for waste on his tenement.	82
1354	John Tyler is ordered to repair damage in the tilery.	82d
	John Aleward is ordered to repair his tenement.	82d
	Henry Lorugh enters a cottage and curtilage and has permission to move the house.	82d
	The lord grants a cottage that was once built (and is now in ruins).	82d
	Laurence atte Hathe is presented for waste in the tenement that was formerly held by Ralph Thikeney.	82d
	Thomas le Smyth is presented for waste in the tenement that was formerly held by Stephen le Bray.	82d
	Stephen May is presented for waste in a cottage near Waterdells.	83d
	William Robyn, Walter Blostine and John Bovere are all presented for waste in their tenements.	83d

(continued on the next page)

Date	Nature of reference	Folio No.
1356	Mabil atte Hulle is presented for waste in her cottage.	84d
	Thomas Donell is presented for waste in his tenement.	84d
	A cottage near Frobleheath is vacant.	84d
1359	A toft at Oxwick where once a principal messuage had stood.	89
1360	Ralph Lorugh obtains permission to remove a house from the plot called Redes and to put it on the tenement formerly held by Robert Dawe.	92d
1367	John atte Feld does not need to repair the house on the half virgate that he received from the lord.	98d
1367	William Bartelot is ordered to repair damage in a shop.	98d
1387	A toft formerly built on and 5a. of land.	108d
1394	Hugo Besouth has allowed his houses to become ruined. Seven tenements are retained in the lord's hands because they are totally ruined.	116d

Sources:- All references are from the court book (op. cit.) except those of 1332 which are from the extent (op. cit.)

APPENDIX I

Society, the land market and economic change in Ibstone in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.

In Ibstone in the thirteenth century, manorial control of tenants was strong. The basis of land holding, free and villein, were the usual customary units, the virgate, half virgate and quarter virgate, to which rents and services were attached. The half virgate in Ibstone contained about 25a.¹ The proportion of free tenants on the manor was large - in 1284 there were 19 free and eight villein tenants² - but labour services were attached to some free land, as well as to all villein holdings. Two free half virgates, for example, owed a rent of 5s.6d. together with three days reaping in autumn, 1½ days carrying grain in autumn and one carrying service with a horse. Other freehold land was held at the will of the lord for a money rent.

The overall burden of services attached to villein land was relatively light. Week work did not exist. Only seasonal services were exacted, but in autumn these were heavy. Throughout the two autumn months, each villein half virgate had to provide, at the reaping, two men for five days in one week and for the Monday of the following week, and one man on the Friday of that week. The half virgater was also to help with washing and shearing the lord's sheep; he was to plough and harrow ½a. in each of the three cropping seasons; and he was to perform a total of six carrying services in the weeks when he worked for the lord. By 1298, villein services had been extended.³ In 1284, four of the bond

(1) The half virgate called Sonnings comprised a messuage and 25a. - compare entries in Merton College Mss. 5203 and 5217 (all subsequent references are to Merton College Mss.); while the quarter virgate called Thornchon contained 10a. - compare entries in 5065, 5202, 5205 and 5218. By the end of the fourteenth century, the meaning of these terms was becoming confused. The tenement called Bussards, formerly a half virgate, was later referred to as a virgate (5226), while in 1453 two half virgates contained 12a. each (5235).

(2) 5202.

(3) By 1298, the half virgater also had to provide two men at the autumn boon works and one man every fourth week during the two autumn months.

tenants were classed as cottagers and the works demanded from them were lighter.¹

Thirty years later, many services had been commuted to a money payment. In 1332, one villein held a messuage and half virgate for a rent of 8s. plus 3s. a year for the services.² Customary plough works were no longer performed after 1337,³ and sowing on the demesne was carried out entirely by hired labour. By 1344, the amount of customary labour provided at the harvest must have been very small - from then until 1350, annual autumn expenses of the manor farm exceeded £4⁴ compared with an average of less than £3 during the previous five years,⁵ an additional cost that was largely due to the employment of more casual labour to replace customary workers. All services had been commuted entirely by the mid-fifteenth century. In a rental of 1451, only two types of land tenure were described, freehold and copyhold, both owing only money rents.⁶

Wage labour on the demesne was the main source of employment in the manor and, with commutation of many labour services during the first two or three decades of the fourteenth century, it assumed a greater significance. At the end of the thirteenth century, the manor farm employed an average of seven permanent farm hands.⁷ After direct farming was resumed, in 1337, a permanent staff of ten was usually retained, including a carter, four ploughmen, two shepherds, a dairyman, a cowherd and a swineherd,⁸ who carried out many routine tasks about the farm apart from their special duties.

Nonetheless, extra labour was also hired for short spells, the numbers of workers required varying considerably. Each year, many hands were needed for a few weeks at harvest time, and the amount of seasonal labour hired then had been large even in the thirteenth century when full

(1) The cottager was to reap every Monday in autumn, for which he was given a sheaf in the evening; he was to help with washing and shearing the manorial flock; and he was to move five hurdles of the sheep fold when it was taken from one field to another.

(2) 5203.

(3) 5078 and subsequent account rolls.

(4) 5089, 5091-6.

(5) 5078-80, 5082-8.

(6) 5205.

(7) e.g. in 1281-82, the seven farmhands included four ploughmen, a dairyman, a cowherd, and a carter, 5057. After 1293, a miller was also employed by the manor, 5062.

(8) e.g. in 1338-39, 5082.

customary services had been exacted. Under exceptional conditions, almost all the grain was harvested by hired help - this was the case in 1338 when, because of rainy weather, crops had to be brought in quickly, and only 19a. of corn was reaped by the tenants.¹ Occasionally, a large body of labourers was hired for a special task, such as helping to build the mill,² but usually the number of temporary workers employed on the demesne was fairly small. They included the two boys who regularly helped at lambing,³ the woman who helped with the milking,⁴ the woman who washed and sheared the sheep,⁵ the men and women who helped with hoeing and weeding,⁶ the women who collected grass for the pigs⁷ or planted beans in the garden,⁸ the men hired for hedging and ditching or for clearing thorn bushes from the fields,⁹ the man who spread dung in the fields,¹⁰ or the boy who scared birds from the crops.¹¹ Craftsmen such as smiths, carpenters and tilers were brought in from outside when needed.¹² The force of temporary wage labour was, no doubt, drawn from tenants of the manor and from smallholders in surrounding parishes. Some of the permanent farm hands, too, had a small holding of their own within the manor.¹³ During the earlier period of direct farming by the College, the manor had been left in the charge of a reeve, who usually was a villein tenant,¹⁴ but after 1287 a paid official, the bailiff was responsible.¹⁵

(1) 5079.

(2) 5062.

(3) e.g. in 1283-84, 5059.

(4) e.g. in 1296-97, 5066.

(5) e.g. in 1344-45, 5089.

(6) e.g. in 1286-87, when 22 men were employed for one day to weed the wheat, 5061.

(7) e.g. in 1346-47, one woman was employed for 28 days in collecting grass in the fields for the pigs, 5092.

(8) e.g. in 1295-96, twelve women were employed for three days to plant beans in the garden, 5064.

(9) e.g. in 1295-96, one man was employed in hedging and clearing thorns for 54 days, *ibid.*.

(10) e.g. 1342-43, 5087.

(11) e.g. in 1296-97, 5066.

(12) e.g. in 1293-94, 5062.

(13) e.g. in 1337, John atte Pulle, the master ploughman, William le Sanapier another ploughman, and Walter the shepherd all held land in the parish, 5078.

(14) e.g. Nicholas Canon, who was reeve between 1280 and 1287 (5055-61), held a half virgate in villeinage, 5202.

(15) 5062.

For the majority of tenants, therefore, the main source of income, other than their land, was employment as seasonal labour on the demesne. Resources in the manor were limited - there was no market or trading centre to occupy small craftsmen and traders, and it is not surprising that less than half of the tenants were smallholders, partly dependent on wages to supplement their income. In 1284, twelve of the 26 tenants held ten acres or more, while twelve held less than six acres of land,¹ and of these, at least two, Richard the Smith of Skirmett and Andrew of Hambleden, probably held land outside the manor. The remainder were no doubt a combination of unmarried daughters, local craftsmen and farm labourers. The large number of tenants living outside the manor at the end of the thirteenth century - in 1293-4 they numbered seven, only two with manorial approval² - was a reflection of the restricted opportunities within it at this time.

At the same time, the high proportion of fugitives also suggests that the thirteenth century had been a period of land hunger in Ibstone. There was no lack of tenants for land, and the lord was able from time to time to seize holdings that were not held on proper authority.³ But by 1300, this pressure was decreasing. Land transactions between tenants were infrequent. The active peasant land market of the northeast and central Chilterns did not exist here. Perhaps the absence of a body of tenant strips in Ibstone was one reason for this difference. Where strip fields remained, they frequently acted as a focus for tenant sale and lease, both because alienation of a few small pieces did not jeopardize the holding as a whole, and because many transactions were aimed at rationalising scattered holdings. On the other hand, had circumstances favoured an active market in Ibstone, closes would no doubt have been broken-down into smaller units and land alienated from them. As conditions were in Ibstone at the beginning of the fourteenth century, when land transfers between tenants did take place, they usually involved complete holdings. The disintegration of customary holdings that was occurring to the north-east was unknown here.

(1) 5202.

(2) 5210-11.

(3) e.g. in 1300, some of the land of eight tenants was forfeited for this reason, 5213-4.

Most fourteenth century land transactions in Ibstone were between lord and tenant. During the last decade of the thirteenth century and the first few years of the fourteenth, the manor had seized many holdings, free and villein alike, for one of a number of reasons - an heir had failed to claim his inheritance,¹ a tenant had fled the manor,² and land had been transferred between tenants without permission.³ The forfeited land was then leased-out by the manor for a fixed term, usually the lifetime of the tenant, but also sometimes that of his wife and a son or daughter. Unless this contract was later renewed, the land returned to the lord on expiry of the lease. In this way, many tenants had been acquiring, often temporarily, all the land of a number of customary holdings. In 1332, for example, Robert le Clerk held five farmsteads and cottages, and the land of a virgate, a half virgate and a quarter virgate together with two crofts.⁴

In Ibstone, as elsewhere in the Chilterns, the first half of the fourteenth century was a period of growing economic decline, that increased sharply after the epidemic of 1349. During the periods of direct farming for which detailed accounts survive, manorial income was at its highest level in the five years between 1293 and 1298 (Appendix J). The cultivated demesne was then at its greatest extent (Appendix K), and the windmill was built, involving considerable capital outlay for such a small manor. After 1298, income declined, mainly because of a fall in the value of grain sales, and three years later the demesne was farmed-out for 39 years. When direct farming was resumed in 1337, the manorial revenue gradually increased to a peak in 1348.

In 1349, at least four tenants died⁵ and five holdings remained in the hands of the lord, their land being leased-out for grazing.⁶ Allowance for decline in rents became a recurring item in the accounts,⁷

(1) e.g. the son of John le Baker, 5210.

(2) e.g. Ralph Witing in 1294, 5211.

(3) e.g. in 1298, John Coleman entered the holdings of William de Lippenor without permission from the manor, 5212.

(4) 5203.

(5) 5223.

(6) 5095, 5097.

(7) In 1349-50, the allowance was for eight holdings (5095) and in the following year for five holdings (5097).

and in the six years following 1349, the manorial income was more than halved. The bases of this income changed, too. Before 1349, the sale of crops and livestock products had usually accounted for one half or more, whereas after 1349, rents and dues became far more important and sales of agricultural produce less so, providing less than one quarter of the total revenue during the seven years up to 1356. The area of the sown demesne was reduced from 146 acres in 1348-9 to 56 acres in 1351-2, the remainder lying uncultivated and valuable only as a source of rent from grazing rights on it - for a time complete fields were leased-out for pasture for a year or a season. A major factor in the decline of demesne cultivation was a shortage of local labour - ploughmen had to be brought in from other College manors¹ - and may have been the main reason why the manor farm was leased-out for the last time in 1360.

In the years after 1349, the existing trend to engrossment of tenant holdings was accentuated. By 1451, land in the manor was held by only twelve tenants compared with the 24 of 1332.² Between them, the twelve owned 19 houses and cottages with land attached, as well as a number of holdings from which the dwellings had been removed. John Persone, for example, held a messuage and a grove, and three cottages, while John Harvey sn. claimed a messuage and a virgate, four acres and a croft. Subletting occurred,³ but there is little indication of its scale. In general, holding sizes had increased - half virgates had been amalgamated to form virgates.

(1) 5097, 5099.

(2) 5205.

(3) In 1441, two tenants were said to have sub-tenants, 5231.

APPENDIX J

A summary of manorial income at Ibstone in the years for which detailed accounts survive.

Source of income	Value (£.s.d.)			
Year	1280-81	1281-82	1284-85	1285-86
Rents & dues	6. 3. 4½	5. 19. 1	7. 4. 0½	6. 12. 6¾
Foreign receipts	-	-	-	-
Sale of crops	5. 10. 8.	8. 6. 3½	11. 6. 0¼	12. 5. 8¾
Wheat	4. 8. 4	7. 9. 1½	6. 18. 8¾	6. 2. 2.
Mixed corn	-	-	0. 17. 6	0. 3. 0
Oats	0. 8. 0.	0. 15. 0	2. 1. 6	4. 2. 8
Barley	-	-	-	-
Dredge	0. 14. 4	0. 2. 2	1. 7. 8	1. 16. 4
Pease & vetch	-	-	-	-
Malt & mill grain	-	-	-	-
Misc.	-	-	0. 0. 7½	0. 1. 6¾
Grain bought	0. 5. 3	-	3. 7. 0	0. 7. 8½
Sale of livestock & produce	1. 14. 6½	4. 4. 3½	3. 1. 6¾	3. 9. 4.
Wool	-	0. 13. 6	0. 5. 8	0. 5. 8½
Dairy produce	0. 10. 7	0. 18. 2	1. 6. 4¼	1. 10. 0
Skins, hides etc.	0. 2. 3½	0. 1. 8	0. 2. 8	0. 4. 6½
Live beasts	1. 1. 8	2. 10. 11½	1. 6. 1½	1. 4. 4
Beasts bought	1. 12. 5¼	0. 17. 5¼	0. 13. 10½	2. 7. 7¼
Sale of woodland products	0. 5. 0	10. 12. 9¼	0. 1. 5	1. 8. 1
Total	13. 13. 7	29. 2. 5¼	21. 13. 0½	23. 15. 8
Source	5056	5057	5059	5060

(continued on the next page)

Source of income	Value (£.s.d.)			
Year	1286-87	1293-94	1294-95	1295-96
Rents & dues	7. 3. 7	8. 15. 3½	6. 9. 11½	7. 18. 6¼
Foreign receipts	-	-	-	-
Sale of crops	3. 18. 10¼	22. 11. 11	18. 11. 6½	18. 7. 2
Wheat	2. 10. 6	8. 1. 9	3. 4. 1¼	8. 6. 4
Mixed corn	0. 4. 0	5. 4. 4	5. 10. 6½	-
Oats	0. 10. 10	2. 6. 0½	-	-
Barley	0. 0. 5	4. 4. 2½	4. 8. 0¼	4. 7. 8
Dredge	0. 10. 3¾	2. 14. 3	2. 11. 0	3. 11. 6
Pease & vetch	-	0. 1. 4	0. 14. 7½	0. 19. 0
Malt & mill grain	-	-	2. 0. 3	1. 2. 8
Misc.	0. 2. 10.	-	0. 3. 0	-
Grain bought	2. 10. 3	4. 7. 1½	2. 17. 4	1. 19. 0¼
Sale of livestock & produce	3. 3. 11½	3. 0. 5½	8. 5. 6	5. 10. 7¼
Wool	0. 7. 10½	-	0. 19. 5	1. 9. 9
Dairy produce	1. 1. 8½	-	1. 13. 2	2. 12. 7
Skins, hides etc.	0. 2. 9	0. 0. 8	-	-
Live beasts	1. 10. 11½	2. 19. 9½	5. 12. 11	1. 8. 3¼
Beasts bought	1. 9. 1¼	5. 16. 4	9. 6. 2	0. 5. 0
Sale of woodland products	4. 2. 1	9. 11. 0	1. 12. 6¼	-
Total	18. 8. 6¼	43. 18. 8	34. 19. 6¼	31. 16. 3½
Source	5061	5062	5063	5072

(continued on the next page)

Source of income	Value (£.s.d.)			
<u>Ye r</u>	1296-97	1297-98	1298-99	1299-1300
Rents & dues	8.13. 4½	7. 7. 2	6. 7. 0	7. 0. 8
Foreign receipts	-	15. 0. 0	1.13. 4	4. 0. 0
Sale of crops	11.18. 7½	15.15. 7	9. 8. 2½	12. 1. 7¾
Wheat	3.16.10½	8. 3. 1½	-	7. 3. 7¾
Mixed corn	-	-	1. 4. 7	-
Oats	-	-	-	-
Barley	4.11. 6	6. 6. 1	4. 8. 8	-
Dredge	1. 8. 8	0. 9. 4½	0.11.11¾	2. 9. 4
Pease & vetch	0. 9. 0	-	0. 8. 0	1. 6. 6½
Malt & mill grain	1. 6. 7	0.14. 0	2.14.11¾	1. 2. 7
Misc.	0. 6. 0	0. 3. 0	-	-
Grain bought	2.15. 8	5.18. 0½	2.11.11	3.15. 4
Sale of livestock & produce	10.16. 2	9. 6. 4½	6. 1. 8¾	9.13.11¾
Wool	1. 4. 3½	2. 6. 3	0. 5. 9½	3. 5. 7¾
Dairy produce	1.14. 6	2. 9.11½	1. 9.11¾	0. 5.10
Skins, hides etc.	0. 0. 7	-	0. 0. 8	0. 4. 2
Live beasts	7.16. 9½	4.10. 2	4. 5. 3½	5.18. 3½
Beasts bought	2. 1. 4	4. 3. 3¾	2.16. 1¾	2. 7.10¾
Sale of woodland products	0; 7. 8	-	-	0. 3. 4
Total	31.15.11	49. 9. 1½	23.10. 3¾	32.19. 7
Source	5064	5066	5067	5068

(continued on the next page)

Source of income	Value (£.s.d.)			
Year	1300-01	1337-38	1338-39	1339-40
Rents & dues	6. 9. 2	7. 4. 0	4.19.10	?
Foreign receipts	-	0.18. 4	2.10. 1	4.15. 0
Sale of crops	7.12. 6½	2.16. 7	2. 1. 8½	7.14.11¼
Wheat	0.16. 6	1. 3. 0¾	0.10.11½	5. 7. 9¾
Mixed corn	1. 3. 0½	-	0. 1.11	0. 0. 7½
Oats	-	-	0. 1. 0	-
Barley	0.13. 9	0.13. 2	1. 8. 8	2. 2. 6
Dredge	2.15.10	1. 0. 3¼	0. 9. 2	-
Pease & vetch	0. 8. 9	-	-	-
Malt & grain mill	1.1¼. 8	-	-	0. 4. 0
Misc.	-	-	-	0. 0. 2
Grain bought	1. 7.11¼	0. 4.10	0.11. 3½	3.16. 5
Sale of livestock & produce	7.17. 9½	0.13. 4	3.13. 4¾	4. 4. 7½
Wool	4.16. 9¾	-	-	-
Dairy produce	1.19.11¼	0. 6. 4	1. 1. 7¾	1.14. 4½
Skins, hides etc.	0. 4. 2	-	0. 0.11	0.13. 5
Live beasts	0.16.10½	0. 7. 0	2.10.10	1.16.10
Beasts bought	1. 3. 7	2. 1. 2	2. 0. 6	0.16.11
Sale of woodland products	-	6. 5. 1	1. 1. 7	-
Total	21.19. 6	17. 7. 4	14. 6. 7¼	?
Sources	5070	5078	5079-80 5082	5083

(continued on the next page)

Source of income	Value (£.s.d.)			
<u>Year</u>	1341-42	1342-43	1343-44	1344-45
Rents & dues	7.17. 7	8. 2. 5¼	7.16. 4½	7.18. 8¾
Foreign receipts	1. 2. 6	-	-	1. 0. 0.
Sale of crops	4. 5. 6¼	6. 6. 5¼	9. 8. 3¼	6.17. 6½
Wheat	1. 9. 0	0.16. 8	1.12. 4¼	3. 0. 0
Mixed corn	-	-	0. 5. 4	-
Oats	0.11. 3	-	3. 0. 0	0.12. 3½
Barley	0.11. 3	1.15. 5	1.10. 7½	0.13. 1
Dredge	1.14. 0¼	2.18. 8	2.11. 0	2. 4.10
Pease & vetch	-	0.14.10¼	0.10. 0	0. 1. 3
Malt & mill grain	-	-	-	-
Misc.	-	-	-	0. 6. 1
Grain bought	2.10. 5½	-	?	0.12. 9
Sale of livestock & produce	2.12. 7	7.12. 0½	3.10. 8½	4. 3. 6
Wool	-	3.14. 0	-	-
Dairy produce	0. 7. 6	0. 8. 0	0. 9. 1½	0.10. 1½
Skins, hides etc.	0. 6. 8	-	0. 4. 3	0. 3. 5½
Live beasts	1.18. 5	3.10. 0½	2.17. 4	3. 9.11
Beasts bought	1. 0. 2	0. 5.10	?	2. 5. 3¼
Sale of woodland products	0. 2. 2	0. 7. 4	0. 4. 0	?
Total	17.18. 4¼	22. 8. 3½	20.19. 4¼	20. 0. 9¼
Sources	5084,5086	5087	5088	5089

(continued on the next page)

Source of income	Value (£.s.d.)			
Year	1345-46	1346-47	1347-48	1348-49
Rents & dues	8. 6. 11½	7. 12. 10½	9. 4. 5½	8. 2. 9½
Foreign receipts	0. 5. 0	1. 13. 0	1. 0. 0	1. 18. 0
Sale of crops	11. 2. 2½	11. 11. 10½	14. 19. 6	8. 15. 8
Wheat	4. 15. 11	4. 2. 6	2. 1. 4	3. 8. 4
Mixed corn	-	-	-	-
Oats	1. 17. 11	1. 4. 6	-	-
Barley	2. 12. 6½	2. 18. 6	7. 12. 0	4. 16. 6
Dredge	1. 4. 6	0. 6. 0	1. 11. 4	0. 3. 4
Pease & vetch	0. 6. 0	-	3. 10. 8	0. 7. 6
Malt & mill grain	0. 5. 4	2. 12. 4½	0. 1. 8	-
Misc.	-	0. 8. 0	0. 2. 6	-
Grain bought	0. 19. 9	1. 7. 6½	4. 0. 7½	1. 13. 6
Sale of livestock & produce	3. 12. 4	2. 9. 8¾	2. 14. 9½	2. 9. 5
Wool	-	-	-	-
Dairy produce	0. 3. 9	0. 6. 1¾	0. 6. 3	0. 5. 7
Skins, hides etc.	0. 6. 3	0. 3. 6	0. 2. 0	0. 9. 0
Live beasts	3. 2. 4	2. 0. 1	2. 6. 6½	1. 14. 10
Beasts bought	1. 16. 9½	3. 11. 1¾	2. 11. 9½	0. 6. 0
Sale of woodland products	-	-	0. 1. 8	-
Total	23. 6. 6	23. 7. 5¼	28. 0. 5	21. 5. 10½
Sources	5091	5092	5093	5094

(continued on the next page)

Source of income	Value (£.s.d.)			
Years	1349-50	1350-51	1351-52	1352-53
Rents & dues	6.19. 7	6.16.11¼	10. 0. 6	8.15. 7
Foreign receipts	4. 0. 0.	-	2. 9. 8	1. 3. 6
Sale of crops	1.15. 8	7. 4. 1¼	1.11.11½	0. 3. 8
Wheat	-	2. 7. 4	0. 1. 8	0. 3. 8
Mixed corn	-	-	-	-
Oats	-	0. 2. 1	0. 1. 2	-
Barley	1. 2. 8	2. 7. 7¼	0.13. 3½	-
Dredge	0.13. 0	2. 1. 6½	-	-
Pease & vetch	-	0. 4. 0	-	-
Malt & mill grain	-	-	-	-
Misc.	-	0. 1. 6	0.10. 6	-
Grain bought	3. 6. 3	0. 9. 7½	0. 4. 2	0. 5. 0
Sale of livestock & produce	3.10. 4½	1.12.10	2.11.11¼	1. 2. 4
Wool	-	-	-	-
Dairy produce	0.14.10½	1. 7. 3	1. 3.11¼	-
Skins, hides etc.	0. 2. 7	0. 0. 6	0. 2.10	0. 0. 3
Live beasts	2.12.11	0. 5. 1	1. 5. 2	1. 2. 1
Beasts bought	0. 3. 9¼	0. 0. 2½	0. 1. 7	-
Sale of woodland produce	7. 5. 0	-	-	0. 2. 0
Total	23.10. 7	15.13.11	16.14. 0¼	11. 7. 1
Sources	5095	5096-97	5098	5099

(continued on the next page)

Source of income		Value (£.s.d.)			
Year	1353-54	1354-55	1355-56	1356-57	
Rents & dues	8. 1.10	10. 8. 3	8.17. 9	9.11. 7½	
Foreign receipts	4. 1. 9	0.14. 0	1.10. 0	-	
Sale of crops	0. 7. 4	2.19. 4½	2.19.10½	5.14.11¾	
Wheat	-	-	-	1.19. 4	
Mixed corn	-	0. 1. 0	-	1.10. 7½	
Oats	-	1. 3. 0	1.16. 7¾	0.14. 8	
Barley	-	-	-	0.10. 2½	
Dredge	-	1.15. 4½	1. 3. 2¾	0.16. 1¾	
Pease & vetch	-	-	-	-	
Malt & mill grain	-	-	-	-	
Misc.	0. 7. 4	-	-	0. 4. 0	
Grain bought	-	0.13. 1	3. 4. 0¼	4. 2.10	
Sale of livestock & produce	0.14. 0	0. 5. 9	0.14. 9	4.11.11½	
Wool	-	-	-	0.12. 2½	
Dairy produce	-	-	-	0.15. 0	
Skins, hides etc.	0.14. 0	0. 0. 9	0. 4.11	0.12. 2½	
Live beasts	-	0. 5. 0	0.13.10	3. 4. 9	
Beasts bought	-	-	1. 7. 6	-	
Sale of woodland products	0. 4.10.	0.15. 8	4. 4. 5	3.13. 4	
Total	13. 9. 9	15. 3. 0½	18. 6. 9½	23.11.10½	
Source	5100	5101	5102	5103	

(continued on the next page)

Source of income	Value (£.s.d.)	
<u>Year</u>	1358-59	1359-60
Rents & dues	7. 6. 2¼	7. 5. 10¼
Foreign receipts	4.13. 8	3. 0. 0
Sale of crops	4.19. 1	4.17. 3¼
Wheat	1. 2. 2	1. 7. 6
Mixed corn	-	-
Oats	2. 9. 5	2. 9. 1
Barley	-	-
Dredge	1. 5. 6	0.10. 0
Pease & vetch	-	0. 9. 8¼
Malt & mill grain	-	-
Misc.	0. 2. 0	0. 1. 0
Grain bought	2. 7. 1	1. 1. 7
Sale of livestock & produce	1. 2. 7½	6. 8. 4
Wool	-	5. 2. 0
Dairy produce	0.10. 0	0. 2. 0
Skins, hides etc.	0. 2. 7½	0.10. 6
Live beasts	0.10. 0	0.13.10
Beasts bought	2.17.11	0.16. 1
Sale of woodland products	0. 2.11	-
Total	18. 4. 6½	17.11. 5½
Source	5104	5105

Note on sources:- All references are to Merton College Mss..

APPENDIX K (i)

Crops on the Ibstone demesne
(in acres)

Year	Total Sown	Wheat	Mixed corn	Total W-S	Oats	Barley	Dredge	Pease	Vetch	Total S-S
1280-1	211½	39	61	100	99¾	3	7¼	1¼	¾	111
1281-2	215¾	41	71¼	112¼	93¾	3	5¼	1¼	¼	103½
1284-5	235½	41¼	75	116¼	109½	1½	9	1¼	-	121¼
1285-6	230½	39	66	105	114¾	2½	7	1¼	¼	126
1286-7	213¾	37	72½	109½	91	11½	¾	1	-	104¼
1293-4	217¼	28¾	96¾	125½	59	17	9	4¼	2¾	92
1294-5	214¼	40	43	83	92	21½	11¼	3½	3	132¼
1295-6	212½	41	61	102	69¼	24	10	3½	3½	119¼
1296-7	222	44¼	71¼	115½	79	20	2	3	2½	106½
1297-8	198	28	83	111	60¼	12	10	2¼	2½	87
1298-9	199½	27¼	78	105¼	62	1	26	2½	2½	94
1299-00	218¾	21	102	123	60	6	21¾	4	3½	95¼
1300-01	171½	27	67	94	63	6½	-	-	8	78½
1337-8	146	28	37	65	55	10	15	-	1	81
1338-9	169	36	55	91	52	11	14	-	1	78
1339-40	148	30	51	81	45	4	16	-	2	67
1341-2	149½	14	59	73	53	7	6	7	3½	76½
1342-3	192½	47	67	114	51½	7	17	-	3	78½
1343-4	165	25	57	82	38	11½	21	5	7½	83
1344-5	?	?	59	?	39	18½	18	8	5	88½
1345-6	179¼	36	59	95	26¼	24	18	8	7½	84¾
1346-7	158	26	47	73	20	21½	27	15	1½	85
1347-8	166½	30	38	68	30½	26	23½	16	2½	98½
1348-9	146	27	40	67	23	18½	20	14	3½	79
1349-50	92	22	28	50	13	17	10	-	2	42
1350-1	70	18	28	46	9½	7½	-	6	1	24
1351-2	56	9	27	36	20	-	-	-	-	20
1352-3	66½	?	12	?	19	-	-	1	2½	22½
1353-4	71	9	28	37	21	3	7	3	-	34
1354-5	66	-	26	26	26¼	-	12½	-	1¼	40
1355-6	79	7	28	35	22½	3	17	-	1½	44
1356-7	51½	15	14	29	13	4	5½	-	-	22½
1358-9	91½	16	23	42	27	-	15½	1	6	49½
1359-60	113	7	36	43	28	-	42	-	-	70

W-S = winter-sown crops; S-S = spring-sown crops.

Sources:- Merton College Mss. 5056-7, 5059-64, 5066-8, 5070, 5072, 5078-80, 5082-4, 5086-9, 5091-105.

APPENDIX K (ii)

Livestock on the Ibstone demesne

Year	Sheep	Cattle	Horses	Pigs
1280	33	17	13	10
1281	34	14	13	14
1282	34	13	13	13
1284	30	17	14	18
1285	27	17	14	32
1286	21	19	14	25
1287	15	15	13	11
1293	-	10	13	11
1294	110	9	20	6
1295	171	12	16	16
1296	179	12	16	28
1297	192	10	15	1
1298	170	9	14	18
1299	196	9	14	16
1300	256	9	15	17
1301	212	8	14	26
1337	190	9	12	-
1338	258	12	12	29
1339	250	13	14	50
1340	184	13	15	55
1341	228	9	16	32
1342	232	10	18	36
1343	257	8	15	41
1344	283	5	15	43
1345	281	10	15	35
1346	249	7	14	26
1347	199	10	14	30
1348	205	15	14	35
1349	237	29	14	22
1350	180	13	13	-
1351	210	21	13	-
1352	172	16	12	-
1353	-	12	6	-
1354	-	8	7	-
1355	121	9	7	-3
1356	98	8	7	17
1357	262	7	7	3
1358	201	9	9	-
1359	158	7	13	-

Sources:- Merton College Mss. 5056-7, 5059-64, 5066-8, 5070-71, 5078-9, 5083-4, 5087, 5089, 5091-6, 5098-5105.

APPENDIX L

Cropping on the Ibstone demesne, 1338-60

Year	Crops	Acreage	Fields
1338-9	wheat	36	Stony & East fields
	mixed corn	55	same fields
	spring crops		no statement
1339-40	wheat	30	diverse <u>cultura</u>
	mixed corn	51	" "
	oats	45	" "
	barley	4	East field
	dredge	16	diverse <u>cultura</u>
	vetch	2	no statement
1341-2	wheat	14	East field
	mixed corn	59	East field & Whytescroft
	oats	53	no statement
	barley	7	Home & Stony fields
	other crops		no statement
1342-3	wheat	47	Lipenor field & other <u>cultura</u>
	mixed corn	67	" " " "
	oats	51½	no statement
	barley	7	East field
	other crops		no statement
1343-4	wheat	25	Home field
	other crops		no statement
1345-6	wheat	36	Lipenor field & other <u>cultura</u>
	other crops		no statement
1346-7	wheat	26	Home field
	mixed corn	47	no statement
	oats	20	no statement
	barley	21½	Lipenor & Home fields
	other crops		no statement
1347-8	wheat	30	East field
	mixed corn	38	same field
	oats	30½	no statement
	barley	26	East & Home fields
	dredge	23½	no statement
	pease	16	Home field
	vetch	2½	same field

(continued on the next page)

Year	Crops	Acreage	Fields
1348-9	wheat	27	Lipenor field & other <u>cultura</u>
	mixed corn	40	" " " "
	oats	23	no statement
	barley	18½	East & Lipenor fields
	dredge	20	East & Hole fields
	pease	14	East field
1349-50	wheat	22	Home field
	mixed corn	28	no statement
	oats	13	no statement
	barley	17	Home field
	other crops		no statement
1350-1	wheat	18	Home field & Churchcroft
	mixed corn	28	East field
	oats	9½	Home field
	barley	7½	same field
	pease	6	Home field and other <u>cultura</u>
	vetch	1	Home field
1351-2	wheat	9	Lipenor field
	mixed corn	27	Twigside & other <u>cultura</u>
	oats	20	no statement
1352-3	wheat	?	Home field
	mixed corn	12	no statement
	oats	19	Twigside
1353-4	wheat	9	East field
	mixed corn	28	same field
	oats	21	Home field
	barley	3	Churchcroft
	dredge	7	Churchcroft & Home field
	pease	2	Home field
1354-5	mixed corn	26	Lipenor & Hole fields
	oats	26¼	Lipenor & East fields
	dredge	12½	same fields
	vetch	1¼	East field
1355-6	wheat	7	Home field & Churchcroft
	mixed corn	28	Lipenor field
	oats	22½	Lipenor & Home fields
	barley	3	no statement
	dredge	17	Home field
	vetch	1½	Lipenor field

(continued on next page)

Year	Crops	Acreage	Fields
1356-7	wheat	15	East field & Churchcroft
	mixed corn	14	East field
	oats	13	Lipenor field
	barley	4	same field
	dredge	5½	same field
1358-9	wheat	16	Lipenor field & Churchcroft
	mixed corn	25	Lipenor field & Twigsid
	oats	27	Home field & Twigsid
	dredge	15½	Home field
	pease	1	same field
	vetch	6	Lipenor field
1359-60	wheat	7	East field
	mixed corn	36	same field
	oats	28	Lipenor field
	dredge	42	Lipenor field & Twigsid

Sources:- Merton College Mss. 5094-5105.

APPENDIX M.

Crop acreages on some demesne farms, 1152 - 1408.

Manor	Date	Total Sown	Wheat	Mixed Corn	Total U-S	Oats	Barley	Dredge	P, V & B	Total S-S	Fallow
Kensworth	1152	140	-	-	70	-	-	-	-	70	80
	1299	165	60	111	111	54	-	-	-	54	58
	1299	140	60	111	60	80	-	-	-	80	105
West Wycombe	1208	616½	256½	28	264½	220	102	-	30	352	
	1210	418	156	21	177	215	14	-	12	241	
	1211	416½	110	32	142	202	42½	-	30	274½	
	1213	394	150	10	150	208	28	-	8	244	
	1215	386	137	35	147	209	20	-	10	259	
	1218	372	174	30	209	150	10	-	3	163	
	1220	348	142	30	172	139	30	-	7	176	
	1223	378	130	48½	178½	160	33½	-	6	199½	
	1224	347½	166	33½	199½	129	19	-	?	148	
	1225	359	149	25	174	165	14	-	6	185	
	1264	311½	126	50	176	116	19½	-	?	135½	
	1265	306	129	45	174	118	14	-	?	132	
	1267	315½	145½	33½	179	117	19½	-	?	136½	
	1268	302½	127	43	170	116	16½	-	?	132½	
	1270	311	121	45½	166½	109½	35	-	?	144½	
	1271	321	128	47	175	109½	36½	-	?	146	
	1296	299	81	109	190	94	15	-	?	109	
1297	269	86	75	161	95	13	-	?	108		
1298	283½	108	54	162	107½	14½	-	-	121½		
1299	261½	72	80	152	92½	16	-	-	109½		
1324	248½	70	73	143	77	19	9½	-	105½		
1325	248½	72	54	126	106½	9½	6½	-	122½		
1326	231½	62	57	119	87	19½	6	-	112½		
1327	262	100	61½	161½	76	24½	-	-	100½		

Manor	Date	Total Sown	Wheat	Mixed Corn	Total W-S	Oats	Barley	Dredge	P, V & B	Total S-S	
West Wycombe	1346	234	58	90	148	56	-	29	3	86	
	1347	215½	43	80	123	57	-	35	4	92¼	
	1348	218	52	86	138	43	-	37	-	80	
	1349	176½	36	77	113	31	12¼	20*	-	63½	
	1350	195½	39	66½	105½	24	8	49	9	90	
	1351	179½	35	68	101	21	15	42½	-	78½	
	1352	214	35	79	114	42	13	40	-	100	
	1353	157	26	67	93	30	17	37	?	64	
	1354	135¼	48	-	48	44½	30	42	1¼	87¼	
	1355	173	51	2	53	40	34	46	-	120	
	Hemel Hempstead	1259	239	117	-	117	119	-	3	-	122
	Marbleden	1276	199	46	52	98	67	24	-	?	91
	Kings Langley	1293	198¼	93½	-	93½	94½	3	5	2	105¼
		1303	255	115	-	115	126¼	4¼	6	3	140
		1305	190½	95¼	-	95¼	78½	2¼	8½	6	95¼
1303		159¾	73	-	73	70½	1¼	4¼	4	80¼	
1315		147½	90½	-	90½	50	3¼	1	3	57¼	
1314		1¼	56	-	56	74	4¼	5¼	4	88	
1316		149*	74	-	74	50¾	1¼	4¼	8	65¼	
1317		152½	78	-	78	59½	6	5	4	74½	
1318		167¼	108½	-	108½	50	3	2¼	3¼	59¼	
1320		130	59	-	59	3½	1½	2¼	11	71	
1321		169½	100	-	100	52½	-	9½	6¼	69¼	
1322		162	84	-	84	52	-	21¼	4¼	70	
1323		1¼	61	-	61	65*	-	15¼	2½	83	
1324		131¼	6¼	-	6¼	56	-	6¼	-	62¼	
1325		133	73	-	73	45	-	15	-	60	
Winsbourne (Harpden)	1321	218½	101½	-	101½	102¼	9¼	3	2	117	
	1322	235¼	130¼	-	130¼	95¼	3½	3¼	2	105	

Manor	Date	Total Sown	Wheat	Mixed Corn	Total A-S	Oats	Barley	Dredge	P, V & B	Total S-S
Kinsbourne (Harpenden)	1323	227	101½	-	101½	121½	2½	1½	-	125½
	1324	203	97	-	97	94½	4½	2½	4½	106
	1325	207½	127	-	127	62½	5½	6	6½	80½
Chenies	1324	142½	59	-	59	75	1½	5	2	83½
Chesham Bois	1341	91	41	-	41	48½	-	-	1½	50
Penn	1372	92½	35½	-	35½	16½	-	37	4	57½
Stonor	1588	161	32	-	32	35	84	-	10	129
Knebworth	1406	139½	52	-	52	55½	6	54	22½	137½
	1407	186½	54	-	54	65½	13	38	11	132½
	1408	187	50½	-	50½	67	20	31½	18½	136½

Note:- The date given is that of the beginning of the accounting year.

Sources:- Kensworth 1199, J. Hale, op. cit., 123; Kensworth & Caddington 1299, St. Paul's WD16, Liber I, ff. 115d & 122; West Wycombe, HARO Eccl. 2/159270, 159270A, 15927-3, 159275, 159277-80, 15925, 159297-3, 159450a, 159299-30, 159315-18, 159337-40, 159556-60, 159362-6; Hambleden, PRO SC6/1095/10; Kings Langley, PRO DL29/40/740, SC6/866/15-29; Kinsbourne, Westm. 8807-11; Chenies, PRO SC6/761/4; Chesham Bois, PRO SC6/1120/10; Penn, Bill Add. 3.659; Stonor, PRO SC6/1248/15; Knebworth, IRO K110, 112, 116.

APPENDIX N

Livestock on some demesne and tenant farms, 1152 - 1413.

Manor	Date	Sheep	Cattle	Horses	Pigs
Angots Fee (High Wycombe)	1185	80	14	6	-
Pinels Fee "	"	50	8	2	6
Gynaunts Fee "	"	60	10	2	6
Kensworth	1152	120	24	2	-
Kensworth	1222	300	-	-	30
Kensworth	1299	32	14	-	32
Caddington	1222	200	4	-	40
"	1299	150	8	8	-
West Wycombe	1208	893	99	6	14
"	1210	212	51	11	50
"	1211	263	54	9	112
"	1213	321	55	12	180
"	1215	457	39	12	100
"	1217	207	71	12	69
"	1221	469	63	14	114
"	1223	395	68	12	44
"	1224	704	72	11	116
"	1225	783	92	11	158
"	1226	645	86	10	242
"	1264	211	62	14	130
"	1265	142	39	14	72
"	1267	242	38	14	11
"	1268	195	43	15	35
"	1270	253	52	14	77
"	1271	308	63	14	70
"	1296	236	43	14	54
"	1297	233	46	14	40
"	1298	290	45	14	41
"	1299	344	53	14	61
"	1324	-	-	20	8
"	1325	-	5	20	28
"	1326	-	7	20	51
"	1327	-	11	20	53

(continued on the next page)

Manor	Date	Sheep	Cattle	Horses	Pigs
West Wycombe	1346	442	37	23	37
"	1347	425	17	21	62
"	1348	319	44	24	39
"	1349	538	52	23	72
"	1350	585	51	20	76
"	1351	726	48	21	93
"	1352	779	54	21	122
"	1353	822	56	20	93
"	1354	798	67	21	97
"	1355	996	68	21	94
"	1356	1026	71	21	82
"	1357	968	62	21	46
"	1358	970	72	22	103
Hambleden	1278	93	5	14	?
Ibstone - a tenant holding	c.1280	-	5	2	6
Kings Langley	1285	-	19	14	-
"	1304	-	31	14	-
"	1305	52	25	14	-
"	1307	18	16	12	-
"	1312	183	?	?	-
"	1313	202	18	9	-
"	1315	72	12	8	-
"	1316	65	14	9	-
"	1317	73	20	9	-
"	1319	94	3	10	11
"	1320	122	5	8	33
"	1321	96	17	12	44
"	1323	120	9	8	-
"	1324	151	10	9	-
Chenies	1324	-	21	14	-
	1325	-	20	15	-
Chenies	1331	174	25	12	26
Shardeloes (Amersham)	"	205	27	-	26
Flamstead Rectory	1341	50	4	5	1
Bramfield - half virgate	1356	20	13	1	-
Fawley - a tenant holding of c. 30a.	1366	20	2	1	-
Penn	1372	74	21	4	-
Stonor	1388	-	65	16	-
Great Gaddesden	t.RII	192	25	8	-

(continued on the next page).

Manor	Date	Sheep	Cattle	Horses	Pigs
Knebworth	1371	294	32	7	-
"	1405	96	26	12	61
"	1406	-	30	13	76
"	1407	-	30	13	75
"	1408	-	35	12	66
King's Walden - a tenant holding	1413	45	8	4	7

Note:- The date given is that of the beginning of the accounting year.

Sources:- As in Appendix M except for the following: High Wycombe, 1185, Stacey Gimaldi (ed.), "Rotuli de Dominabus et Pueris et Puellis in Donacione Regis"; Kensworth and Caddington 1222, W. Hale, op. cit., 1 and 7; Ibstone, Merton College Ms. 5248b; Kings Langley 1285, PRO SC6/866/Bramfield, HRO 40703; Chenies and Shardeloes 1331, PRO E142/64; Flamstead Rectory, Cal. Inq. Misc., II, 439, no.1774; Great Gaddesden, HRO 2632; Fawley BM Add. R. 27021; Knebworth 1371, HRO K100; King's Walden, BM Add. R.35933.

APPENDIX O

Cropping on some arable demesnes, 1282 - 1407.

West Wycombe			
Year	Crops	Acreage	Fields
1282	wheat	100	E. & W. Thurugg, Yridfeld, Senghet.
	mixed corn	63	Same fields.
	oats	117	Hasserugg & Hacfeld
	barley	16¼	same fields.
1283	wheat	103	Chetenor, Foxor & the field below Havingden
	mixed corn	54¾	same fields.
	oats	103½	E. & W. Thurugg
	barley	17½	same fields.
1284	wheat	92	Hasserugg & Hacfeld
	mixed corn	84	same fields.
	oats	101	Chetenor, Foxor & field below Havingden
	barley	16	same fields.
1285	wheat	107	E. & W. Thurugg, Yridefeld, Senghet.
	mixed corn	90½	same fields.
	oats	113	Hasserugg & Hacfeld
	barley	17	same fields.
1346	wheat	58	Chetenor
	mixed corn	90	Chetenor & Smythfeld
	oats	56	Tourug (i.o. Thurugg).
	dredge	29	same field
	pease	2	same field
	vetch	1	same field
1347	wheat	43	Ashrug (i.e. Hasserug) & Hatchfeld
	mixed corn	80	same fields
	oats	57	Chetenor & Smythfeld
	dredge	35	same fields
	vetch	¼	same fields

(continued on the next page)

West Wycombe (continued)

Year	Crops	Acreage	Fields
1348	wheat	52	?
	mixed corn	86	E. & W. Tourug, Castlefeld
	oats	43	Ashrug
	barley	37	Ashrug & Hatchfeld
1349	wheat	36	Estfeld
	mixed corn	77	Chetenor & Vexor (Foxor)
	oats	31	Westfeld & Tourug
	barley	12¼	Westfeld
	dredge	20¼	same field
1350	wheat	39	Ashrug & Hatchfeld
	mixed corn	66½	Ashrug
	oats	24	Bourwes, Shyngledecrouch & Church furlong
	barley	8	Mershlade
	dredge	49	Havingden, Smythfeld, Castlefeld & Shyngle
	pulse	9	Mershlade & field next Bradenhamstrate
1351	wheat	35	E. & W. Tourug
	mixed corn	68	E. & W. Tourug, Castlefeld
	oats	42½	Ashrug, Hatchfeld, Castlefeld & E. Tourug
	barley	15	Ashrug
	dredge	21	Ashrug, Hatchfeld & Castlefeld
1352	wheat	35	Shingledecrouch
	mixed corn	79	same field
	oats	42	East & West fields
	barley	18	same fields
	dredge	40	same fields
1353	wheat	26	Ashrug
	mixed corn	67	same field
	oats	30	Smythfeld, Burwes, Church furlong, Shyngle
	barley	17	Shyngledecrouch
	dredge	37	?
	pease	½	Shyngledecrouch
1354	wheat	48	E. Tourug
	oats	44¼	Ashrug
	barley	30	W. Tourug
	dredge	42	Ashrug
	pulse	1¼	same field

 Kings Langley

Year	Crops	Acreage	Fields
1313	wheat	90½	Home field
	oats	50	le Haylond
	barley	3¼	same field
	dredge	1	same field
	pease	3	same field
1314	wheat	56	Great field
	oats	74	Home field
	barley	4½	same field
	dredge	5½	same field
	pease	4	same field
1318	wheat	108½	Home field
	oats	50	Haylond
	barley	3	Home field
	dredge	2¼	Haylond
	pease	3½	same field
1322	wheat	84	Field below the Park & Jarkemillesfield
	oats	52	Home field
	No fields given for the other crops (dredge & pease)		
1323	wheat	61	Haylond
	oats	65¼	Jarkemillesfield
	No fields given for the other crops (dredge)		

 Chenies

1324	wheat	59	Milnecroft (8½a.), Benorethgrove (15½a.), Parkfeld (35a.)
	oats	75	Michelfeld (50a.), Benorethgrove (17a.), Parkfeld (7a.)
	barley	1½	Parkfeld
	dredge	5	Michelfeld
	pease	2	same field

Kinsbourne (Harpenden)

Years	Crops	Acreage	Fields
1321	wheat	101 $\frac{1}{4}$	Great Ruding, <u>Great & Little Churchfield</u>
	oats	102 $\frac{1}{4}$	the Rudings above & below the wood, Reyleye, <u>Northfield</u> , Lovkinescroft, Cullehoggescroft, <u>Brodefeld</u> .
	barley	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	no statement
	dredge	3	Reyleye
	pease	2	the Ruding above the wood.
1322	wheat	130 $\frac{1}{4}$	Little Ruding, the field before the door, above Six Acres.
	oats	95 $\frac{1}{4}$	Great Ruding, <u>Churchfield</u> & the other Churchf.
	barley	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	the field before the door
	dredge	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	<u>Churchfield</u>
	vetch & oats	2	same field
1323	wheat	101 $\frac{1}{4}$	Ruding above the wood, Reyleye, <u>Northfield</u> , Lovkinescroft, Cullehoggescroft, <u>Brodefeld</u> .
	oats	121 $\frac{1}{4}$	Little Ruding, the field before the door in <u>common</u> & severalty.
	barley	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	Reyleye
	dredge	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	Reyleye & the field before the door.
1324	wheat	97	<u>Churchfield</u> (55a.), Great Ruding (42a.)
	oats	94 $\frac{1}{2}$	Reyleyes in severalty & <u>common</u> (33 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.), <u>Northfield</u> (30a.), Cullehoggescroft (4a.), <u>Assebed</u> (1a.), <u>Brodefeld</u> (4a.), the Ruding above the wood (22a.)
	barley	2	Reyleye
	dredge	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	same field
	pease	2	same field
	vetch	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	same field
1325	wheat	127	Little Ruding (52 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.), the field before the door in severalty (56 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.), same field in <u>common</u> (33a.), Six Acres (5a.), Ashbed (1a.)
	oats	62 $\frac{1}{4}$	<u>Churchfield</u> (47 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.), part of Grt. Ruding (15a.)
	barley	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	field before the door
	dredge	6	<u>Churchfield</u>
	pease	4	<u>Churchfield</u> (3a.), Little Ruding (1a.)
	vetch	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	<u>Churchfield</u>

(Continued on the next page)

Penn			
Year	Crops	Acreage	Fields
1372	wheat	35 $\frac{1}{2}$	Colverhousfeld, Kechenfeld, Grosfeld, Wellfeld.
	oats	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	Colverhousfeld, Kechenfeld, Whetefeld, Estfeld.
	dredge	37	Colverhousfeld, whetefeld, Estfeld, Schortecroft.
	pease	2	Coverhusfeld, Whetefeld.
	vetch	2	Estfeld.
Stonor			
1388	wheat	32	Millfeld
	oats	13	Millfeld, Parkfeld & others.
	barley	84	Parkfeld, Hakkefeld, Stomparysfeld, Welfeld, Bykkelo, Nether Bykkelo.
	pulse	10	diverse fiels.
Knebworth			
1404	wheat	52 $\frac{1}{2}$	Pipenhamscroft, Impofeld.
	barley	16	Impofeld.
	dredge	27 $\frac{1}{2}$	Haukesmerefeld (16a.), Pipenhamscroft (2a.) Betonscroft (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.).
	pease	32	field between Aquiletshurn and the church, furlong next the garden.
1405	wheat	52 $\frac{1}{2}$	furlong between Swalede and the way to Broadwater
	oats	55 $\frac{1}{2}$	Impofeld, Pipenhamscroft.
	barley	6	furlong north of church.
	dredge	54	Austyneshurn (1a.), Aquiletshurn : next the Newark (20a.), Impofeld & Betons (26a.).
	pease	22 $\frac{1}{2}$	Pipenhamscroft (12a.), Betonscroft (6a.), Impofeld & field north of church (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.).

(continued on the next page)

 Knebworth (continued)

Year	Crops	Acreage	Fields
1406	wheat	54	Haukesmerefeld, the field between the manor and Aquileteshurn.
	<u>oats</u>	65¼	Austyneshurn, Rowdell field, next Carterscroft.
	barley	18	Papenhamscroft, furlong north of the garden.
	dredge	38	Papenhamscroft, field west of the garden, field north of church, north part of Austneshurne.
	pease	11	Rowdell field.
1407	wheat	50½	Impofeld.
	<u>oats</u>	67	Haukesmerefeld, Papenhamsfeld, field between the way from Papenh. to the new ditch, field between Papenhamscroft and the garden.
	barley	20	Impofeld (10a.), Papenhamscroft (4a.), Haukesmerefeld (6a.).
	dredge	3¼	Haukesmerefeld (6a.), Papenhamsfield (8a.), field north of the garden (13a.).
	grey pease	16¼	Haukesmerefeld, Papenhamscroft, Aquileteshurn, field between the copse bush and the garden.
	green pease	1½	Papenhamscroft.

Note:- Common arable is underlined.

Sources:- West Wycombe, HARO Eccl. 2/159305-7; 159356-60; 1593562-5:
 Kings Langley, PRO SC6/866/18-19, 22, 26-7; Chenies, PRO SC6/761/4:
 Kinsbourne, Westm. 8807-11; Penn, BII Add. R.659-60; Stonor, PRO SC6/1248/16:
 Knebworth, HRO K103, 110, 112, 116.

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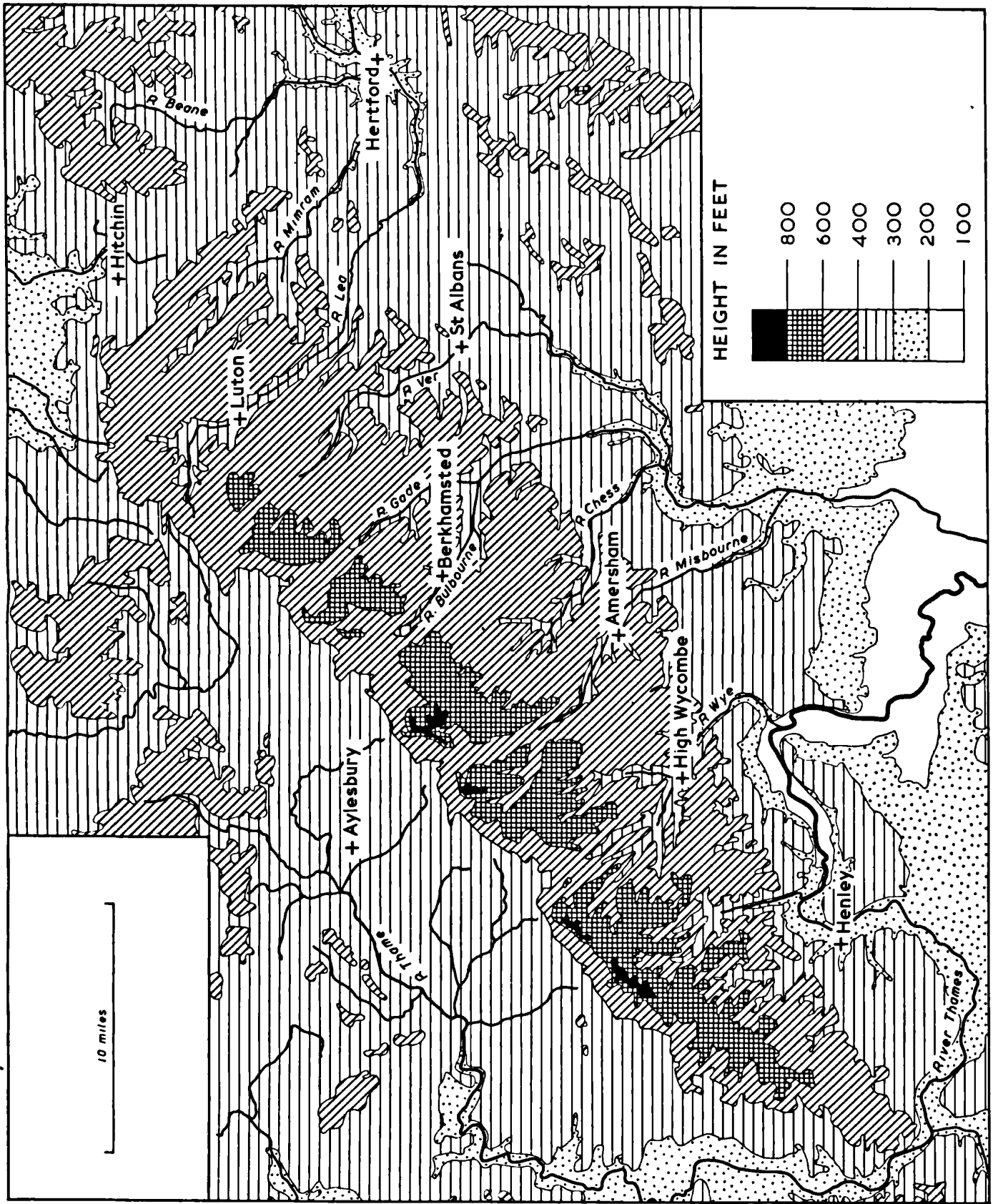


FIG. 46. The Chilterns - relief.