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Map p*iv*, Appendix 1:C

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Aubertin-Potter, N. A. R. (1994). *Social mobility, marriage and kinship among some gentry and yeoman families of Wantage Hundred, c. 1522 – c. 1670*. PhD Thesis. Oxford Brookes University.

**SOCIAL MOBILITY, MARRIAGE AND KINSHIP
AMONG SOME GENTRY AND YEOMAN FAMILIES OF
WANTAGE HUNDRED, c. 1522 - c. 1670**

NORMA ANN ROSE AUBERTIN-POTTER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Oxford Brookes
University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 1994

CONTAINS

PULLOUTS

**TEXT
BOUND INTO THE
SPINE**

ABSTRACT

The core of this thesis is the study of 12 gentry and yeoman families resident in Wantage Hundred between 1522 and 1670. Particular attention will be paid to the 4 main strategies of land acquisition, marriage, office-holding and education that could be adopted by each family group for advancement. In conjunction with this the pattern of social mobility within the families will be examined to determine what if any influence such strategies had on social status. The desire for any social elevation will be analysed to examine the notion that all yeoman were actively striving towards a gentry status, and that the gentry themselves were looking towards an aristocratic title. The actual title of 'gentleman' and 'yeoman' will be examined and their usage in this area analysed, and in particular the way the titles became accepted for merchants and tradesmen. The terms 'open' and 'closed' originally used to define nineteenth century parishes have been applied to Tudor and Stuart England. This hypothesis has been used to suggest that a resident gentry family could regulate the inflow of new families and could effectively 'close' the parish to outside influences and stifle any upward social movement by the local yeoman families. In a parish without a resident gentry family it has been suggested that the opposite is true. New families could freely enter the community, and, more importantly, a yeoman family could control the parish, and, through recognition of local influence gain in social status. This hypothesis and its applicability to Wantage Hundred, will be examined and an assessment made as to whether it had any discernible effect on patterns of social mobility in the area. It can be deduced that throughout the period acquisition and ownership of land through purchase or marriage remained the paramount means of social advancement. Even so all the families used all the suggested strategies of advancement at some time during the period. However, it is apparent that not all

families were actively striving for social advancement, particularly as differentiation between yeoman, merchant and gentleman became more blurred in the seventeenth century. In general it appears that yeoman families had greater opportunities for advancement and office-holding in open parishes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| List of Abbreviations | iii |
| Map of Berkshire Showing the Original Boundary | iv |
| Map of Major Routes in Wantage Hundred, 1500–1700 | v |
| Chapter 1 Introduction: Topography: Family Reconstruction: Sources and their Shortcomings | 1 |
| Chapter 2 Gentleman, Yeoman, Husbandman: Issues of Definition | 26 |
| Chapter 3 An Analysis of the Changing Fortunes and Inter-Relationships of Three Wantage Town Families, 1522–1663 | 56 |
| Chapter 4 Gentry and Yeoman Families in Childrey, Denchworth, West Hanney, East Hendred and Sparsholt, c. 1522–c.1670 | 89 |
| Chapter 5 Leading Gentry and Yeoman Families in the Four Parishes of Betterton, West Ginge, East Hanney and West Hendred, c.1522–c.1670 | 124 |
| Chapter 6 The ‘Open’ Parishes and the Development of their Social Structure, c.1522–c.1670 | 165 |
| Chapter 7 Wantage Hundred, c.1670-1750 | 194 |
| Chapter 8 Conclusion | 212 |
| Appendices: | |
| 1A An Act for Establishing the Town Lands of Wanting in the County of Bark. to the Relief of the Poor, Amendment of High Ways, and Maintaining of a School Master within the said Town | 232 |
| 1B Wantage Town Governors, 1598–1750 | 238 |
| 1C 1598 Seal of Wantage Town Governors | 242 |
| 1D Table Showing Population Totals for Wantage, Charlton and Grove Using Different Multipliers | 243 |
| 2A Chronological List of Wantage Churchwardens, 1564/5–1656/7 | 244 |
| 2B Name List of Wantage Churchwardens, 1564/5–1656/7 | 249 |
| 3A Chronological List of Childrey Churchwardens, 1567/8–1688/9 | 254 |
| 3B Name List of Childrey Churchwardens, 1567/8–1688/9 | 259 |
| 4 John Vincent (John Yate) to Sir Francis Engelfield (June 21) 1593 | 262 |
| Bibliography | 268 |
| Index and Abbreviations to the Family Charts | 286 |
| Family Charts | |

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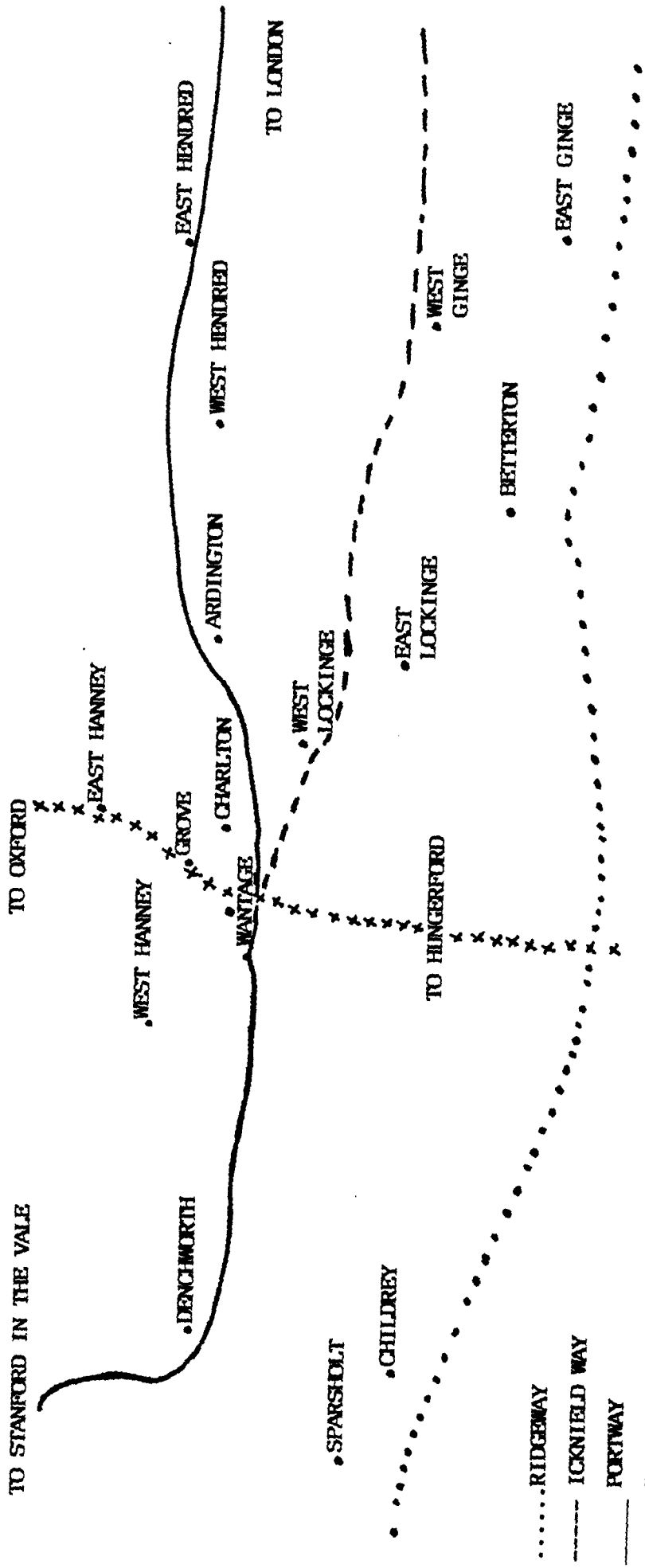
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--|---|
| BMI | Berkshire Marriage Index |
| BRO | Berkshire Record Office |
| CPCAM | <i>Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for the Advance of Money</i> |
| CPCC | <i>Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding</i> |
| CSP | Calendar of State Papers |
| DNB | <i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> |
| Foster, <i>Alumni Oxon., 1500–1714</i> | Foster, Joseph, <i>Alumni Oxoniensis: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500–1714</i> , 4 vols, Oxford: Parker & Co., 1891–1892 |
| Foster, <i>Alumni Oxon., 1715–1886</i> | Foster, Joseph, <i>Alumni Oxoniensis: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1715–1888</i> , 4 vols, London: Joseph Foster, 1887–1888 |
| Heralds, Berks | Rylands, W. Harry, ed., ‘The Four Visitations of Berkshire’, <i>Harleian Society</i> , 56–57 |
| L. & I. | Lists and Indexes |
| L. & P. | Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII. 21 vols, London: HMSO, 1862–1932 |
| NRA | National Register of Archives |
| OED | <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , 2nd ed. (1989) |
| ORO | Oxford Record Office |
| PRO | Public Record Office |
| Sheriffs | List of Sheriffs for England and Wales (PRO, List and Indexes, 9). London: HMSO, 1898 |
| VCH | Victoria County History |
| VCH, <i>Berks</i> | Victoria County History, <i>Berkshire</i> . 4 vols, ed. P. Ditchfield and William Page. London: St Catherine Press, 1906–1927 |
| VCH, <i>Wiltshire</i> | Victoria County History, <i>Wiltshire</i> , ed. Elizabeth Crittal. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970 |
| VCH, <i>Hampshire</i> | Victoria County History, <i>Hampshire</i> , ed. William Page. London: Archibald Constable, 1908. |



MAJOR ROUTES IN WANTAGE HUNDRED, 1500 - 1700

[Not drawn to scale]

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TOPOGRAPHY: FAMILY RECONSTRUCTION: SOURCES AND THEIR SHORTCOMINGS

1 THE THEORETICAL CONTEXT

The publication in 1941 of Tawney's *The Rise of the Gentry, 1558–1640* generated much debate and criticism.¹ Written in wartime the article suffered from Tawney's inability to check many of his sources and references. But despite this the article stimulated historians over the ensuing decades to use his theories as a yardstick and relate his findings to individual areas of the country. Briefly Tawney's thesis was that the gentry were rising in numbers and wealth at the expense of the aristocracy who were squandering their own wealth due to extravagant living and bad estate management. Some wealthy merchants and yeoman were in turn acquiring former monastic, crown and aristocratic land and establishing their own dynasties.

For a number of years this thesis went unchallenged but in 1953 Hugh Trevor-Roper published an article that severely criticised Tawney² particularly his argument that all gentry, merchants and yeomen were rising, and that all were actively engaged in commercial farming and purchasing estates. Trevor-Roper, in contrast, argued that the rising gentry were those who secured office through royal patronage and that the 'mere' gentry were in fact declining. In addition Trevor-Roper found it difficult to accept that all aristocracy were such bad managers, and lived above their income to such an extent that they were forced into bankruptcy. Fired by Trevor-Roper's criticism Tawney wrote a second article more reliant on statistical evidence and based on the number of manors in the possession of the aristocracy, gentry and yeoman

families.³ This basis was fragile since manors were not standard units, but highly varied in size, nature, and value.

On reflection both Tawney and Trevor-Roper guided future historians towards a line of thought not previously considered, and in so doing they have indirectly generated many important studies concentrating either on a countrywide or more localised area.

Christopher Clay, J.C.K. Cornwall and Keith Wrightson are among the foremost of those historians that have examined the theory from a countrywide viewpoint.⁴ Others such as Margaret Spufford have looked at the social order from a narrower platform.⁵ In all of these studies there is shown to be a growing awareness of local influences on the social structure, not only the political or religious aspects, but within the last twenty years the importance of the topography, farming methods and the location of trade or trading routes have all been demonstrated as powerful agents in developing local or regional characteristics of a community. Joan Thirsk, in particular, has been instrumental in encouraging and promoting such research.⁶

The Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester has, like Joan Thirsk, pioneered the study of local societies, strongly suggesting that England was composed of 'many identifiable but interlinked societies' each 'vulnerable to particularized external influences' such as roads, rivers and towns.⁷ Such influences could dictate the way an area developed, and whether the roads and rivers could isolate an community from its neighbours to such an extent that they evolved differently. In a survey of Berkshire wills between 1653–1710 Richard Phillips found a tendency towards a 'commercially farmed and almost agricultural northern economy'.⁸ The road and river system would have been vital for the transport of goods, in particular the leather industries would have relied on a developed network of roads to bring a ready supply of sheep and cattle to market and hence for slaughter for the meat and the skins.⁹ Whereas counties such as Gloucestershire, with an underdeveloped road system only concentrated on agriculture, the road and river

networks of Berkshire attracted service industries into the area. Thus, by the later seventeenth century:

Berkshire was more representative of a consumer society, in that it was producing and consuming a wide range of goods and services, not specialising in any to the point of extremes.¹⁰

With the close proximity of the three main trading routes, and the river Thames, the small acreage of Wantage Hundred is an ideal candidate for such an analysis, relating to transport facilities, markets and industries, and any influences placed by these on the social development, if any, of the 12 families chosen for study.

In the following chapters the old Berkshire region of Wantage Hundred will form the backdrop for a study of 12 resident families.¹¹ The families chosen for the survey were either in the area at the time of the 1522 Muster or had arrived before the end of the sixteenth-century. An attempt was also made to select representatives of each elite group: long established gentry families, such as the Eyston, Fettiplace and Hyde families; merchant—Yate; trade—Aldworth; younger sons of gentry - Ashcombe, Clarke and Keate; and finally yeoman families of 1522 - Collins, Coxhead, Doo and Greenaway. All the twelve families were firmly established in the area by the end of the sixteenth century, the three gentry families of Eyston, Fettiplace and Hyde were resident in 1522, as were the exceptional yeoman families of Collins, Coxhead, Doo and Greenaway. The Aldworth family of Wantage were also resident in 1522 and practising as tanners. The younger sons of gentry: Ashcombe, Clarke and Keate had settled in the region by the mid sixteenth century, attracted either by land or by kinship. While the merchant representative, the Yate family of Buckland had purchased land in the hundred and by 1523/4 the head of the family, John Yate, merchant of the Staple was resident in Lyford. The choice of these twelve families for an in-depth study was to some extent a process of self selection because of the availability of sufficient and appropriate documentary evidence. In varying degrees these twelve families, of differing social status, are an aid to forming some picture of the social structure of one area within a limited time-scale at an important period

when social values were changing under pressure from the increasing wealth of the merchants and yeoman families.

Chapter 2 examines the problem of the titles 'gentleman' and 'yeoman'; how these were assigned by contemporaries; and how they can be differentiated. Chapter 3 examines the evidence relating to the town of Wantage itself, how it influenced the surrounding area, and how the leading families controlled the local authority. The following three chapters, 4–6, will turn the attention to the rural parishes and hamlets, and chart their development from the early 1522 Muster to the end of the seventeenth century. Chapter 7 will attempt to define the social structure between 1670 and c. 1750, at a time when this region was being transformed into a society influenced more by the aristocracy based in London. The last chapter draws the evidence together from this one localised region and offers conclusions as to how its social development relates to the theories of Tawney and others. The four appendices will list Wantage Town Governors, Wantage Churchwardens, Childrey Churchwardens, and finally the text of an important letter of 1593 from John Yate of Lyford, a recusant exile, to Francis Englefield. The thesis concludes with 12 detailed family pedigrees which will illustrate more fully kinship and marriage alliances of the families surveyed in the text.

2 TOPOGRAPHY

Wantage Hundred is formed by a total of 16 parishes or hamlets, situated in the north of the original county of Berkshire. Ardington is over 700 feet above sea level, with East and West Hanney just over 200 feet above sea level. At the lower levels the soils are based on Kimmeridge and Gault Clays changing to chalk at the highest levels. The soil structure influences the land use, particularly water drainage. The lower Ardington sited on fine sandy loam and a loamy clay top-soil allows the water to drain away with ease. In contrast the combined clay top-soil and subsoil around Denchworth seriously restricts water drainage, and the area is prone to flooding. Leland who travelled though the region in 1542 commented that:

From Oxford to Hanney a 8. mils, a 5. mils by hilly ground well wooded and frutefull of corne, and other 3. mils by low levelle ground in sum parties marschy.¹²

The lower regions of clay, the slopes of the Downs consisting of greensand and the upper regions of chalk allowed varying types of agriculture to be practised. For this reason some of the parish boundaries are elongated to take full advantage of this variety. On the clay soils water meadows were developed for hay, the greensand was suitable for arable, while the upper slopes were used as pasture land. This form of tripartite land-use was common along the Downs and continued into the nineteenth century. A number of the surviving Wantage Hundred inventories show both arable and pasture land use by tenants and landowners.¹³

Communications are reliant on an efficient road system, Wantage Hundred itself was crossed by 3 ancient trackways leading to London, Bristol and the south coast.¹⁴ The Portway, which runs from Bristol, Swindon and Faringdon through Wantage towards London, lies in the Vale of the White Horse, bypassing Ardington, East and West Hendred, eventually crossing the Thames at Streatley. Running parallel is the Ickneild Way, in some parts the line of this has been lost, but it can still be traced leading from Wantage through the Lockinge parishes, bypassing the Hendred's and East and West Ginge. On the highest ground running along the heights of the Downs is the Ridgeway, the ancient trackway used by drovers taking flocks of sheep to the London markets, and therefore of vital importance to the sheep farmers of Wantage Hundred. One other route, now the A388, led from Oxford via Wantage to Hungerford and then to the south coast. In common with the Bristol/London route this was an important link with seaborne trade, the importance of which was recognised in 1771 when the road was turnpiked. Between 1787 and 1809 the part of the route that passed between Grove and East Hanney was improved by the straightening of the road.¹⁵

Carriers from Wantage in the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries made twice weekly runs to London, arriving in the capital on Thursdays and Fridays, the drivers lodging in the Mermaid in Carter Lane.¹⁶ The close vicinity of the market town of Wantage to the main trading routes was recognised in 1675 by John Ogilby who

signposted the town on his maps of roads leading from Bristol to London.¹⁷ The importance of maintaining the highways was recognised by local inhabitants and a number of bequests were made for the upkeep of the local roads, particularly in Wantage itself.¹⁸

The importance of the roads to the region is not disputed, but at the same time the river Thames was increasingly recognised as a major way of transporting heavy goods to the capital. The rapid growth of London was causing problems of food supply, which highlighted the importance of keeping the river open and in good repair. As early as 1535 a statute was passed prohibiting the dumping of rubbish into the river.¹⁹ By 1603 the growing importance of the river is shown when George Hyde and Edmund Fettiplace were appointed to a Berkshire Commission whose aim was to improve the navigation of the Thames to its source.²⁰ Daniel Defoe who travelled through Berkshire in the 1720s wrote of the regular conveyance of wood, barley and malt by barges to London. And barges returned laden with coal, salt, groceries and tobacco to sell in the local markets.²¹

Berkshire was rich in local markets providing perfect opportunities for trade, and between 1500–1693 a total of 13 separate markets were in operation.²² Wantage itself had been a market town since at least the thirteenth century. Nearby East Hendred was granted a weekly market by Henry V. Abingdon had been a market town since 1086, and possibly even earlier and James I established two new markets there in 1609, one concentrating on corn and malt, the second on wool. In East Ilsley, in the early seventeenth-century Sir Francis More, one of the original Wantage Town Governors, established a sheep market. This undermined the East Hendred market to such an extent that it had ceased trading by the mid-seventeenth century. Newbury became established as the main market for wool, yarn and cloth. Wantage market did not specialise as such. However, with the location in the town of a thriving tanning industry, along with a number of shoemaking families, it is safe to assume that leather goods formed a large part of the wares on display. The actual market-place of Wantage is characteristic of a small market town, in that it ‘consisted of a simple,

long, wide street, expanding in the middle and narrowing at either end'.²³ In the middle area the market wares would be displayed and the toll-gatherer would make his rounds. Market tolls were themselves 'an important source of revenue'²⁴ and would be 'farmed out to private people, or devoted to some charitable or civic purpose'.²⁵ Thomas Samwell, gentleman, was the Wantage toll-gatherer in the early years of the seventeenth century; he left a modest estate of £184 10s. 2d., of which £110 was 'One lease of 99 years of the Tolls borne of Wantage market'.²⁶

Much of Berkshire escaped the early enclosure movement, although by 1800 'Most of the open fields had been enclosed'.²⁷ But it was not until the nineteenth century that large-scale enclosing of the waste land in Wantage Hundred took place. By 1518 just 646 acres of land had been enclosed, comprising a miniscule 2.29% of the total 28,160 acres in the hundred,²⁸ although the actual figure may have been higher as private landholders enclosed odd acres of land on their estates. While further small scale enclosures, notably by John Clarke of Ardington, took place the majority of the region retained its open field farming system.

3 OPEN/CLOSED PARISHES

Historians have initiated various ways to describe the social structure of any given area and at any point of time. Some economic and social historians studying rural areas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have found it beneficial to label parishes as either 'open' or 'closed', although the terminology remains controversial particularly in relation to the earlier periods. Simply, in their analysis a 'closed' parish was one in which 'ownership of land and house accommodation was in the hands of one, or at the most, three proprietors who shared similar interests',²⁹ while an 'open' parish was one in which 'Ownership was diffuse, the proprietors of lands and cottages serving rather different interests'.³⁰ Sarah Banks in her study of the theory has suggested that in a 'closed' village the poor could be evicted and migration into the area was forbidden.³¹ More recently Brian Short has found that 'closed' parishes were completely dominated by one family who held the power to direct jobs, housing and

religious provision in any one community. In contrast in an 'open' parish such a powerful family was lacking and their social structure was completely different from that of a 'closed' parish.³²

The use of such labels for parishes or hamlets is slowly becoming accepted not only for the latter centuries but Joan Thirsk adapted them for use in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She has concluded that the lack of a ruling gentry family in the earlier centuries provided a situation whereby the inflow of poorer social groups was unchecked. The absence of a strong manorial power and social control allowed a build up of labour in these areas so that such parishes were able to provide cheap labour in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for neighbouring 'closed' parishes.³³ In a parish with a resident gentry family the reverse was true, strong manorial power limited inflow of new families, while the manorial court was strong and the lord of the manor controlled the community in all aspects of its social life. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries these parishes were starved of labour and were forced to look towards the more vibrant 'open' communities with their ready supply of labour.

David Underdown has also suggested that a resident gentry family in the seventeenth century held the parish, particularly its social structure,³⁴ under strict control. Such a parish was a 'closed' one and so developed differently from the more 'open' one not restricted by strong manorial control. Charles Phythian-Adams has also recognised the long-term application of this concept, advocating that 'Methodologically the "open"/"closed" dichotomy is most applicable from the late seventeenth century onwards'.³⁵ However, it must be recognised that during the early decades of the sixteenth century 'the resident squire or gentleman was comparatively rare in English villages'.³⁶ It was only by the early seventeenth century as the Herald and James I created more knights that more villages found themselves with a resident gentry family.

It is essential to recognise that the model varied over the centuries yet the principle remains the same, a resident gentry family could curtail social development amongst families of lesser status, while in a parish with no resident gentry

opportunities arose for the wealthier yeoman families to control the social evolution and local administration. Where a local yeoman family in a 'closed' area rose into a gentry status then a conflict of interests with the already long established gentry family was possible.

For the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries perhaps the labels 'gentry dominated' and 'yeoman dominated' are more appropriate, if clumsy. However it is slowly becoming recognised that such parishes were the forerunner of the later 'open' and 'closed' parishes and it does seem that such labels can be quite usefully attached to parishes even in the sixteenth century. Table 1 shows the position of the Wantage Hundred parishes and hamlets in 1522, with the added 'ecclesiastical' category where a parish was mainly or wholly in the possession of a monastic house.

Table 1

| Urban | Ecclesiastical | Closed | Open |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Wantage Charlton Grove | Betterton W. Ginge E. Hanney W. Hendred | Childrey Denchworth W. Hanney E. Hendred | Ardington E. Lockinge W. Lockinge W. Ginge Sparsholt |

The division of the hundred into these categories provides an excellent starting point from which to analyse the development among the yeoman and gentry families in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From this basis it should be possible to identify the differences in social opportunities between the urban parishes as opposed to their rural counterparts in the hundred. The redistribution of the monastic holdings will give useful insights as to the social opportunities provided by the availability of such land. At the same time it should be possible to test the hypotheses that 'open' parishes gave greater scope for upward mobility among yeoman than was possible in closed parishes.

4 FAMILY RECONSTRUCTION

Family reconstruction has long been recognised as one method by which mobility and kinships can be traced within a family group or area, additionally it can be an aid

towards defining social, economic and demographic patterns. In two early papers, 1965 and 1966, E. A. Wrigley advocated the importance of family reconstruction in determining social and in particular demographic influences on a single area.³⁷ In the later article Wrigley returns again to the importance of the demographic trends that can be analysed from a family reconstruction. In 1977 Alan Macfarlane laid great emphasis on the use of parish registers linked with other documents to draw up a family pedigree for all those living in one area. The result of such an exercise can determine migration patterns, size of families, social status of marriage partners, and age at both marriage and death.³⁸ In 1981 came publication of the results of research undertaken by the *Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure* into the parish registers of 400 parishes scattered throughout England.³⁹ Once again the importance of family reconstruction is repeated

By providing a skeletal history of every family in a community, which can be fleshed out with information drawn from a wide range of nominal sources, bearing on other aspects of family and community life, it is proving very useful to social and economic historians no less than to demographers.⁴⁰

All three historians, Wrigley, Schofield and Macfarlane, are concerned with the study of every family in one community. This thesis, while using their methods of reconstruction, will concentrate on 12 yeoman and gentry families. An attempt will be made to come to some conclusion as to their social and economic status. In addition the reconstructions will draw attention to status of marriage partners, and the distance travelled in such a pursuit of a partner. Finally the kinship patterns created through marriage will be assessed, as well as age at marriage and at death.

While there is no doubt of the growing acceptance amongst historians of the importance of family reconstruction the main documents for such a study, the parish registers, are themselves in many cases defective. Few registers date from 1538, many contain long gaps in the entries either due to damage from decay or fire, or to carelessness by the incumbent or churchwardens. These officers themselves have been found on many occasions to be guilty of failing to enter events in the register.

In Wantage Hundred, three registers, those of Wantage, East Hendred, and Denchworth date from 1538, Lockinge dates from 1546, Sparsholt from 1558. The most serious loss is that for Ardington, the first available date of any entry being 1607, between that date and 1674 only 17 years of entries have survived in the Bishop's transcripts. While the registers give the deceptive appearance of being a complete record of baptisms, marriage and burials, on examination many discrepancies are apparent once a family reconstruction has commenced. One such pitfall is that 'Many children died before being baptised. Some of these appear in the burial register without a corresponding baptismal entry'.⁴¹ Rarely is an entry found such as the one for Francis, son of Sir Edward Keate, who the register tells us was born, baptised and buried on the same day, 3 June 1661. Possibly the fact that he was born into a gentry family explains the helpful entry. The main problems lie with the carelessness of the incumbent or churchwarden who either forgot or was too lazy to keep the registers up to date, Wrigley as early as 1966 found that 'Registers are often not made up from day to day but periodically from rough notes or even from memory'.⁴² It was common for full details such as parents' names or even the name of the individual to be omitted. This is a major problem when a common Christian name such as John is continually used in any one family. For instance, John was common in the Collins family, Peter in the Greenaways. Where no other details are given it is virtually impossible to place the individual into a family unit.

It is common to find entries in the wrong register, for example, burials entered with marriages. The baptism of Peter Greenaway of East Ginge 30 January 1649 'by oversight was registered among those that are buried'. A forgotten entry was noted in West Hendred 1 February 1592, when the baptism of Jone, daughter of Thomas Egerley 'should have bin put about but it was forgotton by ye Minister'. Such entries are rare and in many cases it is only by evidence from wills that children are discovered, and where a will has not survived then the family reconstruction will be incomplete. Instances of missing children have been found for all 12 families surveyed, rather surprisingly more commonly for the gentry families, particularly the

Fettiplaces and the Hydes. The most obvious answer to this is the mobility of the family concerned as they travelled between estates and London town houses, events would have been recorded in the registers for the place of residence at the time.

Missing entries are also common in Roman Catholic or nonconformist families, particularly the Eyston family who maintained their allegiance to Rome despite continual persecution by the state. Nonconformity grew in Wantage from 1648 when a strong Baptist presence led by a member of the Keate family took root. Wrigley and Schofield have found it impossible to calculate with any certainty the number of such missing entries from the 400 parishes, but few Eyston entries appear in the East Hendred register, and from the late seventeenth century the entries relating to the Keate family drop in number.

Tracing a marriage entry can also be problematic when one of the partners travels outside his or her home parish for the ceremony. The task has been made somewhat easier by Marriage Indices compiled by local family history societies, the *Berkshire Marriage Index* on microfilm has proved invaluable in tracing marriages outside the hundred. For the gentry families entries in the Heralds' Visitations can fill in some gaps, but this is no help for the yeoman families who failed to rise into the gentry. A yeoman family was less likely to travel far afield in pursuit of a marriage partner, in contrast to that of the gentry, it is still apparent that marriage details are missing in some families.

In many cases the burial registers only give the Christian name of the deceased making it impossible (as for baptisms) to trace their place in a family unit. Sometimes the prefix 'the younger' or 'the elder' is added to the entry but this is not consistent. On a number of occasions a child has been found to have been given the same christian name as another child in the same family unit but for whom no burial entry has been found. Without documentary evidence it is dangerous to assume that the older child has died, in the case of a male child it may be that the family were attempting to ensure the continuity of the traditional name of the male heir. Again burial entries may be missing from nonconformist families, particularly after the

passing of the 1688 Toleration Act allowed greater freedom of choice and freedom from persecution. No pre-1750 registers for any Wantage chapels have survived. The importance of family reconstruction cannot be denied, but it is obvious that to rely solely on the parish registers is impossible and that further sources must be used in conjunction.

It is because of these deficiencies in the parish registers that they were not used to determine population figures. Instead the household numbers entered in the 1522 Muster Certificate and the 1663 Hearth Tax were turned to, but even here the lists are open to doubt as there is no concrete evidence to determine the efficiency of the scribes in noting every household. However, the high level of households entered do suggest that as complete a listing as possible can be found in them. In recent years other historians have also used both lists for other regions of the country to establish a population figure and in doing so have used various multipliers.⁴³ The evidence from the reconstruction of some of the Wantage Hundred families does suggest that the higher multipliers of 4.75 to 6.5 do produce a more correct population figure, surviving children totals averaging as they do between 4 and 6. In Appendix D can be seen an attempt to arrive at a population for Wantage town for 1522 and 1663 using various multipliers. The result is a wide variation between 162 to 351 in 1522, and 906 to 1963 in 1663. But as family reconstructions show four to six surviving children as being the norm, the higher figures of c.250 to 350 in 1522, and c.1350 to c.2000 in 1663 seem to present a truer picture. However, the usage of such multipliers does illustrate the difficulty faced in attempting any population total for the sixteenth and centuries.

5 OTHER PRIMARY SOURCES

It was Marc Bloch who wrote 'One of the most difficult tasks of the historian is that of assembling those documents which he considers necessary'.⁴⁴ This is true of the present study: a number of substantial documents have survived that are of paramount importance for the study of the region, but an equal number are not extant. Foremost

amongst the survivals is the 1522 muster return which has survived intact for the hundred.⁴⁵ This was a survey of lands and goods taken between Easter and Michaelmas 1522 with the intention of determining the number of able-bodied men aged over 16 and below 60, and their weapons who would be available to fight in a projected war with France. This military purpose soon became operational when one year later the returns were used to summon men and equipment for an expedition to France. Among the Wantage Hundred landowners summoned were Humphrey Foster, Lord Fitz Waren and Sir William Essex.⁴⁶

A second aim of the survey was to discover the true taxable wealth of the country, the value of both goods and lands were 'to be made on oath'.⁴⁷ The land value was based on the net annual income with the commissioners checking figures against the rent-rolls.⁴⁸ The definition of 'goods' has caused problems for historians, for instance do these figures include the house, farming equipment and such items as money, jewellery, household items and furnishing? Brooks and Heard in their study of the Berkshire returns are convinced that the goods valuation is based on the capital outlay of all property, a viewpoint shared by John Pound in his study of the 1522 return for Babergh Hundred in Suffolk.⁴⁹ More recently Lis Garnish who has also studied the Berkshire returns is convinced that the goods valuations are 'annual income based on the contemporary wage structure'.⁵⁰ This viewpoint was criticised in a later article by Simon Kemp.⁵¹ The one overriding criticism of Garnish's theory lies in the actual goods valuation recorded by the scribes. If, as she suggests these are annual income figures then the real wealth of individual families must have been very high, and out of proportion to the wage scale of that period. So far there has been no evidence for such wealth in any of the extant wills and inventories. It does seem more realistic that it is the capital outlay value not the annual income that was recorded by the scribe.

The 1522 document provides a valuable insight into the local community, and in particular the details of wealth and kinship are important. In many cases sons and daughters are listed, proving invaluable for early family reconstruction. Of the other

sixteenth-century musters only that for 1569 has survived, and it is disappointing for the sparseness of the information it gives, because while it includes all the parishes and hamlets only a few names are listed with no indication of wealth, either in goods or land.⁵²

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century one document was produced that compares with the 1522 muster in importance. The 1663 Hearth Tax does not list the entire households of a parish but for those that are entered it gives an important indication as to their wealth. For Denchworth a 1664 return has survived in place of a 1663 one.⁵³ The hearth tax was levied between 1662 and 1689 twice a year on Lady Day (25 March) and Michaelmas Day (29 September). For every hearth the government extracted one shilling, householders whose wealth did not exceed 20 shillings annually were exempt, but the collectors of the tax usually added a list of those exempt providing valuable evidence of poorer branches of wealthy yeoman and gentry families.⁵⁴ For Wantage itself the returns are divided into streets which is invaluable for showing the residents of each area, including those who lived in High Town or the Market Place at the core of the town and who were, therefore, socially more important than those who lived on the outskirts. To use the Hearth Tax by itself as a means of defining wealth is problematic, only if an individual listed died immediately afterwards and the inventory has survived is it possible to see how closely the two are related. But it is true to say 'that hearth accountability was an observable and real, if crude, social and economic discriminator'.⁵⁵

Margaret Spufford, who has undertaken a study of the Cambridgeshire Hearth Tax and compared the returns with information from inventories, has concluded that the number of hearths do not give an accurate picture of the number of actual rooms in any one residence. In her survey a one-hearth dwelling may have up to 6 rooms, a two hearth as many as 10 rooms, with up to 11 rooms in a three-hearth dwelling. In common with Chris Husbands, Spufford concluded that the hearth tax:

can also be used as a social guide in the sense that all persons with three or more hearths were almost certain to be yeoman or extremely prosperous craftsmen of a *similiar status*.⁵⁶

Throughout the period 1524/5 to 1640/1 the returns of some of the lay subsidies have survived. Unfortunately only a few scattered references to Wantage Hundred are still readable in the 1524/5 return rendering it impossible to read in conjunction with the 1522 muster.⁵⁷ Nine other returns have survived, but some are difficult to read due to the deterioration of the paper, caused in the main by the folding of the document resulting in holes and tears. Only the 1628 Subsidy lists the entire hundred and is comparatively easy to decipher.⁵⁸ Table 2 lists the 9 returns showing the parishes and hamlets listed in each.

Table 2⁵⁹

| | 1549/50 | 1550/51 | 1559/60 | 1592/93 | 1598/99 | 1603/4 | 1623/24 | 1628 | 1640/41 |
|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|------|---------|
| Wantage | * | * | * | * | | | * | * | * |
| Grove | * | * | * | | | | | * | |
| Charlton | * | * | * | | | | | * | |
| E. Hendred | | | | | * | * | | * | * |
| W. Hendred | | | | | * | * | | | |
| Denchworth | | | | | * | | | | |
| Ardington | | | | | * | * | | * | * |
| W. Lockinge | | | | | * | * | | * | |
| E. Lockinge | | | | | | | | * | * |
| Ginge(E&W) | | | | | | * | | * | * |
| Childrey | | | | | | | | * | * |
| Sparsholt | | | | | | | | * | * |
| Betterton | | | | | | | | * | * |
| E. Hanney | | | | | | | | * | |
| W. Hanney | | | | | | | | * | |

The subsidies themselves were a tax on land and moveable goods ranging from 4d to one shilling in the pound for land valued at 20 shillings and over during the reign of Henry VIII, rising to 4 shillings in the pound during the reign of Philip and Mary. Goods valuations ranged from 6d in the pound on goods valued between £2–£20, and 1 shilling for £20 plus valuations. Under Philip and Mary this was adjusted and goods valued at £3 and over were taxed at 2s 8d in the pound.⁶⁰ One drawback of the subsidies in highlighting freeholders is that where an individual owned goods above the £3 guideline then he or she was taxed on this not on their land. The returns

are therefore not a reliable source for tracing landholders, but they do give some indication as to wealth and families then resident in any one region.

It is important to remember that an individual's wealth would have been affected by the spiralling inflation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Between 1500–1640 an overall inflation rate of some 600% ran parallel with an increase in population. This makes it difficult to assess and compare family wealth over this period. And while the Phelps Brown and Hopkins indices provide vital evidence they can only be used as a guideline as they concentrate on southern England and do not allow for regional variations.⁶¹ With the levelling off of the population growth after the mid-seventeenth century, the slowing down in the demand for food caused a corresponding decline in the inflation rate. As a result landowners could no longer sell goods at inflated prices and pay low wages to its labour force. To combat this, landowners were forced to be more efficient in the management of their estates and incorporate improved farming methods. Many of the lesser gentry and yeoman were unable to do this, either because of lack of money or a lack of ability. As a consequence many were forced to sell and their place was taken by wealthier and more intelligent individuals who were establishing much larger estates in the region.⁶² The following study will show how the 12 local families fared under such circumstances.

Of importance for the study of the rise and fall of a family are the Heralds' Visitations; for Berkshire these are available for the years 1532, 1566, 1623 and 1665/6.⁶³ The 1665/6 return is the most complete and thus illustrates quite clearly the rise of some yeoman families into gentility. The evidence for family descent was provided by the head of the family who in many cases left entries blank due to his ignorance of his own pedigree. John Collins of Betterton in a letter to Elias Ashmole dated 16 June 1666 moaned that due to 'The carelessness of mens keeping of antient writings...we are ignorant of our descent'.⁶⁴

The surviving wills and inventories give a valuable insight into immediate kinship, land holdings and material wealth. The wills themselves can be of immense importance for compiling a family pedigree because they do list children or near kin

for which no other evidence is available. It is important to remember that the inventories only concentrate on goods and chattels, and therefore they are not 'a reliable guide to the total wealth of any individual, nor can they be used for comparative analysis of relative wealth'.⁶⁵ The problem lies in the way the appraisers undertook the inventory, numerous items were omitted such as clothes, rooms if occupied by other family members, and rarely do they give the amount of money found in the deceased's purse. It is possible that some property was not listed due to an informal arrangement amongst the appraisers themselves. And there was no 'legal compulsion on appraisers to name the rooms'.⁶⁶ Moore found in his survey of Gloucestershire inventories that a second-hand valuation was placed on furniture, household utensils and farm equipment,⁶⁷ and it is possible that this method was used by the Wantage Hundred appraisers. In the case of crops, both harvested and those still in the ground, and for livestock it appears that these were assessed at current market prices. Despite these drawbacks the wills and inventories can be used to give some indication as to wealth and social standing.

6 MISCELLANEOUS CONTEMPORARY SOURCES

A number of single documents survive which have filled in gaps as to wealth and standing in the 12 families. Some details of Wantage town land transactions can be found amongst the papers of the Dean and Chapter of Windsor housed at Windsor Castle. For Wantage itself few documents have survived if indeed they ever existed, Nigel Goose is of the opinion that the small market town 'left fewer records' compared with the larger towns such as Abingdon and Reading.⁶⁸ As an illustration of minor office-holding in Wantage the Churchwardens' Account Book, 1564/5–1656/7 has survived. An analysis of the families that held the office shows that a small number held the post continually.⁶⁹ It also shows that during the turbulent years of the Civil War and the Commonwealth 4 held the post continuously: William Aldworth, John Wedon, Thomas Buckle and William Tull.

Another document still extant for the town is the Bailiffs' Accounts of the Governors of Wantage Town Lands, 1598–1644.⁷⁰ Of greater importance than the churchwardens, the Governors allocated the distribution of monetary bequests to the poor, and administered the land left by testators for the same purpose. The Governors were also responsible for the appointment and payment of a school teacher for the school situated in the church-yard, and for the upkeep of the building.

For the county the 1625 list of Privy Seal Loans is extant, only 25 names are listed, but 8 of those come from Wantage Hundred.⁷¹ The 1630 Return of the Berkshire Knighthood Commission suffers from numerous crossings out but some of the names are still legible helping to identify members of the gentry in the hundred.⁷² The 1632 Berkshire Knighthood Fines lists 13 names associated with Wantage Hundred.⁷³

The reports of the Chancery and Exchequer proceedings throw light on the arguments over payments of tithes and land leasing, and over internal family squabbles. The Greenaway family were in conflict in the 1580s and again in the early seventeenth century over money.⁷⁴ The Aldworth family contested a marriage dowry with the Lissat family in the 1590s.⁷⁵ The Ashcombe family were in dispute with each other in 1683.⁷⁶ In the latter years of the seventeenth century the yeoman Coxhead family in two instances were not afraid to cite the gentry Ashcombe in a dispute over wages.⁷⁷ Local families continually appeared as witnesses in Exchequer cases. In 1656 John Collins, gentleman of Betterton, appeared as a witness in a dispute over rents between William Page and John Wilson.⁷⁸ In 1682/3 Richard Coxhead, yeoman was a witness for the Lyford Yate family in a dispute with Sir Robert Sawyer over land in Marcham.⁷⁹ The outcome of all of these cases is unknown, but they do show a growing resort to the law in settling disputes between both kin and neighbours, and the growing confidence of yeoman families to cite their gentry neighbours in a court of law.

The Minute Book of Courts held by Berkshire Commission for Charitable Uses, 1657–1674⁸⁰ lists the 'worthy' men appointed as commissioners, and the 12 jurors,

for each of the courts, held either at Wantage, Newbury or Faringdon. Invariably the commissioners were drawn from gentry stock, while the jurors were prominent yeomen from the locality. In some instances the jurors lists illustrate that members travelled to other towns to serve, on a number of occasions Thomas Clement travelled to both Newbury and Faringdon.

On the debit side a number of important documents have not survived. Most seriously only isolated estate documents and manorial records are still extant. This is true of both the Fettiplace and Hyde families. The Eyston family documents are now housed at Mapledurham House and the present head of the family is reluctant to allow researchers access, but transcripts have been produced by the National Register of Archives.⁸¹ For the Clarke family some estate papers of Sir Edward Clarke are housed in the Berkshire Record Office, but no documents have survived for the Aldworth family, nor for any of the yeoman families.

Of the 1641 Protestantism Returns only that for Lyford is still extant, but it does illustrate that 2 members of the prominent catholic Yate family refused to sign the declaration.⁸² The 1678 Poll Tax Returns have not survived but a list is still extant of the collectors for each hundred, giving an indication of the importance of individuals in their local area.⁸³ For the eighteenth century the two printed poll books for 1717 and 1768 list individuals but fail to indicate for whom they voted. No Land Tax returns for the hundred are available. Of the 1695 Association Oath Rolls only that for Wantage itself has survived. This lists some 400 people, the majority of whom have signed their own name, probably an indication of rising literacy.⁸⁴ None of the Window Tax returns have survived, which in common with the Hearth Tax would have given some indication as to size of property. On a personal note no diaries or private letters between kin have been traced.

The documents that have survived can help to piece together a picture of each of the 12 families, their status, their kinship and friendship links, their local and county interests and involvements in administration and lastly their wealth. Over a period of time these documents make it possible to chart the rise and/or fall of each family.

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- 72 PRO. SP16/180/24.
- 73 PRO. E407/35.
- 74 PRO. C3/210/31; PRO. C2/James I/G13/40.
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Chapter 2

GENTLEMAN, YEOMAN, HUSBANDMAN: ISSUES OF DEFINITION

Before beginning a detailed analysis of the social and economic inter-relationships of the 12 selected gentry and yeoman families it is essential to establish a working definition of 'gentleman' and 'yeoman'. This is not an easy task and is made even harder by the inability of Tudor and Stuart commentators to arrive at definitive descriptions. Many books were written on the subject during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and even the great Renaissance thinker Erasmus (?1466-1536) struggled with the problem. To the Tudor analyst the world had a strict order, each element being fixed into its allocated place in the universe. There was a Great Chain of Being stretching down from the hand of God to the tiniest particle of matter, each neatly interlocked together. To both the medieval and early modern man all living things had their own degree or estate. If this was to fail then 'Take but degree away, untune that string,/And hark, what discord follows' wrote Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida* echoing a common sentiment of his time.¹

It is therefore ironic that at this time the concept of a strict social hierarchy was under attack and was beginning to crumble under the increasing challenge from wealthy lawyers and merchants who were purchasing estates and calling themselves gentry. This was apparently supported by Erasmus who was one of the first to advocate ability as opposed to wealth in determining the social position of any individual. More important than wealth was 'wisdom, learning, and moral excellence - possibilities at any social level - which should be the sole considerations'.² Laura Stevenson in a survey of merchants in Elizabethan literature found that in the majority of cases wealthy fictional merchants were given the title of gentlemen. The writers of popular literature studied by Stevenson recognised that the wealth of the merchant

enabled them to be elected to civic office, which then put them on a par with the long-established gentry who until then had had a monopoly on local office.³

Perhaps because the Tudor and Stuart commentators feared the breakdown of the social order they were compelled to re-examine their world and attempt to produce a definitive category of gentleman and yeoman and their relationship to each other. This may explain the large number of such treatises written during these two centuries. The problem had been recognised as early as 1413 by an Act of Parliament which decreed that a man's title should be entered in any legal document.⁴ Tudor and Stuart legislators continued this attempt at defining status by passing numerous Acts enforcing individuals to wear only garments and cloths suitable for their social state; a secondary aim was to protect the English cloth industry by reducing the demand for imported textiles. But the main concern was to put an end to the practice of the lower social groups purchasing the costly robes of the richer groups and thereby provoking 'many of them to rob and to do extortion and other unlawful deeds to maintain thereby their costly array'.⁵ As may be expected the Acts were impossible to enforce but they did highlight to contemporaries the differences between a gentleman and a yeoman.

Of the many contemporary commentators the two whose works have proved to be the most influential and the most quoted are William Harrison (1535-1593) and Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577). The *De Republica Anglorum* of Sir Thomas Smith was written between 1562 and 1565 when he was an ambassador in France, but was not printed until 1583. Harrison's *Description of England* was first printed in 1577, a second edition appeared in 1587 when it incorporated many ideas taken from Smith's work.⁶ Both Harrison and Smith divided the social order into four degrees or estates. For Harrison gentlemen formed the first 'sort' which in turn was divided into two groups, the 'greater part' being princes, dukes, earls, viscounts and barons; the second group comprising knights, esquires and gentlemen.⁷ The titles of knights and esquires were of military origin, while 'gentleman be those whom their race and blood, or at least their virtues, do make noble and known'.⁸ More importantly a gentleman is one

who 'can live without manual labour and thereto is able and will bear the port, charge and countenance of a gentleman'.⁹ Writing at the end of the sixteenth century Harrison must have been aware of the wealthy merchants and their increasing claim to gentry status, and in his 'second sort' he provides for these families. His 'second sort' is made up with 'citizens and burgesses' which includes merchants who 'often change estate with gentlemen, as gentlemen do with them'.¹⁰ Harrison's 'third sort' are yeoman, these are free-men who 'dispend of their own free land in yearly revenue to the sum of 40s. sterling'.¹¹ Yeomen 'commonly live wealthily, keep good houses, and travil to get riches',¹² and in gaining great wealth can buy the homes of impoverished gentlemen, send their sons to university and then to the Inns of Court and can live without labour. Yeoman were little different from gentry. Harrison's 'fourth sort' are the poorer sections of society, labourers, husbandman, and tradesman such as tailors and shoemakers but, despite their lowly position, in rural areas these could become churchwardens and constables.¹³ Importantly Harrison throughout his work, suggests that individuals could move either up or down on the social scale.

Smith's viewpoint is similar to Harrison, he also divides society into 'four sorts'. His first grouping is identical to Harrison containing as it does knights and esquires, these are those 'whom their blood and race doth make noble and knowne'.¹⁴ He was scornful of gentlemen for 'they be made good cheape in England',¹⁵ anyone who could 'live idly and without manual labour'¹⁶ was entitled to be known as a gentleman, particularly if he could afford to purchase a coat of arms. Citizens and burgesses form Smith's second sort, these are free men who serve in administrative posts in the cities and towns. Yeoman are the third sort and, in common with Harrison, Smith suggested that they were men who possessed free land valued at 40 shillings annually. These 'commonly live welthile, keep good houses',¹⁷ send their sons to university to study law and by their diligence buy the lands of bankrupt gentlemen enabling the yeoman family to 'make their said sonnes by those meanes gentleman'.¹⁸ As can be seen there is little difference between Harrison and Smith, and this continues with the fourth sort of Smith which is comprised of husbandman,

day-labourers, copyholders, retailers and merchants that have no freehold land. They are a group that is to be ruled, but in rural areas can hold local parish offices such as churchwarden and constable.

While Harrison and Smith are the most quoted of Elizabethan commentators due to their detailed analysis, other writers did comment on the social order of the period. The status of the rich merchant and their claim to gentility was dealt with as early as c.1525 in a play by John Rastell, although this has been attributed on a number of occasions to John Heywood. The work has the long descriptive title of *Gentylnes and Nobylyte, A Dialogue Between the Marchaunt, The Knyght and the Plowman Dysputyng Who Is A Verey Gentylman and Who is a Noble Man*.¹⁹ The crux of the play is formed around the merchant who has amassed great riches and has claimed the title of gentleman. This is countered by the knight who declares that the father of the merchant was a blacksmith, while in contrast the knight is descended from a lineage stretching back 500 years. The knight gives his opinion of a gentleman 'I call them gentylnes that be/Born to grete landys by inherytaunce'.²⁰ The merchant counters this by stating that his ancestors were just as talented as those of the knight, but here the knight replies that his ancestors fought on the battlefield in positions of command, while the merchant's were mere foot soldiers. This section of the play concludes with the final judgement of the knight

Therefore consydering my grete lynage
My blode, my noble byrth and parentage,
Thou art not able to compare with me
Nother in gentylnes nor in nobylyte.²¹

This particular argument was similar to that of both Harrison and Smith who were agreed that a knight was of higher standing than a gentleman because he could trace his line back further.

The problem of merchants purchasing land was addressed by Thomas Cromwell who in the mid-sixteenth century criticised merchants and craftsmen who purchased landed estates. Instead they should 'employ their goods in traffic and not in purchasing lands'.²² By the end of the sixteenth century many merchants were in a

position to purchase a coat of arms and consolidate their claim to gentility. By the 1640s merchants who became gentry were accepted to such an extent that in 1642 William Bird could write that sons of gentry could be apprenticed to a trade and not lose their gentility.²³ By 1665 Edward Waterhouse could recommend that a gentleman should become actively engaged in gainful employment for 'income are great rises and enlargements to a Family'.²⁴

However there is some evidence that even with the approval of the Heralds gentry status could be denied by contemporaries. In 1542 in a court case a Richard Barker insisted that he was a gentleman, not only did his neighbours look upon him as a gentleman but he had a coat of arms from the Heralds, and he had married into a established gentry family - the sister of Sir William Luce. Despite this the jury ignored his pleas, declaring that his marriage 'did not affect his status', that his father was a 'maker of treen dishes', and his kin were of the 'common poor sort' and, finally, that his wealth was not sufficient to support him as a gentleman.²⁵ It was an important point that his marriage to a woman of a higher status did not affect his own status and it is repeated in Ferne's *The Blazon of Gentry* (1586) but in a reverse situation should a man marry beneath him then he did not lose his higher status, but would 'eeke a dishonor to the whole house from which he is descended'.²⁶ In 1717 this observation still held true, in a treatise on the management of estates a G. Jacob wrote:

A Queen or other Person of Quality looses not her Title by marrying a private Gentleman but the Gentleman acquires no new Title thereby, though in the contrary Case a woman does.²⁷

The issue was by no means clear-cut. The Heralds granted arms to 700 families between 1550 and 1600, the majority of the new families entered on their ability to pay the fee, not on their lineage. In 1604 Sir Thomas Ridley, the Rouge Croix Pursuivant was moved to write that a gentleman is one 'who is commonly taken and reputed as suche'.²⁸ However by the late seventeenth century, as with the 1542 Barker case, the acceptance of a family by the Heralds was looked upon with suspicion. False pedigrees were rife in the sixteenth century; 'the age of Elizabeth I has a specially bad name for such activities'.²⁹ As late as the end of the seventeenth century Warden

Thomas Jeames of All Souls College, Oxford stated that the college did not elect Fellows as Founders Kin on the evidence of one of the Heralds alone. One claimant to a Fellowship had admitted to the college that the Heralds had told him that if the pedigree they had drawn up to present to the college as evidence of the descent from Henry Chichele 'would not serve he would give him one that should'.³⁰

While the case of merchants drew the attention of some writers, it was the gentleman and yeoman groups that were looked at in more detail. William Lambarde writing of Kent society c. 1570, described gentry as those that govern, and the yeomanry as those that are governed.³¹ Thomas Wilson, the younger son of a gentry family, looked at the situation at the turn of the century in 1600. For him knights were those that had been knighted for services to the country and had an annual income of £1000 to £2000. Esquires were descended from knights and were gentlemen in their own right, both groups were in the forefront of county administration. Wilson was a bitter younger son, and he decries the situation for such as himself, who have to rely on the elder brother for help. But in time the younger brother, if he turns himself to a lucrative trade such as 'letters or to armes', can set himself up in his own estate with possibly greater wealth than the elder brother had who inherited the family land.³² Wilson has only scorn for the yeoman, particularly the younger son who must 'skipp into his velvet breches and silken dublett' and after entering the Inns of Court call themselves gentleman.³³ He is equally bitter about yeoman marrying into the gentry families.³⁴ His bitterness was possibly generated by himself being a younger son and having to make his own way in the world, but his work is interesting for the viewpoint it expresses of the rise of the yeoman families and the dissatisfaction it aroused amongst the gentry.

In 1630 Thomas Westcote following the pattern set by Harrison and Smith, divided the inhabitants of Devon into four 'degrees'. The first degree comprised nobility and gentlemen, their 'excellent merits' distinguishing them 'from the common and vulgar sort'.³⁵ This 'degree' is descended from 'ancient and worthy parentage',³⁶ which the ability to travel and education placed them above the other

degrees. Westcote places the yeoman and husbandman together in his second 'degree', many of whom are 'gentleman's equals by estate'.³⁷ They are 'freeholders, farmers, men employed in agriculture, tilling and manuring of land ... they are free, by law, nature and disposition'.³⁸ The third degree are merchants who can be extremely wealthy and are composed of younger sons of esquires and gentlemen, 'who by means of their travel and transmigration, are very well qualified, apt, and fit to manage great and high offices in the republic'.³⁹ The fourth degree are labourers, who hire themselves out to the farms and tin works.⁴⁰ Westcote is the only known Tudor and Stuart commentator to place both yeoman and husbandman in the same grouping, nor does he suggest that yeomen might develop into gentry although their wealth equals that of gentry families.

Thomas Fuller writing in 1642 was yet one more commentator who examined the make-up of social groups, but who made no attempt to place them in any hierarchical order. A gentleman was one descended from an 'ancient and worshipful parentage',⁴¹ but if this is lacking then 'he hath endeavoured by his own deserts to ennoble himself'.⁴² The gentleman attends university and the Inns of Court for 'law will help him to keep his own',⁴³ and he serves as a Justice of the Peace and is likely to be elected as a Member of Parliament. Again Fuller is echoing other contemporary commentators by suggesting that an individual can rise by his own efforts, a long and ancient lineage was not strictly necessary. To Fuller a yeoman was a gentleman in waiting 'whom the next age may see refined'.⁴⁴ He has silver in his pocket and wears good clothes but more importantly, 'He improveth his land to a double value by his good husbandry',⁴⁵ and he is friendly with his gentry neighbours. Fuller's account does emphasise that by the mid seventeenth century, and at a time of the ravages of the Civil War, a gentleman family could be descended from a yeoman and have attained the higher status by hard work and the careful husbanding of their wealth. It was important that the gentry learnt the law, if only to administer their estates more efficiently and to guard against any person trying to deprive them of their land. The

yeoman could live like the gentry by diligent regulation of his land, and with the growth of his wealth he could lay claim to gentry status. Evidence suggests that

A yeoman might grow richer than many of his neighbours among the gentry yet not wish to assimilate his way of life or his status to theirs, though if the wealth lasted his son or grandson would usually do so.⁴⁶

At the end of the seventeenth century Gregory King set himself the task of examining in detail the social condition of England.⁴⁷ In a calculation on the income and expenditure of families King placed gentlemen in sixth position after Temporal and Spiritual Lords, Baronets, Knights and Esquires and before 'persons in offices'. King calculated that there were 12,000 gentlemen families resident in the country, and 3,000 esquires and 600 knights. He did not specify the yeoman grouping but they are probably represented in his 'freeholders' categories a long way down the list in 14th and 15th place, below merchants, lawyers and clergymen. The yearly income of gentlemen King estimated at £35 per head, with freeholders at £10 and £12 per head. King's analysis, although criticised by contemporaries, became the yardstick for the study of the eighteenth century and its social conflicts. But for the purposes of this current study King's analysis does give one more interpretation of the social hierarchy of the period. He separates gentlemen from knights and esquires following the pattern set by earlier commentators. King also separates gentry from people holding office, suggesting that in his view office-holding was not necessarily a prerequisite of the gentry.

Analysis of the Tudor and Stuart social commentators does highlight a lack of consensus amongst them as to the hierarchy of gentry, yeoman and husbandman. This problem was made more difficult by the ambivalent status of the wealthy merchant, whose purchase of land and a coat of arms suggested that he was a gentleman. A shift of opinion to recognise the merchant becomes clearer by the end of the sixteenth century when they were establishing county bases in increasing numbers. For most commentators the boundary between the wealthy yeoman and the gentleman was virtually non-existent. The wealthy yeoman dressed, entertained on a scale similar to the gentry, sent their sons to university and later to the Inns of Court. These same sons

were to become recognised as gentry. In common with the merchant they purchased arms and lived as gentry.

In the twentieth century the debate became alive again when in 1941 R. H. Tawney published his article on the rise of the gentry.⁴⁸ The main thrust of his argument was that the peerage was in decline due mainly to extravagant living, bad management of estates and 'political ineptitude'.⁴⁹ The gentry in contrast were well versed in the management of their land; many of them had been in business before the purchase of country estates. The combination of good estate management and the commercialisation of farming placed the gentry in a strong position in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Moreover, in contrast to the ostentatious peerage, instead of purchasing a large London residence the gentleman re-invested his wealth back into the estate. It was as Tawney commented a period of 'changing composition of the upper strata of the social pyramid'.⁵⁰

Tawney set out with a theory that the aristocracy were declining, the gentry and the wealthier yeoman were rising and becoming all-powerful in their own counties. He made no concession to those aristocracy who were not in decline nor to those gentry who were not climbing the social ladder for various reasons. In 1953 Trevor-Roper eventually published his scathing reply to Tawney, his main criticism being that Tawney had avoided any definition of gentlemen, and this Trevor-Roper contended was fundamental to the whole question of the rise of the gentry. It was office-holding, not land alone as suggested by Tawney, that could propel a family up the social ladder. The requisite of office-holding was education,⁵¹ this, coupled with the holding of a public office were the two generators of social advancement. Those families that relied on land alone would only be called 'mere gentry'⁵² of no real importance except perhaps in their own locality. The rising gentry were those with an office which could bring wealth and recognition from their peers.

Since the 1950s these two articles have generated much debate and given rise to many studies of both gentry and yeoman. Whereas the two original arguments looked at the country as a whole many recent historians have concentrated on regions or

counties in an attempt to define the rise, if any, of the gentry and yeoman, and whether the phenomenon could be related to local variations. Wrightson found that a gentleman or yeoman could be given varying descriptions depending on the region, titles are 'modified in meaning between places and over time'.⁵³ Tudor and Stuart England, was, Wrightson concluded, 'a society which was highly differentiated but which was far from uniform, rigid, or unchanging in its pattern of inequality'.⁵⁴ This view was echoed by David Cressy in his own survey of the social order.⁵⁵

In recent years it has been agreed almost universally amongst English historians that land was an important element in the definition of gentry. The ownership of land particularly near to markets could provide great wealth. The prosperous Kent gentry owed their wealth to the ever demanding London market, in contrast the Yorkshire gentry, more isolated were poorer in comparison.⁵⁶ The gentry of Lincolnshire were akin to the Kentish gentry in that they derived their wealth from the ownership of land and the readily accessible markets.⁵⁷ It was the acquisition of land that was soon recognised as the cornerstone of the gentry status by those aspiring to be gentlemen. Estate 'did not of itself endow a man with gentility' but it could enable his family to merge into the local gentry putting himself on a level with established gentry families into which he could marry his children and could enable him to become involved in local affairs.⁵⁸ While the original purchaser might not himself attain the gentleman title his eldest son was nearly always assured of such a distinction.

It has been recognised that within the main gentry description varying figures of wealth dictate that the group is sub-divided into 'upper', 'middling' or 'lower/parish' gentry. Cornwall taking the 1522 Muster returns as his starting point, divided personal wealth ratings into 7 social groups. Of these the three highest are of relevance to this study. Those with £20-£39 were minor gentry, yeoman and lesser merchants. Gentry, higher yeoman and provincial merchants had an income of £40-£99, while those with £100 plus were knights, leading gentry and merchants in overseas trade. But nowhere does Cornwall elaborate on his titles and attempt a definition of any group.⁵⁹ These groupings are a development from an earlier article in which he had given gentry a

much lower income; 'we cannot in general go far astray, if we define a gentleman as a landowner worth usually £10 a year or more'.⁶⁰ Clay split his gentry into 'larger', those with numerous properties acquired by purchase or inheritance, 'middling' gentry who only possessed a couple of manors, and the smaller parish gentry with one or two farms.⁶¹ It was the larger gentry who practised large scale commercial farming, such as the Fermour and Townsend families, who each had between 10,000 to 20,000 sheep on their estates by the mid-sixteenth century.⁶² For Clay there was a fourth classification, 'pseudo-gentry', who were families who only purchased a country estate 'within easy reach of town to provide themselves with and their families with access to rural amenities'.⁶³ Here, Clay is qualifying Everitt's original definition of landless gentry by suggesting that they bought land only as a social amenity. Their interest in the newly acquired estate and the local region is negligible and comparable today with the purchase of a country cottage to use as a weekend retreat. Wrightson in a study of Yorkshire found that the 'upper' gentry of the seventeenth century possessed 5,000 to 20,000 acres, the 'middling' gentry 1,000 to 5,000 acres and the 'lesser/parish' gentry 50 to 1,000 acres. In Kent the annual income for a 'parish' gentry family Wrightson estimated at £200, and for the 'upper' gentry £10,000.⁶⁴

Philip Jenkins in his study of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century Glamorgan gentry also divided them into three sub-groups based on the 1670 Hearth Tax Returns. These groups he called 'elite', 'secondary' and 'lesser'. The 'elite' were families who had held county office for over 100 years, with an annual income exceeding £1,000 and who lived in a residence of 10 or more hearths. The 'secondary' gentry were almost identical with their 'elite' neighbours except 'their possession of 'elite' offices and titles was sporadic'.⁶⁵ Jenkins' third grouping, the 'lesser' gentry, were offshoots from the 'elite' or 'secondary' gentry and had only served as constables or on a few occasions as sheriff.⁶⁶ Jenkins concluded that the 1670 Hearth Tax provided evidence that anyone with less than 4 hearths could not be a gentleman, and that a gentry family normally lived in a residence with 6 or more hearths.⁶⁷ Margaret Spufford, who examined the Cambridgeshire Hearth Tax for evidence of

yeoman families found that those houses with 4 hearths could in fact have 6 to 14 rooms and the owner a median wealth of £360. Spufford's research concluded that the Hearth Tax could not be used as an economic guide to the status of the owner, but that a 4 hearthed property was more likely to belong to a yeoman family than to that of a gentry family.⁶⁸

Jenkins in his analysis of the Glamorgan gentry veered away from land holding as the key to gentility, basing instead his evidence on office-holding as the main guideline in defining a gentleman. Wrightson was in agreement in his study of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; 'the true test of status was selection for county offices'.⁶⁹ In the early Tudor period in Buckinghamshire of the 90 resident gentry 21 had served in public office, while at the same time in Suffolk of 200 Tudor gentry a total of 51 families had held office in varying forms.⁷⁰ But it is important to recognise that the holding of public office needed sufficient wealth to sustain the duties that went with the appointment, large-scale entertaining was expensive, and it was from the land that families could find the resources to undertake any public office.

Land was important for the wealth it could provide not only for the holding of public office but because it could finance the lifestyle of the gentleman and the hospitality he was expected to give to his fellow gentry families. Land had to work for the gentleman and so began an interest in the farming practices and the introduction of the new farming methods. The gentleman increasingly had to develop into a 'capitalist landowner'.⁷¹ During the Tudor and Stuart periods, especially after 1650, specialist farming methods were being adopted and many books were printed advocating these new approaches. The increase in education amongst the gentry and the more wealthy yeoman families, particularly after the mid-seventeenth century, meant that more landowners could read and introduce these new practices into their own estates.⁷² The publication of classical books on agriculture aroused the gentleman to a zeal 'for farming as a satisfying and honourable occupation'.⁷³ These books were of vital importance for those new gentleman who could only purchase an estate carved out of

virgin soil, commonly on poor ground. The agricultural books of the period advised on the action to take to improve such soil and which crops to grow in varying conditions. Thirsk is greatly influenced by Tawney's theory of the introduction of these new crops, which when farmed by an efficient gentleman, can increase wealth, in turn to be ploughed back into the estate. However this picture of a gentleman entering into the production of new crops is one that is not widespread and seems to be very localised, concentrated more on areas of poor soil. Where the soil was rich and yielded a high return there was little incentive for the owner to experiment with new crops. For example in the rich pasture and arable areas of Berkshire there is little evidence to suggest that in the Tudor and Stuart periods experimentation with new crops was taking place.

By the mid-seventeenth century and perhaps earlier in some regions trade or a profession had become established as a suitable occupation for a younger son of a gentry family. This in return could become a means for these individuals to acquire sufficient wealth to enable them to establish their own estate, and to be recognised as a gentleman in their own right. If willing to work in the law, the army, medicine, the Church or even trade, then here was a way for a younger son to provide for himself without becoming dependent on the charity of an elder brother, and this is particularly true after 1660.⁷⁴ All this aided the disappearance of the stigma of trade which earlier in the sixteenth century had hindered the non-elite in establishing their own estate.

The appellation 'gentleman' stood for wealth, office-holding, possession of land and the ability to farm it on a commercial basis, and above all the wherewithal to provide lavish hospitality. By 1700 many established gentry families were actively engaged in a trade or profession, and many bought town houses to enable them to use urban facilities.

Yeoman have also been under scrutiny in recent decades. The monumental work by Mildred Campbell first published in 1942 became the pattern for future research.⁷⁵ Campbell came to the conclusion that the yeoman was primarily connected with land, either as a freeholder or more likely as a tenant. In common with studies of the minor

gentry she concluded that there was little difference between the two, and that while many yeoman aspired to gentry status there were an equal number content with their place in the social hierarchy. For those that did rise the causal factors were the acquisition of land, marriage alliances with gentry or wealth gained from a previous entrance into the professions. One of her most telling comments concerns the leading role that yeoman could play in local administration:

If the parish were one in which the large landed gentry were themselves resident and took a leading part in parish matters, the yeoman occupied a less important position. But in parishes where there were few or no resident gentry, the yeomen were the obvious leaders in the community.⁷⁶

In recent years historians have attempted to place a wealth figure to yeoman as an indicator of that group, or alternatively to suggest that land whether leased or owned was an important pointer to the group. As with the gentry this has not been without problems. Wrightson looking at the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries identified his yeoman group as one farming an excess of 50 acres.⁷⁷ Clay suggests a figure of between 50 to 70 acres as farmed by yeoman.⁷⁸ In the late Stuart period in Cambridgeshire Spufford found that the median yeoman farm was 92 acres and the median wealth £180.⁷⁹ In looking at the 1524/5 Lay Subsidy returns for Cambridgeshire she had suggested a figure of £10 wealth for an ordinary yeoman and £20 for an exceptional yeoman.⁸⁰ Again this is in contrast to Cornwall who after a study of the extant 1522 Muster Returns concluded that the wealth of minor gentry and yeoman commenced at £20, with the affluent members of the two groups having wealth in excess of £40.⁸¹ In a more recent publication Spufford examined 35 yeomen inventories over a longer period of time, in which wealth totals varied between £18 to £2,583, giving a median wealth of £149.⁸² But she quite rightly advises caution in using probate inventories as an indicator of wealth, these do not include the rents and wages owned by a yeoman or any other individual. In the same exercise Spufford looked at 35 husbandman inventories with a wealth ranging from £9 to £388 resulting in a median wealth of £62.⁸³ Linda Hall analysed 400 Gloucestershire inventories covering the period c. 1650-c. 1750 in an attempt to find some common denominator

for the different social categories. Hall found that the maximum wealth of a gentleman was £3,000, of a yeoman £1,000, and of a husbandman £200. But all three categories had many individuals with much lower totals which could have placed them in a lower social group.⁸⁴ In Gloucestershire gentlemen's houses averaged 12 rooms, yeomen's 7.5 and husbandmen's 4.9.⁸⁵ She suggests that one clue as to the identification of a gentry or yeoman house was the presence in the former of a parlour or study.⁸⁶ A different conclusion was reached by John S. Moore who studied the Gloucestershire inventories of Frampton Cottrell admittedly over a longer period of time than Hall, 1539-1804. Moore found little relationship between high social position and great wealth, the only factor that could point to a gentleman with any certainty was the ownership of books.⁸⁷ These different conclusions illustrate that in common with the gentry it is difficult, if not impossible, to give any individual a social label based solely on wealth. The majority of yeomen were connected with the land primarily as leaseholders, then in many cases they steadily acquired freehold land, and by the later sixteenth century began to send their sons to university and from there to the Inns of Court to provide a firm grounding in education, which in turn could propel the son upwards to gentry status. But it is important to remember that equally yeomen could be innkeepers, brewers, tanners or practising any other occupation not necessarily land based but which provided them with sufficient wealth to send their sons to university. The holding of local parish offices, such as churchwarden or constable was open to the yeoman. Although whether the local gentry relied so heavily on the yeomen to serve in local office as suggested by Susan Amussen is open to debate, in her view the yeoman were 'necessary adjuncts to the gentry in the maintenance of order'.⁸⁸ But it is true that the gentleman and yeoman were closely linked, with gentry younger sons even becoming yeomen and then rising again by their own efforts and establishing their own estates, while the yeoman could rise into the gentry group by virtue of his careful husbanding of wealth and acquisition of land. Wilfred Prest found during his study of the late Elizabethan and early Stuart Inns of Court that 'incoming students from socially obscure or humble backgrounds

continued to be simply upgraded to gentlemen'; this to overcome the proclamation by James I that only gentlemen could be admitted to the Inns of Court.⁸⁹ Faced with this evidence it is hardly surprising that attempts at defining both gentleman and yeoman have foundered on the different evidence taken from various parts of the country, although it is true to say that the more ostentatious lifestyle of the gentry set them apart from that of the yeoman, and could in itself be an indicator of status.

It is obvious that all commentators, whether Tudor, Stuart or more recent are agreed that there are four 'strategies' which can be identified as leading to social advancement and employed in varying degrees by those families wishing to gain entry into a higher social group. The four are land, education, office-holding and marriage, not necessarily in that order; and depending on the aim of each individual family these 'strategies' were used in varying ways. Each 'strategy' can be seen to lead to other 'strategies' interlinking, each providing some impetus to the climb up the social ladder. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate these 'strategies' for the gentleman and yeoman and highlight the different ways major and minor strategies could be used by both groups.

In this study of the twelve local families evidence suggests that ownership of land, as a basis of wealth, was important for both the gentleman and yeoman. All the established gentry families in Wantage Hundred were actively engaged in the acquisition of land. John Clarke, who first entered Ardington in the 1540s, had within a space of just fifteen years acquired an estate of some 2,500 acres in the parish and surrounding areas.⁹⁰ While the majority of this acreage was leasehold. In his will of 1568 Clarke left tenements in Reading, land in Shinfield and Erles Court Manor, East Hanney.⁹¹ His son Edward completed the establishment of the family by purchasing Ardington Manor in 1606.⁹² The large families of Fettiplace, Hyde and Yate necessitated the purchase of land outside the area to establish other branches of the family. Alexander Fettiplace in his will of 1542 left land in Childrey, Swinbrooke, Letcombe Regis and Letcombe Bassett.⁹³ In 1553 William Hyde of Denchworth purchased the manor of Kingston Lisle for £1,476,⁹⁴ and when the extravagances of an elder son caused the loss of the Denchworth estate the family moved permanently

to Kingston Lisle. In 1623 the Eyston family purchased Abbey Manor, East Hendred, from Sir Peter Vanlore.⁹⁵ Records of yeoman purchases are scarcer, but the dangers of over-extending the finances by active land transactions can be seen in a letter of John Collins of Betterton to the 1665/6 Herald, Elias Ashmole,

had I not lately purchased land, which renders me uncapable at present for another purchase, soe yt I fear together with the misfortunes of the times yt I shall not be able to defray easily soe great fees till another year.⁹⁶

Most yeoman land was leasehold, although small amounts of land are sometimes described in wills and inventories but in many cases the expense of acquiring land may have deterred some yeomen and the dangers are apparent in the Collins' letter.

It is self-evident that education was of vital importance for those wishing to climb up the social ladder. Without the ability to read and at least sign their name an individual would not have been able to manage their estate efficiently. Nor would they have been able to hold public office. 'Anyone who wished to make headway in the world should learn to read and write'⁹⁷ was as true then as it is today. However education to a gentleman and yeoman could mean two entirely different ideals. A gentleman's son was expected to be conversant in French and Latin, and at ease with philosophy, law, rhetoric, logic and arithmetic.⁹⁸ Despite the trend after the Restoration for fewer gentry to go to university, in Wantage by the mid seventeenth century it was expected that at least the eldest sons of gentry should have had a university education, following on from a private tutor. For Wantage Hundred gentry this has been difficult to substantiate, as in many cases Oxford University matriculation records fail to give full details of parentage. But it has been possible to ascertain that of the gentry families in residence, sons of the Ashcombe, Clarke and Fettiplace families certainly matriculated at Oxford University even if on one or two occasions they failed to take a degree. Only two Eyston members can be traced at the University, (two brothers both matriculated in 1602), but this omission is more likely to be due to the continuing recusancy of the family than to faulty records. For the gentry families of Wantage Hundred an emphasis on the study of law can be detected. As early as 1578 John Yate, merchant but on the verges of gentility, left his law books

Figure 1
Gentry Strategies

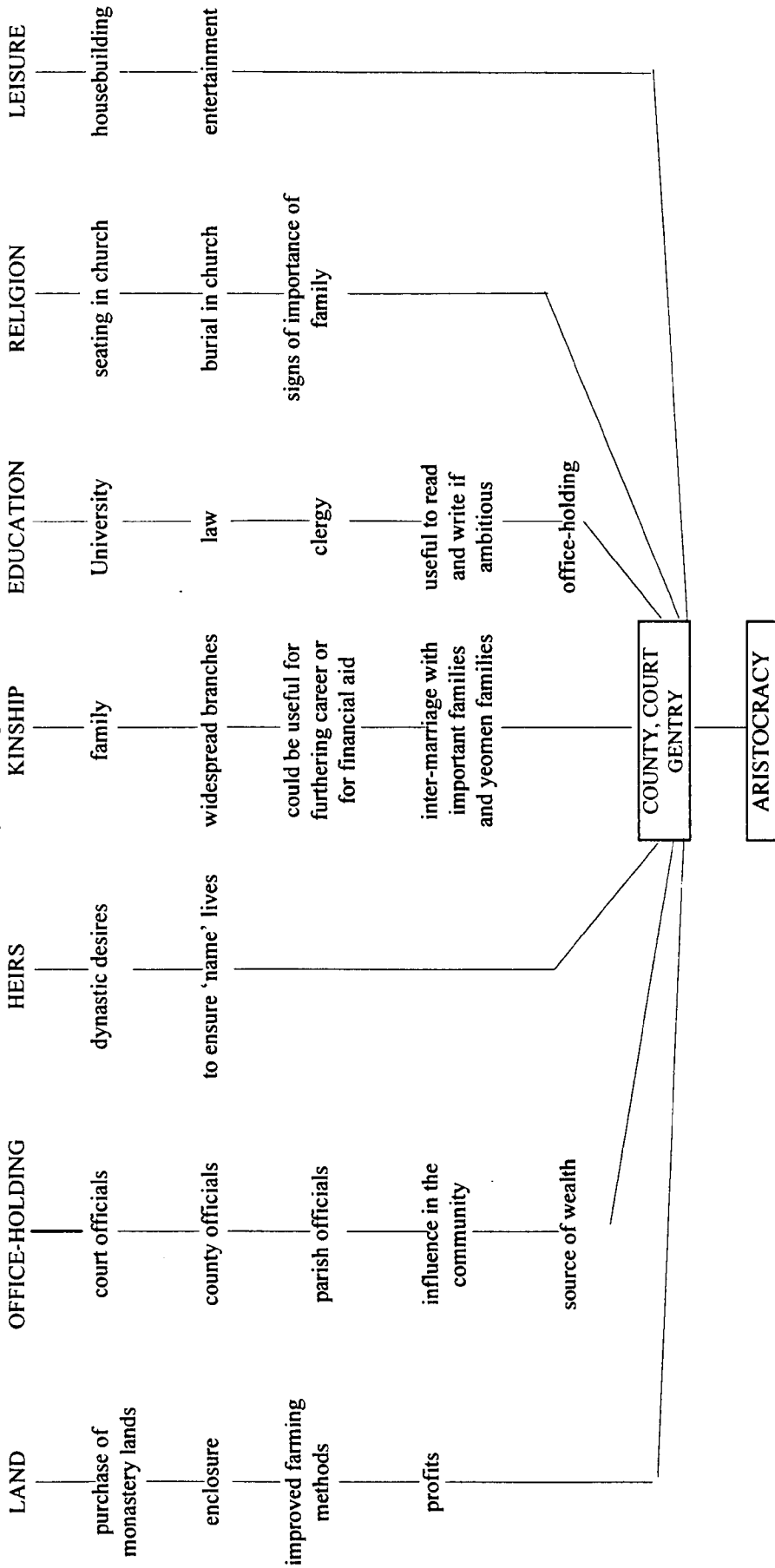
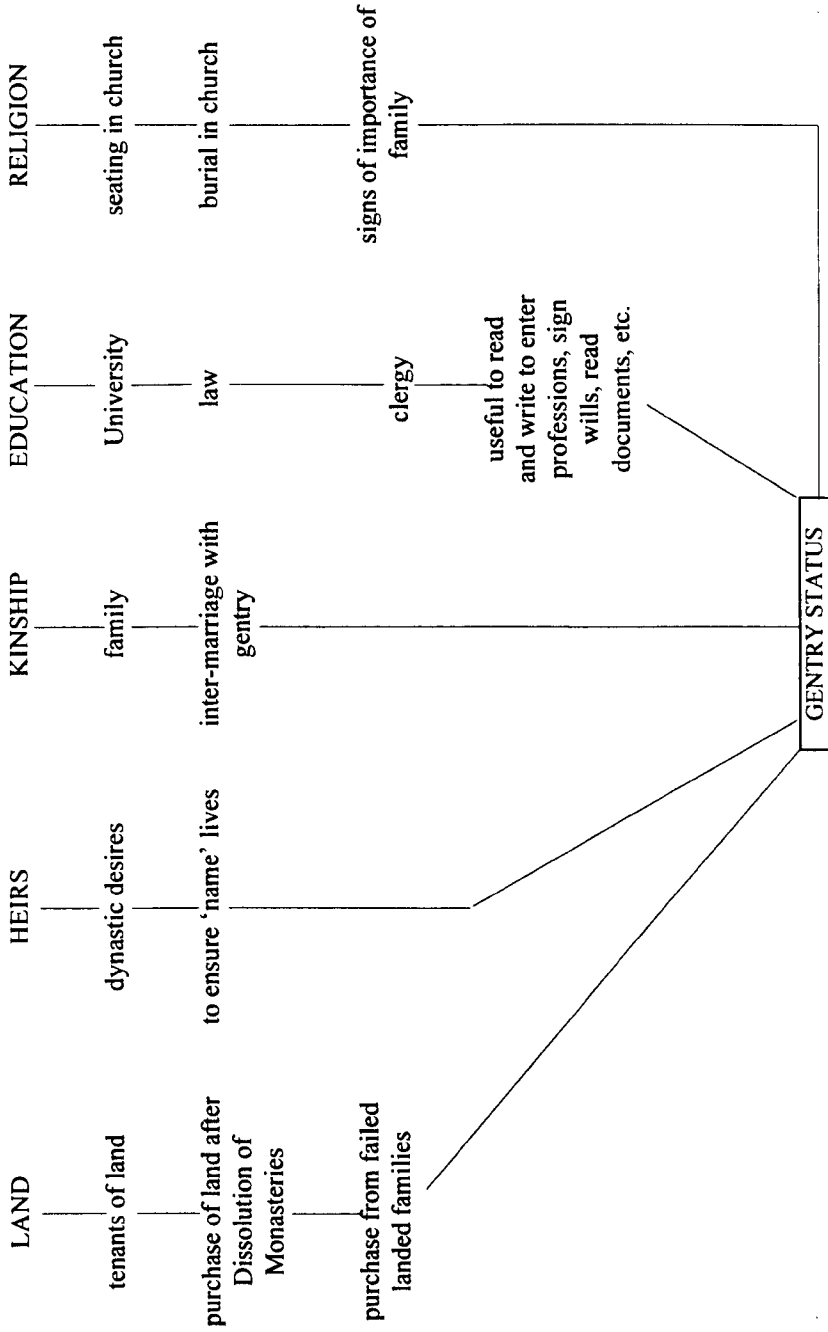


Figure 2
Yeoman Strategies



to be divided amongst his sons and instructed that at least one son was to study the 'laws of this Realm' in conjunction with Latin and singing.⁹⁹ The entry records of the Inns of Court give in most cases details of parentage enabling a family connection to be made. With only two exceptions the Middle Temple was the most popular of the Inns of Court, being favoured by the Ashcombe, Eyston, Fettiplace and Yate families. A John Fettiplace and a John Clarke instead entered Lincoln's Inn. For the yeoman families 'literacy...was substantially inferior to that of the gentry and clergy'.¹⁰⁰ Yeoman were not expected to have a knowledge of languages and the classics, although by the mid seventeenth century this attitude was changing. When John Fettiplace of Childrey founded a school in Dorchester (Oxfordshire) for the children from any social group, (the admittance fee of 1 shilling was commuted if the family were poor), he clearly expected those children to become conversant not only in Latin but Greek as well.¹⁰¹ By the end of the seventeenth century former yeoman families now on the verge of gentility, such as Collins, began to send their sons to university and from there on to the Inns of Court. In common with the gentry the Middle Temple was the chosen destination, an obvious aping of their gentry neighbours. The yeoman was aware of the importance of education at an early period. In 1584 John Collins instructed his wife to bring up their children in 'virtuous and good education',¹⁰² and John Hobbs was proud enough of his ability to write, to announce at the bottom of his father's will made in 1627, that 'This will was written by mee John Hobbes the elder beinge directed word by word by th'above Testator now with God, I say By me John Hobbes'.¹⁰³ The Bailiffs' Accounts of Wantage Town Lands have many references to the upkeep of the school situated in Wantage churchyard, and for the payment of the school-teacher, suggesting a knowledge of the importance of education amongst the governing hierarchy of the town. In common with the spread of Lollardy throughout Berkshire comes early evidence of the ability to read by at least one local family, a characteristic of this faith being: 'Groups of fervent readers, listeners and learners attending scriptural meetings'.¹⁰⁴ The Collins family of Ginge was in the forefront of Berkshire Lollardy to such an extent that Alice Collins

was a famous woman among them, and had a good memory, and could recite much of the Scriptures, and other good books; and therefore when any conventide of these men did meet at Burford, commonly she was sent for, to recite unto them the declaration of the Ten Commandments, and the Epistles of Peter and James.¹⁰⁵

This suggests that Alice had learnt the lessons by rote and not from actual reading, but her husband Richard did own books of the Gospels and one of Wycliff, and he was reported to be 'a great reader',¹⁰⁶ suggesting that it was from the reading of the books by Richard that Alice had learnt to recite the Gospels. Other members of the Collins family were prominent in the Lollard movement, strongly indicating that many of them had learnt to at least read primarily to understand the Lollardy teaching. However the existence of books in a household is not a safe indicator that the owner could read; 'Books in any age can be kept for their status value'.¹⁰⁷ Books are listed in a number of inventories, in the main Bibles, although William Smart in 1623 had 'one Bible and other Books'.¹⁰⁸ Thomas Clement, yeoman, in his will dated 9 February 1635 bequeathed 'one boke called the prixtio of prity' to his daughter Mary.¹⁰⁹ As the ownership of books could not with any certainty indicate ability to read, so being able to sign one's own name was no guideline as to the individual's knowledge of how to write sentences. This was particularly true of the poorer groups of yeoman.¹¹⁰ Many only attended school long enough to learn to sign their names, leaving when the family needed an extra pair of hands in employment, therefore 'good handwriting was not always linked to competence in other aspects of literacy'.¹¹¹ In the absence of other documentary evidence wills can show that the testator could at least sign his name or only leave a mark. Both the Aldworth and Anger members regularly signed their name, a number of Clement family members only achieved a mark, but Thomas Clement, yeoman, 1635, used his own seal.¹¹² For the 1695 Association Oath Rolls only that of Wantage itself has survived, 400 names are entered showing varying degrees of proficiency in the ability to write.¹¹³ But this does not show that the 400 could do any other than just sign their name. It is therefore more difficult to ascertain whether the more wealthy yeoman families could read and write. By the late seventeenth century as some edged towards gentility and sent their sons to university and the Inns of Court then it becomes safe to assume that they had had a sound

education. For those yeoman families who did not achieve gentility it is not only difficult but impossible to gain any insight into their educational level.

Of the four 'strategies', office-holding is perhaps the one with the same importance as land ownership, 'Prestige not wealth was the principal reward of office'.¹¹⁴ For the period 1500-1660 the earliest record of office-holding with the hundred is that of stewardship. Evidence of the importance attached to this form of office is to be seen in the 1522 Muster certificate. Prominent stewardship holders were the Fettiplace family, two brothers Thomas and William (younger sons of Philip of North Denchworth and Pusey) between them were stewards in 14 parishes in the Ganfield and Wantage Hundreds. A steward was the local 'ambassador' for the lord of the manor and as such could be 'courted by local gentry'.¹¹⁵ The steward was in charge of the financial dealings relating to the estate, and was ideally situated to receive any 'perks' such as fines paid by sons moving into the tenancy of a deceased father. The higher the status of the absent lord of the manor the more the steward 'was enhanced by the status of his employer'.¹¹⁶ For instance Sir Thomas Fettiplace was the steward of the king in Hinton, part of Ganfield Hundred, which can only have emphasised the importance of the Fettiplace family in the eyes of local gentry. In other parishes he was the steward of the powerful Abingdon Abbey. The Fettiplace and Hyde families served on a number of occasions as sheriffs of Berkshire and as commissioners for various lay subsidies. Both families entered parliament at various times and on a local basis served as governors of the Wantage Town Lands. John Eyston was appointed in 1562 Escheator for Berkshire and Oxfordshire, but from then onwards the family had to wait until 1688 and the Toleration Act before a George Eyston was appointed a Justice of the Peace. On two occasions, in 1614 and 1669, an Ashcombe member was appointed sheriff of Berkshire and in 1629/30 a John Ashcombe was one of the party occupying the embassy of Sir Henry Vane the elder to Holland.¹¹⁷ Of the local yeoman families, Richard Doo was appointed one of the collectors for the 1525 lay subsidy,¹¹⁸ and an uncle and nephew, both named Robert Aldworth, were appointed collectors for the 1549/50 and 1550/1 lay subsidies.¹¹⁹

While these were county offices more numerous appointments on a local basis were made, such as churchwardens. This was an office the Aldworth, Anger and Clement families continuously held in Wantage. Evidence as to the holders of the office of constable is scarce, although the Hearth Tax returns do list some names. This evidence seems to suggest that this was a form of office-holding favoured by the Doo and Greenaway families. The establishment of the Governors of Wantage Town Lands in 1598 provided another platform for office-holding, and here is important evidence showing both gentry and yeoman families working closely together. The strategy of 'marriage' shows the different inclinations of the gentry and yeoman families. The gentry looked towards their equals and the aristocracy to maintain their drive towards a higher status, although it is true to say that younger sons and daughters did marry into yeoman families. The Eyston family were driven further afield in their search for Catholic partners. The Fettiplace branches of North Denchworth and Childrey intermarried in a vain attempt to revive the failing fortunes of the North Denchworth branch. The Clarke family on one or two occasions did marry daughters into local yeoman families, but male members married into wealthy gentry. In the late seventeenth century an Ashcombe married the daughter of the Lord Mayor of London and later purchased a baronetcy. All the local gentry families intermarried at some stage presenting a picture of close-knit family circles. The Aldworth family concentrated on local trade or yeoman partners, particularly drawn from the Anger and Clement families, but as some yeoman families began to climb the social ladder, noticeably from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, more alliances with the gentry families become apparent. The Doe family intermarried with the gentry Keate family, while in 1663 John Collins married Mrs Anne Fettiplace of Upper Lamborne, a move which prompted him to acquire a coat of arms and gentility status, this despite the shortage of money caused by a recent purchase of land. An analysis of the 12 Wantage Hundred families shows intermarriage and thus kinship links between all 12, in some cases alliances were made more than once. Evidence from far-flung marriage registers and the Herald Visitations point to the gentry

travelling further afield in the search for suitable partners, while the yeomen families concentrated on a 30 mile radius of Wantage, with a preference for parishes along the routes leading to Reading and Newbury.

In the following chapters the four 'strategies' will be assessed in greater detail to determine how they were used by various families to achieve a higher social status. Special attention will be paid to the emphasis placed on each strategy by gentry and yeoman families and the extent to which this affected their fortunes.

NOTES:

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- 4 1 Hen. V, chapter 5 (1413).
- 5 Harte, N.B., 'State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England', in: Coleman, D. C. and John, A. H., *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England: Essays Presented to F. J. Fisher*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976, p. 139. For example in the Act of 1515 Knights and Barons with a yearly income of 100 marks could wear satin and damask, those 'under degree of gentleman' with a yearly value of £41 for life or £151 in goods could wear foreign furs. 7 Hen. VIII. c.6. In 1532 those with an income less than 40 shillings a year were not to 'wear any clothe in his hose'. 24 Hen.VIII.c.13. A later Act decreed that silk was not to be worn by people with less than £20 a year. 1 & 2 Ph. & M. c.2. (1554).
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Chapter 3

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHANGING FORTUNES AND INTER-RELATIONSHIPS OF THREE WANTAGE TOWN FAMILIES, 1522–1663

The town of Wantage and its two hamlets of Charlton and Grove are ideally situated within a framework of main routes and local trackways connecting the town with the ports of Bristol and the South Coast and the capital. In the late seventeenth century John Ogilby recognised the importance of the town by sign-posting the direct routes to it from his main north/south trading routes.¹ The river Thames, an important link with London, flows nearby and within easy reach. The rapidly growing capital was in constant need for food from the hinterland and Berkshire was perfectly situated to provide such a need. Carriers from Wantage travelled to London twice weekly carrying produce and arriving in the capital on a Thursday and Friday, the driver lodging at the Mermaid in Carter Lane.² Within Wantage itself a weekly market was held on a Saturday, and there was an annual fair, both providing an impetus for trade, social interchange and business opportunities. The inhabitants of the local villages and hamlets were drawn into Wantage bringing their produce for sale and in return to purchase supplies. In common with the small Nottingham town of Retford, Wantage's 'close inter-relationship' with the rural hinterland was to remain the base-line of its prosperity, mentality and *raison d'être*.³

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Wantage had all the attributes of a thriving urban centre, except for one thing, the small size of its population, estimated at 378 in 1522, rising to 800–1000 by 1700. In recent years historians have turned their attention to urban areas, and in creating a framework in which to work, have eliminated any town with less than 5000 inhabitants as not truly 'urban'. For towns

such as Wantage it was 'difficult to accord them the title of being fully "urban" since their size was so small'.⁴ Wantage appears to be characteristic as it is suggested that,

Most of the small market centres which served hinterlands within a radius of between three and six miles, had populations of less than 2000 inhabitants at the end of the seventeenth century.⁵

The term 'micro-town' has been suggested as an alternative description for a centre with less than 5000 inhabitants but with all the other attributes of a town.⁶ But this is to create a problem when as suggested by Dyer 'before the eighteenth century the difference between big and small towns was very much less in all respects than it is in the twentieth century'.⁷ Certainly the inhabitants of Wantage between 1500 and 1700 considered that they lived in a town, there are numerous references to the 'town' in contemporary wills, in 1598 an Private Act was passed setting up Wantage Town Governors, and the visitations of the Court of Charitable Uses was held at Wantage 'Town Hall'. Such confusion over the definition of towns is not new, John Leland on his travels about the country between 1535–1543 was moved to call Uppingham 'a market town' with only 'one meane streate' but nevertheless 'it is countid the best town of Ruthelandshire'.⁸

In 1522 there were no gentry families living in Wantage, but a total of 13 non-resident gentry families did hold £82 16s. 8d. of the total land valuation of £256 16s. 0d. The pattern was repeated in Charlton and Grove. In Charlton 6 non-resident gentry held £20 3s. 4d. out of a total land valuation of £43 9s. 7d. In Grove 5 non-resident gentry held £14 14s. 0d. of a total valuation of £60 1s. 3d. The way was therefore open, as suggested by both Harrison and Smith, for ruling elite to be composed of local townspeople of yeoman or trade status.⁹ In Wantage there were 16 families with a goods valuation of £10 or more which would place them at the top of the local social hierarchy.

Table 1
WANTAGE GOODS WEALTH OF £10 AND OVER

| | | | |
|------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
| ALDWORTH, Robert | 80 0s. 0d. | LECHE, Thomas | 20 0s. 0d. |
| ANGER, Nicholas | 60 0s. 0d. | RADYSSHE, Nicholas | 20 0s. 0d. |
| WALTER, Robert | 60 0s. 0d. | RICHARDS, Robert | 20 0s. 0d. |
| ALDWORTH, John | 50 0s. 0d. | ESTMOND, Thomas | 13 6s. 8d. |
| PYE, Thomas | 40 0s. 0d. | HEWYKE, William | 13 6s. 8d. |
| TALBOT, Alys | 40 0s. 0d. | KYLLYNGGALE, Anne | 12 0s. 0d. |
| HEWYKE, Richard | 30 0s. 0d. | BALLOWE, Richard | 10 0s. 0d. |
| ADAMS, William | 20 0s. 0d. | BANTYNG, Harry | 10 0s. 0d. |

Charlton and Grove each had two families with a goods valuation of £10 or over.

Table 2

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| CHARLTON | |
| FRANKELEYN, William | 40 0s. 0d. |
| WEBB, Thomas | 25 0s. 0d. |
| GROVE | |
| GROVE, John | 22 0s. 0d. |
| CLEMENT, Richard | 18 0s. 0d. |

Of these families, three, Aldworth, Anger and Clement were to be prominent in local office-holding, particularly amongst the churchwardens.¹⁰ The office of churchwarden was unpaid but was considered to be a position of 'dignity and importance'.¹¹ In Wantage 4 churchwardens were elected annually, 2 from Wantage itself and 1 each from Charlton and Grove. Between 1564/5–1656/7 a total of 114 different families served in the post, but 7 families were regular holders as shown by Table 3 below.

Table 3

| | |
|--------------|----|
| CLEMENT | 18 |
| ALDWORTH | 17 |
| ANGER | 13 |
| TUBB | 14 |
| TULL | 13 |
| SMART | 11 |
| WINTERBOURNE | 10 |

The list of churchwardens does give some idea as to the ruling elite in the town, but there was one further, more important, post available. In 1598 Parliament passed an *Act to Reforme Deceipt and Breaches of Trust, Touching Lands given to Charitable Uses*, its prime aim being to empower local authorities to regulate more

efficiently land or other goods left to them for charitable purposes.¹² In response to this, in 1598, a Private Act was passed which provided for Twelve Town Governors for Wantage primarily to regulate the poor relief, provide for a school master, keep local roads in repair and to oversee generally bequests to the poor.¹³ But the Twelve were not to have the lucrative control of the local market, this was to remain with the local lord of the manor. The Twelve, who were to hold the office for life were to be chosen from the 'better sort' of the town. The original Twelve were: Edmund Fettiplace, esquire, John Dolman, esquire, Francis Moore, esquire; Thomas Aldworth merchant, Robert Wirdnam, gentleman, William Anger, William Talbot, William Tubb, Richard Webb, Thomas Aldworth (the Younger), Thomas Clement and John Snodham. All except for Dolman and Moore contributed towards the cost of the passage of the Act, which amounted to £88 12s. 6d. The original intention was for the town to repay this loan but there is no evidence that this was ever done, although the accounts do show small figures paid to the original Governors which may represent part repayments. Evidence has survived to suggest the Wantage Town Governors were active before the 1598 Act. A letter addressed to Dr. Bennett, Dean of Windsor and dated 9 May 1597 is still extant. Its purpose was to outline the role of Wantage Almshouse 'builded by Mr William Fettiplace'. The letter was signed by 11 of the 12 later to become Governors. In place of Thomas Aldworth the Younger, was William Willmot. But within a year Willmot, who was still alive, had been ousted by the younger Aldworth supported by his powerful Bristol merchant kin.¹⁴

Three of the Town Governors were not residents of the town, John Dolman was the son and heir of Thomas Dolman who had purchased the manor of Frethornes in Childrey in 1588.¹⁵ Robert Wirdnam was the son of John Wirdnam who first appears in the 1559/60 Wantage Lay Subsidy with £47 in goods.¹⁶ The family is listed in the 1566 and 1623 Heralds' Visitations, but the name dies out with the failure of the male line. Francis Moore (1558–1621) was of yeoman parentage, the heir of Edward Moore resident of East Ilsley. By 1598 Francis had moved to Fawley and had become recognised as gentleman. He was of Catholic leanings and a friend of Sir Francis

Englefield who in turn was a close friend of the Lyford Yate family. Moore was a barrister of high repute, and his expertise would have been beneficial in guiding the Bill and then the Act through its various stages. As a reward he was elected one of the Governors. In 1602 his connection with the region became stronger when he purchased one moiety of West Lockinge, in 1614 he purchased the second moiety. However he remained an absent lord of the manor.¹⁷ Thomas Aldworth, merchant, was the third non-resident Governor, but with far stronger links to the town than Dolman and Moore. He resided in Bristol and was the grandson of the Robert listed in the 1522 Muster. His own father, also Robert, had been apprenticed in 1538 to William Pye (the brother of Nicholas Pye also in the 1522 Wantage Muster), mercer of Bristol.¹⁸ The Bristol Aldworth family kept close ties with their Wantage kin, and Thomas's own son, also Thomas, was resident in the town and was appointed a Town Governor along with his father.¹⁹

The original Act empowered the Twelve to choose a new member to replace anyone dying in office. Provision was also made for a Governor to resign the post should he wish to do so, but perhaps not surprisingly this situation never arose. As the office was for life this gave it greater status than that of a churchwarden and explains the high ratio of gentry in the first appointments.

As the original Twelve died some were replaced by local dignitaries, such as Sir Robert Hyde, second son of William of South Denchworth in 1611. But generally the office was hereditary. In 1616 Thomas Webb succeeded his father Richard, in the same year George Wirdnam was appointed after the death of his father Robert. Again in 1619 Richard Talbot followed his father, William, and he in turn was succeeded by his son William in 1630. Edmund Fettiplace was followed by his son John in 1638, whose own son also John became a Governor in 1656.²⁰ Once the family had a firm hold on the office it was unlikely they would relinquish it to another family, it was a position that enhanced social standing within the community.

There is one further document that relates to office-holding within Wantage, namely the Berkshire Commission for Charitable Uses, dated from 22 June 1657 to 8

October 1674.²¹ The purpose of this Commission was similar to that of the Town Governors, to regulate the administration of money, lands and tenements left for the use of the poor. It was administered by the Sheriff of Berkshire who was empowered to form a Commission consisting of 'twelve or more good & lawfull men of yee County' to hear cases in Faringdon, Newbury, Reading and Wantage in rotation. To aid them in this a jury of between 15 to 25 was to be appointed. A survey of the Commissioners shows that the majority came from local gentry families, amongst which members of the Fettiplace and Hyde families served continuously. In contrast the jury was drawn from yeoman families, or from those on the borderline between yeoman and gentry. A good example of this was the Collins family of Betterton and East Hanney, then slowly rising to gentry status, members of which served a number of times on the jury. Of the resident families in Wantage, two, Clement and Winterbourne, also served regularly. On two occasions, 8 December 1657 and 18 March 1658, Nicholas Clement and Richard Winterbourne travelled to Faringdon to serve on the jury there.²²

In Wantage itself a few gentry representatives did serve on the jury. At the court held in Wantage Town Hall on 10 June 1658 Samuel Bathurst of Charlton, Robert Brookes of Wantage and Thomas Butler of Hendred, all gentlemen, served as jurymen.²³ Robert Brookes was a regular jury member who first appeared in the lists on 15 October 1657, but the clerk did not list him as a gentleman until the court at Faringdon on 18 March 1658, which he attended along with Clement and Winterbourne. There are no further references to Bathurst, Brookes or Butler holding other offices, suggesting that they were parish gentry not county gentry. The absence of any Aldworth or Anger representative is noticeable, it was not until 1674 that Richard Aldworth, Esquire, was appointed as a Commissioner, following his entry of his pedigree into the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitations.

These three contemporary documents illustrate that Wantage had its own structure of office-holding. A certain number of families were continually in the forefront of town politics, and, despite the relatively small size of the town, there were

opportunities to develop a ruling elite. For three of these families, Aldworth, Anger and Clement, a number of documents have survived enabling an analysis of how they used these opportunities from 1522 to the end of the seventeenth century. It is also possible in varying degrees to examine any 'strategies' they might have used to consolidate their position in the ruling elite of the town.

Of the Aldworth family, the earliest surviving will is for John, tanner, dated 8 April 1525.²⁴ Assessed at £50 in the 1522 Muster, John was the younger brother of Robert, also a tanner. John left small amounts for the high altar in Wantage, for the chantry lights and towards the repair of the church. His two servants, who also feature in the 1522 Muster, along with his apprentices, were left their wages and 12 pence. Five daughters received £5 each, and one son Robert £6 13s. 4d. the residue of the estate being divided between his brother Robert, a John Aldworth of Lockinge and another John Aldworth of Sutton Courtenay. The main importance of this document is that it provides evidence for the Aldworth family being firmly established as tanners as early as the first quarter of the sixteenth century. This was an industry that was not only smelly and dirty, but needed a plentiful supply of soft water, and of oak bark. The numerous streams surrounding the town would have provided sufficient water, but local woodland was sparse, and the oak bark may have had to be imported. The cattle rearing farms of the region would also have been vital for the survival of the industry. As the hides took months to mature a cash flow problem was a potential difficulty, making it vital that the family had sufficient to live on while awaiting payment.²⁵

An early indication of the standing within the community of the Aldworth family comes in the 1549/50 lay subsidy when Robert, junior, was appointed a collector. His uncle, also Robert, acted as a collector for the hundred in the following subsidy in 1550/1.²⁶ Three Robert Aldworths are listed in the subsidy for 1550/1, 2 in Wantage with goods valued at 21 shillings each, and 1 in Charlton with 14 shillings in goods. The will of one Robert, senior, has survived dated 1 August 1555.²⁷ He demanded burial within the church near the grave of his brother John (d. 1525). This

helpfully places the former as the head of the family, a tanner, and the Robert that had been assessed with £80 in goods in 1522. In recognition of the importance of the road system for his trade he left 40 shillings for the repair of the highway from 'Clement's shiphouse to the further side parte of Gallow Lane'.²⁸ Three sons John, Thomas and Robert were left £10 each, a further son Richard received £20 'towards his learning at the comen lawe'. This highlights one of the main 'strategies' of both gentry and yeoman, the importance of education and in particular a working knowledge of the law to either practise as a barrister, or to protect the family's property or trade. Another son Mark was to receive on the day of marriage 5 dicker of leather of cow and steer, and household items to enable him to set up his own business.²⁹ Four daughters were left household items and various sums of money as marriage dowries. The executor of the will was his wife Alice.

During the mid 1550s, Thomas (c.1520–77) son of Robert (will 1555) who lived in Reading but still retained a house in Wantage represented the borough of Reading in Parliament on 4 occasions. During one term of office he headed the party to welcome Edward VI to the borough.³⁰ This illustrates neatly another 'strategy', that of office-holding, and the opportunities it provided to elevate a family into a higher social status. While no Court appointment arose from Thomas welcoming Edward VI it did give him enough influence to have his father and brother appointed as collectors for two subsidies. Again in 1559 his standing was put to good use when he obtained a pardon for his brother Robert the younger, tanner, for an unspecified crime, but in view of the religious turmoil at this period Robert had probably transgressed by continuing to hear the Catholic mass.³¹ Yet another brother Richard, resident in Wantage, may have benefited from having close kin as a member of Parliament by being given the title of gentleman in the 1559/60 lay subsidy, a rise in status, particularly for a tanner, that can only have been influenced by the high office held by his brother, particularly as this latter Aldworth kept up a close connection with Wantage and lived there only for a few months of the year.

The only firm evidence of a member of the Wantage Aldworth family attending Oxford University comes in the 1550s when Thomas, son of Richard (gentleman in the 1559/60 subsidy) entered Magdalen College in 1553. He graduated in 1554, and was elected a Fellow in 1555.³² The College records show that he was not in line with the new religious guidelines, on one occasion he was fined for missing chapel, on a second occasion was fined for refusing to chant.³³ Apart from this there is little evidence to suggest that the Aldworth family in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries pursued a more ambitious education policy than that provided in Wantage school itself. However Richard, the fourth son of Robert listed in 1522 did enter Clifford's Inn and continued to practise law in London.

The Aldworth family continued to build up their tanning business. Richard, gentleman in the 1559/60 subsidy, made his will on 8 February 1581 and left all his tools of the 'tanners craft' to his eldest son Richard (II).³⁴ He owned a number of houses in the town, eldest son Richard (II) was bequeathed 'The House Gyrynges' with 9 acres arable and 3 acres of mead and the sum of £60. Second son Thomas, who was also to receive £60, was to inherit the house leased to Thomas Otes, and in addition 9 acres of arable and 3 acres of mead. Aldworth was not alone in the town in exhibiting agricultural interests; many Wantage wills and inventories carry such evidence. This was a pattern repeated in other small towns. For example in Minchinhampton and Painswick, Gloucestershire in 1608, 22% and 37% of the inhabitants were actively engaged in agriculture.³⁵ This seems to illustrate the continual need to be self-sufficient despite the improvement in transport and marketing, and the necessity to provide produce in times of shortage. Richard (I) illustrated the strategy of kinship quite clearly by stipulating in his will that his younger brother George be 'kept with meate drinke clothe and lodginge as he is now kept with 4s a quarter money'.³⁶ No inventory of Richard (I) is extant but the will and inventory of his wife Agnes has survived, dated 1 December 1597 and 28 March 1598.³⁷ Small bequests were given to god-children and the remainder of the estate was divided amongst her sons Thomas and Edward. No provision was made in her will for

her brother-in-law George. The inventory totalled £162 8s. 10d., a considerable amount, and the house was impressive with 6 rooms not including the hall, kitchen and milk house. It was a house suitable for an individual at the forefront of the local elite.

Sarah, the youngest daughter of Richard and Agnes married Richard Lisset, woollen-draper on 24 December 1593.³⁸ Within a few months of the marriage taking place Agnes indicted Lisset in the Court of Chancery. The cause of the dispute is vague but seems to centre around the £500 marriage settlement claimed by Lisset which apparently had not been paid, and the ownership of some lands in Grove once owned by Richard Aldworth. Agnes countered that Lisset had been happy with the arrangements before the marriage took place and that the dowry had been paid.³⁹ The outcome is unknown, but in her will Agnes left Lisset a token 12 pence probably feeling that he had already had his share of the Aldworth estate.⁴⁰ Lisset who had originated in Deptford, was a prominent man in Wantage society, his warehouse full of all types of textiles, cottons and buttons, and his area of trade ranged between Bristol and London. The marriage alliance to the Aldworth family would have benefited both parties, providing trading connections for both.

Apart from the existing inventory of Agnes, four other Aldworth inventories have survived for the period 1550–1600. They show vast differences in wealth. The earliest is for William, buried at Wantage 27 July 1582. Resident in Oxford he was the third son of Robert entered in the 1522 Muster. William lived in poverty in a 3 roomed house, only leaving 28 shillings, 10 shillings of which was for a 'small close of wheat'.⁴¹ The next surviving inventory is for a John Aldworth, also living in poverty but locally in Charlton. His inventory, appraised by William Wirdnam, gentleman, and Richard Lissat, only totalled £8 7s. 5d.⁴² He died heavily in debt, owing nearly £15 to various Wantage people, including 13s. 4d. to William Wirdnam. However it is impossible to place this particular John within the family pedigree with any degree of certainty.

In total contrast to these two wills, Thomas, tanner, left an estate totalling £287 3s. 4d.⁴³ His will is dated 13 February 1597 and the inventory was made 8 days later. He had married Alice Anger who was instructed not to remarry 'towards the better bringing up of all my children'. Perhaps surprisingly the residence described in the inventory is of modest size, there were 3 rooms as well as a buttery, kitchen and malt-house, but it did have a gate-house, one of very few mentioned in Wantage inventories, a symbol of opulence emphasised that here lived a family of importance in the local community.⁴⁴ Only 4 leather hides were listed, valued at 40 shillings, suggesting that Thomas died after he had sold all his prepared stock.

The fourth inventory is that of Richard, eldest brother of Thomas and also a tanner. Dated 1600 it totalled £323 15s. 4d., almost half of which, £150, came from a leasehold in Grove.⁴⁵ Richard as the eldest son lived in larger house, 6 rooms, with more luxuries than his brother, having a carpet in the hall, and a great and little parlour for entertaining. Richard was slowly moving towards gentry status, and his home with its luxuries was beginning to copy that of his gentry neighbours.

In the sixteenth century the Aldworth documents show a family with varying degrees of wealth depending on their position within the family circle. The close affinity with socially upwardly mobile kin in both Bristol and Reading helped the Wantage branch sustain their position despite their involvement with an unsocial trade. From an early stage in the sixteenth century leading members of the family were forming part of the ruling elite in the town, but the large number of children in family groups ensured that younger children were dangerously near the poverty line and they received little help from their more fortunate kin. Only Richard (d.1582) made provision for his brother George, but this was ignored in the will of his widow.

For the period following 1600 a total of 7 wills and inventories have survived. The most important is the 1609 inventory for Thomas, tanner, one of the 1598 Town Governors, although unfortunately the will has not survived.⁴⁶ Thomas left a modest estate of £133 10s. 6d., from his father he had received a bequest £20 and the household goods. But the obligation of hospitality, that possibly hand in hand with

being a Town Governor, seems to have reduced his income, and diverted his attention away from his trade, resulting in a downward trend in profits. His friend Thomas Clement the elder and a fellow Town Governor was one of the appraisers, and they made little reference to the house. Their interest was in the trade goods of Aldworth. A 'shop' is listed, seemingly a workshop to prepare the hides. It contained only 'i joynd stoole i spade i howe & iii plankes i peck with other lumber'. The tan house contained '8 jirkers (dicker) & 9 hydes of leather' valued at £40. This total of 89 hides was a considerable holding and an indication of the large-scale operation run by Aldworth. The cash flow problems in tanning are illustrated by Thomas being owed £18 6s. 8d. by purchasers of his hides.

Evidence from the Town Governors' records show that Thomas, prior to his death, used his influence to aid a near relation. In 1603 the account of Gregory Webb, bailiff, records a payment of £10 to Alexander Aldworth 'towards the building of his house'.⁴⁷ At this time in Wantage there were 3 Alexander Aldworths and it is impossible to identify the one concerned. Further evidence of the difference in wealth within the family is shown by the inventory of William 'husbandman', uncle of Thomas the Town Governor. There is no will but the inventory is dated 26 February 1603 and only totalled £33 10s. 7d.⁴⁸ His home was small with a hall, chamber and buttery, and the farming assets amounted only to 2 sheep and small amounts of wheat and barley. This is in sharp contrast to his nephew, but William was the younger son of 10 children which may account for the downward trend in wealth. His total of £33 is not as close to the poverty line as some of the family but does not compare with the wealth of those in the town's ruling elite.

A list of customary and free tenants of the Dean and Chapter of Windsor shows a Richard Aldworth as a free tenant in 1609/10. He was descended from Richard, fifth son of the Robert in the 1522 Muster. He also was far down in the hierarchy of the family, so much so that the Governors' accounts record 2 charitable payments to him. The first was in 1615 when 7 shillings yearly was authorised to be given to 'Richard Aldworth's wife towards the apparelling of her children'.⁴⁹ Richard was so lowly

regarded that the money was paid to his wife not to him. In 1623 Richard and his wife 'in their sickness' received 19s. 4d. and a further 8s. to pay their rent arrears owed to the Dean and Chapter of Windsor.

In contrast in 1632 Thomas, a cousin of Richard, paid £10 in the Berkshire Knighthood Fines,⁵⁰ once again illustrating the varying fortunes of this large circle of kin. Thomas was the second son of Richard (d.1600) who had left an estate valued at £324 15s. 4d. His eldest brother had died in 1590, leaving Thomas as the head of the main branch. He had been appointed a Town Governor in 1619, and died in 1637. Like his father he was a tanner by trade, but left an reduced estate of £134 8s. 6d.,⁵¹ suggesting, as it did for another Thomas (d.1609), also Town Governor, that such a post could reduce wealth, but at the same time increase social status. For the latter Thomas the inventory was appraised by two fellow Governors, Edward Cottrill the elder, woollen-draper and William Talbot, yeoman; the third appraiser was John Jackson, victualler. The house was comfortable and of sufficient quality to emphasise Thomas's position in the town elite. The green chamber had matching green curtains to its windows, there were numerous feather beds particularly in the 'gesson' (guest) chamber, and a hall and a parlour completed the picture of affluence along with the gate-house. This particular Thomas was the son of Thomas (d.1597), who had moved into the family home immediately after his father's death and was still there at his own death. By then he had amassed £24 in plate, 11 silver spoons, 2 silver bowls and 2 silver salts. The large amount illustrates the extent to which Thomas entertained his fellow Governors and friends of gentry status, all of which would have cemented the steady rise towards gentry status by this branch of the family.

A distant nephew, yet another Thomas, had died 4 years earlier in 1633. Once again only the inventory has survived, but it shows that Thomas also practised tanning and was of comparable wealth to his uncle: £116 13s. 4d. as compared with his uncle's £134 8s. 6d.⁵² In this instance the three appraisers, Thomas Clement, Gregory Geering and John Goodman were more concerned with the land and farming possessions than with the house, for which they only noted a hall. This is a perfect

example of the difficulties faced when using inventories as evidence for wealth and status, the interests of appraisers varying from inventory to inventory. Thomas had died before the harvest, so 4 acres of wheat valued at £8 and 6 acres of barley at £6 10s. 0d. were 'in the field'. There were 3 acres of pease and 3 acres of vetches each valued at 40 shillings.

At this point there are no further wills or inventories for the Aldworth family until 1655. The troubles of the Civil War and its aftermath are the primary cause for such a lack of documents. Wantage was a strategic town, occupied by both sides, and in November 1644 the *Exact Journal* reported that the royalists had entered and plundered, the town 'being but a little place and unfortified', because of suspected sympathy towards the parliamentarians. The royalists had left the inhabitants 'nothing at all but hunger, and nakedness, and sorrow to possesse'.⁵³ The newspaper hardly exaggerated, in 1644 the burial registers show an epidemic rife in the town from May onwards which did not show any sign of abating until the winter of 1645.⁵⁴ The prevailing conditions dealt a severe blow to rich and poor alike, and it was during this trying period from 1643/4 to December 1650 that William Aldworth, mercer, John Wedon, Thomas Buckle and Thomas Tull served continuously as churchwardens.⁵⁵

The position of William Aldworth within the pedigree is difficult to determine, although the registers show that he and his wife Joan had at least one son and four daughters, one of whom died of the plague aged 17 in December 1643. Only an act of probate dated 23 February 1656 has survived for William confirming the bequest of his estate to his wife.⁵⁶ William traded in Wantage as a mercer, the trade practised by the Bristol branch, suggesting that he was from that side of the family and had settled in the town with the help of his Berkshire kin. The son of William (probate 1656) also practised as a mercer, and his will, dated 6 May 1662, provides further evidence of trading practices within families.⁵⁷ William bequeathed to his mother Joan a tenement leased to William Davies which he had recently purchased from Thomas Clement, shoemaker. Further tenements were bequeathed to his own son, also named William. But more importantly for the study of trade the will continues 'whereas the said Joane

Aldworth my mother and my selfe are co-partners in the trade of mercery and other wares and merchandise' the stock was to be divided into two, one half to remain with Joan, the second half to be sold to pay the testator's debts. Hester, William's wife, was to have the residue of the estate and appointed sole executor. There was no provision in the will for his son William, then a minor, to continue the business when of age. The younger William was the first Aldworth since the late sixteenth century to matriculate at Oxford University; entering Christ Church 3 April 1674 aged 15, he graduated in 1677 and obtained his MA in 1680. In the same year he was appointed vicar of Harrington, Northamptonshire.⁵⁸

In a will dated 1655 for Thomas Aldworth there is evidence that the family had branched out away from being tanners, possibly the town not large enough to sustain many such operations. Thomas had been apprenticed and had traded as a cordwainer. Once again it is difficult to place him within the pedigree, but his will is interesting for the provision he made for the continuance of his business.⁵⁹ Three sons and 5 daughters are named. One son, Thomas, was to have

Tenn pounds to be taken in shoes and leather at an reasonable rate. And his mother [Margery] to lay tenn pounds of lawful english monie to it to trade together equally soe long as they two can agree together.

Thomas was to enjoy the shop rent free as long as he remained unmarried. This was an unusual demand to be made of a son and the only instance found in Wantage Hundred wills, nowhere in the document is there any clue as to the reason behind such a bequest. Thomas and his brother William were to share three houses and 6 acres of arable land in Charlton. But first Margery was to have the profits of this land until her death. From the rent of the houses the two brothers were to give their sisters £10 each. A third son Alexander was given a token 12 pence, presumably because he had already received his bequest while his father was alive. Thomas was a minor at his father's death and under the guardianship of Francis Slade, vicar of Wantage. The Commission for Charitable Uses took this opportunity to summon both Thomas and Slade to answer allegations at the court held on 10 June 1658 over non-payment of rent for half an acre of Town Lands originally leased by Thomas's father and then

passed onto Thomas himself. Slade was an uncle by marriage having married Cicily Aldworth on 4 November 1630.⁶⁰ At the court held on 1 August 1658 Aldworth and a second guardian William Burges were ordered to attend to answer the same charge, Aldworth and Slade having failed to appear at the June hearing.⁶¹ The final outcome is unknown.

At the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitation Thomas Aldworth, then aged 33, was summoned to appear before them to put forward his pedigree. The descent given is that from Robert, second son of Robert the elder who had been entered in the 1522 Muster, the main line having died out at some point in the sixteenth century. Thomas was to marry a daughter of Lawrence Castle, a long established local yeoman family, which like the Aldworths were slowly being accepted as of gentry status. Thomas's own son also named Thomas aged 12 in 1664 entered Oxford University matriculating at Magdalen Hall 10 May 1667, BA 1670/1 and MA in 1673.⁶²

In contrast to the Aldworths, the Anger family is less well documented; only 2 wills and inventories have survived. One is for a shoemaker with a modest valuation, the other a wealthier yeoman. John, shoemaker, made his will in 1589, the inventory was drawn up in June of the same year.⁶³ One brother Humphrey was left £20 to be paid within one year, brother-in-law Thomas Day was bequeathed a crop of barley, whilst Anger's godson John Day son of Thomas was left a quarter of barley and a Bible. Two maid servants benefited by 10 shillings each. One of the executors who also witnessed the will was William Wilmot, gentleman, one of the appraisers of the estate which totalled £47 12s. 4d. Anger lived comfortably in a home with 6 rooms, keeping his 'bowe and arrows' in the hall.

The second will and inventory is that for Stephen Anger, dated 3 July and 14 November 1596 respectively.⁶⁴ The main interest in these two documents is that Stephen's son William was one of the original Town Governors. William was to have the residue of the estate, while another son Nicholas was bequeathed £20, a further son Robert received £20, a 'cottage and garden in tenure of John Beaver', and an orchard in Wantage. A tenement, garden and another orchard in Abingdon went to a

fourth son John. Jane, wife of the testator, and formerly the widow of Thomas Aldworth, was provided for in detail. First she was to have the use of the 'inner chamber' called the parlour of the main residence, and the garden and orchard adjoining the kitchen until her death. In addition she was to have 'all the corn crop and her goods that were hers' before the marriage to Anger. William was made sole executor and he was instructed to provide for Jane's cousin, Edward Cottrill, keeping him in 'meat, bread, drink & lodging for two years'. The overseers of the will were a brother, John, and Thomas Aldworth, his 'wife's son'. Aldworth was one of the 3 appraisers of the estate which totalled £352 12s. 0d. The home was large with 6 rooms including a hall, 2 lofts, dairy house, kitchen and well house, a home of sufficient grandeur for a Town Governor. Anger engaged in arable farming, with barley valued at £90, wheat at £40 and beans at £13 6s. 0d. forming the main elements of his crops. This will shows at least one member of the Anger family able to hold his own with his neighbours the Aldworth family, and kinship between the two was close. And it is possible that this close kinship with the Aldworth family was instrumental in William Anger being on the original Town Governors.

In the late sixteenth century Stephen Anger joined with his father-in-law William Wirdnam, gentleman, and Nicholas Clement in a Chancery case against John Clement, the elder and brother of Nicholas, for evicting them from their tenancy of land in Grove, Wantage, West Hanney, West Challow, East Challow and Steventon.⁶⁵ Richard Aldworth, giving evidence for John Clement, found himself drawn into the dispute which split the three main families into warring factions. How the matter was resolved is unknown, but within a few months the Town Governors were appointed including representatives of the Aldworth, Anger and Clement families and providing an opportunity for peace to be restored. In 1600 William Anger, along with William Talbot a fellow Governor, distributed £5 to the poor of the town. In the same year Anger was repaid 40 shillings from the accounts of the Governors as part repayment of the original £5 advanced by him to secure the bill setting up the Governors.

Both John and Stephen Anger served as churchwardens, John in 1580/1 and Stephen on 3 occasions, 1564/5, 1574/5 and 1575/6. From the mid sixteenth century the Anger family were showing a steady rise in status. Stephen Anger had married Jone Wirdnam on 7 June 1559, and his son William, also a churchwarden, in 1606/7 continued the connection with gentry families by marrying Jone Standishe on 4 November 1587. Both Wirdnam and Standishe were of sufficient standing to have put forward their pedigrees in the 1566 Heralds' Visitations.⁶⁶

The rise of the Anger family continued when Stephen, son and heir of William the Town Governor, gentleman, entered Middle Temple in March 1613.⁶⁷ The Minutes of the Middle Temple show that Anger had been acting as clerk to Sir Francis Moore, Master of the Bench, and another Wantage Town Governor, and on his recommendation Anger was entered without paying the entry fine.⁶⁸ William Anger, Governor, was buried 4 January 1618 but any will and inventory have not survived.

However, from the beginning of the seventeenth century the Anger family show a decline in fortunes and in status. One example of this is the 1605 will and inventory of John Anger, yeoman,⁶⁹ the brother of Stephen (d. 1596). To his son-in-law Thomas Clement and heirs John left land in Wantage called the 'Signe of the Crowne', this was not to include the 5 and a half acres of arable land 'sold by me & the said Thomas Clement to William Wright of Wantage'. The two daughters had the silver spoons divided between them, while their own children were left one sheep each. William, another son, is not mentioned in the document. The inventory dated September 1605 only totals £11, neither the will nor inventory give any evidence of great wealth. This is in sharp contrast to his elder brother Stephen and is yet one further example of how fortunes can vary within one family. Yet John had been of sufficient status to marry his daughter to one of the Town Governors. A second seventeenth century inventory, that for Thomas, a tailor, dated 5 May 1614, is extant.⁷⁰ The estate was valued by his brother William and Thomas Clement, senior, then still serving as a Town Governor. The estate was valued at £86 13s. 10d. but, illustrating the problems of cash flow in any business, £60 of this was money owed by unnamed debtors. The next surviving

document is the will and inventory, dated 1614, of Robert Anger, a shoemaker, who was able to sign his name. The valuation is far lower than that of his brother the tailor, in this case £23 10s. 0d.⁷¹ It was appraised by Alexander and Robert Aldworth, John Doo and John Grove, and included £15 for the lease of his tenement for 2000 years. Robert's wife Agnes was to have all of the estate and after her death their son Stephen was to inherit. Agnes was instructed to have 'my walnutt tree be cutt downe, and that, my furnance be sold by my wife within three months after my decease', an odd request, except that walnut was prized by carpenters and would have realised a good price,

the black Grain is much the best timber, and there is a great deal of Profit in planting of these trees as well as Pleasure, for the wood is the best and richest for the Joyner's Use of any next to the Cedar.⁷²

One further inventory is for Anne, a widow, dated 1627 who lived in a home comprising a hall, chamber, buttery and loft, who lived very close to poverty and left an estate only valued at £7.⁷³

After the original election of William in 1598, no other Anger family member was to serve as a Town Governor, although on two occasions members did serve as churchwarden in 1615/6 and 1621/2. From this date the name disappears from records of office-holding, although the family did continue to live in the town for a number of years. The Town Governors' accounts for 1637 show that £2 was paid to Robert Dolton as an inducement to take Thomas, son of Nicholas Anger, husbandman, as an apprentice.⁷⁴ William who was buried at Wantage on 8 August 1644 traded as a tanner, but there are no other documents relating to him. At no time did the Angers serve on the jury for the Commission of the Charitable Uses. Further marriage alliances were made with the Aldworth and Clement families, but in the main the Anger family concentrated on yeoman and trade families of lower status than these two leading families in the town. From the beginning of the seventeenth century there is a noticeable drop in wealth and desire to hold public office, which contrasts with the late sixteenth century when marriage into two gentry families, Wirdnam and Standishe, and appointment as a Town Governor seemed to confirm that the Angers

were in the ascendancy. But the reason for this following decline in wealth and in probable status is unknown.

The third main family in the town, the Clements, held the minor office of churchwarden on 9 separate occasions prior to 1600, Thomas Clement was one of the original Town Governors in 1598. Only 3 wills have survived from before 1600, the most important being that of Richard listed in the 1522 Muster.⁷⁵ The will is dated 22 April 1557. His family was large, 10 children are named (6 sons and 4 daughters), the eldest son John was to have the majority of the farm equipment, while the other children were to receive either 1 cow or small sums of money. The land was sown with 4 acres each of wheat, barley and beans, 4 horses and 1 plough worked the land. Of cattle there were 3 kine and 2 bullocks. This smallholding would not have supported the family in food, but there is no indication that Richard engaged in any other activity.

Richard's eldest son John, a yeoman, dated his will 1582, and left all his 'lands & tenements' to his own son Nicholas for his life and then they were to pass to Nicholas's son John.⁷⁶ Numerous other children and grandchildren were remembered with small amounts of barley, and he did not forget his daughter Anne who had married Thomas Aldworth of Denchworth, an offshoot of the Wantage family. The residue of the estate went to John's wife Elizabeth. One of the three overseers was Samuel Wright, gentleman, 'late of West Hanney', who was connected by marriage to the Clement family. The will of husbandman John Clement dated 1623 mentions Anne Wright 'my daughter' to whom was left 2 acres of arable land.⁷⁷ The remainder of the estate of this latter John Clement was left to Richard Wright 'for the term of his natural life'. Four grandsons and 3 granddaughters received £5 and £3 respectively. Robert, son of the testator, was to receive the residue of the estate. Neither of these wills give any indication of trade other than farming practised by these particular members of the family.

Two marriage alliances made prior to 1600 were with the Aldworth family. Anne married Thomas Aldworth of Denchworth on 13 August 1554.⁷⁸ The second

marriage was far more important for the Clement family, Ellen married Thomas Aldworth the younger on 24 July 1598,⁷⁹ and a few months later her husband and father were elected as Wantage Town Governors. Both families were now established amongst the ruling elite of this market town.

However, records in the bailiffs' accounts for the Governors point towards at least one part of the Clement family being very close to poverty, similarly to the situation in the Aldworth family. In 1603 Richard Clement was paid 40 shillings 'towards his great loss'.⁸⁰ No reason for this 'great loss' is given but it may have been fire damage, since the vast quantity of wood, open fires and rubbish lying in corners caused many a Tudor or Stuart town to suffer at least one fire during the century. In 1615 another payment was made to the same family, the sum of 22d. to Richard's wife 'towards the relief of her children'. In 1618 the Governors paid a further 28s. 6d. to Richard, and again in 1621 the sum of 20 shillings was paid to him 'towards the relief of his wife & children'. Here can be seen the problems facing large families, while the elder sons were relatively prosperous the younger sons were in many cases condemned to poverty, the main cause being the inability of the father's estate to provide sufficiently for all children, although this does seem a rather extreme case.

Nicholas Clement, yeoman, of Grove made his will on 26 November 1604,⁸¹ and once again a large family of 11 sons and 5 daughters had to be provided for. Nicholas was under no illusion as to the ability of his estate to provide for all. His inventory of 1609 totalled only £70 19s. 2d., and to allow for this he left his monetary bequests to be paid over a period of 5 to 9 years after his death. At least 1 son bequeathed £50 was to wait for 12 years before the first payment, receiving the remainder within a year. To his married daughters he left a token 40 shillings, and the sons were to have various sums ranging from £30 to £50. The testator named 2 sons called Nicholas in his will, to the elder he left £20 to be paid within 8 years, and to the younger £50 of which £30 was to be paid within 10 years, and the remainder a year later. The family home was extremely cramped with only 4 rooms, and Nicholas must have been relieved as the family married and moved on. He concentrated on arable

farming, having 13 acres of barley valued at £18, 8 acres of wheat at £11 and 12 acres of pease at £17.

His eldest son Thomas, yeoman, died in 1621. He had been bequeathed £50 by his father, £30 within 6 years and £20 a year later, but there is little evidence of this in the valuation of his estate which only totalled £17 8s. 4d.,⁸² possibly suggesting that Thomas had not received any of his inheritance. Thomas lived in a home with 3 rooms, hall, buttery and chamber. His main wealth, £6, was in 2 acres of wheat, 3 acres of barley and 1 acre of pease, one load of hay just harvested was valued at 13s. 4d.

Thomas Clement, one of the original Town Governors died in 1636, his will dated 9 February 1635 and the inventory dated 27 April 1636 have both survived.⁸³ In the earlier 1623/4 and 1628 lay subsidies he had been valued with 20 shillings in lands.⁸⁴ Thomas a tanner, bequeathed to his eldest son William 'all the Lethers in the Tann house' which the inventory lists as being 7 calf skins valued at £4 18s. 0d. and a further 27 hides valued at £30. The tanning operation is on a smaller scale than that of their close friends the Aldworths and the estate was valued only at a modest £109 15s. 2d., of which £53 was money owed to him in debts. Once again this neatly illustrates the cash flow problem in business. Compared with other branches of the family his own immediate family was small, 3 sons and 3 daughters. William having already received the tanning equipment, was also to have the family Bible and some silver spoons. Two daughters received £22 each, while the third daughter Mary was to have Thomas's prized household possession 'one boke called the prextio of piety'.⁸⁵ Thomas used his own official seal to sign the will emphasising his importance as a Town Governor. In 1622/3 he paid 5 shillings annual rent to the Dean and Chapter of Windsor as a free tenant.⁸⁶ In 1627/8 both Thomas and Nicholas his brother served as churchwardens.⁸⁷

In 1625 The Town Governors paid 26s. 6d. for placing 'Loader an apprentice to John Clement'.⁸⁸ Clement traded as a grocer, and his token of a farthing carried 'The Grocer's Arms' on one side. He was the younger son of Thomas, Town Governor.⁸⁹ A

grocer in this period was described a wholesaler in spices, dried fruits, and sugar. Clement acted as a middleman between the trading ships of the port of Bristol and the demand for such wares locally and more importantly, in London.

The one other surviving will is that of Robert, yeoman, dated 13 July 1646,⁹⁰ important for the details it gives of the land and tenements held by this particular member of the family and for evidence of the names of areas in the town. Robert and his wife lived in 'The Angel', which was to be sold to pay any debts, as was a tenement in Barwell leased to John Alder, Thomas Boulton and John Lyne, and a second tenement leased to Thomas Butcher and in Barwell. His wife Dorothy was to move to a messuage called 'The Bull' and, to keep her in food and clothing, was to inherit 'certaine Land lying in the Comon fieldes of Wantinge', which after her death were to go to the second son John. Another son, Robert, was to have the bedding in the 'shopp Chamber', in this case the workshop, and a third son was to be paid £15 by Robert and John. Earlier, Robert the younger, had inherited 2 mead plots and an acre of land from a distant kinswoman. The overseers were Edward, brother of the testator, his widow Dorothy and a 'wellbeloved friend' Edward Cox, these three were given 'ffull power and authority to make sale of the foresaid lands and tenements'. Despite being deeply involved in trade Robert could only sign his will with a mark.

The younger son, Robert, of Robert yeoman (will 1646), embroiled himself in trouble with the Commonwealth authorities. At the end of 1659 as bailiff of Wantage, he travelled to Abingdon and announced the setting up of a county court there in order to send a member to Parliament. On 25 January 1660 he was reported to Parliament and was ordered to present himself before the Council. The Council moved swiftly and on 2 February the Keeper of the Gate House was ordered to receive Robert Clement, 'bailiff of Wantage, committed for illegally proclaiming a county court at Abingdon, for electing a knight of the shire to serve in Parliament'.⁹¹ The then M.P. for Abingdon was Sir Thomas Holt who earlier, in 1653, had evicted the local baptists from the Town Hall in Wantage and the 'Village House in Grove', a petition was sent to Parliament signed by 60 townspeople demanding the return of their meeting places,

or alternatively to be allowed to worship in another house. While there is no evidence to suggest a connection with Clements' later actions, Holt may have continued to make himself unpopular in the town until it was decided to appoint a more amenable nominee in his place.⁹²

Thomas Clement the elder was elected a Town Governor in 1656. In August 1658 he and Mr Richard Brookes were empowered by the Commission for Charitable Uses to make a terrier of lands in the possession of the Town Governors.⁹³ His brother Nicholas of Grove was one of the 'good & lawful men' elected to the jury for the Court for Charitable Uses held at Wantage, 15 October 1657.⁹⁴ Nicholas was to serve continuously as a jury member during 1657 and 1658. On two occasions, 8 December 1657 and 18 March 1658, he travelled to Faringdon to hear cases there.

Neither the Anger nor Clement families were summoned to appear before the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitation, in contrast to their neighbours and kin the Aldworths. Despite their involvement in town politics the Clement family did not have the advantage of close kinship with important members of Bristol and Reading societies. It was this kinship that enabled the Aldworth family to maintain their status amongst the ruling elite of Wantage.

The final late seventeenth century document that gives some indication of the levels of status in the town is the Hearth Tax return for 3 December 1663. This gives a separate listing for Wantage, Charlton and Grove.⁹⁵ From this document it is apparent that by this date there were a number of residents that could rival the Aldworth and Clement families in status and wealth. For example now living in the town were 2 gentry families that had moved in since the Civil War, namely George Champion and Richard Petifore. The returns show that the houses with the highest number of hearths were concentrated around 'High Town', now the Market Square. This was an important area being at the centre of the town and there were 49 houses circling the square. In this area of the town lived Joan Aldworth (5 hearths), and Robert and Edward Clement each with 2 hearths. Samuel Saxson, Anthony Webb and Thomas

Hurdman owned the three taverns and hostelries in the centre, each having 10 hearths; a surviving trade token identifies Hurdman with the Bear Inn.⁹⁶

In nearby Wallingford Street lived Alexander Aldworth, a clothworker, with 3 hearths, and a few doors away were Thomas and Ambros Clement with 2 hearths each. A later return dated 24 December 1663, listed Mr Thomas Aldworth, Town Governor, with 6 hearths and a Thomas Clement with just 1 hearth. In December 1663, Nicholas Clement with 2 hearths and John Aldworth with 1 hearth lived in Grove. The returns show that poverty was still present in both the Aldworth and Clement families. Richard Aldworth, Edward and Thomas Clement and a second Thomas Clement all with 1 hearth were unable to pay the 2 shillings rate because of poverty. Richard Aldworth was a descendent of the earlier Richard who had received charity from the Governors, this branch of the family had been unable to escape the poverty trap. The returns do show that Thomas Clement was one of the churchwardens and his brother William served as Town Constable. They list no Anger family members, suggesting that they had now left the area.

The Hearth Tax illustrates quite clearly that the town had not yet recovered from the ravages of the Civil War and its aftermath. There were a large number of 1 hearth establishments and there is no evidence of a concentrated rebuilding programme. The number of hearths for the gentry families, an average of 6 each, is quite conservative compared with other regions where gentry were living in houses of up to 10 or 12 hearths.

In Charlton and Grove the pattern of a majority of 1 hearth homes and obvious wealthy yeoman and gentry is similar to Wantage, except that in these two hamlets gentry lived in larger residences. Both of these settlements had escaped the attentions of the two armies so the larger homes were still standing. In Charlton could be found Sir George Wilmot with 11 hearths, Mr Thomas Aldridge with 10 and Mr John Jennings with 7. In Grove there were a larger number of 2 hearthed homes, here lived William Grove, gentleman, with 6 hearths, and 2 members of the Winterbourne family had 5 each.

The three extant Heralds' Visitations returns for 1566, 1623 and 1665/6 illustrate that the Aldworth and Clement families were by no means without competition in the town. Wantage being on the lucrative trade routes attracted other gentry families into the area from the mid sixteenth century onwards.

Table 4
Gentry Families in Wantage from the Heralds' Visitations

| Name | 1566 | 1623 | 1665/6 |
|-----------|------|------|--------|
| Aldworth | | | x |
| Bathurst | | | x |
| Brooke | | | x |
| Champion | | | x |
| Hyde | | x | |
| Norton | | x | |
| Standishe | x | | |
| Willmot | | | x |
| Wirdnam | x | x | |
| Wythens | | x | |

Of these families only Wirdnam managed to be entered in two of the returns. Brooke was resident along with Aldworth in 1522, but like them not yet identified as gentry. In the seventeenth century they served as Town Governors, churchwardens and as jury members in the Court for Charitable Uses. Only one will and inventory has survived, that of Richard, gentleman, dated 1620.⁹⁷ Brooke traded as a tanner and on a far greater scale than Aldworth, his estate, valued by Thomas Aldworth, tanner, Thomas Clement, tanner and Anthony Burges, innholder, was put at £336 3s. 4d. In his tan house there were '20 dicker of over leather & a stack of old barke' valued at £150. A stack of assorted leather was valued at £9. With over 200 hides of leather Brooke obviously ran a thriving business and one that would have been a formidable rival to Aldworth. For this reason it is regrettable that no other documentation survives.

The Willmot family of Charlton came into the manor after the failure of the main line of the Wirdnam family in the 1620s. Sir George Willmot was a staunch royalist and on two occasions, September 1643 and November 1644, he entertained Charles I at Charlton.⁹⁸ Willmot married Margaret, daughter of Richard Aldworth of London,⁹⁹ who in turn was an offshoot of the Bristol branch. The will of Sir George

still survives, dated 21 August 1668; it shows that George and his eldest son William were in conflict. William was to have a token 40 shillings, but three friends of George, Humphrey Hyde the elder, esquire, of Kingston Lisle, Jeffrey Daniell of Marlborough, esquire, and Charles Garrard of Lambourne, esquire were empowered to sell

so much ground or houses at Charlton as to pay William the residue of three thousand pounds then to get from his hand all those articles, deeds & writings as doth anyway remain the manner (sic) of Baldwins in Charlton.¹⁰⁰

A younger son, Richard, was bequeathed £1000 out of the leases in Charlton, and the daughter Margaret was to be the sole executor.

Samuel Bathurst had originated from Kent, a younger son of Randolph Bathurst of Horton Kirby. Samuel had married Dorothy, daughter of Edward Scoles, a long established family in Charlton.¹⁰¹ The Champion family had been resident in Wantage since the early seventeenth century and were another example of a younger branch of a gentry family, this time resident in Surrey and Sussex, moving into the area after a marriage alliance with the local Grove family who were slowly becoming established as of gentry status. To his brother-in-law William Grove, Champion bequeathed 'all my right and estate to the office of clerk of the Peace for Berks which I hold for the life of John Herry Esquire clerk of the Peace as his deputy'.¹⁰² This is an indication of the way an office can be inherited within families.

In one aspect Wantage can be compared with Oxford in that it was an 'open town', an attraction to 'the new men fostered by the dynamic social and geographical mobility of the age'.¹⁰³ The older residents would have found their elite status challenged and even set aside by stronger contenders for office. The Aldworth and Clement families adjusted to these challenges and managed to retain their positions, but the Anger family, possibly under pressure because of the personal expense involved in holding office, found they could not compete and eventually moved away from the town. The patronage of Sir Francis Moore did ensure the entrance of Stephen Anger into the Middle Temple in March 1613, drawing the eldest son away from Wantage into London where he remained.

The social structure between 1522 and 1700 was dominated by the tanning and cloth-making trades, in line with Retford where 45% of the traders were workers of leather and 25% in fabrics.¹⁰⁴ Along with the mercers, tanners and drapers formed the top level of Retford hierarchy ‘united by links of kinship, belief, and commerce’.¹⁰⁵ This ability to specialise in one or two particular trades was, Goose contended,

perhaps related to geographical location, or to the ready availability of a particular raw material, one aspect of this ‘basic’ sector might become of special importance, resulting in the development of a specialist industrial or commercial bias.¹⁰⁶

In the case of Wantage the rich pasture land surrounding the town, the ready supply of water provided two essential ingredients for the tanning operations of Aldworth, and in turn the cordwainer and shoemaking businesses of Anger and Clement. By their numbers and wealth the tanners dominated Wantage society; by contrast in Oxford the governing body with a far greater population and hence a greater diversity of trades to choose from excluded from office those that were tanners or shoemakers between 1522–1585. It was the vintners who held control of the town, certainly until the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁷ But in Wantage where those individuals engaged in tanning and shoemaking were relatively greater in number they were able to gain entry to the ruling elite, sharing the responsibility with local gentry families. In turn one family at least, Aldworth, was to become gentry in their own right.

NOTES:

- 1 Ogilby, John, *Britannia*. London: John Ogilby, 1675. I, plates 14, 15, 79.
- 2 Taylor, John, *The Carriers Cosmographie*. London: Printed by A. G., 1637. sig. C2r.
- 3 Marcombe, David, *English Small Town Life: Retford 1520–1642*. Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1993. p. 28.

- 4 Corfield, Penelope, 'Urban Development in England and Wales in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in: Barry, Jonathan, ed., *The Tudor and Stuart Town: A Reader in English Urban History, 1530–1688*. London: Longman, 1990. p. 49.
- 5 *Ibid.* pp. 48–49.
- 6 *Ibid.* p. 49.
- 7 Dyer, Alan, 'Growth and Decay in English Towns, 1500–1700'. *Urban History Yearbook*, 1979, p. 67.
- 8 Quoted in: Cornwall, Julian, 'English Country Towns in the Fifteen Twenties'. *Economic History Review*, 2 ser., 15(1962/3). p. 54.
- 9 Harrison, *Description of England*. p. 118.; Smith, *De Republica*. pp. 76–77.
- 10 Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Berks. c. 44. A full list of the churchwardens is given in Appendix 2.
- 11 Webb, Sidney and Beatrice, *English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Act*. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1906. I, p. 18.
- 12 39 Eliz. 1597/8. chap. 6.
- 13 39 Eliz. 1598. Private Act 8. House of Lords Record Office. The complete text of the Act is given in Appendix 1.
- 14 Windsor Castle XI. c. 22.
- 15 VCH. *Berks.* 4, p. 274.
- 16 PRO. E179/74/215.
- 17 Prest, Wilfrid R., *The Rise of the Barristers: A Social History of the English Bar, 1590–1640*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986. pp. 212–213, 380. VCH. *Berks.* 4, p. 309.
- 18 Hollis, D., ed., 'Calendar of the Bristol Apprentice Book, 1532–1565. Part I: 1532–1542'. *Bristol Record Society*, 14 (1949). p. 104.
- 19 Fuller details of the Aldworth family and their kinship links between 1522 and the end of the seventeenth century can be seen in Family Chart 1.
- 20 Gibbons, Agnes & Davey, E. C., *Wantage Past and Present*. London: William Walker, 1901. pp. 166–176.
- 21 Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Berks. d. 19.
- 22 Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Berks. d. 19.

- 23 Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Berks. d. 19.
- 24 PRO. PROB11/21.
- 25 Two important descriptions of the tanning industry have been published: Clarkson, L. A., 'The Leather Crafts in Tudor and Stuart England'. *Agricultural History Review*, 14 (1966); Cherry, John, 'Leather', in: Blair, John and Ramsay, Nigel, *English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen, Techniques, Products*. London: Hambledon Press, 1991.
- 26 PRO. E179/74/195; PRO. E179/74/197. This illustrates the main difficulty in compiling a family tree for the Aldworths. John, Robert and Thomas are common forenames and without precise details as to parentage it is impossible to place them within the family group.
- 27 PRO. PROB11/38.
- 28 Shiphouse being a dialect form of Shepherd's House.
- 29 Dicker = 10 hides of leather.
- 30 Bindoff, S. T., *The House of Commons, 1509–1559*. (The History of Parliament). London: Secker & Warburg, 1982. I. pp. 304–305.
- 31 *CSP. Patent Rolls. Elizabeth. I: 1558–1560*. London: HMSO, 1939. p. 161.
- 32 Foster, *Alumni Oxon.*
- 33 Bloxam, John Rouse, *A Register of the Presidents, Fellows, Demies ... of Saint Mary Magdalen College*. Oxford & London: James Parker & Co., 1873. p. 145.
- 34 PRO. PROB11/64.
- 35 Clark, Peter & Slack, Paul, *English Towns in Transition, 1500–1700*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976. p. 19.
- 36 George was the third brother of Richard, baptised 15 February 1543, buried 18 June 1615.
- 37 ORO. MS.Wills. Pec.83/1/8.
- 38 BMI. Microfilm 31.
- 39 PRO. C3/231/24.
- 40 Lisset died in 1605, his inventory dated 9 March and undertaken by 3 gentry and 2 yeoman appraisers is a masterpiece of detail and comprises of 495 lines of detailed descriptions of silk, satins, and all other types of material then available, including a whole range of buttons. The vast quantity suggests that Lisset was a form of wholesaler, possibly trading between Bristol and London.

- 41 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec. 83/1/1.
- 42 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/1/5.
- 43 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/1/7.
- 44 Apart from the gate-house the other rooms were a hall with a chamber over it, malt-house and a chamber above, kitchen and buttery.
- 45 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/1/9.
- 46 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/1/13.
- 47 BRO. D/QW7.
- 48 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/1/10.
- 49 BRO. D/QW7.
- 50 PRO. E407/35.
- 51 Gibbons & Davey, *Wantage*. p. 172. ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/1/21.
- 52 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec. 83/1/19.
- 53 *Diary or Exact Journal*, 14–21 November 1644. British Library, Thomason Tracts. Microfilm E18.4.
- 54 Dils, Joan A., ‘Epidemics, Mortality and the Civil War in Berkshire, 1642–6’. *Southern History*, 11(1989). pp. 40–52.
- 55 Bodleian Library. MS.Top.Berks.c.44.
- 56 PRO. PROB8/50.
- 57 PRO. PROB11/250.
- 58 Foster, *Alumni Oxon, 1500–1714*.
- 59 PRO. PROB11/250.
- 60 BMI. Microfilm 29.
- 61 Bodleian Library. MS.Top.Berks. d. 19
- 62 Foster, *Alumni Oxon, 1500–1714*.
- 63 ORO. MS. Wills.Pec.83/1/3.
- 64 ORO. MS. Wills.Pec.83/1/6.

- 65 PRO. C3/186/81.
- 66 Heralds, Berks. I. p. 53, 59.
- 67 Sturgess, H. A. C., *Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple*. London: Butterworth, 1949. I, p. 99.
- 68 Trice Martin, Charles, *Minutes of Parliament of the Middle Temple*. London: Butterworth, 1904. I. p. 561.
- 69 ORO. MS.Will.Pec.83/1/11.
- 70 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/1/14.
- 71 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/1/16.
- 72 Jacob, *Gentleman's Vade Mecum*. p. 97.
- 73 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/1/17.
- 74 BRO. D/QW7.
- 75 PRO.PROB11/39.
- 76 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/2/1.
- 77 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/2/2.
- 78 BMI.Microfilm 30.
- 79 BMI.Microfilm 30.
- 80 BRO.D/QW7.
- 81 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/2/12.
- 82 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/2/18.
- 83 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/2/27.
- 84 PRO.E179/75/341, BRO.D/Ex 49.
- 85 This was *The Practise of Piety* by Lewis Bayly which had reached the 36th edition in 1617. Bayly was bishop of Bangor, and his small volume contains prayers and meditations on the theme of life. Its popularity was such that 'Men singled it out in their wills for special mention along with the Bible'. Wright, Louis B., *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England*. New York: Octagon Books, repr. 1980. p. 261.
- 86 Windsor Castle. XV.31.27.

- 87 MS.Top.Berks.c.44.
- 88 BRO. D/QW7.
- 89 Dickinson, Michael, *Seventeenth Century Tokens of the British Isles and Their Values*. London: Sealy, 1986. p. 26.
- 90 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec.83/2/30.
- 91 *CSP, Domestic, 1659–60*. pp.322, 569.
- 92 PRO. SP18/37. Payne, Ernest Alexander, *The Baptists of Berkshire*. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1951. p. 32. The list of signatories seen by Payne has not been traced.
- 93 Gibbons & Davey, *Wantage*. p. 174. Bodleian Library. MS.Top.Berks.d.19.
- 94 Bodleian Library. MS.Top.Berks.d.19.
- 95 PRO.E179/243/25.
- 96 His trade token was a 'Bear passant with chain'. Williamson, George C., *Trade Tokens in the Seventeenth Century in England, Wales, and Ireland. A New and Revised Edition of William Boyne's Work*. London: Elliot Stock, 1889. I. p. 39.
- 97 ORO. MS.Wills.Pec. 83/1/31.
- 98 Clarke, *Wanting*. p. 187.
- 99 *Ibid.* pp. 187–188.
- 100 BRO.D/A1/137/189.
- 101 Clarke, *Wanting*. p. 188.
- 102 PRO. PROB11/351. The will is dated 10 November 1675.
- 103 Hammer, Carl I., 'Anatomy of an Oligarchy: The Oxford Town Council in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries'. *Journal of British Studies*, 18(1978/9). p. 16.
- 104 Marcombe, *English Small Town Life*. p. 99.
- 105 *Ibid.* p. 55.
- 106 Goose, 'English Pre-Industrial Urban Economies'. p. 71.
- 107 Hammer, *Anatomy of an Oligarchy*. p. 16. The population of Oxford was an estimated 2,665 in 1524, rising to 8,566 in 1667. VCH. *Oxford*. 4: The City of Oxford. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. pp. 75-76.

Chapter 4

GENTRY AND YEOMAN FAMILIES IN CHILDREY, DENCHWORTH, WEST HANNEY, EAST HENDRED AND SPARSHOLT, c. 1522– c.1670

These five parishes can be set apart from the other settlements and hamlets that comprise Wantage Hundred solely by the fact that at the time of the 1522 Muster each had one or two gentry families actually resident within their boundaries. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the impact of these families and to determine whether their presence aided or hindered social development among the resident yeoman families. At the same time the role played by these gentry families in local and county administration will be examined. In addition to the resident gentry all 5 parishes in 1522 had a high number of non-elite families with a goods valuation exceeding £10, the accepted figure for a yeoman.

CHILDREY

In 1522, three individuals were assessed with over £20 in goods and 9 with a figure over £10 (see Table 1 below).

Table 1

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| FETTIPLACE, William | 95 0s. 0d. |
| RICHARDES, Walter | 26 0s. 0d. |
| BUNS, John | 20 0s. 0d. |
| ALDWORTH, William | 18 0s. 0d. |
| HEWAT, John | 14 0s. 0d. |
| SQUYAR, William | 14 0s. 0d. |
| WYXE, Robert | 13 6s. 8d. |
| FERYMAN, Thomas | 12 0s. 0d. |
| HASILL, William | 12 0s. 0d. |
| HASILL, Robert | 10 0s. 0d. |
| HUDESSELDE, John | 10 0s. 0d. |
| YOUNG, William | 10 0s. 0d. |

Details are sparse for these individuals, but William Aldworth was a cousin of the main Wantage family, and the Hasills were prominent in Childrey until the late

seventeenth century. William Fettiplace the resident gentleman held Rampayns Manor and was the youngest brother of Thomas of Bessels Leigh, of the main branch of the family. Fettiplace had inherited this manor through his wife Elizabeth Waring, he being her second husband.¹ This had provided William Fettiplace with the perfect opportunity to establish his own estate in an area not too distant from Bessels Leigh and illustrates clearly the strategy of marrying to obtain land through marriage dowries. At the time of the Muster William was staying with his cousin Philip Fettiplace at his estate in Charney Bassett. Rampayns Manor was valued at £20, in addition William held smaller parcels of land in Sparsholt, West Lockinge and Grove, their combined value totalling £6 6s. 8d.

In common with other members of the Fettiplace family William participated fully in county administration. He was one of the commissioners appointed for the 1522 Muster to oversee the hundreds of Shrivensham, Faringdon, Lambourne, Wantage and Ganfield.² He officiated as commissioner for the same hundreds in the 1524 and 1525 lay subsidies.³ In Childrey he acted as steward to Sir John Veysey, and to John Baldwin, gentleman, in West Lockinge. His own steward was William Hulse, a gentleman then resident in Sparsholt. The presence of his own steward may suggest that his involvement in county administration and as steward to two other gentlemen left little time for the administration of his own estate. In 1526 William was to highlight his wealth and interest in philanthropy by establishing a school and some almshouses in the village and providing for their upkeep by bequeathing to Queen's College, Oxford the manor of Letcombe Bassett which he had purchased for the purpose in 1524, on condition the College paid some of the manor rents back into the upkeep of the school and almshouse buildings.⁴

William made his will on 24 December 1528.⁵ This document provides evidence that he had remarried and was now fourth husband of Mary Engelfield, who in turn was the widow of his younger brother Anthony. The Engelfield family were established county gentry with good connections at court, and therefore a perfect marriage alliance for the ambitious Fettiplace family. Hence William's determination

to continue the alliance after his brother's death. William left to Alexander, son of Anthony and Mary, the majority of the lands in the Wantage area. The closeness of local gentry families is highlighted by small bequests to two godsons, William Hyde of Denchworth and John Chamberlain of Sparsholt, a minor gentry family. In turn William had acted as godfather to William Walter and William Hewyke, both yeomen, resident in Wantage. One of the witnesses of the will was William Hewat, son of John Hewat, assessed at £14 goods in the 1522 Muster.

Alexander moved to Childrey after his uncle's death and he was to found the Swinbrook (Oxfordshire) branch of the family. However in 1532 the Heralds summoned not Alexander but his cousin Edmund to provide details of the Childrey branch. Edmund was the eldest son of the Bessels Leigh branch and therefore the head of the family.⁶ Alexander made his will on 5 November 1542.⁷ Despite having established his main residence at Swinbrook he demanded to be buried in the aisle of Childrey Church should he die in the village. He bequeathed 6s. 8d. to each of his servants 'being a yeoman' that had been in his service for 4 years. This use of the term 'yeoman' illustrates the difficulties in defining the title. By 1542 this branch had accumulated land in Swinbrook, Letcombe Regis, Letcombe Bassett and in Childrey which was bequeathed to 3 sons and 3 daughters. William, the eldest son, received the largest share of land in Childrey and Swinbrook. William had entered Middle Temple on 9 March 1553 eight months after his cousin Christopher had enrolled on 25 July 1552.⁸ However the example of the younger William shows the dangers of marrying into court gentry or aristocracy. His first marriage was to Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Edmund Ashfield. On her death William made what would have seemed a very advantageous alliance by marrying Anne Seymour, sister of the eighth duke of Somerset, Edward Seymour. All was well until Seymour overreached himself, was destroyed by his own ambitions and was beheaded in 1549. Because of their close relationship to this family the Fettiplaces found that their own fortunes declined for a while. However by the time of his father's will William had recouped his fortunes. Another Christopher, youngest son of Alexander, received a lease in Letcombe Regis

and the office of 'Bailieswicke' which is an interesting side note on the inheritance of local office.⁹ An unexplained close relationship with the Aldworth family is shown in the document by Alexander leaving Alice Aldworth £5 to be paid on the day of her marriage.

This branch of the Fettiplace family generally had large numbers of children, (10 or 12 were not uncommon), and this necessitated the purchase of estates to establish younger sons and the provision of marriage dowries for the daughters, both of which would have placed a great strain on the the family finances. Despite the this family retained the manor house in Childrey, and by the beginning of the seventeenth century other cadet branches had become established in Letcombe Regis, East Shefford, Kentwood, Fernham, Upper Lambourne and Swinbrook. Slowly the Childrey branch became more involved in Swinbrook affairs, the family spending longer periods of time there instead of in Childrey.

The Childrey Churchwardens' Account Book which has survived shows that prior to 1600 the families listed in the 1522 Muster all continued to live in the area.¹⁰ Prominent names such as Aldworth, Hasill and Young feature continuously. Only one Fettiplace served as a churchwarden, Nicholas in 1568/9 and again in 1579/80. Nicholas was the eldest son of William of Maidencourt, a minor Fettiplace branch, he married Elizabeth daughter of Richard Plott of Blewbury, gentleman. Elizabeth was buried in Childrey on 10 April 1601.

A cadet branch of the Chamberlain gentry family of Sparsholt had moved into Childrey by the mid-sixteenth-century. Henry Chamberlain served as a churchwarden as early as 1567/8¹¹ and his inventory dated February 1576 has survived.¹² It shows him to have been a man of considerable wealth, £337 3s. 0d., engaging in extensive pastoral farming with over 400 sheep valued at £136 10s. 0d and 60 tods of wool worth £66 13s. 4d.¹³ Other surviving wills and inventories for the village prior to 1600 are scarce but this large valuation and the obvious large scale farming operation placed Chamberlain at the top of the village hierarchy, particularly as the Fettiplaces at this time were turning their attentions to Swinbrook. But this rise was soon reversed

and by the 1590s the fortunes of the Chamberlain family seem to have been in decline. The will and inventory of James, son of Henry, dated June 1593 is still extant and only shows a wealth of £90 17s. 2d, separately listed are his debts of £80 3s. 2d.¹⁴ This included £42 owed to his sister Alice, 20 shillings to his attorney, 20 shillings to a Miles Fettiplace, £3 to 'a gentleman in London' and 'to the roadman in the hill country' 11s. 8d. In contrast to his father's 400 sheep James only possessed at his death a flock of 'twenty sheep at the downe' valued at £5. In the absence of his father's will it is impossible to discern the reason for such a downward spiral of wealth, evidence from the inventory suggests that James had moved into the parental home after his father's death. The latter will and inventory is dated at a time of severe harvest failure and famine which may account for the lower wealth and the high level of borrowing.

The will and inventory of a Hasill father and son are still extant. The father Francis dated his will 28 January 1597, and the estate was valued at £32 4s. 4d. by Edward Young and Robert Aldworth on 5 March 1597.¹⁵ The document has extensive damage but enough remains to show that Francis wished to be buried in Childrey churchyard, and that John, a son, was appointed executor and was to be repaid the debt of 40 shillings borrowed by his father. A second son William was bequeathed 40 shillings. Francis of moderate wealth, died possessing 19 sheep valued at £6, and 2 acres of wheat at £3. His younger son William had a larger estate valued at £83 8s. 0d.,¹⁶ and a greater sense of his importance, as a yeoman. In his will dated 2 August 1598 he demanded burial inside the church in such a position 'that my feete may lye neare to the Chancell door'. Apart from bequests to children, a servant Jane Whithorne was left a bushel of barley, further bushels went to two friends in West Challow and Letcombe Regis. The valuation of his estate shows that despite the years of harvest failures William still prospered and was a more efficient manager than his father. He had 36 sheep and lambs valued at 25 shillings, but there were 14 acres of barley and beans and 29 acres lying fallow.

A minor branch of the Keate family were still resident in Childrey in 1600, this was a descendent of Andrew Keate, with £6 13s. 4d. in goods in the 1522 Muster returns. While the main branch living in East Lockinge were to achieve gentry status in the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitations the Childrey branch shows little rise in status. The will and inventory of John Keate, yeoman, dated 1596 is still extant.¹⁷ John left all his copyhold lands to his wife Marion, while a nephew also named John was to have all the freehold lands, unfortunately the will does not list any of the land in detail. His estate was valued at £78 16s. 4d., and in common with the Chamberlain and Hasill families there was a tendency towards pastoral farming, with 32 sheep and 10 lambs valued at £6. His brother, William Keate, died in 1602. Only the inventory has survived, dated 23 February 1602, and it gives a low valuation of £15 7s. 0d.¹⁸ It was William's son that had inherited the freehold land of John Keate. This son and three daughters were each left 3 sheep and various household items, while the widow received the residue of the estate.

By 1600 the cadet gentry Chamberlain family were in decline, the Hasill family were entrenched in yeoman status, as was this branch of the Keate family. So despite the absence of the Fettiplace family evidence does not show that the resident families in Childrey were able to take advantage of this. The reason may have been the economic climate at the end of the sixteenth century, the harvest failures and the visitations of the plague may both have been contributory factors. The Fettiplace family were still active in the immediate vicinity. Edmund, then head of the family in Swinbrook and Childrey was more involved in county politics than William his father. On two occasions, in 1585 and 1602, Edmund served as Sheriff of Berkshire.¹⁹ He was one of the original Town Governors of Wantage and loaned £7 towards the passing of the Bill.²⁰ In 1607 Edmund was appointed to serve on a commission to undertake improvements to the river Thames so that it should be 'made also passable both unto the Cittie of Oxford and from thence into some part of the Countie of Oxford, Berks, Wilts and Gloucester'.²¹ Membership of the Commission was

important in terms of social status for it gave the members the power to tax and assess the wealth of the population of the four named counties.

Edmund married twice, first Elizabeth Ashford and secondly Anne, daughter of Sir Roger Alford, by these two wives producing 14 children, of which 13 were baptised in Childrey showing a strong attachment to the village. When Edmund died in 1613, his widow moved back to Childrey manor house, and in the 1628 Subsidy she was assessed with £10 in land. This figure was reduced to £6 in the 1640/1 subsidy suggesting that she had been selling off some of the land inherited from her husband.²² Local gentry and yeoman relationships are emphasised in the 1615 will of William Rudd, a yeoman of Childrey who left Lady Fettiplace, 'my kind friend', 10 shillings to buy a ring. The same bequest was left to Mr. Thomas Dolman gentleman of Wantage. The overseers were instructed to divide the estate, valued in 1618 at £60 13s. 0d., between a daughter and grandchild and were to be assisted by 'the Right Worshipful the Lady Fettiplace & my loving neighbour Mr Thomas Dolman'.²³ The wording suggests that Rudd was showing deference for the local gentry and is an example, if a somewhat grovelling one, of the relationship of yeoman and gentry at this time. And it illustrates if only in a minor way the efforts made by yeoman to infer friendship with gentry families which may be useful to them in the form of a reward of some kind, or in achieving a higher status amongst their neighbours. Alternatively such a deference may have benefitted the children of the yeoman after his death.

By the mid-seventeenth century new names appear in the village and the churchwardens' accounts suggest new building had taken place, a situation most likely brought about by the selling off of Fettiplace land by Lady Fettiplace. Robert, a descendant of William Rudd (d. 1618), was still in the village in 1628 with 20 shillings in land but was no longer there in 1640/1.²⁴ The Wantage Tubb family had £3 in goods in 1628 but again were no longer there in 1640/1. New village names were Bunce, Taylor and Alder, illustrating the fluctuations in village inhabitants at this time. Both Alder and Taylor were cadet branches of established Wantage families. The churchwardens' accounts show that John Bunce of 'ye Newhouse' and

another John Bunce 'of the upper end of the town', possibly the same individual, continually served in the office of churchwarden. So did John Hasill 'of ye middle of the town', the current West Street of today. All three served during the troubled 1640s.²⁵ These accounts also highlight an important feature of local self-help. Numerous references are made to loans being made from the original 1530 £4 bequest of the Rector, Bryan Roos. The loans were usually small, 6s. 8d. or 13s. 4d. was common, and each borrower had another parishioner stand as a surety for repayment of the loan. In 1617 William Hasill was lent £3 with William Coxe as surety; Cox in turn was lent £3 and Hasill returned the favour by standing surety for his friend. In some years the total lent out was high; £17 6s. 8d each year for 1614 to 1617; £15 for 1618. During the unrest of the Civil War and the Interregnum the total amount loaned increased, highlighting the hardships experienced by rich and poor alike during this period. For the years 1644 to 1647, £20 annually was the sum loaned. This system drew the attention of the Commission for Charitable Uses, and William Hasill and John Tame were ordered to appear at the Court held at Faringdon on 8 December 1657 to explain the accounts.²⁶ Hasill and Tame produced a list of the current loans; a total of 17 individuals were in debt to the charity, all having promised to repay with interest. However William Cox, with William Hasill as surety, had forgotten how much he had borrowed on one occasion, suggesting that the Commissioners were correct in their fears over the running of the charity.²⁷

Edmund Fettiplace had been succeeded by his eldest son John, who was to die a bachelor in 1657. John served as Sheriff of Berkshire in 1630²⁸ and, in common with his father, was one of the Wantage Town Governors, elected in 1638.²⁹ John was also deeply involved in county politics being member of Parliament for Berkshire in 1626, 1628 and in 1640.³⁰ In both the 1628 and 1640/1 subsidies he was assessed with £12 in land.³¹ John was a fervent royalist, and entertained Charles I at Rampayns Manor on the night of 9 April 1644, whilst the commander of his troop Lord Bernard Stuart lodged at the home of Sir George Wilmot in Wantage and the ordinary soldiers found quarters as best they could within the town.³² This blatant support for the royalist

cause was later to cost the Fettiplace family of Childrey and Swinbrook the huge sum of £1,943.³³

After the failure of the royalists John Fettiplace retired disillusioned from local and county politics, devoting his time to the management of his estates. He was, however, strongly convinced of the necessity of education, and on 29 September 1652 founded a grammar school in Dorchester (Oxfordshire) for which he set down very detailed rules and regulations showing a learned interest in the classics, literature and religion.³⁴ The schoolmaster was to be aged between 23 and 60 and 'able to instruct his Schollers both in Latine & Greek in prose and verse and knowne to be sound in religion'.³⁵ A long list of classical authors deemed suitable for young minds was given, including Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Herodotus.³⁶ John emphasized his non-Catholic sentiments by declaring such things as 'Popish Superstition or like poysons' were not to be taught,³⁷ instead the teacher was to use the catechism 'set forth by publique authoretie since the Reformation'.³⁸ Where exactly John gained his own education is unknown. Three John Fettiplaces entered Oxford University in the 1590s but their matriculation dates do not fit in with the baptism date entered in the Childrey parish register, 23 May 1583, unless John was baptised when an older child. Cases have been known of delays in baptism, particularly if the family was away from their home region at the time of the birth.

John was succeeded by his nephew, also John, the eldest son of his brother Edward of Lincoln's Inn. Edward had married the daughter of a wine cooper and was resident in London. In 1656 John (II) followed in the tradition of his family and became a Town Governor of Wantage.³⁹ In 1667 he served as Sheriff of Berkshire,⁴⁰ having previously been made a baronet in 1661 'in consideration of services and sufferings for King Charles I'.⁴¹ Between 1657 and 1659 John (II) served as a Commissioner for the Berkshire Commission for Charitable Uses, at the same time as his uncle Charles of Earls Court, Lambourne.⁴² John II died in 1672 and was succeeded by his eldest son Edmund who died without issue, as did Edmund's two brothers who succeeded in turn. This branch of the family was then continued by a

sister Diana who had married a Robert Bushell, Esquire, who later took the Fettiplace name. Before his death Edmund in October 1676 leased Rampayns Manor, Woodhill and land in Childrey, Letcombe Regis and Letcombe Bassett to James Almont, gentleman and Richard Huggins, gentleman of Staple Inn, London. From this date the Fettiplace family were no longer resident in Childrey but devoted their attention to the Swinbrook lands,⁴³ although it was not until the nineteenth century that they finally sold the manor.

The Hearth Tax Returns for November 1663 show that Childrey had grown from 37 households in 1522 to 59, not including the three almshouses.⁴⁴ Of these 59 a total of 27 households did not pay the tax because of poverty. John Fettiplace had 6 hearths, as had a Roger Knight, Esquire, and James Fisher, gentleman had 4 hearths.⁴⁵ In 1646 the manor of Frethorne's, Childrey had been conveyed to John Knight, and it remained in the Knight family possession until 1756 when it passed to John Lee of Arlesey, Bedfordshire. Roger Knight disclaimed at the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitations.⁴⁶ James Fisher was descended from a family resident in Mickleton, Gloucestershire. James being the 5th son of Edward Fisher who had married Mary, eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Chalanor.⁴⁷ Why both families should have moved into the area is unclear. Familiar names such as Aldworth, Hasill (now changed to Hazell), Bush, Bunce and Tubb are entered. Of these John Aldworth had 6 hearths, one of the largest houses in Childrey. But in Childrey the presence of Fettiplace, Fisher and Knight ensured that the yeoman families were dominated by gentry, keeping the village 'closed' and curtailing any marked social advancement of yeoman families.

The Childrey Fettiplace family was descended from Antony, fourth son of John, a member of the household of Henry V, and therefore a cadet branch. But despite this by using the four 'strategies' of land, education, marriage and office-holding they rose to a knighthood and were active in local and county politics. The marriage alliance with the Seymour family in the sixteenth century did cause a slight setback, but this was soon recouped. Their support of the royalist party during the Civil War nearly destroyed their fortunes and John the then head of the family retired from active life.

The restoration of the monarchy saw an upturn in their fortune and status, but the lack of a male heir effectively ended their participation in village and county life. Their nearest relations the North Denchworth branch were in financial difficulties by the early years of the seventeenth century. The actual manor was sold to John of Childrey and the surviving heiress from North Denchworth married the younger son of Alexander Fettiplace of Childrey. The North Denchworth family, being descended from an eldest son, should have taken precedence over the Childrey branch but financial difficulties forced it to relinquish its role and look to the cadet branch for survival.

The Fettiplace family was widely dispersed with branches not only in Childrey, North Denchworth and Swinbrook, but also in Upper Lambourne, Letcombe Regis, East Shefford, Kentwood and Farnham. Between them they owned 46 Berkshire and 8 Oxfordshire manors,⁴⁸ using the strategy of land to great advantage. It was office-holding and marriage that was to cause the few downward trends in their sixteenth and seventeenth century history.

SPARSHOLT

In 1522 the one resident gentleman was William Hulse with £9 in land and £35 in goods. But this wealth was far below that of two resident yeomen, Thomas Chamberlain assessed at £66 13s. 4d. and with 4 servants and Thomas Spicer assessed at £45 and with 5 servants. Hulse acted as steward for William Hyde in Denchworth, John Fettiplace in Carswell, and for the king in Stanford. For the 1524 Subsidy he was appointed a commissioner for the hundreds of Wantage, Ganfield, Faringdon, Shrivenham and Lambourne, along with William Fettiplace of Childrey.⁴⁹ Although of county gentry status his influence on Sparsholt was soon terminated when he moved to the manor of Sutton Courtenay having gained this as an inheritance through his wife Agnes.⁵⁰ A descendent of Hulse, Thomas, married Dorothy a daughter of Thomas Yate, Esquire, then resident in Lyford.

The removal of Hulse from Sparsholt left the yeoman Chamberlain family as the wealthiest in the area. The will of Thomas, resident in 1522, dated 15 January 1542 is still extant.⁵¹ In this he describes himself not as yeoman but as 'farmer of Hestminton in the parish of Sparsholt'. There are many different interpretations of this word ranging from one who is engaged in agriculture either as tenant or owner, to a bailiff or steward.⁵² Perhaps the most likely sense in this case is that Chamberlain was a tenant farmer, particularly as the 1522 Muster makes no mention of him having any land and a marginal note gives the information that he was a tenant of Sir George Foster. Another instance of this usage was in the will of John Clark of Ardington dated only 14 years after Chamberlain.⁵³

Thomas Chamberlain was the youngest son of the gentry Chamberlain family resident at Donington Castle, near Newbury. When the main line failed in the mid-sixteenth century Bryan, a younger son of Thomas, moved back to the Donington Castle residence to continue the line.⁵⁴ Meanwhile Thomas divided his estate between his wife Alice and eldest son John, 5 other sons were left £50 each. Thomas stipulated that if the eldest son should die then the surviving brothers were to inherit in rotation. Another house in Colthorpe was left to his wife whom he appointed executor.

One of Thomas's 5 sons was James, a godson of William Fettiplace of Childrey,⁵⁵ showing a close relationship between a family recognised as gentry and one which, although descended from gentry, was not so recognised in Wantage Hundred. James was to rectify this by giving himself the title of gentleman in his own will dated 24 February 1570.⁵⁶ No children are mentioned; instead nieces and nephews were left the profits from the farm in Sparsholt. His brother Bryan, now resident at Donington Castle, was to have the lease of Renscombe Manor and the mill of Twyford. Thomas Field 'my miller' was bequeathed 10 bushels of corn and 20 shillings. Bryan was to allow James's widow to have her chamber furnished at Renscombe and 'meat & drink at my brothers charge on condition that she nor any other children & others retaining to her do molest or annoy my brother Brian or his household'. This suggests that here was a family not at ease with itself and where

possibly there was friction. Bryan was to provide his aunt with £2 3s. 4d. annually as long as she remained at Renscombe; this was to rise to £10 yearly if she left, clearly an inducement for Bryan to keep her at the manor. Although no children are mentioned in the will a Katherine, daughter of James Chamberlain of Sparsholt, married first Thomas Anton of Stratfield Saye and then became the second wife of Thomas Harrison of Finchampstead, gentleman and surveyor of the staple to Queen Elizabeth.⁵⁷ This was a step up in social status for this younger branch of a gentry family, and illustrates that by the end of the sixteenth century they had attained gentry status in their own right, and were of sufficient importance to make advantageous marriage alliances.

One of the nephews to whom James left a portion of the profits from the farm in Sparsholt was John Chamberlain who moved to London and became established as a grocer, a wholesaler in spices and fruits.⁵⁸ His own will dated 7 January 1578 shows that he retained a close affinity with his home village, leaving 20 shillings to the church and the same amount to be divided amongst the local poor families. John was descended from the eldest son of Thomas 'farmer', so the family had become split into three, Bryan had gone back to Donington Castle, John the elder son was resident in London, while the Sparsholt family land was under the direction of the third son. In this family it had been the elder son that had been apprenticed to a trade, while the younger had remained on the farm. This is unusual, research has found that at this period the elder son normally inherited the estate, and the younger sons were liable to be apprenticed to a trade. The reason for this reversal of roles in this particular instance is unknown.

The grocer John divided his estate amongst his 3 brothers and 3 sisters although he was uncertain whether one brother William was still alive. Another brother, Edward, was to have the portion of the farm at Sparsholt left to them by their father. The interesting point of this document is that despite John having moved away from the village he retained ties with his family in Sparsholt, illustrating the strong links in many families.

By the time of the 1628 Subsidy the situation in the village had again changed. The Chamberlain family had now left the area. The gentry were represented by the non-resident Lady Foster with £10 in land, and Robert Pleydell, esquire, the non-resident owner of Westcot Manor had £6 in land. But by now new names had come into the village, namely Waldron, White, Bush and Grove. Some of the Bush family lived in Childrey and the Grove family, who leased the manor house from Lady Foster, originated in Wantage. But no resident gentry are listed in the document suggesting that Sparsholt had reverted to an 'open' parish since the departure of the Chamberlain family.⁵⁹ The same situation is repeated in the 1640/1 Subsidy, Henry Grove was still resident with £4 in goods, but further new names had appeared, those of Willis and Lawrence.⁶⁰ This continual influx of new families is in line with the current thinking that an 'open' parish attracted immigration into the area, without the constraints of a resident gentry.

The remaining document that gives an insight into the social structure of the village is the Hearth Tax Return for 2 December 1663.⁶¹ The village showed little sign of any growth since 1522. Then there were 22 households and in 1663 the figure was exactly the same. In 1663 the Grove family was still leasing the manor house, which had 7 hearths, and was now owned by the Craven family who had purchased it from the Fosters. Henry Grove, who leased the manor in 1663, or a namesake, owned another 3 hearthed house in the village. The Lawrence and Willis families were still resident, a Richard Lawrence was constable, but yet again new families, Doo, Bunce, Johnson and Rowlands, are listed.

The consistent appearance of new families in the village suggests that Sparsholt had a constantly mobile population although no growth in numbers. The departure of the gentry Hulse family changed the status to that of 'open' except for a brief period when the Heralds' Visitations show the gentry Plotte family resident.⁶² In only one surviving document does the Chamberlain family refer to themselves as gentry and that is in the will of a youngest son. One further gentleman, a John Combes, appears in the 1640/1 Subsidy but, like the Plotte family, his stay seems to have been short.

The 1663 Hearth Tax identifies no gentry as resident. Both Childrey and Sparsholt confirm that villages in this period could experience a continual turnover of families even in the higher social levels.

DENCHWORTH

In Denchworth the gentry Hyde family had been in possession of the manor since the thirteenth century. In 1522 of the total land value of £33 8s. 8s. William Hyde possessed £15 13s. 4d. (48.4%), and of the total goods valuation of £185 2s. 0d. he owned £66 13s. 4d. (36.2%). At this time William (c. 1496–1557) also owned small parcels of land in Wantage (13s. 4d.), Charlton (£3) and Grove (£2 13s. 4d.). His mother Anne, who lived in his household, possessed goods valued at £10.⁶³

In contrast to Sparsholt, Denchworth was in 1522 a village with no wealthy yeoman; John Westbroke with £16 in goods and Richard Cockes with £10 were the only two villagers with any degree of wealth. This would normally leave the gentry as undisputed leaders of the village, but as William Hyde was active in county and court politics he was rarely resident in the village, leaving his household to be run by his wife and mother. In 1523 Hyde was appointed one of the commissioners for the next four years for the Berkshire Subsidies,⁶⁴ and in 1540 he was considered of sufficient importance to attend the reception at court for Anne of Cleves. He served as Sheriff of Berkshire in 1551/2, and was a Member of Parliament for the county from 1553 to 1555.⁶⁵ In 1533 William purchased the manor and advowson of Kingston Lisle valued at £80 p.a. from Sir John Dudley for £1,476.⁶⁶ In 1539 Viscount Lisle, stepfather to Dudley (after a dispute with Hyde over the original Dudley purchase) granted to Thomas Bothe of Balking, gentleman and trustee for William Hyde, the manor of Kingston Lisle and a park belonging to it for the sum of £120 p.a.⁶⁷ William married twice and had 12 sons and 8 daughters which, despite his status as court gentry, placed a great strain on his finances. In his will he provided for the younger children, having previously given his eldest sons their portions, appointing as executor John Yate of Lyford, husband to Alice, one of his sisters.⁶⁸

William was succeeded by his eldest son William (II), who had matriculated at Oxford University in 1529/30.⁶⁹ In 1563 he followed the tradition of his father and represented St. Germans, Cornwall, in Parliament.⁷⁰ But unlike his father he was not active in Berkshire county politics nor did he attend court. His Catholic leanings (it was reported to the Privy Council in 1564 that he was 'No furtherer' of the Anglican creed), made the court a dangerous place.⁷¹ However he did serve as a J.P. for Berkshire from 1559–1564. He married Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Essex of Lambourne, by whom he had 5 sons and 5 daughters.

William (II) was succeeded by his eldest son William (III) who is possibly the William Hyde who matriculated at Oxford University in 1562 and later entered the Inner Temple in 1566.⁷² Like his father there is no evidence to show that he took an active role in county politics. He married Katherine, daughter of George Gill, Esquire of Wydyall, Hertfordshire, by whom he had 2 sons and 3 daughters. William (III) died in 1598 but the Subsidy Returns of that year fail to list a Hyde as resident in the village. By this date they had developed their new acquisition of Kingston Lisle as the primary family home, keeping only a token household in Denchworth.

William (III) was succeeded by his eldest son George who, like his father and grandfather, matriculated at Oxford University, entering Queen's College 27 October 1586 aged 16, and in 1590 entered Gray's Inn.⁷³ George was more involved in county politics and administration than his father. He married Catherine daughter of Sir Humphrey Ferrers of Tamworth in 1597, and his father-in-law was instrumental in Hyde representing that seat in Parliament. By 1601 he was officiating as J.P. and M.P. for Berkshire.⁷⁴ At the coronation of James I he was knighted along with numerous others.⁷⁵ This was not such an honour as is first apparent. James I decreed that all men worth £40 p.a. were to present themselves at his coronation to be dubbed knights. George Hyde was one of 432 who obeyed the summons on 23 July 1603. James and his son Charles I continued to devalue the rank of knight, conferring a total of 3,281 knighthoods between 1603 and 1641.⁷⁶ Along with his neighbour and friend, Edmund Fettiplace, George was elected to serve on the 1607 Commission to improve the river

Thames for barges, and empowered to raise taxes to pay for such improvements.⁷⁷ His brother Robert, then resident in Charlton, was elected one of the Wantage Town Governors in 1611.⁷⁸

In 1617 the Hyde connection with Denchworth ceased when George relinquished the manor to William Cockayne, Alderman of the City of London. This action was forced on him because his eldest son, Humphrey who had borrowed £5,000 from Cockayne in the 1590s was unable to repay the loan with interest. Humphrey had married Anne daughter of Sir Lawrence Hyde of Salisbury.⁷⁹ Lawrence Hyde had agreed to pay a marriage portion of £2,500 to go towards repaying the original debt but when Hyde reneged on this agreement George Hyde was forced to mortgage the Kingston Lisle estate to repay the part repayment of £2,500, leaving a further £2,500 plus interest to find. Finally all but £400 remained outstanding. Cockayne took the matter to the Chancery Court in an attempt to obtain the final £400 then outstanding but eventually the Hyde family relinquished Denchworth in payment of this sum.⁸⁰ From henceforth the Hyde family's interest in the village ceased and in the 1628 and 1640/1 Subsidies the non-resident Lady Cockayne was assessed with £25 in land.⁸¹ In 1663 the manor was again sold this time to Gregory Geering, who was to disclaim in the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitation.⁸² The origin of the Geering family is in doubt, as is the date when they first arrived in the hundred.

However, in reality Denchworth had become an 'open' village when the Hyde family purchased Kingston Lisle, and from that moment on the resident yeoman families became more important. For some decades one such family, for whom a number of documents survive, was that of Wiblin. In the 1522 Muster a Thomas Wiblin owned goods valued at £4 and freehold land valued at 5 shillings, a wealth level below that of a yeoman. John Wiblin, his son, was witness to the 1543 will of the vicar David ap Jenkyn, in which Jenkyn left his goods to William Hyde.⁸³ The will of this John Wiblin, yeoman, dated 22 April 1557, has survived.⁸⁴ The document shows that John had been actively engaged in the purchase of land primarily to

provide for his sons. To one son, Richard, he bequeathed a tenement and 2 acres of arable land in Denchworth purchased from Thomas Emans of Argaston(?), and a further 2 acres of land in Denchworth purchased from Hugh Hapkins of Drayton. A second son Thomas was to have 1 close and half an acre of arable land in Charlton purchased from John Warne of Ardington, with 3 acres of land in 'Manndhyll between Grove and Charlton' purchased from Richard Hermay of Wantage. A third son, William 'youngest of that name', was bequeathed a house in Letcombe Regis purchased from Thomas Stone of Letcombe Regis. The two elder sons, John and William 'the eldest of that name', were to share between them the lease of a house at 'Buckondesmarsh'. Richard was to have the majority of the agricultural possessions including 4 score sheep, 4 horses, the best plough and cart and the crops not yet harvested. Thomas, who was to remain in the house where he lived, was to have the household possessions, some cattle and the residue of the estate. The daughters had £30 each and the remaining household items not left to Thomas. The will is of a yeoman who had built up his land possessions by purchase and not just within the vicinity of where he lived but further afield. By this active policy of land purchase John Wiblin was advancing the social status of his family, as well as providing land for his own sons to establish their families. Here can be seen the strategy of 'land' widely used by a family slowly moving from husbandman to yeoman status. But it is important to remember that John was himself using resources built up by his father before him, and this enabled John to advance the family up the social ladder.

The 1598/9 Lay Subsidy lists a Richard Wiblin with £4 in goods and a Mary Wiblin with £3 in goods, and the latter's will and inventory are still extant.⁸⁵ The will is dated 31 October 1613 and the inventory 10 November 1613. The will mentions 4 sons and 2 daughters, one of whom had married William Hobbes of Letcombe Bassett and the other William Alder of Denchworth. All the children were left various small bequests of barley, horses or household items, and one son Richard received the sum of £10. The inventory was valued at £63 9s. 6d. and shows a mixed farming operation, with 14 sheep worth £46 8s. 0d, 3 hogs and 3 pigs £5, wheat and barley in the barn £8,

one and a half acres of wheat in the field £5 and 12 and a half acres of arable land lying fallow. No rooms are listed in the inventory so it is impossible to discern in what size house she lived.

A third will to have survived is that of Anne Wiblin, widow, the will dated 14 August 1617, the inventory 20 September of the same year.⁸⁶ The valuation of the estate is £90 1s. 4d., larger than the earlier inventory. In the will two sons are mentioned; one John was left £8 upon condition that he shall make his brother William a release for the 'great innoyinge of the sheephouse'. One daughter Anne had married into the Batten family of Ardington, but her mother had little liking for her son-in-law and left her daughter £8 'upon condition that her husband Henry Batten do instate her in living to my executors liking'. The farming operation was concentrated on arable, the corn crop being valued at £60.

In the 1628 Subsidy a William Wiblin, senior, and a William Wiblin, junior, are both listed with £3 in goods.⁸⁷ The will and inventory of William, junior, are still extant, both dated 1632.⁸⁸ The document illustrates quite clearly the difficulty in placing an individual in a social category using only wealth valuations, for here William with an inventory value of £254 11s. 4d. calls himself a 'husbandman'. This valuation would put him in the upper yeoman bracket and on the evidence of Wantage Hundred would place him on an equal par with some of the gentry. One son and 3 daughters are mentioned. The daughters were to have £100 each when they reached the age of 17, as long as they are 'ruled & guided' by their mother and overseers, one of whom was William Coxhead of West Ginge. Daniel the son was to have £5 annually from the age of 17 until his 21st year, and thereafter he was to 'enjoy the living' with his mother, and when he reached the age of 30 he was to give £4 each to his sisters. William lived in a substantial house with 4 chambers, hall, buttery, kitchen and dairy house. He engaged in mixed farming, the corn in the field being valued at £95, the sheep on the common £40 and the 'sheep & beasts in the pasture' £25.

One of the overseers and appraisers of the inventory was John Wiblin whose own will is dated 1 May 1634 and the inventory 22 September 1636.⁸⁹ His

relationship to the above William Wiblin is unknown. John only left an estate valued at £11 15s. 0d., as no wife nor children are listed he may only have been a young man. In common with William, John titles himself a husbandman. Three brothers were bequeathed 3s. 4d., as was a sister, and various kin were left odd amounts of money. He died possessed of 1 acre of wheat and 1 and a half acres of barley worth £3, and hay 12 shillings.

The 1640/1 Subsidy lists Christian Wiblin, widow of William (d. 1632) with £4 in goods, and a William Wiblin with £3 in goods who was either the brother or uncle of John (d. 1634). The surviving documents show a family of fluctuating wealth and social status never higher than a yeoman. Apart from one marriage alliance with the Fettiplace family when Margaret, daughter of Moses Wiblin married John Fettiplace at Buckland on 19 June 1617, alliances were concentrated on yeoman or husbandman families resident within Berkshire, such as Abingdon, Letcombe Regis, Longworth, Blewbury, and Kingston Lisle. The Wiblin family had been resident in the village since 1522 and in the absence of a gentry family this may have given them considerable local status. The Denchworth Hearth Tax Returns for 29 October 1664 show a Daniel Wiblin with 2 hearths, and 2 William Wiblins with 1 hearth each.⁹⁰ One William was the constable while William Wiblin, junior, was a churchwarden, illustrating that the family engaged in local office-holding. But there is no evidence to suggest that either held a county office at any time.

While the village was 'closed' in 1522, by the end of the sixteenth century the removal of the Hyde family to Kingston Lisle opened the door for yeoman families to grow in influence through the absence of resident gentry. Unfortunately few wills and inventories apart from those of the Wiblin family have survived so it is therefore impossible to compare the rise of yeoman families in a now 'open' village. Because of this lack of surviving documentation the Wiblin family must be assumed to have been the chief family. However this assumption is fragile and is only based on surviving evidence.

WEST HANNEY

In 1522 the manors of West Hanney were in the hands of non-resident landowners. Thomas Eyston of East Hendred held Seymours Court, John Yate, merchant of Lyford and Buckland, held Andrews Court, and New College, Oxford held West Hanney manor itself. But there was one resident gentleman, Oliver Wellesbourne, who leased land but held £60 in goods and had 2 servants. Three yeoman held goods valued at £10 and more, and there were 24 resident husbandman families.

Wellesbourne was the younger brother of John (c. 1498–1548) of Fulwell and London, who was M.P. for Oxfordshire in 1539, and ambassador to France in 1529/30.⁹¹ John and Oliver were the sons of Thomas, possibly of Chipping Wycombe, Buckinghamshire and his wife Margery, daughter of Thomas Poure of Bletchingdon, Oxfordshire. However, in a pedigree made for the 1566 Heralds' Visitation, but not entered, the father of John and Oliver is stated to be of Wickham, Buckinghamshire.⁹² John bequeathed his books to John Eyston of East Hendred, who in turn was later to marry Jane Yate, Oliver's widow. Little is known of Oliver in the early years but his brother's steady advancement at county and court level was to prove beneficial to Oliver's career. In 1539 as the 'King's Servant' Oliver was appointed bailiff of the manors of Abingdon, Marcham and Hanney in Berkshire and the manor of Lewknor, Oxfordshire.⁹³ A year later he was made 'keeper' of the former Abingdon Abbey manor in Cumnor,⁹⁴ after his brother had been appointed steward of the Abbey's lands in 1539.⁹⁵ In 1544 Oliver was listed as one of Berkshire gentlemen who could furnish soldiers for a projected war with France.⁹⁶ Other leading figures from Wantage Hundred listed in the same document were William Hyde, John Cheney, Alexander and Philip Fettiplace, John Yate and John Latton, who was Oliver's son-in-law. In 1545 Oliver was appointed along with Thomas Vachell to survey the supply of corn in Berkshire and to investigate those who stockpiled surpluses and were suspected of causing shortages in the county.⁹⁷ While this was an important office it also made Wellesbourne and Vachell unpopular, particularly with those gentry who were

hoarding supplies. In 1546 Oliver was named as one of the king's debtors, as bailiff of Abingdon he was:

charged with the rent of 3 shops under Colstrig in the market place of the town at 20s a year and of the stalls fixed there at the time of the fair at 33s. 4d. and of 4 fishmongers' stalls in the market 8s, which rents have been 7 years in arrear. Total 24l 10s. 8d.

Oliver was able to prove that the shops were in a state of decay making it impossible to levy a rent so he was discharged.⁹⁸ Oliver predeceased his brother who died in April 1548 so while the date of death is unknown it fell sometime after 1546 and before April 1548.

Oliver had married twice, first to Joane daughter of a Humpfreys of Abingdon, and secondly to Jane daughter of John Yate of Lyford. His family was large, 6 children from his first marriage and 2 by his second. In West Hanney Oliver was succeeded by his eldest son, Francis who died in 1602 aged 76, and was buried in West Hanney on 5 November 1602. His younger brother John predeceased him, being buried also in West Hanney on 31 May 1587. Like his father Francis had married twice, firstly to Alice daughter of Martin of Evelton, by whom he had no children, and secondly to Elenor, daughter of Thomas Stafford of Bradfield, Berkshire, by whom he had three daughters. One died in childhood, but the eldest daughter married Paul Ambrose Croke, Esquire of East Hanney, and Anne the second daughter married Edward Clarke of Ardington. With the three daughters the name of Wellesbourne died out in the region and at this point the village reverted to 'open' with no resident gentry. All three manors were still in the possession of those detailed in 1522.

The earliest surviving Subsidy relating to West Hanney, 1628, does not differentiate between West and East Hanney, making it impossible to identify the inhabitants separately. However the 1665/6 Heralds' Returns show that the gentry family of Ayleworth was resident in West Hanney, and much earlier in 1628 a Anthony Ayleworth, gentleman, was listed with £3 in goods, so the family had been resident for some time.⁹⁹ The origin of the Ayleworth family is not clear. The first relevant entry in the parish registers is the baptism of Katherine on 27 July 1623,

daughter of 'Mr. Anthonie'. The register entries for the family after that are spasmodic. Only one marriage is entered, that of Katherine to William, son of John Yate of Lyford. For baptisms only 12 are entered between 1623 to 1671, the children of two Anthony Ayleworths and an Andrew, and 7 burials between 1669 and 1692. All this suggesting that the family had a residence elsewhere and were only intermittently in the parish. The Heralds' Visitation of Gloucestershire shows an Ayleworth family resident in a village of the same name, and it is possible that there was some kinship connection although no evidence has been traced to confirm this. The Gloucestershire family married into the Oxfordshire Tackley area and from there is only a short step into Berkshire.¹⁰⁰

Few documents have survived that relate to West Hanney from 1522 to 1700, and the Hearth Tax provides the only evidence as to inhabitants.¹⁰¹ From the 28 households in 1522 the village had shrunk to 21 by 1663. Three family names in 1663, Dunsdon, Tull and Kimber, also appeared in the 1522 Muster. A Thomas Dunsden had 5 hearths, the second largest number in West Hanney, and held the position of constable. He was ordered to produce his pedigree to the Heralds in 1665/6 but failed to do so.¹⁰² Tull and Kimber had two hearths each. The Ayleworth family was represented by Antony with 3 hearths, and a younger brother Andrew had 5 hearths. If these figures are correct then the gentry family did not live in the largest house. Anthony Ayleworth, aged 45 in 1665 had married Joyce, daughter of Mark Hawkins of a yeoman family of Babington, Somerset. Andrew had married into the gentry Champion family of Wantage, and his father-in-law George was Clerk of the Peace for Berkshire. Despite being the younger brother Andrew had made the more advantageous marriage, marrying into a family prominent in county administration. The father of George Champion had been Clerk of the Peace for Surrey from whence the family originated. This is one instance where an advantageous marriage is more beneficial than actual wealth.

The Hearth Tax shows a village in the late seventeenth century smaller than in 1522 but with many new families. One such was that of Edward Bowles, yeoman,

with 9 hearths representing the largest residence in the village, possibly the manor house originally the home of the Wellesbourne family. But the absence of documentation makes it impossible to analyse the structure of the village in any detail, particularly after the absence of the Wellesbourne family. For a while the village reverted to that of 'open' but the arrival of the Ayleworth family, recognised as gentry, gave it the appearance of being 'closed', although the parish registers suggest that this particular family was not resident all the time. Along with Thomas Dunsden, Edward Bowles and William Yate were summoned to appear before the Heralds but like Dunsden failed to do so.

EAST HENDRED

In 1522 East Hendred had two resident gentry. Robert Hyde, an offshoot of the Denchworth branch, had £1 in land and £30 in goods. The second family was represented by Thomas Eyston, then a minor, with £10 in land and a moderate £10 in goods. Eyston owned Arches Manor in the village which had been in his family since the fourteenth century, and in addition possessed the manor of Seymours Court in West Hanney, valued at £10 in land.

A strong connection between the Hyde and Eyston families commenced in 1518/19 when Robert Hyde was appointed guardian to Thomas Eyston during his minority.¹⁰³ This was further emphasised when Thomas married Robert's daughter Elizabeth,¹⁰⁴ an action which brought the Eyston lands temporarily under Hyde administration. Both these families were to remain in residence throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁰⁵

The Eyston family remained loyal to the Catholic faith despite continual persecution and presumably for this reason there are only 2 entries relating to the family in the parish registers. This adherence to the Catholic doctrine may be the reason for the noticeable lack of public office held by the family. In the sixteenth century there is only one such appointment, when John Eyston, grandson of the Thomas listed in the 1522 Muster, was appointed Escheator for Berkshire and

Oxfordshire in 1562.¹⁰⁶ John was to marry 3 times. His first wife was Joan Clifford, a marriage for which he had to obtain a dispensation from Cardinal Pole because of consanguinity. His second wife was Jane, daughter of John Yate of Lyford, the widow of Oliver Wellesbourne of West Hanney, and the third wife was Jane, daughter of Thomas Berington of Streatley, Berkshire.

In 1589 John Eyston and Humpfrey Hyde of East Hendred united with their neighbours the Fettiplaces in an Exchequer case in which John Halliwell claimed from the estate of the late Sir John Fettiplace the repayment of a loan of £15.¹⁰⁷ John Eyston died the following year and was succeeded by his eldest son William. While John's widow lived in the East Hendred residence, William moved to the manor of Catmore, another family manor. The 1598/9 Subsidy makes no mention of the Eystons, but a William Hyde, Esquire was entered with £30 in lands.

In 1610 William Eyston married Mary the daughter of James Thatcher of Priesthawse, Westham in Sussex. This was another ardent Catholic family who like the Eystons faced continual fines for recusancy. William himself received a discharge from paying such fines for a number of years between 1629 and 1640.¹⁰⁸ The marriage illustrates the increasing difficulty Catholic families were experiencing in finding partners of the same persuasion within their immediate vicinity.

In the same year as his marriage William entailed the manors of Catmore, Arches in East Hendred, and Seymours Court in West Hanney and various other lands to an unborn eldest son and to younger sons in rotation upon the death of the elder. In default of a surviving male heir all lands were to pass to William's brother John, then resident in London.¹⁰⁹ In 1632 William, his brother John, his mother Jane, and William's own son William entered into a legal action to disentail the estate.¹¹⁰ The lands involved in the action were described as 2,200 acres of arable, 200 acres of meadow, 1,154 acres of pasture, and 140 acres of woodland in the villages of East Hendred, Catmore, Farnborough, Ardington, Sutton Courtenay and Hanney; a total of 3,694 acres. There were 43 messuages and gardens, 2 mills and 4 dovecots. In 1623 William Eyston consolidated his hold on East Hendred by purchasing Abbey Manor

from Sir Peter Vanlore.¹¹¹ A Court Roll of 1623 reveals that the free tenants of William Eyston were Edward and Thomas Sherwood, gentlemen, and Richard Whiting, Richard Smalbone, William Titcombe, Lawrence Spicer, John Collins and Robert Keate.¹¹² A Martin Eyston acted as witness to the 1659 will of a John Keate.¹¹³ Martin, a nephew of William, was still living in Catmore, being the eldest son of William's younger brother Thomas, who himself was resident in Finchampstead. The presence of Martin in the village to sign a will suggests that he was resident in the manor house either as part of the household or acting as a local agent for his uncle. He was not resident in 1628 when no Eyston members are listed in the Subsidy.¹¹⁴

On 20 March 1637/8 William Eyston the elder and his son William entered into an indenture with Thomas Eyston, brother of the elder William and the tenants of land, commons and pasture called Killmanside and Alfields in East Hendred. The intention was to regulate the pasture of sheep and cattle to safeguard the condition of the grass. A ruling was made that sheep were not allowed to be on the common from the 'First Day of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary until the 1st May the next following', and cattle could not be grazed from the 'First Day of Thomas the Apostle until the First Day of the Annunciation'.¹¹⁵ Perhaps the most interesting feature of this document is not only that William was concerning himself with the pasture of sheep and cattle to protect the land but that the wording still includes the popish 'Virgin Mary' form, abolished at the Reformation. In contrast to the 1628 Subsidy two Eyston families are listed in the returns for 1640/1, 'Mr William' and 'Mr Thomas' and both their wives are noted as being recusants.¹¹⁶ One other recusant with 40 shillings in land was Jane Arderne, the widow of John Eyston (1532 -1590) who had remarried John Arderne of Kirtlington and Tackley.¹¹⁷ William was the heir of William of Catmore, while Thomas was brother of William the younger. Thomas made a second Eyston alliance with the Yate family by marrying Mary, daughter of Thomas Yate. Thomas Eyston

was a good Christian and a Wise-man; he was bred in one of the Inns of Court and was a Councillor at Law. He was a great sufferer on the score of Religion, and so remarkably patient that they gave him the name of Old Job.¹¹⁸

The aftermath of the Civil War brought monetary problems for the family. In 1649 The Committee for the Advance of Money reported that William of Catmore was a papist and in possession of an estate valued at £1,000 a year.¹¹⁹ In 1650 John Eyston of Streatley and Hanney, younger brother of William of Catmore was cited by John Billingsley, minister of Faringdon Church, to the Committee for Compounding over the non-payment of tithes from Hanney, originally due to John Eyston but now diverted to Billingsley.¹²⁰ In April 1652 two-thirds of the Eyston estate in Hanney and Streatley were let to John Deane of Lambourne at £290 a year, with John Eyston and his son John as security for the rent.¹²¹ In February John Eyston complained to the Committee over the severity of the rent, and the case was referred to a court at Reading. But the rent for a 7-year lease of his land was confirmed.¹²² This dealt a severe blow to the family finances and, taken with the large number of children within each group, reduced the resources available to provide for the family. From this moment until the eighteenth century the Eyston family struggled to survive.

In June 1650 a survey of East Hendred was undertaken on the instruction of Parliament.¹²³ This lists Edward Hyde, gentleman, as a freeholder with 26 copyholders present, among them were William Eyston and familiar names from the subsidies such as Keate, Spicer, Yorke and Sherwood. The gentry Sherwood family had been resident in the village since Framptons Manor had been inherited by Anne, wife of John Sherwood, in the early seventeenth century.¹²⁴ The Sherwood family were entered in the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitation, and a John Sherwood served as sheriff of Berkshire in 1672.¹²⁵ So by the end of the seventeenth century East Hendred had two gentry families resident, Eyston and Sherwood.

The 1663 Hearth Tax Returns list 37 households, an increase of only 4 since 1522. John Sherwood had the largest number of hearths 8, followed by 7 in the home of William Eyston.¹²⁶ This particular Eyston was the eldest son of William of Catmore, born in 1611 who died aged 59 in 1670. He married twice, firstly to Eleanor daughter of George Smythe of Eshe in Durham, and secondly to Anne daughter of a Genoese merchant named La Taura. The printed pedigree quotes an unspecified

document saying that he 'was a great sufferer during the time of the civill warrs of England, and was forced to sculk upp and downe by reason of his Religion and Loyalty.'¹²⁷

Despite the downward spiral of monetary fortunes after the Civil War the East Hendred Eyston family appear in the Heralds' Visitations for 1566 and 1665/6.¹²⁸ The Streatley branch of the family are also listed in the 1665/6 Returns.¹²⁹ The eldest son of William Eyston of East Hendred was George, born in 1636 who died in 1691. He married Anne daughter of Robert Dormer of Great Missenden, another prominent Catholic family. He was imprisoned during the 1678 Popish Plot 'and paid 80 pound for Carmer alone then valued at 120 pound per annum'.¹³⁰ Eyston was forced to secure a loan of £1,420 from Gregory Geering of Denchworth on the mortgage for 21 years of the manor and lands of Catmore, Farnborough, a farm and tenement in East Hendred then leased by William Doo, another 2 tenements and farms in an unidentified area called Little Downe and Harneden, and 11 and a half yardlands occupied by William Keate.¹³¹ However, there was a slight improvement when George was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1688, the first public appointment in the family since the end of the sixteenth century.¹³²

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the determination of the Eyston family to remain faithful to Catholicism cost them dear in monetary fortune, and barred them from lucrative office-holding during this period. Members of the family, both male and female entered religious orders. George the son of George Eyston who put forward his pedigree at the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitation joined the Society of Jesus in 1688/9, was ordained a priest, and died in Ghent 1745.¹³³ Finances must have been stretched by the continual fines, and another large commitment were the numerous children born into the family. The 1522 Thomas had 5 sons and 5 daughters; John his eldest son had 5 sons and 1 daughter. Throughout the two centuries an average of 5 children was common, but the William of Catmore who died in 1649 had 8 sons and 6 daughters. In the search for suitable Catholic marriage partners long distances were travelled, yet one more strain on family finances.

Of the 2 gentry families resident in 1522 the Eyston family either by inclination or because of their faith, took little part in local and county politics. Only 2 of the family matriculated at Oxford University, Thomas and William were both sons of John Eyston (d. 1590) who together entered Magdalen College, and matriculated in 1602. Thomas was later to enter the Inner Temple in 1604.¹³⁴ They were parish gentry as opposed to the Fettiplace and Hyde families who entered into county and in one case, court politics. However, their presence maintained the 'closed' status for East Hendred throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The original 5 'closed' villages display differing development until the end of the seventeenth century. Childrey remained 'closed' with the resident Fettiplace family, but they were to leave the area in 1676. East Hendred remained a 'closed' village with the resident Eyston family. West Hanney was 'closed' when the Wellesbourne family were in residence, but when a failure of male heirs caused the name to die out, the village was 'open' for a short period until the arrival of the Ayleworth family. The Hyde family were forced to sell Denchworth manor in 1617 to repay a debt; the village then became 'open' with the yeoman Wiblin family prominent. In Sparsholt, after William Hulse had moved to Sutton Courtenay, the Chamberlain yeoman family, a cadet branch of a gentry family, and themselves named as gentry in one document, moved into the area. But by 1628 they had gone, and a Henry Grove yeoman of the Wantage Grove family was now living in the manor house. In tracing the descent of the original 1522 gentry it has become apparent that there was a high level of mobility for a number of reasons among such families. Only the Eyston family, admittedly of parish gentry status, show any degree of stability throughout the period.

NOTES:

- 1 Fuller details of the Childrey Fettiplace family and their kinship links between 1522–c.1750 can be seen in Family Chart 8.
- 2 PRO. E315/464.
- 3 PRO. E179/73/128; PRO. E179/73/126.
- 4 VCH. *Berks.* 4, pp. 218, 272.
- 5 PRO. PROB11/23.
- 6 Heralds, *Berks.* I, p. 8.
- 7 PRO. PROB11/47.
- 8 Sturgess, *Middle Temple.* 1, p. 20.
- 9 The office of bailiwick was that of bailiff, which in turn could be either a sheriff or steward.
- 10 Bodleian Library. MS. Film. Dep. 52.
- 11 Bodleian Library. MS. Film Dep. 52.
- 12 BRO. D/A1/181/79.
- 13 The average weight of a tod equalled 28 pounds.
- 14 BRO. D/A1/53/54.
- 15 BRO. D/A1/77/138.
- 16 BRO. D/A1/77/141.
- 17 BRO. D/A1/89/40.
- 18 BRO. D/A1/89/65.
- 19 Sheriffs. p. 6.
- 20 BRO. D/QW7.
- 21 Bodleian Library, University Archives S.E.P. 2. Other members of the Commission included local gentry such as George Hyde, John Hungerford, William Spencer and the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford.
- 22 BRO. D/EX 49; PRO. E179/75/360.
- 23 BRO. D/A1/112/31.
- 24 BRO. D/EX 49.
- 25 Bodleian Library. MS. Film. Dep. 53.

- 26 Bodleian Library. MS. Top. Berks. d. 19.
- 27 Bodleian Library. MS. Top. Berks. d. 19.
- 28 Sheriffs. p.6.
- 29 Gibbons & Davey. *Wantage*. p. 172.
- 30 Durston, Christopher G., 'Berkshire and its County Gentry, 1625–1649'. PhD Thesis, University of Reading, 1977.
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- 37 *Ibid.* fol. 8r.
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- 41 G.E.C., *Complete Baronetage*. Exeter: William Pollard & Co. Ltd., 1903. 3, p. 182.
- 42 Bodleian library. MS. Top. Berks. d. 19.
- 43 BRO.D/ERT241/3. The description of the land and buildings involved was: 'The Manor of Rampions and Woodhill and 40 messes 20 tofts and watermill 8 Dovehouses 4 gardens 1600 acres of land 440 acres of meadow 1500 acres of pasture 300 acres of wood 550 acres of furze heath'.
- 44 PRO. E179/243/25. fols. 687, 688.
- 45 In Swinbrook John Fettiplace had 20 hearths. Weinstock, Maureen M. B., *Hearth Tax Returns, Oxford 1665*. Oxfordshire Record Society, 21 (1940), p.179.
- 46 VCH. *Berks*. 4, p. 274; *Heralds, Berks*. 2, p. 4.
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- 48 Dunlop, J. Renton, 'The Fettiplace Family'. *Transactions of the Newbury District Field Club*, 5 (1895-1911). p. 16.
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- 50 VCH. *Berks.* 4, p. 373.
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- 53 PRO. PROB11/52.
- 54 Heralds, *Berks.* 1, p. 80.
- 55 PRO. PROB11/23.
- 56 PRO. PROB11/53.
- 57 Heralds, *Berks.* 2, p. 140.
- 58 PRO. PROB11/56.
- 59 BRO. D/EX 49.
- 60 PRO. E179/75/360.
- 61 PRO. E179/243/25. fol. 698.
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- 63 Anne was the daughter of Thomas Lovingott, Esquire of Elvendon in Oxfordshire, Oliver Hyde her husband had died in 1516. In 1509/10 he had been given a pardon by Henry VIII for an undisclosed transgression. L. & P., 3(2), p. 272.
- 64 L. & P., 3(2), p. 1364.
- 65 Bindoff, *History of Parliament.* p. 431.
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- 67 *Ibid.* p. 103.
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- 90 PRO. E179/243/26.
- 91 Bindoff, *History of Parliament*. 3, p. 577.
- 92 *Heralds, Berks*. 2, p. 224.
- 93 L & P. 14 (1), p. 593.
- 94 L & P. 16, p. 714.
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- 96 L & P., 19(1), pp. 149, 152.
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- 98 L & P., 21(1), p. 636.
- 99 BRO. D/EX 49.

- 100 Chitty, Henry & Phillipot, John, *The Visitation of the County of Gloucester taken in the Year 1623*. Edited by Sir John MacLean and W.C. Heane. Harleian Society, 21, pp. 7-8.
- 101 PRO. E179/243/25.
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- 104 Pedigree of the Family of Eyston of East Hendred. London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1875.
- 105 Fuller details of the Eyston family and their kinship links between 1522–c.1750 can be seen in Family Chart 7.
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- 115 Bodleian Library. MS. Ch. Berks. 910.
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- 117 Eyston Pedigree.
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Chapter 5

LEADING GENTRY AND YEOMAN FAMILIES IN THE FOUR PARISHES OF BETTERTON, WEST GINGE, EAST HANNEY AND WEST HENDRED, c.1522–c.1670

In 1522 land within the four townships of Betterton, West Ginge, East Hanney and West Hendred was predominantly held by ecclesiastical foundations. Poughley Priory held the total land valuation of £13 6s.8d. in Betterton, while Abingdon Abbey owned the total land valuation of £18 11s.0d. in West Ginge. In the two parishes of East Hanney and West Hendred the situation was not so clearly defined. East Hanney was split into eight small manors or estates; Sheene Priory held the largest manor of Priors Hanney valued at £14 6s.8d.; Salisbury Diocese held £10 13s.4d in tithes; and Poughley Priory just seven shillings in lands. The remaining manors were held by 10 individual families, with the largest holding being in the hands of Sir Matthew Cradock with a £20 valuation; the remaining nine families held much smaller portions ranging from a few shillings to the £4 6s.8d. of John Fettiplace. Of the total land valuation in the parish of £65 11s.4d., religious holdings amounted to £28 13s.8d (43.9%), while secular holdings totalled £36 17s.6d.(56.0%).¹ In West Hendred Wallingford Priory was in possession of the manor valued at £39 12s.2d, (43.4% of the total land valuation of £91 15s. 2d), the vicar held £15 6s.8d. in tithes, the Lord of St. John's 13 shillings, and Poughley Priory 10 shillings in lands. One individual, Thomas Sankey gentleman, possessed £15 13s.4d. (17.3%) of the land valuation.

None of the townships were large in terms of households. The Muster lists only one household at Betterton, 4 households in West Ginge, 13 in West Hendred and 18 in East Hanney. All four were in a sense 'closed', since just as the gentry regulated the influx of new residents so could the ecclesiastical lords of the manor in these parishes and hamlets. With the dissolution of the monasteries the situation was to change. This

chapter will examine how these areas developed without the firm control of their previous religious landlords, and how the the resident families adapted to the change and possibly used this new order to their advantage in establishing themselves in the social hierarchy.

BETTERTON

In 1542 most of the estates, including Betterton belonging to Poughley Priory, were given to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, in whose hands the settlement was to remain until the nineteenth century. In 1522 one house was in the possession of John Collins, then assessed at £12 in goods, while his son John, who still lived in the parental home, was assessed at £7 in goods. Compared with other local yeoman families this was not a high assessment, but 5 servants lived in the home which suggests that he was wealthier than the Muster calculated. In 1542 the Collins lease was transferred to the new lords of the manor, and the family continued as tenants into the nineteenth century.

This particular family was famous in the locality and beyond for its Lollard leanings, something which neither the old nor new landlords would have condoned, but nevertheless they turned a blind eye. The elder John Collins of Betterton was one of many individuals in Wantage Hundred reported in 1521 by Robert Pope of West Hendred for reading the Bible in English. Pope himself was under suspicion and incriminated his neighbours in an unsuccessful attempt to curry favour with the authorities.² The punishment was severe and involved fasting, and standing in Burford market place on three market days carrying a faggot of wood. Driven underground, the Collins family managed to conceal their continued practice of Lollardy from the authorities, and we hear of no further transgressions.

At the time of the 1542/3 lay subsidy the younger John and his own son Thomas are listed with 14s. 8d. and 2d. respectively in land.³ A number of early wills and inventories relating to the family have survived, and illustrate quite clearly the social differences within this one group. The earliest extant will is that of the younger John

Collins of the 1522 Muster, yeoman, dated 15 December 1579.⁴ It shows that John I was engaged in large scale farming, and, more importantly, that to consolidate his status as a yeoman he had been purchasing land in both Wantage and neighbouring areas. One son Thomas was bequeathed 'Broodocke' land in Steventon and one close and two acres of arable 'lately purchased from John Payne of Wantage'. Thomas was to enjoy these for his life and then they were to revert back to the eldest son John and his male heirs. The same condition was placed on a bequest to another son William, to whom went one other house in Steventon 'lately in tenure of John Smythe'. Both Thomas and William were to inherit twenty sheep and £40 in 'lawful money'. One further son, Robert was to have £4, while the eldest son John was to have the remainder of the estate and to act as executor. The estate was valued on 6 November 1581 by William Greenaway and Thomas Castell and amounted to £371 7s.6d., of which the two leases were valued at £80. The wealth is substantial for the region and illustrates quite clearly that while the family were tenants in Betterton, elsewhere they had been purchasing land to establish younger sons and as a first step on the ladder of increased social status.

The will of his son John (II) dated 12 May 1584 has also survived, but not the inventory.⁵ Whereas his father requested burial in the churchyard of East Lockinge, the younger John felt sufficiently important to demand burial inside the church. Four daughters were bequeathed £50 each to be paid when they reached the age of eighteen or on the day of their marriage if earlier. The lease of Betterton farm and the two smaller holdings in Wantage inherited from his father were in turn left to his son, John (III). William, brother of the testator was to inherit should his nephew die before the age of 21. His wife Joan was to farm the land until John (III) should come of age; if she did not remarry then she was to have one half 'of my said Hooe Lease during her life', and she was exhorted to bring up the children in 'virtuous and good education'. This isolated entry shows that in one yeoman family education was considered of importance not only for the son but also for the daughters, and it comes at a time when the value of education was increasingly appreciated.⁶ But the ability of the Collins

family to at least read dates back to 1521 as John (1) was accused of reading the Bible in English.

John (II) whose will of 1584 has survived, was one of seven children (six sons and one daughter) of John (I) who had died in 1581. One son Edmund died in 1558 in childhood, but the wills of five other sons have survived. The survival of these wills for 5 brothers is important for it shows quite clearly the way social titles could vary according to the position in the family. The second son, Robert, yeoman, dated his will 13 May 1617; then living in East Hannay he requested burial in West Hanney church.⁷ He bequeathed £20 to his son William, and to his son-in-law Thomas Winterbourne, and £5 to his daughter Mary. The three children of his brother-in-law Oliver Stevenson were left 10 shillings each and Oliver was to be repaid his loan of £20 previously made to Robert. Martha, his wife, was appointed executor and was left the residue of the estate. The inventory dated 20 June 1617 shows a wealth of £285 19s.0d. and a large residence with both maid and manservant rooms. The farming tended towards a mixture of both pasture and arable with 29 acres of barley, 22 of beans and peases, and 17 of wheat. A flock of 96 sheep is listed with 6 bullocks; and cows and pigs.

Martha's will and inventory are still extant,⁸ dated 10 March 1634. While the details of her home do not correspond exactly with that of her husband's inventory there is a great similarity suggesting that she still lived in Betterton farmhouse and had not relinquished it to her son. She had made some alterations presumably taking advantage of the money left to her by Robert. There was now a room within the kitchen and a chamber near to the backside had been added. The inventory appraised by her brother Oliver Stevenson and John Kimber totalled £244 17s.5d, showing only a small decrease from her husband's estate. This despite the expenditure on home improvements, suggests that Martha had practised husbandry efficiently. She in turn left the majority of her estate to her son William and appointed him executor.

The three younger sons of John (I): Henry, William and Thomas are all termed husbandman, this despite Henry having a wealth of £185 11s. 0d. Henry who lived in

West Ginge made his will 9 November 1576. He had acquired land in Farnborough, mentioning a messuage or tenement in the parish called 'Barnes Bondes' which was to go to his son Henry. John, the testator's brother was to act on the younger Henry's behalf until he reached the age of 21.⁹ This lease and house was valued at £40 in the inventory. Another brother Thomas was to have the horses on the farm at West Ginge, the interest on the 'farm grounds' and the 'coppie groundes' held by Henry again in West Ginge. His wife Agnes was provided for by being allowed to stay at the farm as long as she wished and on her departure to have £20. The inventory dated 22 November 1576 was undertaken by Edward Keate, Robert Pynock and Vincent Smyth. Again an interest in both arable and pasture farming are illustrated; 110 sheep valued at £23 10s.5d are listed as well as weaning calves, hogs and kine. The value of the wheat was estimated at £20 and the barley at £50 7s.6d. No details of the house are given. Henry's estate was considerable and well on a par with his elder brothers, but as the third son convention ruled he was of 'husbandman' status.

The fourth brother William in his will dated 4 December 1607, makes no mention of an immediate family; instead his nephew John, son of brother Thomas was left £20 to be paid when aged 22 and another nephew Henry, son of brother Henry, were left the residue of the estate and were appointed executors.¹⁰ The inventory was undertaken by Edward Hyde, John Sherwood and John Stone and totalled a modest £34 13s.0d. Both Hyde and Sherwood were from local gentry families, suggesting that Collins was of a good status. The home consisted of a hall, chamber and kitchen. Apart from the £11 in ready money the largest valuations were given to the brass and pewter (£4) and four quarters of malt at £3 12s. 0d.

The remaining brother Thomas, died possessed of an estate valued at £16 4s.10d.¹¹ Two children, Agnes and John are mentioned; Agnes was to have £6 at the time of her marriage, and John 'my house and close and one aker [sic] of land after the decease of my wife'. If the son should die then the daughter was to inherit. The home was small in comparison with his elder brother's; a hall and a chamber, and a barn in the yard. The wheat sown in the acre was valued at 10 shillings, and there was

one cow, two bullocks and three pigs. The inventory was again undertaken by John Sherwood and a John Holmes.

This valuable set of six wills for father and five sons is important for social historians, illustrating as it does how in one family social status and wealth could be lowered between the eldest and youngest sons. The 1628 lay subsidy shows a land valuation of 40 shillings for William Collins, son of Robert (d.1617).¹² The 1640/1 lay subsidy assessed John Collins with a £4 land valuation,¹³ and it is with him that the title of 'gentleman' begins to feature in documents. Also from this date details of office-holding begin to appear. In 1652 John Collins was one of several Berkshire gentry, among them Thomas Fettiplace and William Hyde, appointed to collect the rate levied for the maintenance of the armies in England, Scotland and Ireland.¹⁴ John was one of 72 commissioners appointed for Berkshire, but it had the effect of emphasising to contemporaries that the family was of sufficient status to be considered along with established gentry such as Fettiplace and Hyde. In 1654 he appeared as a witness in an Exchequer case bought by John Wilson against William Page regarding lands in Lockinge, Sutton Courtenay and a messuage in West Hendred. In this document John Collins testified that he was aged 40 and a gentleman.¹⁵ His sister Joan had earlier married Thomas Pomfroy, gentleman. She had died in 1631 leaving a valuation of £322 12s.0d, of which £300 was owed to her by her father-in-law Thomas Pomfroy.¹⁶ Marriage into a local gentry family suggests that this branch of the Collins family were of sufficient status amongst their contemporaries to consider such an alliance.

The will of John Collins, gentleman is still extant, dated 19 May 1656. His eldest son John was to inherit the remaining thirty-year lease of two-thirds of 'the manor or lordship of Little Shifford' leased from 'Dame Mary Clarke'. Collins had already consigned this lease to his brothers-in-law Richard and John Dewe to hold until John came of age.¹⁷ The second son Jonathan was to inherit the lease of the manor and farm of West Betterton. The residue of the estate went to the eldest son, John. Three daughters, Martha, Francis and Joanna were to receive the sum of £700

pounds each when reaching the age of 21. The inventory has not survived so it is impossible to see if John's estate would have been able to handle three bequests of such large amounts of money, which were intended to provide dowries and thus attract husbands of suitable calibre. Mary, their wife, inherited the household goods along with £50 and was made executor. Numerous bequests were made to nieces and nephews, and to god-children.

The Hearth Tax of 1663 shows dissimilar house sizes for the family. The main branch now recognised as gentry still lived in Betterton, and John had 8 hearths; Thomas and William of East Hanney the descendents of the second son Robert had 6 and 3 hearths respectively. A John Collins of West Hendred, son or grandson of Thomas Collins who left a wealth of £16 4s.10d, had only one hearth.¹⁸ This implies that the West Hendred family received no benefit from their wealthier relations, suggesting that in this one case kinship was not of importance.

The second son Jonathan who had inherited the lease of West Betterton in his father's will was the first known member of the family to enter Oxford University, matriculating at St. Edmund Hall, 9 December 1664, aged 18. Two years later he was admitted to the Middle Temple, 1 December 1666, but died on 19 January 1669 and was buried in the Temple Church.¹⁹ The rising status of the family made university education an essential item on the agenda. While the elder son remained at Betterton to oversee the family home and leases, Jonathan was dispatched to Oxford to equip himself with a suitable education for a gentleman, and later one in law as well, bringing him within the orbit of gentry families.

His elder brother then presumably inherited the lease of West Betterton. In 1663 John had married Mrs Anne Fettiplace of Up Lambourne, the ceremony taking place at Compton Beauchamp. The couple had met when both fathers had served in the 1652 Commission to raise money for the upkeep of the army.²⁰ In 1664 Anne's father was to be Justice of the Peace for Berkshire; by this alliance John further reinforced the gentry status of his branch of the family.²¹

John Collins originally disclaimed at the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitation; in a letter to Elias Ashmole dated 16 June 1666 he blamed the recent purchase of land 'together with the misfortunes of the times' for making it impossible for him to afford the entry fee. One further major problem seemed to be over the design for a coat of arms; Collins suggests that he would pay the fee if Ashmole could agree to a design. The marriage alliance with the Fettiplace family was an added incentive for Collins to be firmly established as gentry and he did eventually enter his pedigree, the likelihood being that the fee was paid by his father-in-law, but without a coat of arms. This was not granted until 6 May 1672.²² John was later to be elected as a Wantage Town Governor in 1667, an office his son Charles was also to hold, being elected in 1688.²³

Despite not entering Oxford University himself, John was aware of the social benefits provided by such an institution so both his sons were sent there. Charles matriculated at Pembroke College on 18 April 1684 aged 18, and in 1685 entered Middle Temple. The youngest son Thomas also matriculated at Pembroke College on 26 October 1696, received his B.A. in 1700 and M.A. in 1703. In that year he became vicar of Gosberton and Quadring in Lincolnshire.²⁴

By the turn of the eighteenth century the main line of the Collins family of Betterton was firmly established as gentry. The advantageous marriage of Joan Collins to Thomas Pomfrey gentleman had been the first surviving sign of the family attracting non yeoman partners, but John, her elder brother only married into the yeoman Dewe family of Harwell. By 1652, however, John was appointed to the Berkshire Commission on raising funds for the army on the recommendation of his brother-in-law George Pomfrey. John's son married Anne Fettiplace, which gave John the impetus to call himself a gentleman, and to follow the gentlemanly custom of sending sons to university. While in Betterton the family remained leaseholders, over the years they actively purchased land elsewhere to provide for younger sons, but there was no wholesale purchasing to the extent undertaken by some gentry families. John himself reported to the Herald that the recent purchase of land had so depleted his resources he was unable to pay the fine for entry in the 1665/6 Visitation.

WEST GINGE

In 1522 West Ginge consisted of four households, two of which would appear to be of yeoman status, namely Henry Carpenter with £20 in goods and John Cockyshedde (Coxhead) with £30 in goods. The will of Carpenter is still extant and proves how fragile is the attempt to place individuals into social categories. In the will, dated 22 September 1525, Carpenter titles himself a 'husbandman', and requested burial in the churchyard of East Lookinge.²⁵ One son Andrew was bequeathed 100 sheep and £13, a second son John 6 sheep and £10. The residue of the estate was left to his wife Alice and son Robert, both of whom were appointed executors.

The inventory of his son Robert is still extant, but unfortunately not the will.²⁶ Sadly no title is given on the document dated 3 November 1550. With a valuation of £340 0s. 8d. and his home containing such luxuries as wall hangings and a carpet, Carpenter was an individual of considerable wealth. He was owed £114 15s. 0d. in debts suggesting that he actively engaged in money-lending. He, like his father, concentrated on sheep farming, West Ginge being on the slopes of the Downs, with 20 acres of wheat and 8 acres of barley. A son, Robert, had been baptised on 25 February 1550 but after this date no documents have been traced relating to the family within Wantage Hundred making it impossible to trace their residence, if continuous, in the village.

In March 1546 John Winchcombe paid £1,067 12s. 6d. to the Court of Augmentations for 'tithes in tenure of John Cockished (Coxhead) from lands called Pynockes in Gynge and Lokynge' as well as the manors of Lockinge and Ginge.²⁷ The Coxhead family had been the wealthiest family in West Ginge at the time of the 1522 Muster, their goods wealth of £30 entitling them to be called 'exceptional yeoman'. They continued in the hamlet until the late seventeenth century. The earliest surviving document relating to this family is the will of John Coxhead, yeoman, dated 6 April 1564.²⁸ It illustrates that over the years the family had acquired land, either by purchase or by marriage in both Berkshire and Oxfordshire. Land in Cutteslowe features particularly in the will. All this land John bequeathed to his son Henry for his

life, then to Henry's eldest son Oliver and to his heirs. Should Oliver have no heir then the land was to go in turn to his brother John, and younger brothers Edward and Richard should the preceding brother have no male heirs. Richard Doo of East Hendred, who was leasing this land and houses from John Coxhead, was to continue to do so at the unspecified rent agreed between them. The executor was son Henry; William Wirdnam, gentleman, and Robert Aldworth, both of Charleton were the two overseers.

Henry Coxhead was listed as a Berkshire freeholder at the end of the sixteenth century.²⁹ He married twice; Jane his first wife died in 1546, and by his second wife Margaret he had fourteen children; 11 sons and 3 daughters. Neither will nor inventory has survived but a note of administration dated December 1584 gives his wealth as £119 2s. 2d. with wife Margaret as executor.³⁰ The number of children to be provided for must have placed a heavy burden on the estate.

His widow Margaret dated her will 28 June 1595.³¹ She ignored all the children except for two. A son Henry was appointed executor and bequeathed the residue of the estate. A daughter, Mary was to have the corn 'now sowed upon the ground and that the next year shall be sowed upon the ground of the customary lands which I hold in Ginge...'. No inventory has survived but the notice of probate dated 21 July 1595 gives a valuation of £216 9s. 8d. This was a considerable increase on her husband's estate, and may show one of two things; either the first valuation was incorrect; or that Margaret was the more efficient of the two in farm management and had increased profits. One of her sons, Thomas 'yeoman' was listed as a recusant 29 January 1600/1, as was his nephew John also titled a 'yeoman', son of James Coxhead of West Hanney.³²

The will of James Coxhead, eldest son of Henry (d.1584), 'yeoman' of West Hanney, dated 14 June 1622,³³ has survived and is important for three reasons: firstly the land detailed, secondly the two gentry members named as overseers, Mr. Edward Clarke, 'Esquire' of Ardington and Thomas Yate 'esquire' of Lyford, and thirdly for the probate valuation given as a massive £1,184 18s. 10d. This is the highest valuation

found for this period within Wantage Hundred. The will provides no clue to its source and the inventory has not survived. In a few other documents relating to other individuals in the hundred a high valuation is given for a long-term lease and this may be the answer here. To his wife Coxhead left 'all my grounds that I hold of Mr Thomas Yate of Lyford', and 'the high way ground called Redmore and the Bushie ground adjoining unto it & the way adjoining to the said Bushie ground' also leased from Thomas Yate, on the condition that she did not remarry. If she did remarry then their two sons John and Richard were to inherit. The son John was to pay the rent of £3 yearly for the Redmore and Bushie ground. John was to inherit this land after his mother's death and in return was to pay his sister Judith 'three score pounds', should he fail to do so then Judith was to inherit the land. The second son Richard was to have the freehold land 'meadow ground called the Broad Meade' leased by Jasper Scoles until 'the Ladie daie next', but again he must wait until the death of his mother. Three other children, William, Elnor and Ursula are not mentioned in the will.

His son John undertook a leasing agreement with Edward Clarke dated 26 September 1627, which sheds some light on the Coxhead family activities and shows at least one member to have been in the service of a local gentry family. Clarke had already acted as an overseer to the will of Coxhead's father and the 1627 document highlights a closer connection between the two families:

In respect of his long and honest service I have granted to him (John Coxhead) i messuage and ii yardlands with the appurtenances late in the holdinge of Agnes Martyn widowe, and in respect of service to be done to me and my sonne, without wage from this tyme forwards ...³⁴

The wording of this document invites more questions than answers. For instance why should Coxhead be happy to work without pay? One interpretation is that he might have felt it reduced him to the level of an ordinary servant, and to own some land of his own would have seemed a more profitable investment particularly for his children, and retained the status of yeoman without the stigma of waged employment. Coxhead's service to the Clarke family has not been traced, the most likely explanation being that he acted as a bailiff, a position of authority in the locality.

From this date the Coxhead family disappear from West Ginge records. One branch descended from the West Hanney family headed by Richard son of James (d.1622) settled in Lyford, and the few surviving documents relate to that line. The Hearth Tax of 1663 shows that a Richard Coxhead had two hearths, suggesting a downward decline in wealth from his ancestors of the sixteenth century.³⁵ The Heralds did not summon the family to present their pedigree for the 1665/6 Visitation. In 1682/3 this Richard was a prosecution witness in an Exchequer case brought by the Attorney General against the Yate family for their alleged allegiance to the Catholic faith.³⁶

This particular Richard Coxhead (bn. 1634, d. 1692) features in two Chancery cases of the late seventeenth century. In the first Oliver Ashcombe of Lyford brought an action against a Leonard Coxhead and others alleging neglect of his estate by these servants.³⁷ Leonard, whose relationship to Richard is unknown, testified that he had served as groom and 'to wait on his (Ashcombe) person'. He went on to say that the estate was managed by a Robert Greenaway who had hired Leonard and also Richard Coxhead to be bailiff. Leonard denied that he had ever received 'any of the rents and profitts...'. This dispute dragged on into the 1690s. In 1692 after Richard's death his widow Elizabeth felt sufficiently secure to bring a case against Sir Oliver Ashcombe alleging arrears of wages for her husband.³⁸ She claimed that Richard had acted as bailiff for Ashcombe for 28 years, while she had been Ashcombe's maid servant for about 14 years. Her evidence stating that John Ashcombe father of Oliver had left Richard Coxhead £20 on his death eight years previously; this Richard had never received. Oliver, in turn, had agreed to pay Richard £20 a year in wages; again this had not been forthcoming. Elizabeth was therefore claiming the £20 bequest and the 8 years arrears of wages. Not unsurprisingly Oliver denied this claim, in turn stating that Richard had helped himself from the estate, and that Richard had died indebted to him. And for good measure Ashcombe criticised

Mr Robert Greenaway who together with some other volunteer managers or agents have under the Colour of friendship and the fair pretence of acting for this defendants

advantage so artfully involve this defendent in difficulties and incumberance as that he is utterly undone.

The outcome of this case is unknown, but its importance lies in the evidence it provides for the Coxhead and Greenaway families being actively engaged in estate management. However, this close involvement with a gentry family had ruined the yeoman Coxhead family, at least in monetary terms, and most likely reduced their standing in the area. In the beginning the lack of opportunity in the tiny hamlet of West Ginge had forced them to look elsewhere for position and income. For the Ginge branch this meant acting as bailiff in the Ardington estate of Edward Clarke. Moving away from the parental home an eldest son settled in West Hanney, while his own son moved again to act as bailiff for the Ashcombe family in Lyford. The Coxhead family restricted marriage alliances to those of yeoman status within the near vicinity of Wantage, except for a few marriages that took place along the main route to Reading, showing that the family had some connection, either though trade or kin in that region. A Francis Coxhead disclaimed at the 1665/6 Visitation.³⁹ This does suggest an early alliance with the gentry Wellesbourne family but there is no supporting evidence. Evidence regarding education is lacking, and was presumably confined to local schools. This family shows a mix of fortunes. Their close connection with one particular gentry family not only lost them money but also status

West Ginge had a mobile population, and as the Coxhead family moved away so other families moved in. One was the yeoman Castle family whose members were scattered throughout the hundred, but of which one branch had become resident in West Ginge by the early seventeenth century. Thomas Castle 'yeoman' and William Castle 'miller' appear in a 1637 East Hendred document itemising leaseholders of land belonging to William Eyston.⁴⁰ At some stage a marriage alliance was made with the rising Collins family, William Castle marrying Martha, daughter of John Collins.⁴¹ In the 1663 Hearth Tax the Castle family was still resident, William having four hearths.⁴² An isolated Hobbs family member lived in the parish for a while; Richard Hobbs made his will on 23 February 1623.⁴³ The estate was valued at £237 7s. 6d. on 17 March 1623; the farm concentrated on sheep, 74 being valued at £35, with wheat

and barley as the crops. By the 1663 Hearth Tax the family had apparently moved from the parish.

West Ginge, a small hamlet, attracted no resident gentry family. The manor itself remained in the hands of non-resident owners well into the eighteenth century. In 1571 the Winchcombe family sold the manor to Edward Horton, who in 1611 sold it back to Benedict Winchcombe son of the original vendor. In 1623 he was succeeded by his widowed sister Mary Hall. It remained in the Hall family until 1720, when it was sold to Matthew Wymondsold who had earlier purchased the manor of East Lockinge. Thus the parish remained throughout the period an 'open' parish with the potential to be dominated by yeoman families. But there is no evidence of long-term residence by such families within the area. In common with gentry families it is possible that yeoman found the small acreage did not provide sufficient opportunity to support families, nor to ensure a rise in status.

EAST HANNEY

In 1538 the manor of Priors Hanney previously held by Sheen Priory passed to the Crown, in 1546 John Cheney of West Woodhay purchased the lordship and manor for the sum of £283 10s. 0d.⁴⁴ A few years later Cheney was indicted for murder, the Privy Council gave custody of his estates to his wife, and it may have been at this time that this manor was sold to John Clarke of Ardington.⁴⁵ Clarke bequeathed it to his second son John,⁴⁶ who in turn bequeathed it to his son Edward. Edward in 1612 sold the manor to Paul Ambrose Croke, who had recently acquired by marriage the manor of Long Hanney in East Hanney.

In December 1545 Long Hanney had been granted to Robert Browne a London goldsmith, Christopher Edmondes and William Wenlowe.⁴⁷ Within one year they had sold the manor to Oliver Wellesbourne then resident in West Hanney. Oliver was succeeded by his eldest son Francis,⁴⁸ at whose death the manor was divided between his two daughters and their husbands. The eldest daughter Francis had married Paul Ambrose Croke who was later to purchase the manor of Priors Hanney from Edward

Clarke.⁴⁹ Edward Clarke had married the second daughter, Anne on 18 April 1602,⁵⁰ and her portion of the moiety continued in the Clarke family until 1720 when sold to Matthew Wymondsold. The Croke moiety was conveyed to John and William Ashcombe in 1640, in 1656 it was in the possession of John Aldworth, nephew of William Ashcombe.

An earlier dispute over the conveyance of this manor resulted in a long standing lawsuit between the Croke, Clarke and Ashcombe families. It originated in 1608 when Edward Clarke challenged Oliver and John Ashcombe over their claims to land previously in the possession of Francis Wellesbourne. Two masters of the Chancery Court were ordered to investigate the various claims, reporting back to the Court on 9 June 1608.⁵¹ They had found that in an indenture dated 20 January 1582/3 Francis Wellesbourne had in his possession lands in East Hanney, Sutton Courtenay, Sutton Wick, Wickfield and Drayton, and that in this indenture he had stated that should he die without heirs then the lands were to go to his brother-in-law's second son William Ashcombe. If William was to die before Francis then William's eldest brother Oliver 'upon tender of a silver spoone' was to take his place. All this was elementary when Francis had two daughters, so the land passed to them as his sole heirs and their husbands Croke and Clarke. Mr Justice Warberton after examination of all parties gave the judgement, dated 27 January 1609/10, in favour of the two daughters.

Edward Clarke wrote out a summary of the case which in itself is interesting for giving the Ashcombe argument. The main thread of it seems to be that daughters were less important than sons, and Wellesbourne's failure to have a son meant that John, the eldest son of Oliver Ashcombe should have inherited the estate. Clarke, who took the side of his brother-in-law, countered this by making the important point that any child regardless of gender should 'in equity have the lands before kindred or strangers'.

The case was again before the courts in November 1620/21 when Paul Ambrose Croke and John Ashcombe were ordered to attend Baron Bromley, one of the Barons of the Exchequer.⁵² The outcome of this was that Ashcombe was ordered to give an

assurance that he would not take advantage of any irregularity in the original indenture and that he would relinquish any claim to the lands contested by his father. The Croke moiety was part of the dowry of his daughter Lucy, when she married Edward Heath, from an established Kent gentry family. Oliver Ashcombe, eldest son of John, obtained the lease, paying rent to Heath, but there was soon friction. In a letter dated 24 June 1639 Heath wrote to Oliver Ashcombe, addressing the letter to Ashcombe's chambers in the Middle Temple, accusing him of being in arrears with the rent, alleging that he had failed to meet Heath at East Hanney the previous week as had been agreed. In addition Ashcombe had so far failed to repay any of the £100 loan obtained from Heath. Heath, understandably upset, demanded that Ashcombe bring the money himself or 'I must and will do myself that right which the law allows me'.⁵³ Unfortunately no further documents survive regarding this dispute so it is impossible to determine the outcome.

The Ashcombe family came into the region in 1568 when Lyford manor in East Hanney was granted to John Ashcombe by George Mordaunt in return for an annuity of £33.⁵⁴ In 1577 Ashcombe purchased the manor of Mautravers in Childrey. Two of his sons entered the Middle Temple, the second son William was admitted on 6 May 1567 and called to the Bar on 9 February 1574/5; the fourth son Lewis was admitted on 15 April 1578 but was not called to the Bar.⁵⁵

John himself was buried at Hanney on 18 May 1593, Margery his wife having predeceased him and been buried on 26 June 1591. John was succeeded by his son Oliver who had married Martha, daughter of Thomas Yate of Lyford. Almost immediately Oliver was the defendant in a Chancery case concerning the Mordaunt copyhold.⁵⁶ Robert Howse the plaintiff alleged that Mordaunt had granted to his family one tenement and 2 yard lands and that this lease had continued under John Ashcombe, involving an annual rent of £1 3s. 4d. for the past ten years. Now Oliver was claiming the tenement and land back from Howse stating that there was no court roll recording the original grant. Howse countered with the evidence that the custom

of the manor was by 'parol grant', in this case by a verbal agreement as opposed to a written agreement. The outcome of the case was not reported.

Oliver's will, dated 1611 has survived. His 'daughter Pleydall' was left £100 and each of her children £5.⁵⁷ To the poor of Wantage, West Hanney, South Denchworth and Charney Bassett Ashcombe left £80. Oliver was succeeded by his son John the first known member of the family to enter Oxford University having matriculated at Jesus College in March 1584/5, aged 17.⁵⁸ In 1589 he followed his two uncles to the Middle Temple and was called to the Bar in 1600.⁵⁹ He married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Clarke, gentleman, of Streatley. In 1614 Ashcombe served as Sheriff of Berkshire and in 1631 as Justice of the Peace.⁶⁰ In 1625 Ashcombe was among local gentry who paid £20 in a privy seal loan to counteract a shortfall in customs revenue.⁶¹ In October 1630 he paid a fine of £37 10s. 0d. for not attending the coronation of Charles I.⁶² Ten years later he paid the same figure in knighthood fines.⁶³

The inventory of the Oliver Ashcombe who had defaulted over his loan repayments to Edward Heath, dated 4 March 1647 was undertaken by three local yeoman: William Strange, Humphrey Tubb and Thomas Beames. The first two were resident in Wantage. Oliver, who divided his time between Lyford manor and his chambers at the Middle Temple, had a moderate wealth at £72 18s. 8d. His inventory shows that he engaged in both arable and pastoral farming on a small scale.⁶⁴ The 12 acres of wheat, a stack of barley and one of wheat, 5 horses, 2 milking cows and 2 ewes with lambs, were probably sufficient to supply his own household.

Three of John's sons followed him into the Middle Temple, after all had first matriculated at Oxford University. Only two of the sons: Oliver and William were called to the Bar; Richard the fourth son entered Middle Temple in 1632 after first matriculating at Magdalen Hall, Oxford in 1628/9, but did not progress further than that.⁶⁵ John and two of his sons, William and Richard, signed the 1641 Protestation Returns.⁶⁶ The will of John Ashcombe has survived, dated 19 March 1646.⁶⁷ As overseers he appointed members of two prominent Berkshire gentry families, William

Lenthall, esquire ‘Speaker of the House of Parliament’, and John Fettiplace of Childrey, eldest son of Sir Edmund Fettiplace, Knight.⁶⁸ Ashcombe’s main bequest was 1,000 marks to be paid to his daughter Elizabeth, but in recognition that his estate might not bear such a bequest immediately it was to be paid in 3 equal instalments over a period of 3 years. John ‘my disobedient son’ was left £20 a year for life, ‘upon condition’ that he shall ‘not to trouble me or my executor’s house...or any tenants of mine or my executors’. This statement is unclear particularly as John (II) was appointed one of the executors. John (I) died in 1655.

No early records of John (II) have survived; there is no mention of him having attended either Oxford University or the Inns of Court, however, he faced continual investigation by the local authorities concerning the £80 left to the poor by his grandfather. At the Court of Charitable Uses held at Wantage, 15 October 1657, John Ashcombe was ordered to attend the next Court to be held at Faringdon on 3 December 1657 to answer the charges that he had placed into the almshouse established by his grandfather his own servants, and strangers to the village.⁶⁹ The complaint was upheld, despite Ashcombe attending the hearing, the court ruled that the present residents could remain but ‘for the time being’ future residents were to be chosen by the vicar and churchwardens.

The matter did not end there. At the court held at Faringdon on 18 March 1658 John Kimber, yeoman of Hanney, complained that Ashcombe had not paid to the overseers of the poor £36 donated by Oliver Ashcombe in 1611. At the Newbury court on 22 April 1658, Ashcombe was ordered to be present at the next court in Wantage and to bring proof that he had paid the bequest. At Wantage he was ordered to pay the £36 and the £40 still outstanding from the legacy of his great-uncle Richard Ashcombe. The case continued with Ashcombe being ordered to pay the money at each court; at the court held in the Pelican, Newbury, on 19 October 1659 it was decided that he had annual assets of £100, and again he was ordered to pay the £36 with 39 years’ interest, bringing the total to £120. At this point in the manuscript there is a gap from 18 December 1660 to 13 May 1674 so the final outcome has been lost.

But Ashcombe's flouting of the ruling of the court shows that, despite influential gentry families such as Hyde and Fettiplace having members on the Commission, the court only had limited powers to enforce their decisions. John (II) died in 1662 to be succeeded by his eldest son John (III). According to the 1663 Hearth Tax return Joan, widow of John (II) lived in a house with 13 hearths.⁷⁰ The family are entered in the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitation. In 1669 John (III) served as Sheriff for Berkshire.⁷¹ In 1683 Joan now living in Lower Quinton, Gloucestershire, accused her son of not providing her with the £140 left her by John (II).⁷² Her evidence to the Chancery Court suggests that she had allowed John (III) to keep the money during the 14 years since he reached maturity in the belief he would pay the bequest when she needed it. Now 'aged' and her younger children having left home leaving her with 14 grandchildren 'besides one child which the said John Ayshcombe himself hath' and needing to provide for the children she was now claiming her legacy. John (III) had inherited in fee simple messuages, lands and tenements in Lyford, Childrey and 'divers other places' to the yearly value of £1,000; therefore should have been able to pay with ease the £140. Not surprisingly John (III) denied the allegations, stating that his mother had had the use and benefits of the profits of the estate until he reached 21 and that should be sufficient. Furthermore, she had only recently mentioned the £140 and he suspected someone had suggested this action to her. The outcome of this family dispute is unknown.

It is difficult to ascertain the parentage of the 14 grandchildren; the Wantage parish registers only contain scattered references. Marriages that have been traced show alliances with the gentry Wellesbourne, Wiseman and Yate families. Oliver Ashcombe married Martha Yate of the Lyford family, who in 1586/7 were fined for recusancy.⁷³ Oliver, the younger brother of John (III) married Elizabeth daughter of Sir Jaspas Chapman, Lord Mayor of London in 1688/9. On 28 May 1696 Oliver purchased a baronetcy which became extinct in 1727 when he died childless.⁷⁴

The religious allegiances of the family are unclear, apart from the conviction of Martha. In 1629/30 either John (I) or John (II) accompanied Sir Henry Vane the Elder

to his embassy in Holland. During his six months' stay Ashcombe composed a report on the religious activities of the British residents there.⁷⁵ This was a time when Charles I was trying to reconcile the Protestant and Catholic doctrines. In the document Ashcombe advocates a stricter control from London which would ensure the suppression of 'all scandalous and libellous pamphlets against Church and state'. But the main importance of the report is that it shows that a relatively obscure local county gentleman such as Ashcombe could play a role for central government and could be away from the parish for long periods in the process. The Ashcombes concentrated on the law as a means of advancement, but they found themselves continually being cited by others in a court of law. Defence would have been expensive despite their ability to act for themselves. The Ashcombes remained county gentry dividing their time between East Hanney and London. Eventually at the end of the seventeenth century a younger son made an advantageous marriage and purchased a baronetcy only for it to become extinct when he died childless.

The Yate family into which the Ashcombes had married were leading merchants. The 1522 Muster shows that various members of the family held land and goods throughout Berkshire. In Wantage James and John, sons of John (I), merchant of the Staple, owned land in Wantage, Grove, Charlton, West Lockinge, East Ginge, West Hanney, and East Hanney. James and John were two of the 11 children of John (I) and his first wife Johann Goddard; he was to have a further 9 children by Alice Hyde, daughter of Oliver Hyde, Esquire of South Denchworth.⁷⁶

By the date of the 1523/4 Lay Subsidy the father John Yate 'gentilman' had become resident in Lyford with £666 13s. 4d. in goods.⁷⁷ In November 1527, following a bad harvest, John Yate was one of a number of local notables appointed by the Crown to look into the apparent scarcity of corn in Berkshire; they were given powers to search all barns and to identify hoarders of corn, because 'more scarcity of corn is pretended to be within this our realm than, God be thanked, there is in very truth'.⁷⁸ Other members of the commission included William and Philip Fettiplace,

William Hyde, Sir George Foster, Sir William Essex and John Latton, all members of prominent Berkshire gentry families.⁷⁹

The will of John (I), dated 27 November 1537, is still extant.⁸⁰ Burial was requested in Longworth church, and the will contains lengthy instructions for removing his body from Lyford to Longworth and the payment of the carriers. His son Peter, priest of Longworth was left £40. John's second wife Alice was to have the household plate and £100. His 6 unmarried daughters were each to have 100 marks, the married daughters £10 each. James, his eldest son was to have all the sheep on his manor in Wantage.⁸¹ The second son, Richard inherited the sheep on the manor of Lambery (?). A third son, Thomas, was bequeathed 100 ewe sheep, 4 kine, one bull and 2 colts. Numerous bequests were made to grandchildren. His widow was to have the residue of the estate and was appointed executor. William Hyde and John Warnford were appointed overseers.⁸²

Alice continued to acquire property in the Wantage area. In 1544 John Williams, Master of the Jewels, alienated the East Hanney manor of Philiberts and its free chapel to Alice and Thomas, her eldest son.⁸³ Thomas was already in possession of the Lyford estate having inherited this from his father.⁸⁴ At some date between 1524/5 and 1550/1 John Yate, grandson of John (I) and eldest son of James Yate, was admitted to the Middle Temple.⁸⁵ In 1567 his own eldest son, Edward, and a younger son, another John, followed their father into the Middle Temple, being admitted on 8 May 1567.⁸⁶ In 1571 one John Yate and a John Hunt were expelled from the Middle Temple 'because they have been imprisoned by order of the Council for attempts touching the state of the Kingdom'.⁸⁷

James Yate, gentleman, made his will in 1543 and died one year later while in prison for his faith.⁸⁸ Five sons were left various farm stock and money, and the 4 daughters inherited £20 each; sisters and grandchildren were also remembered. The importance of education is recognised, Francis his youngest son was to be educated for 6 years, and his eldest son John received 'my great Croonyde booke whiche

Master Englffelde hathe'.⁸⁹ Another son, Philip, was to have his other 'great Croonycle' book. Mary, his wife, and sons John and Philip were appointed executors.

John, his son, made his own will in 1578. In it he lists lands, messuages and tenements in Letcombe Regis, Chawler, Charlton, East Ginge, Grove, Wantage, Steventon, Buckland Marsh, Longworth, Duxford, Hinton, Hatford, Wallingford, East Shefford, Aston Tirrold, Lambourne, and Childrey, Berkshire and Kingham, Cotwell and Thrupp Oxfordshire.⁹⁰ His recognition as a gentleman was reflected in his being one of a small number of Berkshire gentry who were allowed to keep their own mute swans marked with their own individual mark.⁹¹ Like his father he requested burial in Buckland Church and his executors were instructed to place a marble stone over his grave. His eldest daughter Elizabeth was left £200 but if she should enter a nunnery this was to be reduced to £100.⁹² His second daughter Martha Wirdnam, 'although she married without my consent' was given 200 marks, and her son John £35 6s. 8d. 'so as her husband John Wirdnam be bound to my wife and sonne Edward Yate'. A further example of the importance of education in the minds of gentry can be seen in a bequest to a son Thomas who was to have £200 for his 'learninge in the laws of this Realm', furthermore he was to study singing and Latin and to be overseen in this by his brother Edward and mother. Edward and Thomas were to have all his law books; Edward was to have 'my booke of Pollocromcon which my ffather left me'. His wife was to have the residue of the estate. Overseers were to be John Eyston, William Martin, John Arderne and Richard Plott.⁹³ At the close of the will John Yate details land transactions relating to the cadet Lyford branch of the family then headed by his cousin Francis, son of Thomas Yate, his uncle. He alerts his executors to the knowledge that should the Lyford branch fail to produce male heirs then the estate reverted back to the main Buckland branch. One other son, John, not named in the will lived abroad and served as a member of the Society of Jesus. A 1593 letter from him, intercepted by the authorities, has survived, it fills in important details regarding the Yate family and the close association with the Catholic Englefield family. The

surviving text of the letter which was intercepted by the English authorities is given in Appendix 4.⁹⁴

Of the Lyford cadet branch the will of Thomas Yate, uncle to James Yate, has survived dated 31 August 1565.⁹⁵ In the 1593 letter of his brother, John, known as Father Vincent, we learn that Thomas had spent some time overseas but had returned to Lyford before his death. In contrast to the long detailed will of his nephew this document is short and concise. To each of his 3 sons and 2 daughters Yate bequeathed £200 to be paid in instalments on the day of marriage and the first and second wedding anniversaries. The children were to marry only with the permission of William Hyde the Elder and Paul Yate, a cousin. Francis the eldest son was appointed executor and the overseers were William Hyde and James Braybrook a brother-in-law.

Documentary details are scarce for the children. One daughter, Martha, married Oliver Ashcombe and was convicted of recusancy in 1586/7.⁹⁶ The will and inventory are available for one son Edward.⁹⁷ This is dated December 1596, he styles himself 'gentleman' and requests burial in Hanney Church. Few details are given in the will. The inventory, dated January 1597 gives a wealth of just £18, the lowest valuation for a gentleman found in the region. The home was modest consisting only of a chamber, hall, buttery and kitchen.

Far more details are available for the eldest son Francis, who in 1581/2 were fined for recusancy.⁹⁸ In February 1587 while a search was being undertaken in the Wantage area for some escaped Catholics, it was reported to Sir Francis Walsingham that 'many popish relics and books' had been found in the house of Francis Yate.⁹⁹ Two of Yate's servants, John Doo and Richard Buckley, were arrested and were later to admit hearing the Catholic preacher Edmund Campion and receiving mass from him in Francis Yate's house at Lyford.

Yate had married Jane, daughter of Benjamin Tichborne of Tichbourne, Hampshire.¹⁰⁰ Because of their continued support for the Catholic faith the Yate family found themselves having to travel widely to find marriage partners. Thomas, the eldest son of Francis, married twice and both marriages illustrate this point. First

wife was Dorothy, daughter of Nicholas Stephens of Burderop, Wiltshire, by whom he had 3 sons and 2 daughters.¹⁰¹ His second wife was Maria, daughter of Francis Tregian of Golden, a small parish near to Truro, Cornwall from which marriage there was one son and 4 daughters.¹⁰²

Both the main Buckland and the cadet Lyford branches of the family continued their allegiance to the Catholic faith into the seventeenth century. In 1605 Edward the head of the Buckland branch was one of eight recusants given by the king to Lord Saye and Sele to fine for his own benefit.¹⁰³ In June 1644 Edward was cited as being half a recusant by a Commons Committee.¹⁰⁴ Despite this Edward was to marry Catherine, sister of Sir Henry Baker of Sissinghurst, Kent; a Knight and Baronet, and Edward himself was created Baronet on 30 July 1622.¹⁰⁵ In 1628 Edward served as Sheriff of Berkshire, his Catholic faith proving no hinderance to holding county office.¹⁰⁶ Two of his sons, John the eldest and the second son James entered the Middle Temple.¹⁰⁷ There is no record of Edward contributing to the 1625 Privy Seal Loan, but his cousin Thomas, now head of the Lyford branch gave £15.¹⁰⁸ Thomas, the son of Francis and Jane, is given the title of 'Esquire', suggesting that despite the Lyford family being the poorer relations their close connection with the Buckland Baronet family ensured their own elevation in status.

Earlier, in 1637 Thomas had lost his goods to a John Pulford of London, the cause being Yate's continued Catholicism.¹⁰⁹ In 1641 Thomas Yate 'Esquire' and his third son William refused to sign the Protestation Returns.¹¹⁰ Yate and Pulford were in conflict over the lands into the early 1650s. Pulford complained that despite the grant of two thirds of Yate's estate, Yate being a 'Popish recusant convicted of a relapse after his conformity', Pulford had had to use his own wealth to pursue the original grant. He eventually claimed possession in December 1650.¹¹¹ The affair did not end there; almost immediately in January 1651 a Ralph Harmswood of Upton, tenant of the Yate lands in Hanney, complained that Pulford was determined to gain control of all of the Yate estate and to this end he 'vexed the tenants of the said lands and drove their cattle'.¹¹² The case continued in 1652 with Pulford persisting in his claims to the

whole of the estate. In January 1652 he was instructed by the Committee for Compounding to bid for the remainder of the estate. On 1 April he offered £80 3s.6d a year; increasing this to £92 a year six days later. In an effort to thwart this move the eldest son of Thomas, John, also put in a bid of an unknown amount as did a William Haycock. Unfortunately the final outcome does not appear in the reports for the Committee.¹¹³

At the same time as Thomas Yate was in danger of losing his lands to John Pulford, he and his son John were also under review as alleged supporters of Charles I. On 27 August 1650 the Committee for the Advance of Money heard evidence that both the Yates had been resident in Oxford at the time the King was holding court there; and that they had lent money to the earl of Berkshire and Henry Marten.¹¹⁴ Further evidence to the Committee in May 1651 claimed that 'Thomas Yate carried to Oxford most of his household stuff and goods, and much corn, with his own teams, which corn, and the team horses he gave the late king'.¹¹⁵ This double unwelcome attention by the prevailing authorities and the resulting loss of part of the Lyford estate can only have dealt a severe blow to the Yate fortunes.

The Buckland branch did not escape the attentions of the authorities over their continued support for the Catholic mass. In 1643 the Middlesex estate of Sir Edward Yate and his second son James was assessed at £2,000 and sequestered. In January 1644 the family were in addition fined £1,000.¹¹⁶ Edward's death in 1645 meant that the sequestration order was passed onto his son John, who in November 1645 agreed to pay the outstanding debt of £1,900.¹¹⁷ The documents suggest that both the main line and the cadet line of the Yate family were continually involved in lengthy and expensive litigation in the 1650s. John of Buckland died in 1657/8 and was succeeded by his eldest son Charles; he in turn was succeeded by his only son John who died unmarried in 1690. Thus the main Yate line became extinct.¹¹⁸

For the latter part of the seventeenth century documents relating to the Lyford Yate family are scarce. In the 1663/4 Hearth Tax John Yate was assessed with 8 hearths.¹¹⁹ In 1683/4 they were still under scrutiny for their faith. At an Exchequer

court deposition hearing held at Wantage witnesses gave evidence as to whether Thomas Yate, son John and grandson, also John, were active Jesuits or just rumoured to be.¹²⁰ In contention was their right to land in Marcham. Unlike their Buckland cousins the Lyford Yate family were not summoned to appear before the Heralds in 1665/6, implying that to contemporaries they could no longer retain their gentry status.

The will and inventory of Charles, son of John Yate who appeared in the Hearth Tax returns, has survived, respectively dated 13 April 1693 and 1 May 1696.¹²¹ Yate left his property in trust to William Moore of Fawley, gentleman, Charles Fettiplace of Lambourne, gentleman, and Thomas Woolascott of Wallingford, gentleman, who were to pay his debts and the funeral expenses of himself and Mary his wife. The land itemised included the manor of Philberts, Hanney, 'his capital messuage or tenement in Lyford' where he lived, the land called Chadwicks, Marcham, subject of the earlier court case, and other land not named.¹²² Charles appointed his wife executor, but in an unusual move she signed a document dated 25 April 1696, immediately after her husband's burial which had taken place in Hanney on 11 April 1696, disclaiming her right to be executor and to any probate. In her place a William Thorogood, gentleman, of East Horndon, Essex 'principall creditor of the said Charles Yate' was appointed to 'Administration with the said will'.¹²³

The inventory was appraised by Thomas Saunders of Abingdon 'abholsterer',¹²⁴ William Strange and William Dew both of East Hanney and yeoman, and Thomas Fretwell, tailor. Two of the four appraisers appear on face value to be considerably lower in status than the deceased, and none of the trustees took part. The estate was valued at £336 10s. 3d. including £30 owned in rents from tenants, and 'there is about fforty pounds besides interest due to Mr Yate att his death from Mr John Ayshcombe which wee beleive to be despeate'. The estate at Lyford was not large, 10 acres of wheat; 14 acres and one rood of barley, 4 acres and 3 roods of oats and 12½ acres of beans, and by this evidence concentrated on arable farming. But the action of his wife in relinquishing the estate to the principal creditor points to Yate being a bankrupt at

his death. The continual fines for recusancy and the ones incurred for support of Charles I had taken their toll of the fortunes of the Lyford branch, although the failure of the Buckland branch also contributed to the monetary problems of the cadet branch.

The main Lyford Yate family became extinct at almost the same time as their Buckland relations, Charles had two daughters, at the time he made his will he was hopeful of a son and this was realised but the boy, for whom no baptism records exist died in April 1695, thus effectively leaving no male heirs. The two families of East Hanney for which sufficient documentation exists to trace their development, Ashcombe and Yate, both suffered from their involvement in courts of law, this despite many of the sons entering the Inns of Court and therefore being in a position to give free advice and representation in court. The Ashcombe family, victims of overstretching themselves in financial matters, were soon submerged under by continual litigation. In the 1630s one of the John Ashcombes joined the embassy of Sir Henry Vane, but there is no further evidence of office-holding. In the 1680s an advantageous marriage was made, and a baronetcy purchased, but the failure of the male line soon made the title extinct. For the Yate family their downfall was brought about by continual recusancy and royalist sympathies. Both the main and cadet branches became extinct at the same time, the cadet branch showing signs of being bankrupt and in the hands of creditors by then. Mary, the eldest daughter of Charles (buried 1696) was in receipt of alms from the parish at her death in 1700, as was her aunt Katherine, wife of William, younger brother of Charles, at her death in 1723.

WEST HENDRED

West Hendred in 1522 consisted of 13 households; of which 5 were of potential yeoman status. William Howchyn, tenant to Wallingford Abbey, and Henry Hykman, tenant to lord Derby were both assessed at £20 in goods. Robert Goddard had £16 in goods; Thomas Kepe had £13 6s.8d., and John Collins £10 in goods.¹²⁵ The Keepe, Howchyn (Hutchins) and Goddard families remained in the parish to the end of the seventeenth century. Numerous documents have survived for the Keepe family. In the

1542/3 Subsidy they were assessed with 8s.6d. in lands.¹²⁶ The first will to have survived is for John Keepe, 'husbandman' dated 5 July 1579, inventory dated 21 August 1579.¹²⁷ This records a wealth of £58 18s. 0d. and a concentration on arable farming. His son Thomas, who inherited the estate after the death of his mother, was valued at £3 in goods in the 1598/9 Lay Subsidy.¹²⁸ Thomas 'husbandman' made his will on 8 September and the inventory is dated 7 November 1609. The valuation was less than that for his father at £20 18s. 0d; but the inventory supplies evidence that he regularly lent money to other parishioners: Peter Greenaway owed £10; William Goddard of Childrey 8 shillings, and four other debts which were considered desperate. The total loans amounted to £14 15s. 0d. The will and inventory of his younger brother John, the first to be titled a 'yeoman', is extant, both dated March 1615. Brothers in Rotherwick, Southampton and Marlborough, Wiltshire were left bequests, illustrating how far flung yeoman families could be. The valuation came to a modest £31 15s. 6d.¹²⁹

In the 1628 subsidy William, brother of John and Thomas, had £3 in lands.¹³⁰ William featured in an undated Chancery Case as a witness when Robert Keate of Harwell and William Keepe of East Hendred petitioned Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor in a complaint concerning copyhold lands in Harwell. The importance of this case is that it provides evidence for a kinship between the husbandman/yeoman Keepe family and the gentry Keate family of Wantage Hundred.¹³¹ The case centres around a marriage settlement between John Wise and Mary Keate daughter of Robert and 'neice of your orator William Keepe'. Mary had since died and John remarried and now refused to give to his son by Mary 'Two yardlands called Corkyes and Bonds and half of all the houses and buildings then in the possession of the said John Wise'. Once again the outcome is unknown.

The will and inventory of the William Keepe 'yeoman' of West Hendred is still extant.¹³² The inventory shows a surprising increase in valuation from the earlier modest amounts of his two brothers, to £521 4s. 0d. Kinship with the gentry Keate family is again evident when one of the overseers is 'my cousin John Keate of

Harwell'. His house was large and on a par with local gentry residences and an improvement on the one or two rooms of his brothers.¹³³ Both cattle and crops are listed in the inventory implying a mixed operation. The high value of £280 was put on his lease of the land.

By the 1640/1 subsidy Andrew son of William is listed as having £4 in goods.¹³⁴ He had received the residue of his father's estate. In the 1663 Hearth Tax he had 3 hearths.¹³⁵ He died the following year and the inventory dated 5 September 1664 records a much larger home than suggested by the Hearth Tax Returns.¹³⁶ Andrew had inherited his father's house and the number of rooms listed suggests that he had made additions and improvements. His wealth of £601 15s. 0d, larger than his father's £521 4s. 0d., gives the impression of him as being a good manager particularly as he had held the estate throughout the Civil War. A lease of a messuage and lands in West Hendred, presumably the same lease as in his father's inventory, was valued at £400 'for divers years yet to come'.

His son Andrew (II) shared the estate with his brother Richard; Andrew (II) yeoman, made his will on 24 February 1665 and the inventory was appraised on 24 March 1667. To his uncle Thomas Clarke of Yattendon, Keepe left his customary lands in West Hendred as repayment for the money Keepe had borrowed from him. Keepe's estate valuation of £51 14s. 11d. was considerably lower than his father's, and the loan from Thomas Clarke provides evidence that Andrew suffered monetary problems, the cause of which are unknown, particularly as he had received half of his father's estate. Andrew (II) was the first known member of the Keepe family to sign his own will.¹³⁷

After this date documents for the Keepe family are scarce, they were not invited to appear before the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitation despite the increase in wealth shown in the mid-sixteenth century. There is no record of their sons attending Oxford University or the Inns of Court. Both William and Andrew with the large wealth valuation were content to title themselves 'yeoman'. The family as a whole give the

impression of being content with their status and surviving documents show no desire to rise to that of gentry.

In 1613 Charles Wiseman came to the parish when he purchased Sparsholt's Court manor in West Hendred from the non-resident Thomas Sankey. Wiseman was the son of Edmund of Steventon who was in turn the younger son of Thomas Wiseman of Thornham, Suffolk.¹³⁸ Charles (d. 1635) married twice; first to Lee, daughter of Nicholas Cooke of Linslede, Suffolk by whom he had 3 daughters, secondly to Mary, daughter of Anthony Blagrave of Bulmersh, Berkshire, by which marriage he had 6 daughters and one son Edmund. The total of 9 daughters must have placed a considerable strain on the family fortunes.¹³⁹ Charles held county office as sheriff of Berkshire in 1613.¹⁴⁰

Edmund inherited the estate and served as sheriff of Berkshire in 1668.¹⁴¹ He also married twice; both to local gentry families. Firstly to Dulcibella, second daughter of Samuel Dunch of Pusey by whom he had 4 sons and 3 daughters; and secondly to Susanna, daughter of John Clarke of Ardington, from which marriage there were 2 sons and 2 daughters. In the 1663 Hearth Tax he lived in the manor house with 11 hearths.¹⁴² His first surviving son, also Edmund, followed his father and grandfather as Sheriff of Berkshire, in 1685.¹⁴³

Edmund (II) died without issue leaving his estate at West Hendred to his younger brother William. William in turn died in 1713, leaving as heir his only child Mary, who married Edward Clarke of Ardington; the second marriage alliance between the two families.¹⁴⁴ So once again another family in the region ended the direct line because of lack of male heirs.

For West Hendred itself the 1663 Hearth Tax recorded 19 households compared with the 13 of the 1522 Muster, and a religious census of 1676 estimated the number of church going inhabitants at 240.¹⁴⁵ With the arrival of the Wiseman family, descended from a younger son but who rose to be gentry in their own right the parish became a 'closed' one, and this shifted the balance of power away from the yeoman

families such as Keepe, Goddard and Hutchins who could trace their residence in the parish back to the early sixteenth century and perhaps earlier.

The four parishes wholly or mainly held by religious houses in 1522 show varying patterns of development to the end of the seventeenth century. In Betterton the already resident Collins family continued to hold the lease under the new ecclesiastical landlords. By the mid-seventeenth century they had developed into gentry, aided by a marriage into the local gentry Pomfroy family of Wantage, and a later marriage alliance with the Fettiplace family. In 1665/6 the Collins family were listed in the Heralds' Visitation returns, but they were leasehold tenants throughout this period, despite holding land outside the area. In West Ginge the Coxhead family remained 'yeoman' and acted as bailiffs for both the gentry Ashcombe and Clarke estates. They returned modest wealth valuations in their inventories, apart from two members in the mid-seventeenth century, particularly James (d. 1622) with a massive £1,184 valuation. There were no resident gentry so West Ginge was 'open' to the influences of the resident yeoman families.

In East Hanney the yeoman Ashcombe family had moved into the area in 1568, as younger sons of a gentry family, a status the East Hanney branch had gained themselves by the early seventeenth century. As a family they were continually involved in law suits which depleted their monetary resources. Again in East Hanney the Yate family were a cadet branch descended from the merchant family originally resident in Charney but which had moved into Lyford by the mid-sixteenth century possibly prompted by a marriage into the Hyde family of South Denchworth. The Yates of East Hanney were continually harrassed by the authorities for their support of the Catholic faith, (some of the children entered the religious orders), and later for their support of the Royalist cause. But despite loss of wealth they were still considered as gentry and given the title of 'esquire' by their contemporaries. However the Lyford branch was not called by the Heralds, and within a few years the line was extinct. The residence of both Ashcombe and Yate gentry families gave East Hanney a 'closed' parish status. In West Hendred the husbandman/yeoman Keepe family

recorded only modest wealth figures, with two exceptions. In the early seventeenth century they lost their place in the parish hierarchy with the arrival of the Wiseman family, descended from the younger son of gentry, these became gentry in their own right. Like East Hanney, the residence of the Wiseman family in the parish made this a 'closed' one.

By 1670 the four 'ecclesiastical' parishes had changed in social structure. The Dean and Chapter of Westminster now owned Betterton, retaining it as 'ecclesiastical' with a dominant gentry family as leaseholders; West Ginge had a yeoman family in residence; while both East Hanney and West Hendred were now 'closed' by virtue of resident gentry families.

NOTES:

- 1 The decision to include East Hanney in this chapter devoted to religious landowners despite the larger valuation in the hands of individual families has been taken because of the larger valuation held by the religious foundations; and the much smaller fragmented amounts held by families.
- 2 Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*. 4, pp. 234, 237.
- 3 PRO. E179/73/166a.
- 4 BRO. D/A1/52/104. The will does not mention a meadow called 'Robins' and forty acres of land in Lockinge over which there was a dispute of ownership in a 1560's Chancery suit between John Collins (plaintiff) and Alice and John Latton (defendants). Both parties claimed that they inherited the land; the outcome is unknown, but the absence from Collins' will does suggest that he lost the case. (PRO. C3/40/27)
- 5 PRO. PROB 11/67.
- 6 The provision here for the wife to farm the land shows that women were considered capable of such trust. In Chippenham Spufford found that it was usual for the widow to be left a life interest in the farm; but not so in Orwell and Willingham. Spufford, *Contrasting Communities*. pp. 88-89; 112-3; 162. However Wrightson found it was the norm for women to be named as executor, given the responsibility of the land and the

upbringing of the under age children. Wrightson, *English Society*. p. 94. And in Berkshire it was the norm for women to be left the land if the eldest son was under age and to be appointed executor. Todd, Barbara, 'Freebench and Free Enterprise: Widows and Their Property in Two Berkshire Villages', in: Chartres and Hey, *English Rural Society, 1500–1800*. pp.175–200.

- 7 BRO. D/A1/54/28.
- 8 BRO. D/A1/55/36.
- 9 BRO. D/A1/52/70. Henry his only child had been baptised 19 March 1576.
- 10 BRO. D/A1/53/193.
- 11 The will was dated 1605; the inventory 11 March 1605.
- 12 BRO. D/EX 49.
- 13 PRO. E179/75/360.
- 14 Firth, C. H. & Rait, R. S., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660*. London: HMSO, 1911. 2, pp. 653, 657.
- 15 PRO. 1654 Mich 2 Berks.
- 16 BRO. D/A1/54/182.
- 17 BRO. D/A1/56/2.
- 18 PRO. E179/243/25.
- 19 Foster, *Alumni Oxon 1500-1714*; Sturgess, *Middle Temple*. I, p. 174.
- 20 Firth & Rait, *Acts and Ordinances*, p. 657.
- 21 BMI. Microfilm 23, Anne was one of 7 children of Charles Fettiplace, esquire, of Earls Court, Lambourne.
- 22 Heralds, Berks. 2, pp. 109–110.
- 23 Gibbons & Davey, *Wantage*. pp. 174, 177.
- 24 Foster, *Alumni Oxon 1500-1714*.
- 25 PRO. PROB11/22.
- 26 BRO. D/A1/51/52.
- 27 L. & P., 21(1), p. 246. Winchcombe was the son of John Winchcombe the Newbury clothier. He served as J.P. for Berkshire 1540/1; and in 1544/5 he entered Parliament representing West Bedwin, Wiltshire. He was granted a coat of arms in 1549; in 1552/3 he represented Reading in Parliament.

- 28 BRO.D/A1/8/311. Fuller details of the Coxhead family and their kinship links from 1522 to the mid-seventeenth century can be seen in Family Chart 5.
- 29 British Library, Lansdowne MS. 5, item 9.
- 30 BRO.D/A1/11/3.
- 31 BRO.D/A1/12/269.
- 32 Petti, Anthony G., ed. 'Recusant Documents from the Ellesmere Manuscripts'. *Catholic Record Society*, 60 (1968). p. 128.
- 33 BRO. D/A1/16/42.
- 34 BRO. D/ECw E 2.
- 35 PRO. E179/243/25.
- 36 PRO. 34/35 Chas. 2 Hilary 8 Berks.
- 37 PRO. C5/315/2.
- 38 PRO. C5/234/6
- 39 Heralds, Berks. 2. p. 30.
- 40 Bodleian Library, MS.Ch.Berks.909.
- 41 Heralds, Berks. I, p. 187.
- 42 PRO.E179/243/25. fol. 684.
- 43 BRO.D/A1/78/158.
- 44 L. & P., 21(1), p. 577. The family had resided in West Woodhay since the early fifteenth century. They were of sufficient status to be rewarded with the keeping of their own swans. The 'privilege of keeping them (the mute swan) was much sought after and was only granted to subjects of a certain standing, each one of whom was granted through the King's Swan-Master a private mark'. Tilehurst, N.F., 'The Swan-Marks of Berkshire'. *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*. 36 (1932), pp. 62, 81.
- 45 VCH. *Berks.* 4, p. 243. Cheney Rad married in 1515 Dorothy Yate Lyford.
- 46 PRO. PROB11/52.
- 47 L & P., 20(2), pp. 544–545. The sum paid, for this and numerous other manors throughout the country, was £3,892 17s. 2d.
- 48 Francis also married twice; first to Alice widow of a Henry Barton; secondly to Eleanor, daughter of Thomas Stafford. The first marriage was childless; by the second marriage he had three daughters; two of whom survived him.

- 49 Croke (d.1631) was the fourth son of Sir John Croke of Chilton, Berkshire and his wife Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Alexander Unton. Croke, a member of the Inner Temple, lived in Hackney, Middlesex and over a period of time acquired lands in Leicestershire, Rutland, Essex and Berkshire. Francis died 10 July 1605 aged 22 and was buried in the chancel of St. Katherine Cree-Church, London. His second wife was Susanna, daughter of Thomas Coe of Boxford, Sussex. Prest, *Rise of the Barristers*. p. 353. White, Kennett, *Parochial Antiquities attempted in the History of Ambrosden, Burcester, and Other Adjacent Parts in the Counties of Oxon and Bucks*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1818. 2, pp. 484-485.
- 50 BMI, Microfilm 27.
- 51 BRO. D/EX 17/1 L2.
- 52 PRO. C3/390/79.
- 53 University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Edward Heath Papers. A: Correspondence, No. 11.
- 54 VCH. *Berks*. 4. p. 289. An Ashcombe family was resident in East Pennard, Somerset in 1623, but there is no evidence to suggest that the families were related. However John's sister Elizabeth did marry Edward Walrond of Somerset. Colby, Frederic Thomas, *The Visitation of the County of Somerset in the Year 1623*. Harleian Society. 2.
- 55 MacGeagh, Sir Henry F., *Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple*. London: Middle Temple, 1949. 1, pp. 31, 43. Fuller details of the Ashcombe family and their kinship links from the end of the sixteenth century to the early eighteenth century can be seen in Family Chart 2.
- 56 PRO. Eliz. H6. C2/29.
- 57 Anne Ashcombe married John Pleydall, gent, of Shrivenham. In the eighteenth century the sole surviving heir of this line Harriet, married William, earl of Radner. Bodleian Library, MS.Top.Berks. b.2, fol. 32v-33r. Another daughter, Dorothy married Edward Walrond, gentleman, of Langridge, Somerset. Bysshe, Sir Edward, *The Visitation of Somerset and the City of Bristol 1672*. transcribed by G. D. Squibb. Harleian Society, n.s., 2, p. 5.
- 58 Foster, *Alumni Oxon, 1500-1714*, 1, p. 50.
- 59 MacGeagh, *Middle Temple*. 1, p. 59.
- 60 Sheriffs, p. 6. Bodleian Library. MS. Tanner 395. Ashcombe signed this document as J.P., dated 13 April 1631 it records that in the past year within the Division of Abingdon 2 apprentices had been bound, 2 alehouses suppressed; vagabonds punished; and those that had harboured them punished; unlicenced shops and houses against the church wall dealt with; the relief of the poor administered and the highways repaired.
- 61 PRO.E401/2586. fol. 101.
- 62 Bodleian Library, MS.Tanner. 395.

- 63 PRO.E407/35.
- 64 The house had eleven rooms listed; Chamber over the Hall; Chamber over the Kitchen; Maid's Chamber; Hall; Kitchen; Pantry; Chamber over the Pantry; Loft; Buttery; Parlour; Cuttery.
- 65 Foster, *Alumni Oxon, 1500-1714*; MacGeagh, *Middle Temple*. 1, p. 126. Prest found in his study of the Inns of Court that in many cases the Inns were used as a form of finishing school and the societies admitted many 'who had no intention of following a legal career. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries a stay at the Inns was part of the conventional gentlemanly education...' with the study of law a by-product. He also found that 'many junior members, especially those who had no plans for a legal career were preoccupied with acquiring the gentlemanly accomplishments of dancing, fencing and singing, Prest, Wilfrid R., *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts, 1590-1640*. London: Longman, 1972. pp. 23, 167.
- 66 House of Lords Library, Berkshire, fols. 49-50.
- 67 BRO.D/A1/37/1.
- 68 Lenthall was appointed Speaker on 3 November 1640 to be eventually ousted by Cromwell. In 1630 he had purchased the estate of Besselsleigh from the Fettiplaces. In later years a marriage alliance was made between the Lenthalls and a branch of the Ashcombe family when Mary daughter of Sir William Ashcombe of Alscott, Oxfordshire married John Lenthall of Bessels Leigh. *DNB*. *Heralds, Berks.* 2, p. 169.
- 69 Bodleian Library. MS. Top. Berks. d.19. Minute Book of Courts held by Berkshire Commission for Charitable Uses. The manuscript commences on 22 June 1657; but the original commission to investigate any mis-use of lands, money or goods given to charity was set up in 1601 by an Act of Parliament, 43 Eliz. I. c. 4.
- 70 PRO. E179/243/25.
- 71 Sheriffs, p. 7.
- 72 PRO. C5/438/4.
- 73 Bowler, Hugh. 'Recusants in the Exchequer Rolls, 1581-1592.' *Catholic Record Society*, 71 (1986). p. 12.
- 74 G.E.C., *Complete Baronetage*. Exeter, William Pollard & Co. Ltd., 1904. 4, p. 167.
- 75 Bodleian Library. MS. Tanner. 395. fol. 99-101.
- 76 Fuller details of the Yate family and their kinship links between 1522 and the end of the seventeenth century can be seen in Family Chart 12.
- 77 PRO.E179/73/134.
- 78 L. & P., 4(2), p.1613.
- 79 Both Philip Fettiplace and John Latton were to be sons-in-law of John Yate; marrying respectively his two daughters Jane and Anne by his first wife. Philip Fettiplace died

1546; and was the son of John Fettiplace (d.1510). He was resident in Charney in 1522 with £80 in goods; and in Pusey with £60 goods wealth. He also served as commissioner of the 1524 Lay subsidy for the Hundreds of Hormer, Morton and Ock. John Latton (1484/5–1548) held land in Upton. He entered The Inner Temple in 1510; and in 1529 and 1536 he represented Oxford in Parliament. At his death in 1548 his house and half the lands in Kingston Bagpuize went to his widow; the remaining half and land in East Lockinge went to his eldest son William; two younger sons received land in Charleton, East Hanney and West Lockinge. The four daughters had cash bequests. Bindoff, *History of Parliament*. pp. 496–497.

80 PRO. PROB 11/28.

81 This was the manor of Tullwick conveyed to John Yate in 1503 by Richard Saunders and his wife Margery. VCH. *Berks.* 4, p. 324.

82 John Warnford of Sevenhampton, Wiltshire had married Susan one of John's daughters by second wife, Alice.

83 L. & P., 19(1), p. 6391. Williams had originally purchased this property in 1538. VCH. *Berks.* 4. p. 288.

84 VCH. *Berks.* 4, p. 290.

85 No exact date can be given due to missing records. Sturgess, *Middle Temple*, 1, p.12.

86 *Ibid.* p. 31.

87 Trice Martin, ed. *Minutes of Parliament*. 1, p. 180. One likely explanation may be that the Yate family continued to practise the Catholic faith. Edward Yate, gent, was a prisoner in Westminster Gatehouse in 1581/2 for this reason; and earlier in 1577 Edward was among those who 'forbere to come to the Church here at the Temple' and his younger brother John was one of a number from the Middle Temple who were 'fugytyves at Lovan' (Louvain). Bowler, 'Recusants in the Exchequer Rolls'. p. 198; Ryan, Patrick, 'Diocesan Returns of Recusants for England and Wales, 1577'. *Catholic Record Society*, 22 (1921), p. 106. John Yate who later used the alias Father Vincent was admitted to the Society of Jesus at Louvain 4 December 1574 and ordained priest 1581 and undertook missionary work in Portugal, Brazil and the Indies. In 1593 he corresponded with Sir Francis Englefield, of another prominent Catholic Berkshire family. This letter is important showing as it does the vast amount of travelling that could be undertaken by a member of a gentry family. The full text of the letter which is unfinished is given in Appendix 4. Foley, Henry, *Records of the English Province of the society of Jesus*. London: Burns & Oates, 1885. 7(2). pp. 874–875. CSP, *Domestic*, 1591–1594. pp. 355–365.

88 PRO. PROB11/30.

89 This is the Francis Englefield correspondent of his son John. The identification of the book is difficult but a clue is given in John's will of 1578 where it is titled *Pollocromcon*; which may identify it with Randulphus Higden, *Polycronicon*, edited and printed by William Caxton, 1480. Five editions had been printed between 1480 and 1543. Stc. 2 edn.

- 90 PRO. PROB11/61.
- 91 Tilehurst, 'Swan-Marks of Berkshire'. pp. 62, 91.
- 92 She later joined Syon Priory. *CSP. Domestic, 1591-1594*. p. 355.
- 93 All these were related by marriage to the testator: John Eyston had married Jane his step-sister; William Martin married Margaret his sister; John Arderne and Richard Plott married Bridgett and Marie his daughters.
- 94 PRO. SP12/245.
- 95 BRO.D/A1/142/23.
- 96 Bowler, 'Recusants in the Exchequer Rolls'. p. 12.
- 97 BRO.D/A1/142/45.
- 98 Petti, 'Recusant Documents'. p. 198.
- 99 *CSP. Domestic, 1581-1590*. London, 1985. pp. 384-5. Sir Francis Walsingham (1530?-1590), Secretary of State, was at this time actively involved in the suppression of the Catholics following the discovery of the Babington plot the previous year.
- 100 The Tichbournes were a long established gentry family having held the manor since 1135 and were to do so until the twentieth century. VCH, *Hampshire*. Vol. 3 (1908), p. 337. Benjamin Tichbourne served as sheriff of Southampton during the reign of Elizabeth I and was the first to proclaim the accession of James I for which he was created a Baronet, 8 March 1620/1 *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage*, 102 ed., 1959.
- 101 The manor of Burderlop had been conveyed to the Stephens family in 1579 by Giles, Lord Chandos. VCH. *Wiltshire*. 9 (1970). p. 10.
- 102 The Tregian family had acquired considerable estates in the reign of Henry VII when a Tregian had married the co-heiress of John Wolvedon of Wolvedon. The Tregians were a Catholic family eventually to be ruined by continual harrassment by the authorities. At one stage there was in the possession of the Yate family a 'Manuscript Life of Mr. Tregian, written anno 1593, and formerly, viz. anno 1656, in the possession of Thomas Yate, of Berkshire, Esq. great-nephew to Mr. Tregian'. Gilbert, C.S., *An Historical Survey of the County of Cornwall*. Plymouth-Rock: J. Congdon, 1820. 2, pp.281-282.
- 103 In the case of Yate Lord Saye and Sele experienced great difficulty in obtaining any fine; he wrote to the Earl of Salisbury 'Mr Edward Yeate of Berkshire being pursued there is come hither to London, but where I cannot learn, but yet has offered for his proportion of estate, if I would wick at him, to give me as much as any other whosoever'. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury*. Part 17. Edited by M.S.Giuseppi. London: HMSO, 1938. p. 634.
- 104 *Journal of the House of Commons*, 2, p. 168. By 'half a recusant' was meant that Edward had 'Not received the Communion these Thirty Years'.

- 105 Shaw, *Complete Baronetage*, 1, pp. 206 -207. He was discharged from paying the required baronetage fee. *CSP, Domestic, James I, 1619-1623*. p. 429.
- 106 Sheriffs. p. 6.
- 107 John entered in November 1624; and James in November 1627. Trice Martin, Middle Temple, 2, p. 727.
- 108 PRO. E401/2586.
- 109 *Second Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*. London: William Clowers and Sons, 1841. p. 211. In 1649 John Pulford was deputy of Henry Stanley, Auditor for recusants accounts and was 'appointed special agent for recusancy in the souther parts'. *CPCC*. 1, p. 166.
- 110 House of Lords Record Office, Berkshire Return. The two eldest sons John (bap. 10 January 1613) and Thomas (bap. 5 February 1615) are not listed in the document.
- 111 *CPCC*. 3, pp. 2327-2328.
- 112 *Ibid*. p. 2328.
- 113 *Ibid*. p. 2328.
- 114 The Earl of Berkshire was Thomas Howard, Viscount Andover; created 5 February 1626, died 16 July 1669. Henry Marten (1562? -1641) was a distant relation of the Yate family; being the son of Anthony Marten and his wife Margaret, daughter of a John Yate. Here is evidence of kinship links and monetary support in times of trouble.
- 115 *CPCAM*. 3, p. 1266.
- 116 *CPCAM*, p. 115. In July 1644 Edward was imprisoned for being in arrears with payments. *ibid*. p. 196.
- 117 *CPCAM*, p. 196. John had been knighted on 19 August 1629. Shaw, *Knights*. p. 196. In common with his Lyford cousin John faced mounting claims on his estate during the 1650s. In June 1651 a Jane Hancks of Bampton claimed that since being sequestered for recusancy at £500 John had refused to pay rent of land of hers of which he was a tenant. *CPCC*, 4, p. 2833. while a Sam Wastell, merchant of London, having been granted 2/3 of the Yate estate in Stepney Marsh, which included the old sea wall, was now faced with bankruptcy because the wall had been breached and the land flooded. *ibid*. p. 2833. Edward Blandy of Letcombe Regis, having been granted part of Yate's estate valued at £300 a year, went to the Committee for confirmation. He had originally been a tenant of the Yate family and may be related to the gentry Blandy family then resident in Wantage. *ibid.*, p. 2833.
- 118 Charles had married into the Catholic Gage family of Firle, Sussex; in 1713 this particular family entered the Church of England. G.E.C., *Complete Baronage*. I, pp. 193-194.
- 119 PRO. E179/243/25. fol. 399r.
- 120 PRO. 34/35. Chas.2, Hilary 8 Berks.

- 121 BRO. D/A1/143/34.
- 122 This land in Marcham was again under investigation in June 1690 when a petition of Peter Goddard, gentleman, produced evidence of goods and lands belonging to a 'popish priory or nunnery' in Marcham valued at £100 which was to build a nunnery in Hanney 'when popish times should come'. Goddard demanded this land for his own use. *CSP, Domestic, May 1690–October 1691*. London: HMSO, 1898. pp. 30 -31.
- 123 BRO. D/A1/143/34.
- 124 Upholsterer (*OED*).
- 125 Wallingford Abbey who owned West Hendred manor was dissolved in 1528 and granted to Cardinal Wolsey and then passed to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. The manor of Sparsholt's Court was in the possession of the Sankey family until sold in 1613 to Charles Wiseman. *VCH. Berks*, 4, pp.303-304.
- 126 PRO. E179/73/166a.
- 127 BRO. D/A1/88/93.
- 128 PRO. E179/75/292. Unfortunately the document is damaged making a valuation for a Richard Kepe and Robert Hutchins impossible to read.
- 129 BRO. D/A1/89/101.
- 130 BRO. D/EX 49.
- 131 PRO. C3/James I/K6/13.
- 132 BRO. D/A1/89/145.
- 133 The house comprised of: Hall, lower chamber, guest chamber, lodging chamber, inmost chamber, appleloft, pantry and buttery, cheeseloft, milkhouse, kitchen, brewhouse, servant's chamber,
- 134 PRO. E179/75/360.
- 135 PRO. E179/243/25. fol. 702.
- 136 The house comprised of: hall, parlour, buttery, parlour chamber, chamber over buttery, chamber over hall, chamber over the entry, garrett, milkhouse and room adjoining; cheese loft; dish house, brewing kitchen and brewhouse, meal house, manservants chamber.
- 137 Historians have long debated whether the ability to sign a document meant an individual could read and write. For a recent survey of the debate see: Ford, 'The Problem of Literacy'. pp. 22–37.
- 138 Edmund had settled in Steventon in the late sixteenth century and in 1596 had served as Sheriff of Berkshire. *Sheriffs*, p. 6. The main impetus for him to settle in this region came when he married Anne, daughter and co-heir of William Hawkyins, esquire, who had estates in Steventon. *Clarke Wanting*. p. 144.

- 139 All the daughters except for 2 were to marry into local Berkshire and Oxfordshire gentry families; the two exceptions being Francis who married Thomas Hall, carver to the duke of York; and Katherine who married a Richard Blackford of Southampton.
- 140 Sheriffs. p. 6.
- 141 *Ibid.* p. 7.
- 142 PRO. E179/243/25. fol. 702. The manor house was demolished in 1721; the front, east and west elevations were 115 feet; with two wings extending 54 feet north and south. Next to the house the chapel measured 33 feet in length and 25 feet in breadth. Clarke, *Wanting*. p. 145.
- 143 Sheriffs. p. 7.
- 144 Clarke, *Wanting*. p. 145.
- 145 Money, Walter, 'A Religious Census of the County of Berks in 1676.' *The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archaeological Journal*. 4 (1899-1900). p. 57.

Chapter 6

THE 'OPEN' PARISHES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR SOCIAL STRUCTURE, c.1522–c.1670

The 1522 Muster Returns show that the 4 neighbouring parishes and hamlets of Ardington, East and West Lockinge and East Ginge were 'open' in the sense that there were no resident gentry and that ecclesiastical holdings were not large.

ARDINGTON

In 1522, 5 families can be identified with an excess of £10 in goods wealth placing them within yeoman status.

Table 1

| Name | Goods Value | Family | Servants |
|-------------------|-------------|--------|----------|
| JOHNSON, William | 80 0s.0d | - | 3 |
| HOBBS, Thomas | 26 0s.0d | - | 1 |
| COLLINS, Thomas | 13 0s.0d | - | 1 |
| WYSTELER, Richard | 11 0s.0d | son | - |
| HOBBS, John | 10 0s.0d | son | - |

Of these the Collins and Hobbs families feature throughout the period from 1522 to 1670, not only in Ardington but in other Wantage Hundred parishes. However, the Johnson and Wysteler families disappear from the Ardington records within a short space of time.¹ The 1524 Lay Subsidy Returns list a William Johnson with a goods valuation of £66. 13s. 4d. as living in nearby Hendred.² The closeness of the goods valuation may point to the William Johnson of Ardington and Hendred as being the same individual. Johnson's will has survived, in which he bequeathed a pair of silk vestments to East Hendred church, and a sheep to each of the chantry lights. In support of the theory that he originally lived in Ardington he left to the five chantry lights in Ardington one sheep, and similarly to Streatley church. Each of the four orders of Friars in the University of Oxford was to receive 3s. 4d. The residue of the

estate went to his wife Agnes, no children are mentioned.³ Richard Wysteler had moved to Fyfield by the 1524 Subsidy, becoming one of four Wysteler family members living in that parish. The family was moderately wealthy: Richard with £7 in goods, Thomas £13, Jacob £2 and a William with £1 in goods.⁴ The apparent disappearance of both Johnson and Wysteler may lend credence to the mobility of yeoman families within the area.

In the early 1540s Ardington manor, originally leased from the earl of Derby by William Johnson, came into the tenure of John Clarke.⁵ Clarke was a newcomer to the area and was related to the Basildon gentry Clarke family.⁶ In 1546 Clarke purchased the manor of Priors Hanney (East Hanney) from John Herle.⁷ Later in 1553 half of the manor of Eastbury was alienated to him by George Owen and William Marten, the remainder being alienated to John Coxhead.⁸ In 1559 the Ardington estate of John Clarke amounted to an estimated 2,500 acres.⁹ His will has survived, dated April 1568 with a later codicil of 4 October 1571.¹⁰ Clarke titles himself 'yeoman', perhaps mindful of his younger son status. He mentioned nine children in the will: three sons Henry, John, Richard, and six daughters.¹¹ At the date of the will only one, Anne, was married, to an Infantryman Justian Welles.¹² Clarke instructed that land recently purchased in Oxfordshire was to be given to Anne on payment of a yearly rent of £5 to her brother Richard. All the daughters were left a crown of gold. The remainder of the land was divided between the three sons, and these land details illustrate not only Clarke's wide interest within the county of Berkshire and beyond, but also his active policy in acquiring property to establish his family. The youngest son Richard was to receive a tenement in Reading, land and tenements in Shinfield recently purchased from William Aldworth, and the 'late purchased' manor of Erles Court in East Hanney then leased to Henry Hobbs. John, the second son, was bequeathed the lease to the manor farm and lordship of Ardington, Priors Court manor in East Hanney and land in Goring. The eldest son, Henry, was bequeathed land in Eastbury, Lambourne, Bockhampton and Blagrove. In addition Henry was to have £40 'for and toward the servinge of his liverye and his further advancement upon condition he shall not

disturb trouble or hinder the poor Almesmen of Lambourne'.¹³ John, who inherited the main family residence, is entered in the 1598/9 Lay Subsidy Returns. Here, unlike his father he is termed 'gentleman'. Unfortunately the document is damaged so it is impossible to see the wealth valuation for this particular John, but his son John Clarke the younger and a Richard Hobbs both possessed £4 in goods.¹⁴ The elder John Clarke had died by the 1603/4 Subsidy, for that document lists his grandson Edward 'gentleman', with £16 in goods, so within 2 generations the Clarke family had overcome their younger son status and become gentry in their own right. Local yeoman families were still important in the parish, Thomas Hobbs had £14 in goods, while Alice Hobbs (widow), John Hobbs, Thomas Batten and John Batten all possessed £3 in goods, and Richard Hobbs had goods valued at £4.¹⁵

It was Edward Clarke who changed the status of Ardington when in 1606 he purchased the fee of the manor from the then holder Thomas Leigh of Stoneleigh, Warwickshire. In 1616 Clarke followed this by being granted the reversion from the King on the failure of the male issue of the earl of Derby.¹⁶ In an earlier document dated 13 October 1594 from William, earl of Derby, Clarke had been appointed as 'bailiff & tenant of my manors of Streatley & Ardington & of the manor of Goringe in Oxon'.¹⁷ As Clarke established a freehold estate in the parish and at the same time moved from yeoman to gentry status Ardington moved from an 'open' parish to a 'closed' one.

Some Ardington yeoman families, in particular that of the Hobbs and the Batten families, drew the gentry Clarke family into their circle when making wills.¹⁸ John Hobbs, who only felt able to title himself 'husbandman', made his will on 8 December 1585 in which he appointed John Clarke 'gentleman' as one of the overseers. Two months later, on 23 February 1586, Clarke acted as one of the appraisers for the estate which totalled £45 15s. 6d.¹⁹ Thomas, the brother of John Hobbs, was not so modest when making his own will. Whereas John had requested burial in the churchyard of Ardington, Thomas wanted to be buried inside the chancel of Ardington and gave himself the title of 'yeoman'.²⁰ In an apparent attempt to

ensure his wishes were carried out Hobbs bequeathed 20 shillings to the church, 20 shillings to the vicar William Cox, and 40 shillings to the poor of the parish. Without an inventory it is impossible to be precise as to his wealth but he obviously felt able to leave £13.13s.4d. to his son Richard, and £20 to his daughter Joan which she was to have on the day of her marriage. To each of his grandchildren by another son, Thomas, he left 20 shillings, and to each servant a bushel of barley.²¹

The Ardington Batten family also included the Clarke family in their wills. In a document dated 4 February 1577 a John Batten bequeathed a stack of bees to John Clarke 'farmer of Ardington', and Edward, son of John Clarke, was present to sign the latter's will as a witness. The February 1578 valuation of the estate gives a total of £93 18s.4d. emphasising that Batten was an individual of some wealth.²² One further Batten will, that of William 'yeoman' dated 14 August 1594, again suggests a strong involvement of the Clarks in local parish matters. Batten bequeathed to 'master Edward Clarke' two 'staules' of beef.²³ Again John Clarke acted as an appraiser for the inventory which totalled £72 8s.2d., evidence from the inventory points to an involvement in both arable and pasture farming, with 9 acres of wheat, 40 sheep and lambs, 3 horses and 5 bullocks. Batten had lived in a house containing a chamber, inner chamber, hall, buttery, kitchen and loft. While William was content to describe himself as a yeoman, in a document dated after his death he was to be termed a 'gentleman'. On 17 November 1609 his youngest son Edward to whom William had left £3 'to buye him a nagge' entered Middle Temple as

'Mr Edward, sixth son of William Batten, late of Ardington, Berks, gent; deceased specially; fine only £31.6s.8d. by request of George Snigge, Knt., Baron of the Exchequer...'

This is the only instance found in surviving documents of the Wantage Hundred Batten family being given the title of 'gentleman'.²⁴

It was from the early seventeenth century that Edward Clarke began to show an interest in local county government and affairs. In 1601 he served on the Berkshire Commission of the Peace, and was still a J.P. in 1609. He held this position with other local gentry, Edward Fettiplace of North Denchworth and William Eyston of East

Hendred.²⁵ In January 1618 Edward Clarke, Esquire, was one of 4 who attended a court session held in Thatcham regarding an Exchequer Deposition of evidence in the case brought by William Wollascott against John Hyde concerning a watercourse, mill and common pasture in Brimpton.²⁶ The Clarke family were entered in the 1623 Heralds' Visitation, confirming their gentry status.²⁷ In 1625 Edward contributed £20 to the king as a Privy Seal Loan.²⁸ Two years later the rise from yeoman to gentry was further cemented when Clarke was knighted by the king at Bisham Abbey.²⁹ The 1628 Lay Subsidy gives a land valuation of £12 for Edward Clarke.³⁰ In 1630 he was listed in the return of the Berkshire Knighthood Commissioners.³¹

Edward was to marry 3 times and each marriage would seem to have enhanced his social standing in the county. The first was to Mary Wiseman, daughter of Edward resident in Steventon. Wiseman was later to purchase Sparsholt Court, West Hendred. He had been sheriff of Berkshire in 1596 and served along with Clarke as a Commissioner of the Peace in 1601.³² The second marriage was to Susanna, daughter of Sir Thomas Temple of Stowe in Buckinghamshire.³³ The third marriage was to Mary, daughter of Edmund Dunch of Wittenham, and the widow of William Winchcombe.³⁴ This marriage made one further kinship connection for Clarke; Mary's mother Anne was the daughter of Nicholas Fettiplace of Kentwood.³⁵ In common with both Clarke and Wiseman, Dunch had served as a Commissioner of the Peace for Berkshire in 1601.³⁶ By these careful marriages to families established within the county hierarchy Clarke set a seal on his family's rise from yeoman to gentry status. This was an instance of the marriage 'strategy' used to its full advantage.

In 1630 Edward was succeeded by his son John. John had been the first member of the Ardington family to attend Oxford University, matriculating at Wadham College on 2 November 1627 aged 17, but it took him 6 years to be awarded his B.A.³⁷ In between these two dates Clarke was admitted to Lincoln's Inn on 5 March 1631 'at the request of Edward Fettiplace, now reader'.³⁸ At some stage John married Katherine, daughter of Thomas Bateman of Tottenham Court, Middlesex.³⁹

The 1640/1 Subsidy gives a land valuation of £10 for John Clarke.⁴⁰ A year later he assessed his own wealth, in particular his lands in Ardington and Isbury. The Ardington estate was the larger, being calculated as 'worth £6000 besides £600 a year'; and for Isbury 'I doe esteeme to bee worth 1400 li more'.⁴¹

Clarke was an ardent Royalist and on 22 December 1642 (the year he served as sheriff of Berkshire) he was commissioned to raise 'one Regt of horse in Berks'.⁴² In this capacity as a Royalist he wrote to the Mayor and Constables of Reading twice in June and July 1643. The first letter, dated 23 June 1643, encloses a warrant signed by the king, then at Oxford,

we doe require you to cause 500. able & strong bodyed men of ye County to be brought to Abingdon upon Monday the 28th of this instant June to serve in the Regiment of the Lord Viscount Grandison one Colonell of all our Army...

As this was a second request the Mayor having ignored the first order, Clarke added at the front of this second request 'And that you appear at time & place to be appointed to give an account of the defaults within your liberty'.⁴³ Again the Mayor ignored this request so when Clarke wrote again on 5 July 1643 the tone was stronger. Clarke, having been informed that the proclamations concerning contributions to the king's army at Oxford had not been broadcast in Reading, he threatens 'I doe hereby require you in his Majesties name to proclaim them the next market day or else the danger will be your sole self'.⁴⁴ With the final victory of the Parliamentarians Clarke paid for his support to the Royalists. In May 1645 the goods of 'Colonel Clarke', including houses and possessions in Abingdon, Ardington and Isbury were ordered to be seized.⁴⁵ However the main effect of this order fell on his ten-year-old son John, the elder John Clarke having died the year previously.

While the Clarke family had been more closely involved in county administration, the Hobbs and Batten families still resident in Ardington had been quietly consolidating their social position. In the 1603/4 Lay Subsidy Thomas Hobbs was assessed at £14 in goods. Thomas was probably the elder son of John Hobbs 'husbandman' whose will had been made in 1586, an inventory valuation of £45 15s.6d is dated the same year. In the will Thomas the eldest son was bequeathed £20

and a younger son Stephen 20 marks.⁴⁶ Stephen died in 1627 leaving a large estate valued at £109 7s.0d. While this 1586 inventory is interesting for his wealth assessment, the will itself contains one interesting item for the light it sheds on literacy among local yeoman families. A note at the end of the will reads: 'This will was written by mee John Hobbes sone the elder beinge directed word by word by th'above Testator now with God; I say By me John Hobbes'.⁴⁷

In 1600 Stephen had entered into a leasing agreement with Edward Clarke for an unnamed area of land, then occupied by his mother Widow Hobbs, for the sum of £53.⁴⁸ The first known instance of a member of the Hobbs family being given the title of 'gentleman' is in the Berkshire Knighthood Fines for 1630 and 1632. In these lists Andrew Hobbs, gentleman, who had been assessed at £5 in goods in the 1628 Lay Subsidy, was now assessed at £10.⁴⁹ Andrew died in 1650 and was succeeded by his son Bennett. It was Bennett who was to consolidate further the family's position among the local gentry by marrying twice into such families. The first marriage was to Mary, daughter of Sir Charles Wiseman of Steventon,⁵⁰ while the second was to Martha, daughter of Thomas Plott of Upton.⁵¹ With the elevation of the Hobbs family into recognised gentry status Ardington now had two gentry families in residence, both of whom had originated from yeoman status. However the seizure of the Clarke estates in 1645 must have dealt a severe blow to that family, and most certainly would have caused a reduction in wealth. This may have opened the way for the Hobbs family, perhaps now greater in wealth, to be in the ascendancy.

For the Batten family only one will has survived from the period 1600-1650. This is for John, 'yeoman' dated 1620.⁵² An Edward Batten of Bristol is mentioned giving rise to the tentative theory that the family had merchant links.⁵³ After small legacies to two sons John and Henry 'of Abingdon', the residue was left to his wife Margaret.⁵⁴ The inventory, dated 4 May 1620, was appraised by John Clarke (gentleman), John Barre, Thomas Batten, Richard Hobbs and Thomas Kempster, and the valuation was set at £142 15s.0d. The home was substantial comprising hall, lower chamber, upper chamber, 'entrye' chamber, kitchen and servants' chamber. Evidence

from the inventory suggests a mixture of pasture and arable farming; the summer corn crop was valued at £50, and the livestock numbered 5 horses, 10 hogs, 4 bullocks and 10 'mylch' kine. The mention of a servants' chamber and an increase in wealth from the earlier will of William Batten may illustrate that the Batten family was also gaining in status along with the Hobbs family, but content to remain as yeoman and not follow Hobbs into gentry status.

On 23 October 1617 Edward Clarke and John Batten entered into a lease which sheds light on kinship links between a gentry and yeoman family. Clarke, in his list of leasing agreements, states that

in consideration of xxxli to be payd at dayes to come by bonde and in consideration that his son Francis Batten shall shortly take to wyfe my brother John his daughter he shall have as according to the custom of all the lands now in the tenure of Richard Fritwell...⁵⁵

The implication here is that Clarke is providing John Batten with a source of wealth to enable him to provide suitably for a wife from the gentry, in this case a member of Clarke's own family.

At some stage a cadet branch of the Sherwood East Hendred gentry family moved into Ardington, possibly when John Sherwood married Elinor, daughter of John Clarke.⁵⁶ John, their son, entered Oxford University, matriculating at Pembroke College in June 1663 aged 14, and two years later entered the Inner Temple. In 1668/9 he was granted a licence to marry Ann Giles of St. Margaret's, Westminster.⁵⁷ In 1665/6 John the elder was still resident in the parish living in a four-hearth home.

The Hearth Tax returns for Ardington also supply evidence that the Clarke family were temporarily non-resident. In a note attached to the returns and signed by Mark Ziegler (vicar) and the two churchwardens: Richard Hobbs and Francis House, it was testified that 'by a sudden and violent fire happeninge about the beginninge of February last 1662' much of the house had been destroyed, and only seven of the original hearths remained. At the time of the fire the manor house had been inhabited by Edward Garrard.⁵⁸ A 'Mr' William Clarke, son of Richard (d.1670) and cousin of

John Clarke was summoned to appear before the Heralds but failed to do so; William lived in a modest house with two hearths and was parish constable.⁵⁹

Richard and Bennett Hobbs, uncle and nephew, were also summoned to appear before the 1665/6 Heralds and the family were entered officially as of gentry status. Despite the absence of the Clarkes the Hobbs family now being elevated to gentry status continued Ardington's status as a 'closed' parish. In the Hearth Tax Bennett lived in a substantial property with seven hearths, and Richard in a property with six. Richard died in 1672, his will dated 7 April 1669 has survived. He left the majority of his estate to his son Richard, but a second son Bennett was to receive an annual rent of £20 from 'all of my leases and messuages, lands, tenements & hereditaments in Ardington'. A daughter was bequeathed £10, while his wife was provided 'for forty years if she lives that long 2 chambers in my dwelling house & all the furniture in one room in my dwelling house in Ardington'.⁶⁰

The Batten family lived in homes with a smaller number of hearths. The June 1663 Hearth Tax Returns list Francis (3), John, senior (3), John, younger (3), Robert (2) and Edward (2).⁶¹ Robert was serving as the Parish Constable at the time of the return, emphasising that they were considered of some standing in the parish, but not of sufficient status to be summoned to appear before the Heralds.

The 1667 will and inventory of a Richard Batten 'yeoman' has survived; evidence from this shows that he was the brother of the elder John. Batten divided his estate into two, one half to his second wife of a few months, and the second to an unmarried daughter. The inventory valuation totalled £254 14s. 0d. showing a man of some wealth. He owned a considerable number of sheep valued at £112, while the crops of wheat, barley and pulse were collectively valued at £60.⁶²

Apart from the one mention in the 1609 Middle Temple records of William Batten 'gentleman' no other such reference has been traced within Wantage Hundred. However the family did marry twice into the Clarke family; Francis Batten married a daughter of John Clarke, and the 1665/6 Heralds' Visitation shows that a Thomas Batten had married Jane, also a daughter of John Clarke. It was this particular branch

of the Batten family that moved to East Garston and were eventually entered in the 1665/6 Heralds Visitation.

Of the three Ardington families that were obviously of yeoman stock in 1600, the Clarkes had widened their horizons, actively purchased land, entered into local administration and had made advantageous marriages with gentry representatives. A check was put on this rise by their active support for the Royalist cause, and the loss of their estates and wealth must have affected them greatly. After the 1640s there is no record of them actively engaged in local politics, and by 1663 the main branch of the family would appear to have moved from Ardington. Now the Hobbs family, elevated to gentry status, could take their place as the main elite family of the parish. The third family, Batten, showed little progress towards gentry status, apart from the individual that moved to East Garston, and it is likely that they were established in this village by the father of Jane Clarke, to ensure his daughter was in a position suitable to her status as a gentlewoman. The surviving inventories of the Batten family point to a wealthy family but one that had no aspiration to climb the social ladder. While Ardington developed into a 'closed' parish it experienced hardly any population growth between 1522 and 1663. The earlier document lists 35 households; the June 1663 Hearth Tax lists 33 households; three of which, including the destroyed manor house, were empty.⁶³

EAST GINGE

The development of nearby East Ginge differed from that of Ardington. A small township of only five households listed in 1522 it formed one of the manors of West Hendred. Since 1237 the manor of East Ginge had been divided into two moieties. The Giffard family held one half and the Rede family the other. The total land valuation in 1522 totalled £19 19s. 2d., of which Thomas Giffard held £5 17s. 8d. and Clement Rede £3 17s. 8d. Twelve more individuals held smaller parcels of land. Of the five households listed, only two show wealth that would put them into the yeoman category. One was John Greenaway, tenant of Thomas Giffard, with £20 in goods and

10 shillings worth of freehold land. His household consisted of two sons, Peter with £10 in goods, and Andrew with £5 6s. 8d. The second yeoman family was headed by Walter Webb with £12 in goods and one servant. The absence of resident gentry would suggest that the Greenaway family could be considered the main family of the township. An earlier document dated 1447 places a branch of the family in Wantage, Roger Greenaway 'husbandman' was indicted for failing to appear before the assizes concerning a debt of £60 due to his landlord, the Dean and Chapter of Windsor.⁶⁴

The earliest Greenaway will to have survived is that for Andrew. Dated 26 January 1575, in it he left modest bequests of 40 shillings to a daughter, Dorothy, 20 shillings to a second daughter Anne and the same amount to a younger son, William.⁶⁵ The residue of the estate was to be divided between his wife Margaret and eldest son, another William. William the elder, in return, was to provide for his mother. The inventory, dated 14 February 1575 gives a valuation of £83 12s. 0d., but unfortunately the document is badly damaged although enough remains to point to Andrew being actively engaged in arable farming.⁶⁶ One further early will and inventory, that of William Greenaway of West Hendred dated 17 November 1575, is still extant. A modest wealth of £29 4s. 0d. was recorded; but he was owed a further £12 by unnamed individuals. Two sons, Andrew and Robert, and a daughter Elizabeth were bequeathed 40 shillings each with the residue going to Joan their mother.⁶⁷

One early John Greenaway was to find himself in trouble with the church authorities, an item dated 19 February 1536 of the East Hendred Church Court Presentiments notes that:

Dom John Greenaway of Esthenred confesses to immorality with Alice Colyns late of the parish of Lokyng—enjoined to offer a wax candle two pounds in weight before the third sunday in Lent to the principal image in the church of Lokyng.⁶⁸

At some stage after 1561 Thomas Barnes, the current owner of the former Clement Rede moiety, granted half-manor in East Ginge to William and Peter Greenaway, sons of John. John himself had earlier purchased small parcels of land from the descendents of the lesser landowners in 1522.⁶⁹ These actions may point to a family determined to establish an estate of its own. When Peter Greenaway died in 1608, a

post-mortem investigation listed in his possession one messuage, a water-mill and eight virgates of land.⁷⁰ This transaction between Barnes and the Greenaway brothers was later to be the cause of a dispute within the family and was to become the subject of a Chancery suit in the early seventeenth century. Peter Greenaway 'husbandman' complained that his brother William was keeping from him two yardlands which were intended to be shared between Peter and another brother John. This land purchased from Barnes had been brought by William using the father's money, John the father having been blind for ten years before his death, the elder son William had acted for him. William had retained the two yardlands claiming them as his own during the minority of Peter, but now Peter was of an age to be able to claim his rights. William, however, produced witnesses to say that whereas John the elder had died possessed of 7 yardlands, the deeds and conveyances for the 2 extra yardlands were lost. Thus Peter could produce no evidence, only word of mouth, that he was entitled to share in the land, if his accusation was true then the elder brother had stolen from his brothers. At the time of the case William had already had sixteen years' benefit of the land. His witnesses who included James Hallywell, Robert and Agnes Clement, denied 'utterly that there was any deed between Thomas Barnes and the Complots father'.⁷¹

This was not the first time that the Greenaway family had taken a family member to court. In the 1580s in a Chancery suit a complaint was brought by Agnes Greenaway, widow and the executor of a William Greenaway against her brother-in-law Peter, concerning one yardland in East Ginge. This had been conveyed to Peter by William, 'upon special trust' that the profits from this land might be used for the benefit of William and his family, in particular his children. Now that William had died his widow complained that Peter is using the land for his own use 'to the utter defrauding of fyve poore infants and fatherless children of the sd William deceased...'. The court decided that Peter must appear before it to explain his actions. While the document does not say so, the implication is that William and Peter were brothers, possibly the two brothers that had purchased land from Thomas Barnes. And again, if

the accusation was true, here is a second example of kin against kin, and one apparently defrauding the other.⁷²

In the 1598/9 Lay Subsidy Return Greenaway possessed 40 shillings in lands.⁷³ In the 1603/4 Returns three members of the family were listed: Robert with 40 shillings in lands, Peter, junior, with £3 in lands, John, senior, with 20 shillings, again in lands. Peter Greenaway, junior, is listed in both the 1628 and the 1640/1 Subsidies with 20 shillings in lands.⁷⁴ Peter served as a churchwarden in West Hendred in 1623. The June 1663 Hearth Tax Returns show two John Greenaways, each with three hearths.⁷⁵ The will and inventory of one John Greenaway has survived, dated 2nd and 21st May 1667 respectively.⁷⁶ This particular John practised as a tanner and from the evidence and documents available is the first member of the family shown to have any considerable wealth, £209. Despite the three hearth entry the house he dwelt in was large.⁷⁷ Of his tanning, equipment the 'Hides in the Lines', 10 vats and tan house were valued at £115, his bark-mill and stone was valued at £3. In addition Greenaway practised small scale farming, with a corn crop valued at £10, threshed wheat in the barn at £3, and 1 horse and 2 cows. This small scale operation points to the main interest of Greenaway being in trade, in this case tanning, and the farm part of his estate was undertaken merely to provide food for the family and perhaps a small surplus for sale.

The Greenaway family were not summoned to appear before the 1665/6 Heralds, but from this period indications point to a rise in fortune for the family. John, son of a John Greenaway matriculated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford on 3 March 1680/1 aged 17, and obtained his B.A. in 1685, and his M.A. in 1687. In 1701 he became rector of Hartley Mauditt, Hampshire, and was later appointed vicar of Frayle in 1719.⁷⁸ Then in 1727 their fortunes rose still further when Oliver Greenaway of East Ginge was knighted at the Coronation of George II.⁷⁹ The reason for the elevation of the family particularly at the end of the seventeenth century is a mystery; certainly up until 1670 they were still yeoman with at least one connection with trade. It is perhaps interesting to point out that Thomas Reynolds, who lived in the house

with the greater number of hearths in 1663, had married an Ann Greenaway at Sonning, on 17 May 1645.⁸⁰ The Greenaway family remained of yeoman status until the eighteenth century and, with no influx of gentry families, East Ginge remained an 'open' parish. Population growth had been small, the 5 households of 1522 had grown to 11 in 1663.

EAST LOCKINGE

Of the remaining two 'open' townships of 1522, East Lockinge with 14 households and an estimated population of 75 was considerably larger than West Lockinge with its 5 households and an estimated population of 30. In East Lockinge Robert Doo, a tenant of Abingdon Abbey, with a goods valuation of £66 13s.4d. and 10 servants far outstripped the two other yeoman families in the parish: John Daniel with £12 in goods and Roger Webb with £10 in goods. The local importance of the family is emphasized by the appointment of Richard Doo as a collector for the 1525 Lay Subsidy.⁸¹

The will and inventory of Robert Doo are still extant, the former dated 9 April 1550.⁸² One son William was to receive the holding at 'Farborghe' (possibly Farborough, Berkshire) leased by a James Richards, 100 sheep; 2 bullocks and 21 quarters of barley.⁸³ Another holding in the same parish leased by John Perme was left to a second son, Thomas, who in addition received 30 sheep. The freehold land in Wantage and West Hendred went to Robert the third son, as well as 100 sheep, 2 kine, 2 bullocks and 20 quarters of barley. A fourth son, John, inherited the remaining years still outstanding of the leasehold farm. John Clarke of Ardington was made one of the overseers and acted as an appraiser for the estate, which was valued at £154 10s.4d. The flock of 500 sheep totalled £66 13s.4d., the tillage of 20 acres of barley totalled 20 shillings, and the 46 'lands' of barley sown were valued at £7 13s. 4d. Of other animals there were 16 bullocks worth £6 8s.0d., 12 kine £9 12s.0d. and 8 pigs 24 shillings. Farming on such a large scale at this period within Wantage Hundred was

unusual and would have placed Doo at the top of the yeoman hierarchy within the hundred.

Documents relating to two of his sons, John and Robert, are still available. The earlier will, that of John, is dated 4 April 1558.⁸⁴ He had inherited the leasehold to the East Lockinge farm and this he divided between his only children his two daughters Joan and Agnes, who were also named joint executors. Should they predecease him then his two brothers, William and Thomas, were to inherit. Anne, his wife, was provided for with £60 and 40 sheep. In the will Doo gives an insight into kinship, revealing that he had an illegitimate son, bequeathing to 'a child which I have in hampstead £20 to be pd when he is XVIII yeres of age And also the costs and charges of his Keeping the meanwhile'. Doo did not forget the mother, providing £6 13s.4d. for 'the mother of the said child' to be paid after his death.

No inventory has survived for John Doo but both the will and inventory for his brother Robert are extant, dated 21 June 1557 and 17 January 1558 respectively. Robert had inherited the freehold land in Wantage and in West Hendred, which he left in turn to his son John, along with £13 6s.8d. in cash, 1 cow and the best calf. He had inherited 100 sheep from his father, but by the time Robert made his will the herd had shrunk to 17. His inventory only totalled £26 3s.8d. and he was in debt to three individuals for a total of £2 8s.4d.⁸⁵ This evidence suggests that Robert was not a good manager, either through carelessness or due to the financial, political and social influences of the time.

In February 1587 a John Doo 'servant' to Francis Yate was, along with others, arrested by the authorities on the suspicion of actively practising the Catholic faith. After interrogation Doo confessed to 'hearing mass and of being reconciled to Rome when Campion was at Lyfford'.⁸⁶

Between 1550 and 1635 a total of 12 inventories have survived for the Doo family, they show an interesting variety in wealth (see Table 2).

Table 2
Inventory Wealth for the Doo Family, 1550–1635

| Date | Name | Title | Wealth | Parish |
|------|---------|------------|-------------|----------|
| 1550 | Robert | - | 154 10s. 4d | Lockinge |
| 1558 | Robert | - | 26 3s. 8d | Lockinge |
| 1563 | Richard | - | 8 9s. 11d | Hanne |
| 1576 | Richard | yeoman | 71 16s. 6d | Hendred |
| 1586 | John | yeoman | 5 14s. 4d | Hendred |
| 1588 | William | husbandman | 34 15s. 8d | Lockinge |
| 1591 | Thomas | - | 112 18s. 4d | Lockinge |
| 1597 | Richard | - | 6 13s. 6d | Wantage |
| 1614 | Joan | widow | 41 4s. 4d | Lockinge |
| 1627 | Edward | yeoman | 46 16s. 0d | Lockinge |
| 1627 | Francis | yeoman | 29 16s. 0d | Lockinge |
| 1635 | Edmund | - | 65 16s. 0d | Hanne |

The Table using available documentation illustrates that a number of the Doo family did not possess any great wealth, and apart from the earlier Robert, only Thomas with a valuation of £112 18s. 4d. was comparable with local wealthy yeoman and gentry families.⁸⁷ At this stage an offshoot of the East Lockinge family settled in neighbouring Betterton, and became for a while actively involved in land transactions. In April 1595 John Doo of Betterton, yeoman, and Thomas Pomfroy of East Lockinge, gentleman, were granted by the Dean and Canons of Windsor the lease of the mansion house of the parsonage of West Ilsley, along with glebe lands, for the term of three lives of Edward Keate and his two sons, William and Francis.⁸⁸ In 1603 the same John Doo sold for £245 to William Clement of Haddenham, yeoman, 40 acres of land and the manor house of Kirtlington. He retained interest in one half acre at ‘Templeton Sladd’ in the parish.⁸⁹ In a later indenture Doo agreed to convey land in the area of Kirtlington to Richard Perce and William Clement for the sum of £540.⁹⁰

In 1590 East Lockinge manor was sold by Francis Winchcombe to Edward Keate, the fourth son of William Keate of East Hagbourne, a family which had been listed in the 1433 Berkshire gentry. Edward had earlier married, in 1565, ‘Joan, daughter and coheir of John Doo, gentleman’, so may already have been resident in the parish.⁹¹ In 1617 Edward Keate settled East Lockinge manor on his eldest surviving son Francis and his male heirs, with reversion to the male heirs of Edward the eldest son of Francis and Edward’s own right heirs.⁹² Edward and his wife Joan

both died in 1624. Francis, who succeeded his father, was a member of the Middle Temple having been called to the Bar on 30 October 1607.⁹³ He married Frances, the daughter of Sir John Hungerford of Cadenham, Wiltshire, an alliance that may indicate the rise of the Keate family despite its originating from the fourth son of a gentry family.

At this period Francis would appear to be resident in London. The 1628 Lay Subsidy records that he possessed £8 0s 0d in lands.⁹⁴ On 20 June 1620 the Dean and Chapter of Windsor leased the mansion of the parsonage of West Ilsley to Francis Keate, gentleman, on the surrender of a former lease by his father granted to John Doo and Thomas Pomfrey.⁹⁵ A further document, dated May 1627, by the Dean and Chapter renewed to Francis the lease of 26 acres of pasture land called Tulwick, the site of a deserted medieval village, in Wantage, originally leased to his father on 12 April 1611.⁹⁶ In February 1634 Francis was the Plaintiff in a Chancery Proceeding against Richard House concerning the copyhold and tithes of Brightwalton Manor.⁹⁷

A number of Doo and Keate family members entered Oxford University. Thomas Doo matriculated at Queen's College on 26 November 1602 aged 17, and on 24 May 1607 Thomas, 'son and heir of John D. of Betterton, Berks., gentleman', entered the Middle Temple.⁹⁸ In an earlier entry Edward, brother of Francis Keate, had matriculated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, on 7 November 1589 aged 17. From the early years of the seventeenth century the Doo family, both of Betterton and East Lockinge, are on a number of occasions given the title of 'gentleman'. This can be found in both the 1628 and the 1640/1 Lay Subsidies where Thomas Doo is titled 'gentleman'; in the first record he has a goods valuation of £5, in the second £4 in goods.⁹⁹ In 1632 Doo paid £13 in the Berkshire Knighthood Fines Return.¹⁰⁰

The will for Francis Keate is still extant, dated 21 March 1648. He directed that he was to be buried in East Lockinge church near to the tombs of his parents.¹⁰¹ The document is particularly interesting for the light it sheds on the provision for female members and the way a previous will can be manipulated to suit later needs. Keate had taken up a loan of £500 from his uncle Hugh Keate of East Hagbourne, John

Southby of Carswell and Thomas Southby of Appleton, 'gentleman', in order to discharge the annuity left to his youngest sister Dorothy by their father. That Keate had to take up a loan in the first place suggests that the father had made a will without adequate resources to pay the bequests. Dorothy, who had married a Humphrey Hawkins 'a man of noe fortune & improvident', had now inherited land in Staffordshire. Her brother having previously maintained her family 'to my great coste and charge' his estate is now 'by reason of those late warrs much impaired' so to rectify this Keate intends that Dorothy is only to receive £300 of the £500 annuity; the remaining £200 he is going to use for his own ends and to pay his debts. Despite these pleas of proverty Keate still bequeathed to his second son Francis £800 which he was to receive when 23 and until then an annuity of £30 a year. It is not clear whether Francis had repeated the mistake of his father and made a bequest which the estate could not cover, although with the evidence he provides for the difficulty in providing for his sister as determined by the father does suggest that his own estate would not have been able to meet the bequest. The eldest son, Edward, inherited the estate and was appointed executor. Francis the younger son was to die a bachelor while living in Paris.

Edward had followed his father into the Middle Temple, entering on 2 May 1640 as 'son and heir of Francis K. one of the most ancient Masters of the Utter Bar'.¹⁰² Edward travelled to Kintbury to marry on 9 January 1646 Cecily, daughter of Sir John Darell of Barton Court, baronet.¹⁰³ The acceptance of Edward into this circle suggests that his position was suitable for such an alliance and that over three generations the family had climbed from the lowly position of fourth son to a gentry status in their own right.

The 1663 Hearth Tax shows that Edward was resident in the parish, his 13 hearths being one of the largest hearth numbers recorded for the Hundred. At the same time John Collins had 8 hearths, and John Doo 4.¹⁰⁴ Edward served as a Justice of the Peace for Berkshire,¹⁰⁵ and he was also active as a Commissioner on the Berkshire Commission for Charitable Uses.¹⁰⁶ Despite his London interests Keate retained a

strong hold on local affairs, which would have restricted the ambitions of the wealthy local yeoman families. The Keate family earlier disclaimed at the 1623 Heralds' Visitation, but appear in the 1665/6 Returns.¹⁰⁷ They died out in the area when in 1718 the five daughters of Francis Keate sold the manor to Matthew Wymondsold.

In the late 1640s a distant relation, Robert Keate then aged 23, travelled from Reading and settled in Wantage. He was to be one of the founder members of the Baptist Church in Wantage, established around the year 1648, and one of the leaders of the movement until his death in 1709. In July 1660 he was imprisoned in Reading and his goods were confiscated for his Baptist leanings, but on his release he returned to Wantage, and helped to convert a barn in Garston Lane as a meeting place. The Wantage Baptists were frowned upon by Sir Thomas Holt, M.P. for Abingdon during the Protectorate, and this led to the local Baptists petitioning Parliament to allow them to use Wantage Town Hall as a meeting place.¹⁰⁸

From the late sixteenth century the Doo family were recorded as having migrated into Wantage. The earliest reference is the will of Richard 'joyner' with a small assessment of just £6 13s.4d., who appointed his cousin John to be an executor.¹⁰⁹ Some documents dating from the middle of the seventeenth century suggest that the Wantage Doo branch was involved in the cloth trade. In a will of 1648 John 'yeoman' left to David, one of his five sons, his 'dyeing furnance & one broad loome'.¹¹⁰ This is more or less confirmed when Alexander, another son and the executor of his will, is titled a clothworker in two documents. In the earlier, dated 20 February 1662 the Dean and Chapter of Windsor leased Rack Close (one and a half acres), and 12 acres which formed part of Priorsmede, both in Wantage, to Alexander 'clothworker' for 21 years at an annual rent of £1 14s.7d.¹¹¹ This lease was renewed on two further dates, 20 December 1669, and 4 November 1676, when the rent was increased to £2 a year and a bond of £40.¹¹² A few years earlier, on 21 December 1658, Alexander Doo along with Thomas Stibbs, yeoman, had purchased another piece of Priorsmede called Northend from Sir George Willmot, Knt, Robert Flower, Richard Furnifall and William Pitman.¹¹³ These three documents show Alexander

Doo as a clothworker by trade, but also not backward in entering into land transactions, possibly with a view to gaining a higher social status than a person wholly engaged in trade and manufacture. The marriage registers show that there was at least one kinship link with the tanning Aldworth family, when John Doo married Elizabeth Aldworth at Wantage on 12 May 1656.¹¹⁴ A kinship link with a gentry family was established when in 1641 Thomas Doo married Ellen Keate at Harwell.¹¹⁵

The status of East Lockinge alternated between 'open' and 'closed' with the Keate family mainly resident in London, while the Doo family, continually termed 'yeoman' and only of modest wealth, by virtue of their close kin relationship with the 'gentleman Doo family of Betterton' could have become lords of the manor in all but name.

WEST LOCKINGE

Few documents have survived which relate to West Lockinge for the period 1522 to 1670. It was only a small hamlet in 1522 with 5 separate households. The household showing the largest wealth was that of John Aldworth with £26 13s.4d., his mother Alice who shared the home assessed at the same figure, and 5 servants. The kinship with the Wantage family of the same name is proved by a will dated 1525 which states that John was the 'brother' of John Aldworth of Wantage, tanner.¹¹⁶ The next highest wealth valuation was John Knolles with £6 in goods.

In the 1598/9 Lay Subsidy only three names are entered: John Knolles with £3 in goods; William Marriot with 20 shillings in lands, and a John Keate 'gentleman' with £8 in lands.¹¹⁷ John Knowles was most likely a descendent of the John Knolles of 1522; and William Marriot was resident in Wantage at this period. John Keate was a brother of Edward Keate of East Lockinge,¹¹⁸ At some date he had moved from Lockinge to Checkendon, Oxfordshire, and in his will dated 10 July 1616 he requested burial at the latter.¹¹⁹ In this document he bequeathed to his son John £200 and one annuity of Checkendon Manor. An Ellinor Goswell was also to receive the same sum to be used by the executors for her use until she reached the age of 19.¹²⁰

The testator's wife was directed to look after Ellinor; if she agreed then she was to receive £10 annually. Leonard, heir and executor, was ordered to grant to Alice and Ellinor for their life 'the next coppiehold which shall fall into his handes in Checkendon', and he was to spend £20 making the house 'handsome' for them. If he should refuse then he was to divide £100 equally between them. Leonard, whose residence was in East Challow, was to give Alice houseroom and firewood 'in one of his houses untill the said coppiehold shall falle'. The will contains one vague reference to apprenticeship in gentry families; Keate left to his youngest son John 'nowe in the keepinge of John Clarke of Wanborough twenty poundes to binde him prentice' and a further £50 upon completion of the said apprenticeship.

Both a Knolles and a Keate are listed in the 1628 Lay Subsidy,¹²¹ but the next extant document exclusively referring to the township is the 1663 Hearth Tax Returns. Apart from the familiar name of John Knowles with one hearth, unfamiliar names are listed; 5 of the 7 households had one hearth each, Edward Hyde had 2, James George 3 hearths.

The Knowles family appear to have only a modest wealth throughout the period. The inventory of a John Knowles, dated 11 August 1660, is still extant, appraised by John Aldworth and William Tubb amounting to £22 6s. 0d.¹²² The house was a sizeable one comprising of a bedchamber, hall, buttery, 'Backer' house chamber, and a brew-house and kitchen. While the rooms contained nothing of any great value, the brew-house kitchen contained a furnance and a malt mill.

The scarcity of documents make it impossible to arrive at any firm conclusion regarding developments in West Lockinge, but the few documents that are available suggest that the gentry Keate family were non-resident, and the Aldworth family appear to have moved from the parish at an early date. The absence of any known gentry family resident places the parish in the 'open' category for the period 1522 to 1670.

Of the four 'open' townships in 1522, East Ginge and West Lockinge, the two smaller, poorer ones remained 'open'; their situation did not attract gentry families or

yeoman families who wished to establish an estate from which to rise to gentry status. The two larger parishes, Ardington and East Lockinge fared differently. Both did attract gentry families. In each case the Clarke and Keate representatives were younger sons of gentry families moving into the area away from the vicinity of the main family residence. As these two families attained gentry status then both parishes became 'closed' parishes. In both resident yeoman families of 1522 by the middle of the seventeenth centuries had also achieved gentry status, the Hobbs in Ardington and the Doo family in East Lockinge, so that when both the Clarke and the Keate families became non-resident these original Wantage Hundred families could become dominant.

NOTES:

- 1 It is unfortunate that no Ardington parish registers have survived prior to 1607.
- 2 PRO. E179/73/127
- 3 PRO. PROB.11/21. The will is dated 13 April 1525; unfortunately the inventory has not survived. Burial is requested inside East Hendred Church pointing to Johnson's idea of his social status within the parish.
- 4 PRO. E179/73/128. A Whistler family were resident in the parish in 1656 when Alice wife of Andrew Whistler 'yeoman' gave information concerning the payment of tithes to Ardington rectory in an Exchequer Deposition taken at Wantage. Plaintiff: Bennett Hobbs; Defendant: John Sherwood. PRO. 1656 Easter 10 Berks. In a document of 1632 Andrew Whistler is named as the son-in-law of Richard Hobbs. PRO. D/ECW E2.
- 5 Clarke was certainly in possession of land valued at 46/8d. in the 1542/3 Lay Subsidy. PRO. E179/73/166A.
- 6 An ancestor John Clarke of Inkpen is entered in the 1433 list of Berkshire gentry; and his son John (d. 1497) moved to Basildon at an unknown date. Clarke, *Wanting*. pp. 9, 56.

- 7 VCH, *Berks.* 4, pp. 287, 289.
- 8 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 260. The identity of John Coxhead is unclear; it is possible that he was one of the John Coxheads who in this period lived in East Lockinge and West Ginge.
- 9 Clarke, *Wanting.* p. 56. Ardington has a total land area of 2,693 acres, so by now Clarke was in possession by leasehold of the majority of the parish. VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 269.
- 10 PRO. PROB.11/52. A copy is held at the Berkshire Record Office. BRO. D/ECw F1.
- 11 Fuller details of the Clarke family and their kinship links between 1522 and the mid-eighteenth century can be seen in Family Chart 3.
- 12 This did not have the military association common in later centuries, in this era it was used to denote a servant either male or female. *OED.* 2 edn.
- 13 The term 'livery' in this context is obscure; it may imply that Henry was serving an apprenticeship; or he was a retainer in the service of one of the nobility. As his father leased land from the earl of Derby it is plausible that Henry was in his service.
- 14 PRO. E179/75/313
- 15 PRO. E179/75/313. The identity of Edward Clarke is unclear; he may be the brother of John the Younger. Edward certainly had a brother John; Clarke mentions him in a document concerning a leasing agreement dated 1636, in which he notes that Francis Batten 'shall shortly take to wyfe my brother John his daughter...'. BRO. D/ECw E2
- 16 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p.270. In 1613 Ardington manor had been valued at £67 7s. 0d. by the King's Auditors. BRO. D/ECW M1.
- 17 BRO. D/ECW E1
- 18 At the 1522 Muster John Batten with one servant possessed £4 in goods; and this was a family that remained in the area throughout the period until 1670.
- 19 BRO. D/A1/77/18
- 20 BRO. D/A1/77/106
- 21 Thomas may have been the elder brother of the earlier John Hobbs and therefore felt entitled to call himself a yeoman and be buried in the church. Spufford found that in Cambridgeshire 'Burial within the church always argued unusual standing in the community', and this is probably true of Berkshire. Spufford, *Contrasting Communities.* p. 109.
- 22 BRO. D/A1/40/76. A branch of the Batten family were later to live at East Garston and were recognised as gentry by the 1665/6 Heralds. *Heralds, Berks.* 1, p. 169.
- 23 BRO. D/A1/41/52. 'Staules' is unclear. In Gloucestershire it implied a cattle-stall. Moore, *Goods and Chattels of Our Forefathers.* p. 331.

- 24 Trice Martin, *Minutes of Parliament*. II, p. 513. Snigge was MP for Bristol and the Batten family had relations there, which may explain the connection between the two.
- 25 Clarke, *Wanting*, pp. 12–13. Gleason, J. H., *The Justices of the Peace in England, 1558 to 1640: A Later Eirenarchia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969. p. 247.
- 26 PRO. 15 Jas.I. Hil.3
- 27 Heralds, Berks. I, p. 81.
- 28 PRO. E401/2586.
- 29 Shaw, *Knights*. II, p. 192.
- 30 BRO. D/EX 49
- 31 PRO. SP16/180/24
- 32 Clarke, *Wanting*. pp. 12, 44. Edward Wiseman was the younger son of Thomas, Esquire of Thornham Hall, Suffolk. Heralds, Berks. I, p. 185.
- 33 Susanna was one of fourteen children; four sons, ten daughters. Temple had served as Sheriff of Buckinghamshire in 1616; and of Warwick in 1620. Heralds, Berks. I, p. 81. Lipscomb, George, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham*. London: J. & W. Robins, 1847. III, pp. 85–86.
- 34 Heralds, Berks. I, p. 185.
- 35 Durston, 'Berkshire and its County Gentry'. Appendix, p. 43.
- 36 Clarke, *Wanting*. p. 12.
- 37 Foster, *Alumni Oxon, 1500–1714*. His brother, Edward, also matriculated at Wadham College on the same day, then aged 15. He received his B.A. much earlier in December 1629; and was listed a member of Gray's Inn in 1643. In 1656 he became an extra licentiate of the College of Physicians.
- 38 *The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn*. London: Lincoln's Inn, 1896. I, p. 212.
- 39 Heralds, Berks. I, p. 186.
- 40 PRO. E179/75/360.
- 41 BRO. D/ECW.M1. A total of £283 8s.8d. was incoming rent at Ardington, £317 4s.0d. was meadow, crops not rented out; and the £6,000 was the 'new' enclosure of eighteen acres; trees and bushes on the manor lands and on the copyholders' lands. The new enclosure mentioned in the document was activated in October 1636 when in agreement with local copyholders, which included the Coxhead, Batten and Hobbs families, Clarke enclosed eighteen acres near to the manor house in exchange for land by Ickleton Way to be used as common. He also undertook to improve a second

area of common called Morthe Marsh 'by grabbing up of some of the bushes there growing.' BRO. D/ECW E3.

- 42 British Library. Harleian MSS. 6852. fol. Iv.
- 43 BRO. Reading Corporation Archives. LIV, no. 22. Up until this point Reading had been garrisoned first by the Royalists then the Parliamentarians, both of which had made heavy demands on the resources of the town. At the time of Clarke's demand the town was empty of both forces; however in July 1643 the commander of the Royalist garrison at Wallingford having received no reply to his demand for a contribution of £50 weekly from Reading detained the Mayor of Reading, William Brackston, until some of his demands had been met. VCH, *Berks.* 3, 358-359.
- 44 BRO. Reading Corporation Archives. LI, no. 41.
- 45 *CPCAM*, p. 553.
- 46 BRO. D/A1/77/18
- 47 BRO. D/A1/79/11
- 48 BRO. D/ECW E2
- 49 BRO. D/EX 49; PRO. SP16/180/24; PRO. E407/35.
- 50 Heralds, Berks. I, p. 227. Mary's step-brother Edmund was to marry Susanna daughter of John Clarke of Ardington. Clarke's father had earlier married into the Steventon Wiseman family.
- 51 Heralds, Berks. I, p. 227.
- 52 BRO. D/A1/176/79.
- 53 In the Bristol Mayor's Audit of 1627 to 1628 an Edward Batten leased in the 'Ould Market a garden at the watering place' the rent being one shilling. *City Chamberlain's Accounts in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Edited by D. M. Livock. Bristol Record Society, 24(1966), p. 91.
- 54 Formerly Margaret Bunne; the marriage took place at Appleton 26 April 1596. Henry, resident at St. Helen's Abingdon, had married Anne Wiblin of Goosey at Stanford-in-the-Vale, 3 November 1604. BMI. Microfilm 27;30.
- 55 BRO. D/ECW E2.
- 56 Heralds, Berks. I, p. 278. John Sherwood was the son of Thomas who in turn was the second son of John the head of the family then resident in East Hendred. So here is another instance of a younger son moving away from the main residence and setting up his own branch. Both the Ardington and East Hendred families are entered in the 1665/6 Heralds Returns.
- 57 Foster, *Alumni Oxon. 1500-1714*.
- 58 PRO. E179/243/25. fol. 706r.

- 59 His relationship to John Clarke remains unclear. While the social standing of constables depended largely on the nature of the locality it may be safe to conclude that they 'usually seem to have been drawn from the prosperous and more prominent sections of village society...'. Kent, Joan R., *The English Village Constable, 1580–1642: A Social and Administrative Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986. p. 150. In Cambridgeshire it was found that the number of hearths did not necessarily relate to the number of actual rooms; that a house with two hearths could have two to ten rooms; one with three hearths could have six to eleven rooms. Therefore the Hearth Tax returns must be used with caution when assessing wealth. Spufford, 'Cambridgeshire Hearth Tax'.
- 60 BRO. D/A1/81/37.
- 61 PRO. E179/243/25.
- 62 BRO. D/A1/46/30. Richard had married a Mary Robins of Ardington, 20 May 1666. BMI. Microfilm 23.
- 63 A religious census of Berkshire taken in 1676 gives a total population for Ardington of 217; a figure that includes three recusants and two separatists. Money, 'A Religious Census'. p. 57.
- 64 *CSP, Patent Rolls*. Henry VI. 5 (1446–1452). p. 12.
- 65 Fuller details of the Greenaway family and their kinship links between 1522–c.1750 can be seen in Family Chart 9.
- 66 BRO. D/A1/71/27.
- 67 BRO. D/A1/71/30.
- 68 Humphreys, Arthur L., *East Hendred: A Berkshire Parish Historically Treated*. London: Hatchards, 1923, p. 328. The original Latin text is given in BRO. D/A 2/c. 3. *Liber Actorum*, 1535–1536. fol. 40v.
- 69 VCH, *Berks*. 4, p. 306.
- 70 VCH, *Berks*. 4, p. 306.
- 71 PRO. C2/James I/G13/40.
- 72 PRO. C3/210/31.
- 73 PRO. E179/75/292.
- 74 PRO. E179/75/313; BRO D/EX 49; PRO. E179/75/360.
- 75 PRO. E179/243/25. fol.702.
- 76 BRO. D/A1/73/33.
- 77 Hall; Parlour; Lodging Chamber; Chamber over the Hall; Little Chamber; Chamber over the Cellar; Servant's Chamber; Buttery; Cellar and Dish-House; Garrett and

Kitchen. This illustrates how caution must be exercised when stating the size of a house from the Hearth Tax alone.

78 Foster, *Alumni Oxon. 1500–1714.*

79 Shaw, *Knights*. II, p. 284.

80 PRO. E179/243/25. fol. 700. BMI. Microfilm 29.

81 PRO. E179/73/128. Doo was appointed collector along with William Richards for the Hundred of Ock. The three commissioners William Yong, Philip Fettiplace and William Hyde were all local gentry and as such would have known Doo.

82 BRO. D/A1/61/17.

83 Fuller details of the Doo family and their kinship links between 1522 and the end of the seventeenth century can be seen in Family Chart 6.

84 PRO. PROB11/40.

85 PRO. PROB.11/40 (John Doo); BRO. D/A1/61/31.

86 *CSP. Domestic. Elizabeth I: 1581-1590*. pp. 384–5.

87 BRO. D/A1/61/172.

88 Windsor Castle Archives. XV.54.147; XV.54.148.

89 ORO. Dash.III/XII/2.

90 ORO. Dash.III/XII/1.

91 Clarke, *Wanting*, p. 11; 151. Fuller details of the Keate family and their kinship links between 1522 and the end of the seventeenth century can be seen in Family Chart 11.

92 VCH, *Berks*. 3, p. 308.

93 Sturgess, *Middle Temple*. p. 76.

94 BRO. D/EX49.

95 Windsor Castle Archives. XV.40.7; renewed 2 May 1627 XV.54.149. Thomas Pomfrey was also of East Lockinge and had married Joan Collins of the Betterton family at Sunningwell 17 January 1615. BMI. Microfilm 29.

96 Windsor Castle Archives. XV.40.4. This was further renewed to Edward Keate 29 January 1667; renewed again in May 1674. In 1680 it was renewed to Edmund Wiseman of East Lockinge and his wife Anne, daughter of Edward Keate. XV.40.4.

97 PRO. C3/407/2.

98 Sturgess, *Middle Temple*. I, p. 89.

- 99 BRO. D/EX 49; PRO. E179/75/360.
- 100 PRO. E407/35.
- 101 BRO. D/A1/90/56.
- 102 Sturgess, *Middle Temple*. I, p. 137.
- 103 BMI. Microfilm 28.
- 104 PRO. E179/243/25. fol. 684.
- 105 Heralds, Berks. I, p. 236.
- 106 Bodleian Library, MS.Top.Berks. d.19. *Minute Book of Courts held by Berkshire Commission for Charitable Uses*. fols. 93; 129; 133; 218; 219. Established 22 June 1657 to regulate the use of money and lands left to charity; Edward served as a Commissioner at Faringdon 8 December 1657; Wantage 28 April 1658; Reading 30 April 1658. On 4 August 1674 he signed the order addressed to the Sheriff of Berkshire instructing him to summon twelve 'good and lawfull men' to form a commission.
- 107 Two members disclaimed; John Keate; and a Hugh Keate, brother to Edward of East Lockinge; their relationship is unclear.
- 108 Payne, E. A., *The Baptists of Berkshire*. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1951. pp. 32, 39-40,66. *CSP, Domestic 1652-1653*. p. 381. PRO. SP18/37.
- 109 ORO. MS. Wills. Pec. 83/2/35.
- 110 PRO. PROB.11/207. The inventory has not survived.
- 111 Windsor Castle Archives. XV.40.6.
- 112 Windsor Castle Archives. XV.40.6.
- 113 Windsor Castle Archives. XV.40.3.
- 114 BMI. Microfilm 23.
- 115 BMI. Microfilm 27. 4 May 1641.
- 116 PRO. PROB.11/21. The term 'brother' could also be applied to a close relation as opposed to an actual brother.
- 117 PRO. E179/75/292.
- 118 Clarke, *Wanting*. facing p. 150-151.
- 119 PRO. PROB. 11/131.
- 120 This may be an instance of an individual providing for a close relation; a Mrs Francis Keate having married a Thomas Goswell at East Lockinge 28 August 1610. There is

no record of their burial; but it is possible that Ellinor was an orphan. BMI. Microfilm 28.

121 BRO. D/EX 49.

122 BRO. D/A1/200/126. This is the only known inventory which has survived for the family making it impossible to compare wealth over a period of time.

Chapter 7

WANTAGE HUNDRED, c.1670-1750

By the end of the seventeenth century the movement of gentry and wealthy yeoman families in and out of the region over the previous century had brought about a shift in the social structure in most if not all of the parishes and hamlets forming Wantage Hundred. The gentry families of Fettiplace and Hyde had moved away and established themselves in Swinbrook and Kingston Lisle respectively. Former yeoman and trade families such as the Aldworths and Collins still resident in the area were now accepted as of gentry status by their contemporaries. At the same time new families, in particular Clarke and Keate, both cadet branches of established gentry families who had settled in the hundred in the sixteenth century, had established their own dynasties and were still resident in 1700.

For the period c.1670-1750 a detailed analysis of all of the 12 core families of this study is difficult due to an apparent lack of surviving documents, in particular wills and inventories. However, from the surviving evidence it is possible to reconstruct, if only loosely, some idea of their development into the new century, and to assess how this affected the social and economic structure of their particular parishes and the region as a whole.

WANTAGE, CHARLTON, GROVE

For the town of Wantage and its two neighbouring hamlets of Charlton and Grove the basis of such reconstruction is the 1665/6 Heralds Visitation. This shows that 3 families put forward their pedigrees in Wantage: Aldworth, Brookes and Champion. Two families in Charlton, Bathurst and Wilmot submitted pedigrees, while in Grove, William Grove of a long established yeoman family in the town disclaimed. Both Brookes and Champion were serving as Wantage Town Governors at this time. There

had been an hiatus in the appointment of Town Governor of any Aldworth family member since that of Thomas in 1619.¹ The Clement family despite being resident in the town were not summoned by the Herald, Elias Ashmole, suggesting that at this time they were no longer considered as part of the top hierarchy of Wantage. While this may be true, some of the Aldworth family continued with gentry related pursuits, both of the Wantage Aldworth branches, headed by the brothers Thomas and William, sent their sons to Oxford University. Thomas, son of Thomas, entered Magdalen Hall on 10 May 1667 aged 16, and he gained his BA in 1671 and his MA in 1673. A younger cousin, William, entered Christ Church on 3 April 1674 aged 15, and gained his BA in 1677, and his MA in 1680, and was later appointed as vicar of Haringworth, Northamptonshire in 1682.² This is the first known break away from either farming or the tanning industry undertaken by a member of the Aldworth family, and indicates that a clerical career was by then considered acceptable. A John Aldworth along with a Richard Shepherd was appointed to the minor local office as collector of the sum of £20 14s. 0d. charged on Grove for the 1678 Poll Tax, Alexander Doo, Robert Burshall and Thomas Butler collected the sum of £62 11s. 0d. for Wantage, and the collectors of £7 14s. 0d. for Charlton were Thomas Pulbrook and Thomas Kent. Apart from Kent all these names were familiar from earlier records, showing continuity within the town.

In 1695, after the accession of William and Mary, the authorities, still fearful of an uprising by papists in support of James II, decreed that all adult males were to sign an oath of loyalty to the new sovereigns swearing to take revenge should they be assassinated. Unfortunately only the document for Wantage town itself has survived for the hundred, entitled 'The Association of all the Gentlemen Free-holders and other the Inhabitants of the Ancient Market Tonn of Wantinge als Wantage in the Vale of White Horse in the County of Berks'.³ The document contains an estimated 400 signatures tightly packed into 7 columns, in many cases the entries run into each other making it difficult to be precise as to the actual number. Based on the number of households listed in the 1663 Hearth Tax the estimated population of Wantage at this

time was between c.1350–c.2,000 inhabitants [see Appendix D] so the return may well form the majority of the entire male adult population, but this is open to conjecture. What the document does illustrate is that a high proportion of the town's inhabitants were able to sign their own name. A large percentage of the signatures, 90%, are original without the aid of marks. This suggests that by this time literacy levels among the male population were high.

Of the estimated 400 names, 6 that are entered are of interest for this particular study. Three members of the Aldworth signed, 14 of the Clement family, the Keate family had 5 entries while there were 2 each for the Clarke, Doo and Hyde families. The total of 14 entries for the Clement family is high and may well illustrate the large numbers of surviving children within that one family group. This apparently large number of surviving children within the Clement group meant that their traditional trade of shoemaking could not support all of the male children within a micro-town such as Wantage. The Index of Apprentices for 1710-1762 gives some indication that other avenues were explored. In 1737 a William Clement of Wantage was a master mason and took Daniel Belcher of West Hanney as an apprentice.⁴ Richard Clement had moved from Wantage to Abingdon and there traded as a chandler, he took on John, son of John Browne of Wantage a sack cloth weaver, as an apprentice in 1714.⁵ A further Clement branch had settled in Steventon and traded as tailors.⁶ However slight, this evidence may indicate that the family had been forced to diversify from the original trade of shoemaking into other trades by the growth in family numbers, taking advantage of new openings through the growth of commercialism.

Two further documents have survived which give some indication of the inhabitants of Wantage, Charlton and Grove. The first and most detailed is the list of freeholders eligible to vote in the parliamentary election held at Abingdon on 30th August 1727, when Charles, Lord Vane, Sir John Stonehouse and Robert Parker, esquire, contested the seat.⁷ The second document, a list of freeholders for the 1768 election, is much less detailed, but in a sense is more interesting for it gives not only the place of abode but also land and buildings, and whether they were leased out to

other individuals. At this election the candidates were Arthur Vansittart, Thomas Craven and John Stone. Craven won the seat with 163 votes, Vansittart 153 and Stone 80.⁸ In the earlier Poll 91 freeholders are entered under Wantage (14 of whom lived outside the town), for Charlton the number was 12 (5 lived outside), and for Grove 18 with 4 living outside the hamlet. In Wantage 5 Clement freeholders are listed and only 1 Aldworth member. Names such as Bathurst, Brookes and Champion do not reappear suggesting that these had now moved away from the area. In Charlton familiar names such as Barr, Stampe and Tubb occur, and one other freeholder was Charles Collins, esquire, then head of the gentry family still resident in Betterton. In Grove regular names such as Allen, Doo and Hobbs are entered. But in the 2 lists many unfamiliar names appear showing the migration into the region and the expansion that was taking place in the town and its 2 hamlets. The 1768 list of freeholders shows that John and Francis Aldworth both possessed a messuage in which they lived, but that William Clement lived in London and leased his land to a Daniel Trinder. Benjamin Hobbs lived in his own messuage in Wantage, as did a William Hobbs in Grove, and a John Hobbs worked his own land also in Grove.

The surviving documents illustrate the stability of the Aldworth and Clement families within the area, although members of the Clement family had migrated outside the town possibly due to a larger family size. The documents also show the transitory nature of migration into the town with new names being listed, some of which do not appear in the following document, suggesting that that particular family had moved on. Similar diversity is also evident in the membership of the Wantage Town Governors between 1700-1750. In contrast to the earlier years when familiar names such as Fettiplace, Aldworth, Talbot and Grove reoccur constantly, in the early years of the eighteenth century unfamiliar names appear but without the apparent continuity between father and son that can be seen in earlier years. The Aldworth names cease after Daniel was elected in 1686. Thomas Clement, elected in 1656, was the last member of that family to serve in that capacity. The Moore family, descended from the founder governor, continued in office: a Sir Richard Francis Moore was

elected in 1723. But the overriding impression is that the ruling hierarchy of the town looked further afield for suitable governors, and that no longer were the Aldworths and Clements looked upon as part of that ruling hierarchy. In 1704 Petley Price of East Challow was elected, and in 1723 Francis Loder of Hinton became a governor. In 1743 Thomas Goodlake of East Challow was elected — the same year as Thomas Mills of Faringdon. Here there was a marriage connection, the granddaughter of Mills having married Goodlake. It would be wrong to take the list of elected town governors by itself as evidence that the hierarchy of Wantage had shifted away from the ruling elite of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to an hierarchy formed by an elite living outside the town, but in the absence of other contemporary town records this does seem to be the case.

CHILDREY, DENCHWORTH, WEST HANNEY, EAST HENDRED, SPARSHOLT

The five original 'closed' parishes of the 1522 Muster had seen movement by resident families up to 1700. The 1665/6 Heralds Visitation shows that a branch of the Fettiplace family and a Fisher family were resident in Childrey. In 1676 Edmund Fettiplace had leased Rampayn's Manor to James Almont and Richard Higgins, gentlemen, and from this date the Fettiplaces ceased to be resident in the parish, although Sir George Fettiplace retained enough interest in the area to found a school there in 1732.⁹ A Roger Knight, whose family had held Frethorne's Manor since 1646, disclaimed at the Visitation. In 1757 this manor passed from the Knight family to John Lee of Arlesey, Bedfordshire.¹⁰

The Childrey Mautravers Manor remained in the possession of the Hanney Ashcombe family until the mid-eighteenth century. Some documentation exists to show the descent of the manor, but little remains to chart the progress of the yeoman families such as Bush, Bunce, Hasill and Tubb, names long present in the parish. As the manors were slowly becoming the property of non-resident gentlemen these yeoman families may have had an opportunity to establish themselves as more powerful locally, but in the absence of suitable documentation it is impossible to form

any picture of this development. The two local Childrey collectors for the 1678 Poll Tax were John and William Bunce.¹¹ The 1727 list of freeholders entered 15 names for Childrey, including Bunce and Bush, but the majority, such as Wichelow, Goodwin and Sidwell were new to the area. This may lend support to the theory that without the presence of the resident gentry Childrey was turning into a more 'open' community attracting new families.

In Denchworth Gregory Geering, whose origins have not been traced, purchased the manor from Viscount Cullen in 1663. Geering disclaimed at the 1665/6 Heralds Visitation.¹² In contrast to Cullen, Geering was a resident lord of the manor and took an active part in local and county administration. In 1699 he was elected a Wantage Town Governor,¹³ and in 1710 he served as sheriff of Berkshire.¹⁴ His interest in Denchworth was such that in 1693 he erected over the porch of the church a room to hold about 120 volumes, mainly on divinity, for the use of the incumbents. This room was used as a library until 1852, by which time most of the books had disappeared, and the only 2 that remained were given to the Bodleian Library, Oxford.¹⁵ The Geering family remained resident in Denchworth until 1758 when William sold the manor to Worcester College, Oxford. The 1727 list of freeholders had 12 names entered including Gregory Geering the younger and his brother William who by then had moved to Hanney. The Wiblin name is still prominent, with Daniel and William listed, but the majority of the names are familiar from Denchworth documents, although Welman, Ayres and Barton had moved in since the 1664 Hearth Tax.

For West Hanney documentation is scarce. The non-resident Yate family based in Lyford conveyed the manor in 1670 to George Eyston and John Weedon.¹⁶ The 1727 Poll of Freeholders does not differentiate between East and West Hanney, but does include a William Bowles, descendent of the Edward Bowles that had featured in the West Hanney 1663 Hearth Tax returns,¹⁷ showing some continuity in the area. The Ayleworth family who were resident at the time of the 1665/6 Heralds Visitation were not entered in the 1727 listing.

In East Hendred the Eyston family of Arches Manor were still in residence, as were the Sherwood family of Framptons Manor. Both of these families continued to be resident in the parish during the eighteenth century, although the Sherwood's residency ended in 1788 when the surviving daughter died certified a lunatic and intestate.¹⁸ The Eyston family still maintained their fervent support of the Roman Catholic faith. In 1687 George Eyston, encouraged by the support of the Catholic faith by James II, began the repair of St Amand's Chantry in East Hendred and on 24 September 1687 the altar was blessed, with 7 priests attending the mass along with many Catholic friends and neighbours.¹⁹ George Eyston had been implicated in the Titus Oates plot and subsequently imprisoned.²⁰ In 1715, 2 of his sons entered the value of their estates as recusants for the purpose of double taxation by the government. Charles, the eldest son, entered £567 7s. 11d. and Robert, third son, entered the much smaller sum of £6 13s. 4d.²¹ Despite their standing as gentry, 3 members of cadet branches were apprenticed to a trade. In 1714 William, second son of the Robert entered in the recusant list, was apprenticed to Frances Carman, a widow resident in Reading and trading as a linen draper.²² A few years later in 1731 a John Eyston was apprenticed to Walter Barnes of Shaston, Dorset, a surgeon.²³ Finally in 1746 a Charles Eyston was apprenticed to John Kirby, a Wantage ironmonger.²⁴ These individuals, all of whom are descended from the 1715 Robert Eyston, illustrate that some gentry families had no choice but to apprentice sons where monetary fortunes were not sufficient to support large numbers of children.

In 1672, 1691 and 1732 representatives of the Sherwood family served a term as sheriff of Berkshire,²⁵ and in 1690 Edward Sherwood was one of numerous commissioners appointed to collect the tax of £2,264 13s. 4d. payable by Berkshire for the 'Entire Reducing of Ireland'.²⁶ Among the list of fellow commissioners were Sir Anthony Craven, Sir Thomas Dolman, Edmund Wiseman, Sir Edmund and Edmond Fettiplace. In the 1727 Poll a total of 32 names are listed, among them Edward Sherwood, Humphrey and Thomas Yorke and John Clement. The Yorke family had long been resident in the parish, Thomas Yorke had been one of the

collectors for the 1678 Poll Tax. A late seventeenth century terrier of East Hendred shows that both the Sherwood and Yorke families were leaseholders of the Eystons.²⁷ But the 1727 poll indicates that few new families had entered the parish by this time, implying the resident Eyston gentry family had retained a strong influence on any intended new settlement in East Hendred.

Sparsholt at the turn of the eighteenth century showed no change from the mid-seventeenth century when all three manors were in the hands of non-resident gentry. Sparsholt manor itself was in the possession of Sir Anthony Craven, who in 1712 conveyed it to his grandson Samuel Palmer, and later in 1726 it descended to Seymour Richmond, second husband of Margaret Palmer.²⁸ The second Sparsholt manor, Westcot, descended in the Pleydell family until 1759 when Henry Pleydell Dawnay, Viscount Downe, sold it to Abraham Atkins.²⁹ East Manton manor was sold to John Hippisley of Lambourne in 1671/2 and it continued in the possession of this family until the mid-eighteenth century.³⁰

Of the 5 original 'closed' parishes Sparsholt was the one which had developed into an 'open' status at an early stage, and it retained this category into the eighteenth century. Unfortunately little documentation remains regarding the wealth and status of the resident yeoman families. The Grove family, who had leased the manor house from Craven at the time of the 1663 Hearth Tax, appear to have left the parish by the time of the 1727 poll of freeholders in which only 5 names are listed, none of which are entered in the earlier 1663 return. The 2 collectors for the 1678 Poll Tax, John and Charles Lush, are entered in the 1663 Hearth Tax with 4 and 5 hearths respectively.³¹ However, with the absence of other documentation it is impossible to come to a conclusion as to the structure of Sparsholt and whether the absence of any resident gentry attracted more new families into the parish.

BETTERTON, WEST GINGE, EAST HANNEY, WEST HENDRED

Of the original 1522 'ecclesiastical' townships only that of Betterton had retained its character, the manor being held by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. By the end

of the seventeenth century West Ginge had become 'open', while West Hendred and East Hanney were 'closed' by virtue of the residency of the Wiseman and Ashcombe gentry families.

The Collins family continued in Betterton as leaseholders of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Recognition of their gentry status had come when John Collins finally put forward his pedigree to the 1665/6 Heralds Visitation. Despite the stability of the Collins family at Betterton, only one will dated 1685, of John, who entered his pedigree, has survived.³² While the document is short it contains items of great interest for the study of social and economic attitudes within one particular area. Firstly, Collins wished to be buried 'under the seat I have of late used to sitt in the Chappell of the Church of all Saints of Locking'. Secondly, to be placed in the church for the use of the parishioners was a copy of *A Companion to the Temple and Closet* by Thomas Comber (1645-1699).³³ In view of the earlier support of the Collins family for Lollardy this bequest is particularly interesting for Comber's intention was 'to reconcile protestant dissenters to the church of England'.³⁴ The 1676 census for Locking, under which Betterton fell, gives a nil return both for papists and for any non-conformists.³⁵ Perhaps here is an example of at least one member of the Collins family announcing his return to the established faith.

The third and most interesting item in the will is John's treatment of his sons. The eldest son Charles (born 1666) was appointed executor, but during his minority John's brother-in-law Charles Fettiplace was to be 'executor in trust'. John placed a heavy burden on his executors, and in particular on his eldest son, for he instructed that his three other surviving sons, Jonathan, Richard and Thomas, at the time of the will aged 18, 11 and 7, were to be able to choose 'according to their inclinations' whether to enter university or be apprenticed to a trade, and 'such trade as they shall like best'. Charles was to maintain his brothers 'at his own cost' whichever option they chose. But should they 'not be pleased att the university or bound apprentice' then Charles was to allow them £30 a year. This was a most enlightened bequest, and the only known instance at this period of sons being able to chose their way in life.

The records show that only Thomas entered Oxford University, matriculating at Pembroke College on 26 October 1696, gaining his BA in 1700, and a MA in 1703/4. In the same year as he gained his MA Thomas was appointed vicar of Gosberton and Quadring, Lincolnshire.³⁶ Another indication of the growing respectability of an ecclesiastical career.

The 3 youngest sons and a daughter Anne were each to receive £1,000 when reaching the age of 21, or in the case of Anne on the day of marriage if earlier. Charles was to inherit the land his father had purchased in Charlton from Sir George Wilmot and John Jennings, gentleman. This presumably was the land purchased prior to the 1665/6 Heralds Visitation which had forced John to delay putting forward his pedigree due to lack of money. In addition Charles was to take over the lease of the land in Betterton, and 5 yardlands in East Lockinge also leased from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. John was buried on 14 November 1685, Charles being 18 at the time of his father's death, so Charles Fettiplace would have acted as executor. A year earlier Charles had matriculated at Pembroke College, Oxford on 18 April 1684 and in 1685 he entered the Middle Temple.³⁷ At the early age of 22, in 1688, he was elected Town Governor of Wantage.³⁸ He was to marry Anne, daughter of John Head, esquire, of Hodcutt, Berkshire, by whom he had 6 children,. Three of the sons were baptised Charles in a vain attempt to carry forward their father's name but all died soon after birth. The line was continued by John, eldest son, who entered Pembroke College, Oxford on 2 November 1715 aged 15, gaining his BA in 1719 and his MA in 1722.³⁹

The Collins family continued to send sons to Oxford University into the nineteenth century, maintaining a belief in education the roots of which can be traced back to the beginning of the sixteenth century. Pembroke College traditionally was their choice, a preference that was broken when John Ferdinand, son of John, entered University College on 21 October 1830.⁴⁰ The family reached its peak of social status when John Ferdinand's fourth son, Robert Hawthorne, also of Oxford University and Lincoln's Inn was created a K.C.B. on 15 April 1884, and in the same year was

appointed comptroller of the household of the duchess of Albany, having previously served as the comptroller of the household of the duke of Albany.⁴¹

By 1700 the Coxhead family had moved away from West Ginge possibly relocating in Didcot, leaving the hamlet without a dominant resident family. Documents of the period are scarce, so it is impossible to trace any yeoman family into the eighteenth century. In 1720 the manor was sold by Thomas, 1st viscount Gage to Matthew Wymondsold. He was slowly acquiring land and manors in the hundred, having already purchased in 1718 the manor of East Lockinge from the female heiresses of the Keate family and had settled in that parish.⁴²

East Hanney was another manor purchased by Wymondsold, in 1720 he bought the Clarke moiety, two years later he acquired the Ashcombe moiety.⁴³ Prior to these dates the cadet Clarke and the main Yate branches had died out due to failure of the male line. The Ashcombes who were mainly resident in London by the end of the seventeenth century died out in 1718 with the death of Oliver Ashcombe. In their place a Knapp family, whose origins are unknown, had moved into East Hanney. In 1684 Henry Knapp was elected a Wantage Town Governor, and was succeeded in this office by his son, another Henry, in 1729.⁴⁴ The return for the 1727 poll gives a total of 23 names of which 9 were living outside the parish. The majority of the names are new to the area, such as Wingrow, Cook, Calice and Osbourne. It seems that without any dominant gentry family considerable migration into East Hanney had taken place at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

In 1700 the Wiseman family were still dominant in West Hendred, William having succeeded to the estate when his elder brother Edmund died without issue. William died in 1713 leaving Mary his only child as heiress, she was later to marry Edward Clarke of Ardington.⁴⁵ The 1727 Poll of Freeholders makes no mention of the Keepe and Goddard families that had been resident in the parish since 1522 but for whom documents had ceased by the late seventeenth century. The last known document relating to the Goddard family is the 1678 Poll Tax when Henry Goddard, Kenelm Humphreys and Thomas Reynells were appointed collectors.⁴⁶ The Hutchins

family, resident in West Hendred since 1522 were entered under East Hendred. The Wiseman family severed their connection with West Hendred in 1802 when William Wiseman Clarke the son of Mary and Edward Clarke sold it to William Towsey of Wantage.⁴⁷

ARDINGTON, EAST GINGE, EAST LOCKINGE, WEST LOCKINGE

In Ardington, 3 families, Clarke, Hobbs and Sherwood put forward their pedigrees at the 1665/6 Heralds Visitation, and a John Cox disclaimed. Clarke and Sherwood were established gentry, both originating from cadet branches. The Hobbs had been resident in the parish for many years. The family had been entered in the 1522 Muster, but it was only a few years prior to 1665/6 that they had become recognised as being of gentry status. The Cox family, like the Hobbs, had been entered in the 1522 Muster but had made no social advancement towards gentry status either through lack of ambition or lack of funds to enter a pedigree.

In 1662 a large part of the manor house had been destroyed by fire, and the head of the Clarke family, John, had become mainly resident in London. But in the 1663 Hearth Tax William Clarke, a distant cousin of John was resident in Ardington. William died in 1672, his inventory appraised by John Sherwood, gentleman and James Stevens totalled £212 15s. 0d., of which 'a lease of a Messuage & certaine lands in Ardington for divers yeares to come' totalled £130.⁴⁸ The Clarke family was to remain in Ardington until the nineteenth century when in 1833 William Nelson Clarke sold the manor to a Richard Vernon.⁴⁹

In 1728 Edward Clarke served a term as sheriff of Berkshire, as did Edward Sherwood in 1732.⁵⁰ Clarke's son William Wiseman matriculated at Magdalen College, Oxford on 2 July 1746 aged 18.⁵¹ But that is the only eighteenth century traceable entry into Oxford University for the Clarke family. In the 1727 Poll of Freeholders only Edward Clarke is listed amongst 11 names; neither Hobbs nor Sherwood are entered. Two members of the Batten family are listed, as is a Richard

Cox. The remaining names such as Cannon, Broadstock and Ballard are unfamiliar from earlier records, suggesting an influx of new families.

The Hobbs family continued in the parish throughout the eighteenth century, but documentation is scarce. In 1746 William Hobbs of Ardington, joiner, took as an apprentice a Henry Back,⁵² showing that despite a gentry recognition some members of the family followed in a trade. Edward Batten was one of the collectors for the 1678 Poll Tax.⁵³ They were still resident in the parish certainly until the early years of the eighteenth century. Thomas Batten and his son, also Thomas, are entered in the 1727 Poll of Freeholders. Two inventories for the Batten family have survived dated prior to 1700, but unfortunately after then no such records have been traced. The earliest inventory is of Robert Batten, husbandman, dated 1684, it totalled £193 1s. 10d., comparable with some of the gentry valuations in the area, and illustrating the dangers of giving an individual a social status on the basis of wealth alone.⁵⁴ The inventory was appraised by two kin, John and Edward Batten, and a John Bradstock. Batten had concentrated on arable farming, in the barn were 27 quarters of barley valued at £27, while his 'two and twenty Acres of Land plowed and dunged' were valued at £13 7s. 6d.

The inventory of John Batten, yeoman, who appraised the earlier inventory, has also survived dated 23 May 1693.⁵⁵ This estate was appraised by Robert Rodice, yeoman of Harwell and Robert Smith of East Lockinge, yeoman, who valued it at £508, a considerable increase from earlier Batten valuations, and one which would have placed Batten on an equal footing with the local gentry and certainly near the top of the local hierarchy. It is unfortunate that neither the Clarke nor Sherwood inventories have survived for this period to enable a comparison to be made. Batten farmed on a large scale, leasing 123 acres valued at £247 and sown with wheat and barley. He shows a knowledge of monetary matters having lent out £100 to be repaid with interest, but at the same time a further £50 is outstanding to him in bad debts. The appraisers omit to give any details of the borrowers. This branch of the Batten family continued to live in Ardington until the mid-eighteenth century, but entries in

the parish register grow irregular after 1720, and no further documentation has survived.

In East Ginge the Greenaway family continued to be in residence, but again few documents have survived. The 1727 Poll of Freeholders only lists 3 names, Greenaway as a leaseholder being omitted. In the reign of Queen Anne, Oliver Greenaway served as a churchwarden in Lockinge, and on 13 October 1727, Oliver, then a alderman of Oxford, was knighted at the coronation of George II.⁵⁶ Oliver was the third and eldest surviving son of John (d.1726) and Mary (d.1715). His youngest brother Richard (d.1714) had traded as a tanner in West Hendred. The family had not been summoned at the 1665/6 Heralds Visitation, but a John Greenaway had entered Oxford University in 1680/1 suggesting that they considered themselves of, or aspired to be of, gentry status. However, in the absence of more documents it is impossible to form a firm conclusion as to their influence, both socially and economically on East Ginge up to 1750.

In East Lockinge the gentry Keate family were resident, but this was now a cadet branch, the main line having failed when the surviving daughter of Edward Keate who had married Edmund Wiseman only had one son who died in infancy. The manor therefore reverted back to the heirs of Frances, sister of Edward, who had married Joseph Prowse. But the cadet branch failed when Frances and Joseph only had 5 daughters, who in 1718 sold the manor to Matthew Wymondsold, who established a residence in the parish.⁵⁷ This is one example of the fate of a gentry family who failed to produce a male heir, and is one explanation for the large families of the Tudor and Stuart eras as families tried to have a number of sons, to ensure the continuation of the dynasty, as opposed to daughters, who could cause financial problems with the demand for dowries. East Lockinge was to retain its 'closed' status as Wymondsold settled in the parish.

For West Lockinge information for the period 1700-1750 is scarce. The manor was held by the non-resident Moore family of Fawley until 1750 when they sold it to George Prescott.⁵⁸ No documentation has been found for any of the resident families,

continuing the situation existing at the end of the seventeenth century, so it has been impossible to trace any development up to 1750.

Of the 12 families researched for this study, only Clarke, Collins, Eyston and Greenaway remained stable in the parishes and hamlets, and were to continue to be resident into the nineteenth century. Others such as Ashcombe, Keate and Yate failed due to the lack of a male heir. Hyde had already moved away from the area, using the manor of Denchworth to repay a debt incurred by an eldest son. Late in the seventeenth century the Fettiplace family leased the manor of Childrey and removed to Swinbrook, already established as a Fettiplace seat. The Aldworth family continued in Wantage, but there is a lack of information regarding their status. No longer were they appointed Town Governors, suggesting that after the entry in the 1665/6 Heralds Visitation the family was unable to sustain its position among the top elite. For the Coxhead and Doo families only scattered references appear in the parish registers suggesting that in the main they had moved away from the hundred.

The records show that new names had moved into the hundred, such as Matthew Wymondsold, who was quietly purchasing manors, and that these individuals were taking the place of the long established families. This suggests that although there was underlying continuity the pace of change was becoming more pronounced.

NOTES:

- 1 Gibbons & Davey, *Wantage*. pp. 172-174.
- 2 Foster, *Alumni Oxon, 1500 -1714*.
- 3 PRO. C213/6; Webb, C. R., 'The Association Oath Rolls of 1695'. *Genealogist's Magazine*, 21 (1983-85).

- 4 PRO. IRI/15.
- 5 PRO. IRI/43.
- 6 PRO. IRI/43.
- 7 *The Poll of the Freeholders of the County of Berks at the Election for Knights of the shire for the Said County taken at Abingdon on Wednesday, the 30th of August, 1727.* London, (no printer), 1727.
- 8 *The Copy of the Poll for Knights of the Shire for the County of Berks...30-31st March and 1st April 1768.* Reading: J. Carnan & Co., 1768.
- 9 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 272.
- 10 VCH, *Berks.* 4, 274.
- 11 PRO. E179/76/456.
- 12 Heralds, *Berks.* 2, p. 4.
- 13 Gibbons & Davey, *Wantage.* p. 178.
- 14 Sheriffs. p. 7.
- 15 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 284; Streeter, Burnett Hillman, *The Chained Library: A Survey of Four Centuries in the Evolution of the English Library.* London: Macmillan, 1931. p. 295.
- 16 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 286.
- 17 PRO. E179/243/25.
- 18 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 299.
- 19 Bodleian Library, MS.Top.Berks.c.43.
- 20 Eyston, Pedigree.
- 21 Clarke, *Wanting.* p. 18.
- 22 PRO. IRI/9.
- 23 PRO. IRI/12.
- 24 PRO. IRI/18.
- 25 Sheriffs. p. 7.
- 26 2 Wm & M. 1690, chap. 1. An Act for Granting an Ayd to their Majestyes of the Summe of Sixteene hundred fifty one thousand seaven hundred and two pounds eighteene shillings.
- 27 Bodleian Library, MS.Top.Berks.d.27.

- 28 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 312.
- 29 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 315.
- 30 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 313.
- 31 PRO. E179/243/25.
- 32 BRO. D/A1/57/63.
- 33 Comber's work was published in 2 parts between 1672 and 1676.
- 34 *DNB.*
- 35 Whiteman, Anne, ed., *The Compton Census of 1676: A Critical Edition.* London: Oxford University Press, 1986. p. 134.
- 36 Foster, *Alumni Oxon, 1500-1714.*
- 37 Foster, *Alumni Oxon 1500-1714.*
- 38 Gibbons & Davey, *Wantage.* p. 177.
- 39 Foster, *Alumni Oxon 1715-1886.*
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 *Ibid.*
- 42 VCH, *Berks.* 4, pp. 308-9.
- 43 *Ibid.* 4, p. 287.
- 44 Gibbons & Davey, *Wantage.* pp. 176, 180.
- 45 Clarke, *Wanting.* p. 145.
- 46 PRO. E179/76/456.
- 47 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 304.
- 48 BRO. D/A1/183/114.
- 49 VCH, *Berks.* 4, p. 270.
- 50 Sheriffs. p. 7.
- 51 Foster, *Alumni Oxon, 1715-1886.*
- 52 PRO. IRI/17.
- 53 PRO. E179/76/456.
- 54 BRO. D/A1/179/37.

- 55 BRO. D/A1/48/14.
- 56 Shaw, *Knights*. 2, p. 284.
- 57 VCH, *Berks*. 4, p. 308.
- 58 *Ibid.*. 4, p. 309.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this research it was decided to analyse the varying social and economic fortunes of 12 families in Wantage Hundred, c.1522–1670 and their impact within the area. These 12 families were chosen for their gentry, merchant or yeoman status, and because they were either resident in 1522 or came into the area before the end of the sixteenth century. In the case of the wealthy merchant and yeoman families it was important to see the extent to which they achieved gentry, and, indeed, to assess if they actively strove to gain such status, or whether some were content to remain as they were. It is generally accepted that it normally took 3 generations for a family to rise from yeoman to gentry status, and it must be asked if there is any support for this in the Hundred.¹ One further key question to be asked of the Hundred was whether resident gentry in a parish restricted the social development of resident yeoman families, and prevented yeoman families from successfully establishing themselves. Alternatively, in a parish where there were no resident gentry was it easier for the yeoman families to gain in status and thus encourage other yeoman families to settle.

To test these issues in the case of the 12 selected families 4 main ‘strategies’ were identified by which a family could rise in status, or with the failure of such ‘strategies’, could decline. These 4 were: land acquisition, education, office-holding, marriage and kinship. Of these 4 the acquisition of land would seem to be of prime importance. All 5 Northamptonshire families studied by Mary Finch gave impetus to their fortunes by purchasing landed estates, using money acquired from trade or the profits of sheep-farming on leased land.² The fortune of one further gentry family, Temple of Stowe, was established by Peter Temple (c. 1517–1578) who by using profits acquired as a tenant farmer was able to purchase land at Burton Dassett,

Warwickshire formerly held by lease, and other land nearby.³ In Leicestershire land could be the sole source of income and was used to support all adult males, or where this was not possible 'one nuclear family and a number of celibate adults'.⁴ And in mid-seventeenth-century Kent ownership of land was seen as vital for the continuing importance of a family.⁵

From these examples elsewhere in the country, it can be seen that the ownership of land was of importance for the enhancement of a family. Land could be vital for the establishment of a dynasty, and to set up younger sons with their own estates. The surviving wills of the gentry families in Wantage Hundred show that in the majority of cases inheritance was by male primogeniture, whereby the eldest son inherited the main estate with younger sons being given smaller amounts of land or manors elsewhere. The prime example of this can be found in the Childrey Fettiplace family, who were themselves descended from a younger son. By adopting this strategy by 1600, they had established their own cadet branches in Swinbrook, Letcombe Regis, East Shefford, Kentwood, Fernham and Upper Lambourn.

The Hyde family also actively purchased land and manors. In 1533 William Hyde of Denchworth purchased for £1,476 the manor of Kingston Lisle.⁶ In 1617 this became the main Hyde residence when the manor of Denchworth was used as part payment of a debt incurred by the eldest son when he borrowed £5,000 from William Cockayne, Alderman of the City of London.⁷ At the same time his father was forced to mortgage the Kingston Lisle estate for £2,500 for the same reason. This is an example of the secondary role of an estate to raise a mortgage to either provide available money to be used for a number of purposes, or to repay a debt when ready money was not available.

In contrast the Eyston family appear to have had no progressive land policy. In 1522 the family were in possession of Arches Manor, East Hendred valued at £10. Some land and manor purchases took place during the sixteenth century, because in 1610 William Eyston entailed the manors of Arches, East Hendred, Seymours Court, West Hanney, and the manor of Catmore to an as yet unborn son and to any younger

sons after the death of the eldest. In default of a surviving heir all lands were to pass to William's brother John, then resident in London.⁸ The land involved in this entailment totalled 3,694 acres including 43 messuages, 2 mills and 4 dovecots. But in 1632 William, his son also William, brother John and their mother Jane entered into a legal action to disentail the estate.⁹ This may have been because the family were staunch Catholics and royalists. This resulted in sequestration by the Committee for the Advance of Money which valued the manors of Catmore and East Hendred at £1,000 p.a., and in 1652 two-thirds of William Eyston's estate in Hanney and Streatley was let to John Deane of Lambourn at £290 p.a.¹⁰ Furthermore, in 1678 George Eyston was implicated in the Popish Plot and in order to pay the fine levied by the government was forced to borrow £1,420 from Gregory Geering of Denchworth by the mortgaging to him for 21 years the manor and lands of Catmore, Farnborough and East Hendred.¹¹ The absence of any land policy, or possibly because of their religious persuasion, the Eyston family, although the oldest gentry family in the Wantage area, appear to have struggled to retain their gentry status throughout the period.

The Yates, another Catholic family, appear to have been very successful in land acquisition prior to the Reformation and thus elevated their status from that of merchant to gentlemen. However, similarly to the Eyston's their religious persuasion appears to have curtailed their social advancement during the seventeenth century.

The Clarke family provide an excellent example of a successful land acquisition policy. John Clarke, the younger son of a Basildon family settled in Ardington in the 1540s by leasing 2,500 acres of Ardington manor. Once established in the manor Clarke began to purchase land in the vicinity, one such purchase was Priors Hanney manor from John Herle.¹² By the time he made his will in 1568, calling himself a 'yeoman', he was able to bequeath to his eldest son Henry land in Eastbury, Lambourn, Bockhampton and Blagrove. John, his second son, inherited the lease of the manor farm and lordship of Ardington, Priors Hanney manor and land in Goring, while Richard the third son, inherited a tenement in Reading, land and tenements in

Shinfield, which had recently been purchased from William Aldworth, and the 'late purchased' manor of Erles Court in East Hanney.¹³ This illustrates the growing importance given to actual ownership of land. Unable to purchase the lease of the manor of Ardington from the earl of Derby, Clarke had purchased land elsewhere to establish his eldest son. John, the second son who inherited the family home in Ardington, was accepted as a 'gentleman' by his contemporaries and was entered as such in the 1598/9 Lay Subsidy.¹⁴ However, it is clear that ownership of land was considered important because his son Edward purchased the fee of the manor from Thomas Leigh of Stoneleigh in 1606, and in 1616 Clarke was granted the reversion from the king on the failure of the male issue of the earl of Derby.¹⁵ In their case the acquisition of land played a key role in a cadet branch of a family achieving secure gentry status.

The yeoman Collins family provides another useful example of the importance and problems of land acquisition to enhance status. John Collins, 'yeoman', in his will of 1579 left the leasehold of Betterton to his eldest son another John; while a younger son Thomas was to inherit land in Steventon and one close and 2 acres of arable 'lately purchased from John Payne of Wantage'.¹⁶ Thomas was to enjoy this land for his lifetime then after his death it was to revert back to his eldest brother John and his heirs. This meant that Thomas would have to provide for his own children without the aid of any estate from his father. The same condition was placed on a third son William who was left a house in Steventon. Perhaps mindful of the effect this clause would have on the family of both Thomas and William their father also left them £40 and 20 sheep each to help establish their fortunes. A fourth son Robert, however, was left only £4, illustrating the dangers of being the youngest. By thus ensuring that their holding was not fragmented the Collins family gradually increased their stature to such an extent that by 1663 John Collins was considered of suitable status to marry Anne Fettiplace of Upper Lambourn. But continued land purchasing, in this case from Sir George Wilmot and John Jennings in Charlton, forced Collins to write to the herald Elias Ashmole confessing that he did not have sufficient money to purchase his

pedigree and arms.¹⁷ His fee was eventually paid, possibly by his father-in-law, but the coat of arms was not granted until 6 May 1672. This is just one illustration of the dangers of purchasing land, by overstretching themselves a family could be brought to the verge of bankruptcy.

The Coxhead yeoman family originally leased land in West Ginge. The will of John Coxhead, yeoman, dated 6 April 1564, suggests that he had been actively gathering together small parcels of freehold land in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, in particular in Cuttleslowe.¹⁸ The Cuttleslowe land he bequeathed to his eldest son Henry for his life, then to Henry's eldest son Oliver and in turn to Oliver's eldest son. Should Oliver have no heir then the land was to go to his brother John and younger brothers Edward and Richard in turn should the elder brother fail to have a surviving son. This effectively tied this land up for some time, keeping it within the family. However the will of James Coxhead, dated 14 June 1622, shows that he mainly held land by leasehold, in particular from the Yate family of Lyford, but he did own the 'meadow ground called the Broad Meade' in West Ginge.¹⁹ But apart from these references and the message and 2 yardlands given to John Coxhead in 1627 by Edward Clarke in return for his 'long and honest service' there is little evidence of any major land purchasing undertaken by this family.²⁰ This may be the reason why the Coxhead family show little evidence of any rise in status, but may equally indicate that they were content with their position as yeoman.

The Doo family show a similar lack of social ambition. The 1550 will of Robert Doo shows that while he leased land in East Lockinge and in Farnborough, he had purchased freehold land in Wantage and West Hendred. Doo divided the leaseholds amongst 3 of his sons, while a fourth, William, inherited the freehold land. In the late sixteenth century a John Doo of Betterton was actively engaged in land transactions. He leased the parsonage of West Ilsley from the Dean and Chapter of Windsor.²¹ In 1603 he sold to William Clement of Haddenham for the sum of £245 forty acres of land and the manor house of Kirtlington.²² In a later indenture he conveyed land, again in Kirtlington, to Richard Perce and William Clement for the sum of £540.²³

From this date until the last quarter of the seventeenth century there is no evidence to suggest a continuation of active land investment. In 1658 Alexander Doo 'clothworker' and Thomas Stibbs, yeoman, jointly purchased from Sir George Wilmot and others the area of land in Wantage called 'Northend'.²⁴ But in common with the Coxhead family there is little trace of active land investment after the mid-sixteenth century. The same is true of the Greenaway family although this may have been the result of protracted litigation²⁵ between members of the family over land ownership.²⁶ Neither family appears to have coveted gentry status and they certainly do not feature in the 1665/6 Heralds Visitation. From these examples it can be seen that land as a 'strategy' was not widely used, possibly indicating the lack of sufficient wealth to support such an action.

While land was important, even more so was the ability to farm it to its highest potential. The final ruin of the Tresham family of Rushton in the seventeenth century can be traced back to Prior Tresham the founder of the dynasty in the sixteenth century. Despite purchasing land in and around Rushton he 'did little to improve the obsolete methods of estate management which kept his revenues far below the potential yield of the estate'.²⁷ In contrast the active and efficient land management undertaken by Peter Temple was made easier by his legal training and technical knowledge.²⁸ Education was of vital importance for the running of an estate. Lawrence Stone has identified the period of 1560 to 1640 as the era of a boom in education, corresponding with an increase in gentry numbers.²⁹ A survey of the 12 Wantage Hundred families does suggest support for Stone's thesis, with representatives of most being admitted to the university and the Inns of Court before 1640. Both Fettiplace and Hyde sons were regularly sent to Oxford University and from there to the Middle Temple, although only a small number were called to the Bar. It is possible that in some instances their parents may have had the same attitude as the mother of John and Richard Newdigate who sent them to Oxford University and to the Inns of Court not to practise law but to give them 'the best available entree into society' as befitted their status as sons of a gentleman.³⁰

Evidence that the importance of education was recognised at an early date in Wantage Hundred is shown in the will of James Yate dated 1543. In this he directs that Francis his youngest son was to be educated for 6 years at the expense of the eldest brother.³¹ This concern for education is repeated when the eldest brother John made his own will in 1578, he left to his youngest son Thomas the sum of £200 for his 'learninge in the laws of this Realm', and he was to be taught singing and Latin by his mother and elder brother Edward.³² This determination that younger sons should receive adequate education is in common with the practice of the gentry Newdigate and Croke families who ensured that the younger sons entered university and the Inns of Court which in turn helped them to establish new landed families.³³

Not only the Fettiplace and Hyde families looked to the university and the Inns of Court for education for sons, but so did the Ashcombe, Clarke and Keate families, although once again not all went on to practise law. The situation was different for the yeoman families, unable to afford the private tutors used by the gentry families they had to rely on the local school. For many the school situated in Wantage graveyard, its broken windows and doors continually being repaired under the orders of the Town Governors, would have provided the rudiments of education. The Greenaway family records give no hint of education higher than the local school, and it was not until 1680/1 that a John Greenaway entered Oxford University.

However, for those yeoman families that reached gentry status more references to education can be traced. In the early sixteenth century John Collins was reported for reading the Bible in English,³⁴ suggesting that he had the ability to read if not write. The will of another John Collins dated 1584 instructed his wife to bring up their children in 'virtuous and good education'.³⁵ But it is not until the late seventeenth century when a marriage alliance was made with the Fettiplace family that members of the Collins family began to enter Oxford University and from there went on to the Middle Temple. However most of the socially upward yeoman families do not appear to have placed great importance on education. For example, for the Coxhead family there is no trace at all of any involvement in university education. There is an early

entry into Oxford University by the Aldworth family, when Thomas matriculated at Magdalen College in 1553, but there is a break until 1667 before another member of the family attended university. There is only one reference to a member of the Doo family matriculating at Oxford University, Thomas Doo in 1602 and from there he entered the Middle Temple. It is noticeable that the Middle Temple was the favourite among the families of Wantage Hundred, possibly influenced by it being the one favoured by the Fettiplace and Hyde families.

Education could open up the prospect of office-holding, which in turn could bring prestige and links with families of a higher status. Along with an university education service as an agent or steward could bring enhanced status, financial rewards and hence upward mobility.³⁶ To act as a steward 'could provide a satisfactory additional income' and with it would come local prestige as the steward acted on behalf of the absent lord of the manor.³⁷ There is one interesting insight to the inheritance of such an office. Alexander Fettiplace in his will dated 1542 bequeathed to his son Christopher the office of 'bailieswick' in Letcombe Regis. The term 'bailieswick' is ambiguous, it could be related to either bailiff, steward or sheriff, but in this particular case is more likely to relate to bailiff or steward than to sheriff.³⁸

There were 3 levels of office-holding available: parish, county and court. In the parish and town the main posts available were church-warden, constable, and in the case of Wantage the office of Town Governor. For the years 1564/5 to 1656/7 the Aldworth family were regular holders of the office of church-warden in Wantage. They were also in the forefront of the original 1598 Town Governors, two being elected, despite one of them being resident in Bristol. In the county there were numerous opportunities for office-holding. Robert Aldworth and his nephew were appointed collectors for the 1549/50 and 1550/1 Lay Subsidies.³⁹ William Fettiplace was appointed a commissioner for the 1522 Muster and for the 1524 and 1525 lay subsidies.⁴⁰ He also acted as steward for Sir John Veysey in Childrey and to John Baldwin in East Lockinge. On a number of occasions from 1500 to 1670 members of the Fettiplace, Hyde, Keate, Clarke and Ashcombe families served as sheriff of

Berkshire. This was a position that in Lancashire ‘fell regularly upon the county’s most substantial families’,⁴¹ and there is no suggestion that the situation was any different in Berkshire. A number of the Fettiplace family served as a Wantage Town Governor, Edmund Fettiplace being one of the original 12 in 1598.

William Hyde was a Justice of the Peace for Berkshire from 1559–1564, and in the seventeenth century Ashcombe and Clarke names appear in the lists. The Berkshire Commission for Charitable Uses provided opportunities for gentlemen and yeomen alike. Of the 12 families under review the Collins family of Betterton can be regularly found amongst the names of the jury to hear cases concerning the misuse of money left to charity. The Fettiplace and Hyde families were regularly members of the same Commission. For the Eyston family their recusancy barred them from public office for most of the period, but Thomas Eyston was appointed Escheator for Berkshire and Oxfordshire in 1562.⁴² It was not until 1688 when George Eyston was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Berkshire that the next notice of public office appears.⁴³

There are only two references relating to court appointments for the 12 families, emphasising that in the main the gentry representatives in this study were county or parish gentry. William Hyde of Denchworth was present at the reception to mark the arrival of Anne of Cleves in 1540, and in the seventeenth century a John Ashcombe accompanied Sir Henry Vane the elder on his embassy to Holland.⁴⁴

There is only one instance of the Yate family being appointed as sheriff of Berkshire, Edward in 1628.⁴⁵ But as in the case of the Eystons this may be due more to their recusancy than to a deliberate policy of not wishing to hold public office. For the yeoman families evidence of office-holding is scarce, apart from continual references to the Aldworth family among the Wantage Town Governors and churchwardens. Richard Doo was appointed a collector for the 1525 Lay Subsidy, but there is little evidence of further office-holding.⁴⁶ A document written by Edward Clarke in 1627 strongly suggests that a John Coxhead was acting as his bailiff in Ardington.⁴⁷ At the time when the Collins family were entering into a marriage alliance with the

Fettiplace family there comes the first known reference to office-holding: John Collins was one of those appointed in 1652 to collect the Berkshire levy imposed for the maintenance of the army.⁴⁸

Kinship and marriage were of vital importance for the survival and social advancement of the family. A close network of kinship could provide loans, contacts for business and introductions to other families while 'kinship with other leading families are helpful pointers to a man's status'.⁴⁹ Francis Keate called upon his uncle Hugh of East Hagbourne for a contribution towards the £500 he needed to provide for his sister and to pay his own debts.⁵⁰ The Yate family of Lyford lent money to Henry Marten the regicide and a distant cousin during the time the court was resident in Oxford. For this act of generosity the Yate family lost part of their estate during the Protectorate.⁵¹

The wills of both gentry and yeoman families in the Hundred show a concentration on close kin. Richard Aldworth in his will of 1581 directed that his younger brother George was to be 'kept with meate drinke clothe and lodginge as he is now kept with 4s a quarter money'.⁵² In the majority of the wills examined the testator made provision for the widow, either to receive the residue of the estate or to enjoy the income until the eldest son was of age, from which date he was to provide for his mother. Andrew Greenaway in his will of 1575 directed his eldest son to provide food, clothing and shelter for his mother.⁵³ In one other instance John Keate of West Lockinge and Checkendon, a younger son, in his will of 1616 instructed his son Leonard to give to his mother and Elinor Goswell the next vacant copyhold in Checkendon, to provide them with living accommodation until this should happen, and then to spend £20 making the house that accompanied the copyhold 'handsome' for them.⁵⁴ The overriding evidence from these wills is that there was a concentration on close kin, their children and their own brothers and sisters. This follows the trend in Terling where such a concentration has been identified.⁵⁵ But in contrast to Terling, in Wantage Hundred there are numerous instances where a son acted as a witness to

his father's will. The Hundred did follow the example of Terling in that overseers were mainly drawn from friends and neighbours.⁵⁶

The choice of marriage partners was of vital importance 'Men could on occasion see their fathers-in-law as the chief means of their advancement'.⁵⁷ One instance of this may be seen in the marriage of John Collins to Anne Fettiplace which made Collins family acceptable as gentry and their pedigree was finally put forward to the Heralds in 1665/6. In common with the Verney family the Wantage Hundred gentry tried to arrange marriages into families of a higher or comparable status but failing this, as can be seen by the Collins/Fettiplace alliance, were happy to consider wealthy yeoman as suitable.⁵⁸ In the majority of families it is possible to see a pattern of hundred families looking within the county boundary for marriage partners. This is comparable with the situation in St. Ives, Huntingdonshire and in Nottinghamshire.⁵⁹ However the established gentry families of Fettiplace and Hyde did go farther afield to find partners, as did the Eyston and Yate families who were forced into such an action by their continual recusancy and the need to find like-minded families. William Gifford, a recusant exile in France, wrote to John Yate (Father Vincent) telling him that his eldest brother Edward had married Gifford's sister, that they had 3 or 4 children and were living in Buckland.⁶⁰ Yate was previously unaware of this and Gifford's letter illustrates the kinship network and its role in keeping families in touch with each other.

The issue of a male heir was of paramount importance to continue the dynasty, but 'the failure of the male line (was) common before the fall in death rates at the end of the eighteenth-century'.⁶¹ This was the fate of the Ashcombe, Keate and Yate families all of which had died out before 1750. The Fettiplace family had to resort to Robert Busell, husband of the sole surviving daughter of John Fettiplace, taking the Fettiplace name when he succeeded to the estate in 1743.

Families entered into a policy of having large numbers of children to try and ensure that there was at least one surviving male child and in some cases, in an attempt to continue the Christian name of the father, more than one child was given

the same name. In one such instance 3 sons of Charles Collins in the late seventeenth century were given the name Charles, but all 3 died in infancy, and the line was finally carried on by John the sole surviving son. The danger in this policy was the large number of daughters that could be born, placing a burden on the estate as the father was forced to find money to provide an attractive dowry for each. A survey of the 12 families analysed shows varying levels of 'strategy' usage, but however successfully those of 'land', 'education', 'office-holding' and 'kinship' were applied without a male heir all these were a failure.

The second main question asked in this thesis was how far did a resident or non-resident gentry family affect the social and economic balance of a parish or hamlet. Joan Thirsk one of the pioneers of the 'open'/'closed' theory in relation to the early modern period has strongly emphasised that one of the main attractions for a gentry family to move into any area was the physical nature of the soil and whether it lent itself to profitable farming. Berkshire, and in particular Wantage Hundred due to its soil and terrain, could support successfully both arable and pasture farming, and as such was able to follow the trends set by the government in encouraging either grass or grain production.⁶² Table 1 illustrates the complexity of the region showing soil, agriculture and at what period a parish could be described as 'open' or 'closed'.

Table 1
'Open' and 'Closed' Status of Wantage Hundred, 1522–1750

| Parish | Dominant Soil Structure | Dominant Agricultural Type | 1522 | 1600 | 1650 | 1700 | 1750 |
|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Ardington | Chalk/loam | P | O | O | C | C | C |
| Betterton | Chalk | A,P | E | E | E | E | E |
| Charlton | Chalk/Greensand/Blue Gault | A,P | U | U | U | U | U |
| Childrey | Clay | A | C | C | C | O | O |
| Denchworth | Clay | P | C | C | O | C | C |
| Ginge, E. | Chalk/loam | A | O | O | O | O | O |
| Ginge, W. | Chalk | A,P | E | O | O | O | O |
| Grove | Chalk/Greensand/Blue Gault | A,P | U | U | U | U | U |
| Hanney, E. | Loam/Clay | A | E | O | C | C | C |
| Hanney, W. | Loam/Clay | A | C | O | C | O | O |
| Hendred, E. | Chalk/Loam | A | C | C | C | C | C |
| Hendred, W. | Chalk/Loam | A | E | O | C | C | O |
| Lockinge, E. | Chalk | A,P | O | O | C | C | C |
| Lockinge, W. | Chalk | A,P | O | O | O | O | O |
| Sparsholt | Chalk/Loam | A | C | O | O | O | O |
| Wantage | Chalk/Greensand/Blue Gault | A,P | U | U | U | U | U |

Key: a = arable; c = closed; e = ecclesiastical; o = open; p = pasture; u = urban

As can be seen from Table 1 only West Lockinge and East Ginge remained constant throughout the period. Table 2 shows the growth in household number using the 1522 Muster Certificate and the 1663 Hearth Tax returns. In West Lockinge and East Ginge where, without a resident gentry, a considerable growth in numbers might be expected the opposite is true, there was minimal growth. The highest increase is recorded in Childrey, Denchworth, East Hanney and East Lockinge, all four areas having resident gentry for long periods. However without any firm evidence it is difficult to determine whether this increase in household number was due primarily to a rise in the birth rate or to new family units moving in to the area. An analysis of the available parish registers for the hundred does show in all parishes an increase in baptisms over the total number of burials, in particular Childrey, where for the period 1560 - 1650 baptisms totalled 622 and burials 395. Surprisingly in East Hendred, where there was only a small increase in household number, baptisms totalled 678 and burials 344, these figures possibly suggest a high rate of mobility away from the area. Smaller increases are seen in West Hendred (baptisms 348, burials 212) and in the two Lockinge parishes (baptisms 387, burials 240). This does suggest that the increase in households may be due to a natural rise in the birth rate rather than an influx of new families, and that a resident gentry family had little or no influence on such a situation.

Table 2
Number of Households, 1522 and 1663

| | 1522 ^a | 1663 ^b | Percentage Growth or Decline |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Ardington | 35 | 33 | -5.7% |
| Betterton | 1 | † | — |
| Charlton | 21 | 43 | +104.7% |
| Childrey | 37 | 59 | +59.4% |
| Denchworth | 19 | 33 [†] | +73.6% |
| Ginge, E. | 5 | 11 | +120% |
| Grove | 31 | 82 | +164.5% |
| Hanney, E. | 18 | 60 | +233.3% |
| Hanney, W. | 28 | 21 | -25% |
| Hendred, E. | 33 | 37 | +12.1% |
| Hendred, W. | 13 | 19 | +46.1% |
| Lockinge, E. | 14 | 31 | +121.4% |
| Sparsholt | 22 | 22 | — |
| Wantage | 54 | 302 | +459.2% |

a Muster Certificate Return b Hearth Tax Return

† Betterton figures included in East Lockinge; ‡ Return for 29 October 1664

The second point, about a gentry family restricting the social upward movement of a yeoman family within the Hundred, has from the available evidence produced conflicting results. In Childrey at the end of the sixteenth century the Fettiplace family were concentrating on their new estate at Swinbrook, and at this period the Chamberlain and Hasill yeoman families can be seen to be rising in wealth and status. This, however, was checked when the Fettiplace family redirected their interests again to Childrey and there is a noticeable drop in wealth for Chamberlain and Hasill families, and eventually the Chamberlain unit moved away from the parish. The Hyde family moved from Denchworth in 1617, and at this point the Wiblin family who had been resident in the parish in 1522 began to exhibit a rise in financial status. This coincided with the marriage of Margaret Wiblin to John Fettiplace in 1617. So in those two parishes the removal, however temporary, of the gentry families did improve the prospects of some yeoman families. In East Hendred the Eyston family remained resident, but this did not hinder the gentry Sherwood family moving into the parish at the end of the seventeenth century. In Ardington the Clarke family remained resident but when after the 1650's they spent longer periods in London a rise in status can be seen for the yeoman Hobbs family and they in turn were to eventually achieve gentry status. So in three instances as the influence of the gentry family waned so at least one yeoman family in each parish can be seen to increase in status.

In the parishes that had not experienced resident gentry the outcome was different. In East Ginge the Greenaway yeoman family remained stable in status, as did the Knowles family of West Lockinge. In East Lockinge the Keate family rose to gentry status after 3 generations, but they themselves were a cadet branch of a long established gentry family. In Ardington the Clarke family, another cadet branch, established themselves and rose to gentry status in their own right. So in the two larger 'open' parishes of Ardington and East Lockinge cadet branches of gentry moved in and established their own dynasty. In the two smaller parishes there was little movement by yeoman families and no influx of aspiring gentry families.

The Ashcombe family a further representative of a cadet branch moved into East Hanney, and shared the parish with the Yate family. In West Hendred in 1613 the gentry Wiseman family took up residence, while Sparsholt, except for a period in the sixteenth century when the main line of the Chamberlain family were resident, attracted no settlement by gentry. The final result is inconsistent and each parish would appear to be slightly different. The absence of resident gentry in some parishes enabled yeoman families to rise in status and affluence while in others there was little noticeable improvement in status.

It is noticeable that these 12 families of Wantage Hundred were not in possession of a vast wealth. The 8 surviving inventories in the decades 1590–1599 show an average wealth of £111. Forty years later during 1630–39 the average wealth of 6 surviving inventories had only risen to £168. Unfortunately for the period after 1650 few inventories have survived, making it impossible to chart to what extent the Civil War and its aftermath affected personal wealth. But Tables 3–5 below do illustrate quite clearly, how, for the decades 1570–79 to 1670–79 individual wealth fell far below that of the inflation rate. On this evidence alone it is possible to see how these 12 families could not compete against the wealthier newcomers who moved into the region in the eighteenth century. Thus they lost their place in the local hierarchy to those able to incorporate more efficient working practices on their estates, and who could, and were, willing to use the many advancements in husbandry to their advantage.

Table 3

| Decade | Average Inventory Wealth | Calculated on Number of Cases | Inflation |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 1570–9 | 91.0 | 4 | 284 |
| 1580–9 | 106.0 | 5 | 321 |
| 1590–9 | 111.0 | 8 | 473 |
| 1600–9 | 93.0 | 6 | 475 |
| 1610–19 | 85.0 | 4 | 529 |
| 1620–9 [ⓐ] | 44.7 | 3 | 516 |
| 1630–9 | 168.0 | 6 | 616 |
| 1640–9 | 50.0 | 2 | 618 |
| 1650–9 [ⓑ] | – | – | 636 |
| 1660–9 | 144.0 | 2 | 647 |
| 1670–9 [ⓒ] | 212.15 | 1 | 615 |

ⓐ Excludes James Coxhead, yeoman, inventory wealth £1,184.18.10

ⓑ No surviving inventories for this period

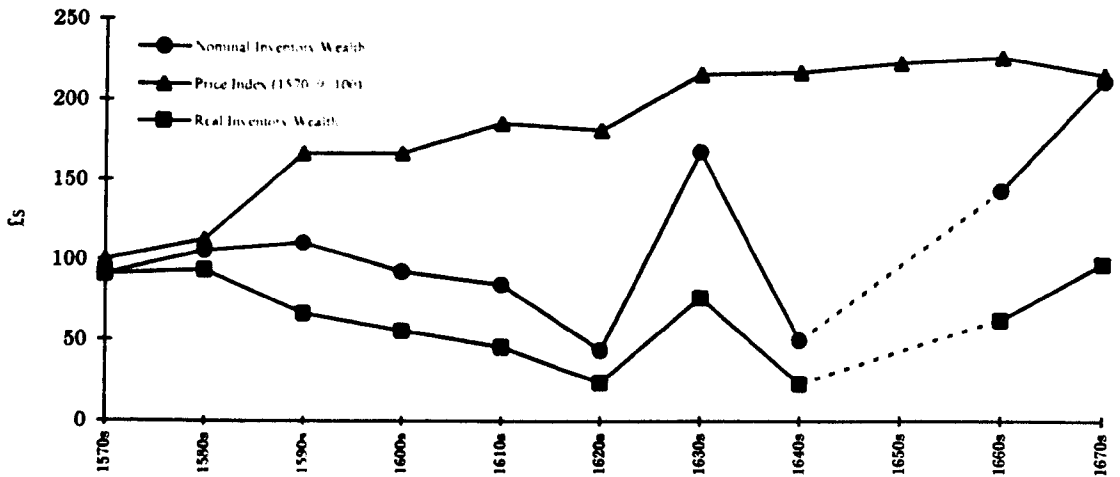
ⓒ Excludes Charles Fettiplace, inventory wealth £3,099.18.10

Table 4

| | Average Nominal Inventory Wealth | Phelps Brown and Hopkins Price Index | | Average Real Inventory Wealth (£s) |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| | (£s) | 1451-75=100 | 1570-9=100 | (£s) |
| 1570-9 | 91 | 284 | 100 | 91 |
| 1580-9 | 106 | 321 | 113 | 94 |
| 1590-9 | 111 | 473 | 167 | 67 |
| 1600-9 | 93 | 475 | 167 | 56 |
| 1610-19 | 85 | 529 | 186 | 46 |
| 1620-9 [ⓐ] | 44 | 516 | 182 | 24 |
| 1630-9 | 168 | 616 | 217 | 77 |
| 1640-9 | 50 | 618 | 218 | 23 |
| 1650-9 | | 636 | 224 | |
| 1660-9 | 144 | 647 | 228 | 63 |
| 1670-9 [ⓐ] | 213 | 615 | 217 | 98 |

[ⓐ] Excludes James Coxhead (1622) inventory value £1,184.18s.10d; and Charles Fettiplace (1674) inventory value £3,099.18s.10d

Table 5
Nominal and Real Inventory Wealth, 1570-1679



..... = Assumed figures as data not available

The absence of any estate records makes it impossible to come to any conclusion as to how the land was managed, although some of the documents available for the Clarke family in the seventeenth century do suggest that they at least were able managers of their estate. The local support for the Royalist cause curtailed many fortunes, notably the Hanney and Lyford Yate family whose status declined after the

Civil War and did not show any signs of recovery after the Restoration. The Fettiplace family were also heavily fined and finally they leased out Childrey manor and withdrew to Swinbrook. The Eyston family suffered fines for their recusancy and support of the Royalists. This seriously hindered any rise in status as continual loans were taken out to pay the fines. After the 1640s all the gentry studied in this research saw a decline in wealth and a movement away from the Hundred. A number that did continue in the area were eventually to die out by the mid-eighteenth century with the failure of the male line. By the end of the seventeenth century the Aldworth family under pressure from newcomers to Wantage began to disappear from the records of office-holding, suggesting that their newly acquired gentry status was very fragile. By the mid-nineteenth century they had lost their position to such an extent that they were in receipt of poor relief. Other yeoman families show varying fortunes. The Coxhead family made no serious attempt to purchase land and remained stationary in status. The Clarke and Collins families achieved gentry status while the Doos and Greenaways remained at yeoman level. It is clear that by no means all gentry and yeoman families were interested in trying to gain higher status. Some did enhance their position, others failed through misfortune, while the remainder appear content to remain as they were, illustrating the difficulties of assessing the concept of the 'rise' of the yeoman and gentry.

NOTES:

- 1 Stone, *Social Mobility*: p. 17.
- 2 Finch, Mary E., 'The Wealth of Five Northamptonshire Families, 1540-1640'. *Northamptonshire Record Society*, 19 (1956). The 5 families were: Isham, Tresham, Spencer, Brudenell, Fitzwilliam.
- 3 Alcock, N. W., 'Warwickshire Grazier and London Skinner, 1532-1555: The Account Book of Peter Temple and Thomas Heritage'. *British Academy, Records of Social and*

- Economic History*. n.s. 4. London: Oxford University Press, 1981. p. 1. In the seventeenth century Edward Clarke of Ardington took as his second wife, Susanna, daughter of Thomas Temple of Stowe.
- 4 Howell, Cicely, *Land, Family and Inheritance in Transition: Kibcourt Harcourt 1280–1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. p. 269.
 - 5 Everitt, Alan, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion, 1640–60*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1973. p. 38.
 - 6 Bodleian Library. MS. Top. Berks. d. 30.
 - 7 PRO. C2/James I/H12/18.
 - 8 NRA. Berkshire 32/2. Eyston Papers.
 - 9 NRA. Berkshire 32/2. Eyston Papers.
 - 10 CPCC. 4, p. 2658.
 - 11 NRA. Berkshire 32/2. Eyston Papers.
 - 12 VCH. Berks. 4, pp. 287, 289.
 - 13 PRO. PROB11/52.
 - 14 PRO. E179/75/313.
 - 15 VCH. Berks. 4, p. 270.
 - 16 BRO. D/A1/52/104.
 - 17 Heralds, Berks. 2, pp. 109–110.
 - 18 BRO. D/A1/8/311.
 - 19 BRO. D/A1/16/42.
 - 20 BRO. D/ECw E.2.
 - 21 Windsor Castle Archives, XV.54.147, XV.54.148.
 - 22 ORO. Dash.III/XII/2.
 - 23 ORO. Dash.III/XII/1.
 - 24 Windsor Castle Archives. XV.40.3.
 - 25 PRO. C3/210/31.
 - 26 PRO. C2/James I/G13/40.
 - 27 Finch, *Wealth of Five Northamptonshire Families*. p. 70.

- 28 Alcock, *Warwickshire Grazier and London Skinner*. p. 248.
- 29 Stone, *Social Mobility*. p. 54.
- 30 Larminie, Vivienne M., 'The Lifestyle and Attitudes of the Seventeenth-Century Gentleman, with special reference to the Newdigates of Arbury Hall, Warwickshire'. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1980.
- 31 PRO. PROB11/30.
- 32 PRO. PROB11/61.
- 33 Larminie, Vivienne M., 'Settlement and Sentiment: Inheritance and Personal Relationships Among Two Midland Gentry Families in the Seventeenth Century'. *Midland History*, 12 (1987), p. 31.
- 34 Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*. 4, p. 234.
- 35 PRO. PROB11/67.
- 36 Stone, *Social Mobility*. p. 33.
- 37 Watson, J. Brierley, 'The Lancashire Gentry and Public Service, 1529–1558'. *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 73–74 (1963–4), p. 20.
- 38 PRO. PROB11/47.
- 39 PRO. E179/74/195, PRO. E179/74/197.
- 40 PRO. E315/464, PRO. E179/73/128, PRO. E179/73/126.
- 41 Watson, 'Lancashire Gentry'. p. 18.
- 42 *Pedigree of the Family of Eyston*.
- 43 Eyston Pedigree.
- 44 Bodleian Library. MS.Tanner 395.
- 45 Sheriffs. p. 6.
- 46 PRO. E179/73/128.
- 47 BRO. D/ECw E 2.
- 48 Firth & Rait, *Acts and Ordinances*. 2, p. 657.
- 49 Kirby, Joan W., 'The Rulers of Leeds: Gentry, Clothiers and Merchants, c. 1425–1626'. *Publications of the Thoresby Society*. 59 (1983). pp. 29–30.
- 50 BRO. D/A1/90/56.
- 51 *CPCAM*. 3, p. 1266.

- 52 PRO. PROB11/64.
- 53 BRO. D/A1/71/27.
- 54 PRO. PROB11/131.
- 55 Wrightson, Keith, 'Kinship in an English Village: Terling, Essex 1500–1700', in Smith, Richard M., *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. p. 326.
- 56 Wrightson, 'Terling'. p. 330.
- 57 Houlbrooke, Ralph A., *The English Family, 1450–1700*. London: Longman, 1984. p. 44.
- 58 Slater, Miriam, 'Marriage in an Upper-Gentry Family in Seventeenth-Century England'. *Past & Present*. 72 (1976). p. 27.
- 59 Carter, Mary, 'Town or Urban Society? St Ives in Huntingdonshire, 1630–1740'; Mitson, Anne, 'The Significance of Kinship Networks in the Seventeenth Century: South-West Nottinghamshire', in: Phythian-Adams, *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580–1850*. pp. 59, 103.
- 60 PRO. SP12/245.
- 61 Habakkuk, Sir John, 'The Rise and Fall of English Landed Families, 1600–1800'. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. 5 ser., 29 (1979). p. 188.
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Appendix 1

A: 1598 ACT ESTABLISHING THE TOWN LANDS OF WANTAGE

[Recto]

Soit baille aux seigneurs
A cesté bille avecq La
Provision a elle
mesmé annexee Les Seigneurs
sont assensus.¹

Soit faict come il est desiré.²

Whereas divers landes tenemente and hereditamente scituate lyenge and benige in the severall parrishes hamletts Townes and fyelde of Wantinge [Wantage] estchawllowe [East Challow], Grove, Charleton, Stevington [Steventon] Hanney Woodhill and Letcombe Rege [Regis] in the saide countie of Berk nowe comanlie called & knowen by the name of the Towne lande of Wantinge [Wantage] have benie heretofore some in the tyme of the late Kinge Henry the Sixte, and some in the tyme of the late Kyng Henry the Seaventhe given and grannted by divers and Sondrie psons [persons] to certen ffeoffees and their heires then inhabitinge wthin the saide Towne & parrishe of Wantinge [Wantage] upon speciall trust and confidence reposed in them and their heires for ymployeng the yffices and proffitte of the same landes and premisses for ever to good and charitable uses wthin the saide Towne and parrishe, And whereas the same ffeoffees and their heires, of longe tyme after the saide grannte did putt in are the charitable uses of reliefe of poore people, amendement of highe waies & maynteynyng of a Scoolemaster in the saide Towne and parrishe, wth the yssues and proffitte of the said landes, untill of late that some fewe of the same Towne have procured themselves and some fewe of their frends to be newe ffeoffes of the same, and have made, or procured to be made guythe [gift?] in taylor to their children and kyndred whereby the truste confydences and charitable uses aforesaid of the saide lande and likely to be interrupted destroyed and cutt of, to the greate preindice [prejudice] of the poore and needie people of the same Towne and to the evill example of others, Be yt therefore Inacted by the auuthoritie of this present Parliament, that there shalbe from hencefoorthe for ever twelve psons [persons], wthin the saide Towne and Parrishe of Wantinge [Wantage], wch [which] shalbe Governors of the Towne lande of Wantinge [Wantage] aforesaide, whiche twelve psons [persons] shall have a pretnall succession and shalbe called and knowen by the name of Governors of the Towne land of Wantinge [Wantage] in the countie of

Berk, and by the same name shall and mayie for ever purchase receive and take, gyve and grannte, demyse and lett to farme, sue and be sued, ympleade and be impleaded in all suytes pleas and courte whatsoever & wheresoever wthin this Realme And that the saide Governors and their successors, for ever shalbe a bodie pollitique in deede, and in name. And shall and maye have and use a comen Seale, to serve for the necessurie use & affaires of the saide bodie pollitique And be yt also Inacted by the auuthoritie aforesaid, that Edmund Phetiplace [Fettiplace] esquier, John Dolman esqre [esquire] Frannc[e] [Francis] Moore esqre [esquire] Thomas Aldwoorthe [Aldworth] merchant, Robte Wyndnam [Robert Wirdnam] gent, Willm [William] Anger Willm [William] Talbott, Willm [William] Tubb, Richarde Webb Thomas Aldwoorthe [Aldworth] the younger, Thomas Clement, and John Snodham shalbe the firste & present Governors of the saide Towne lande of Wantinge [Wantage] in the saide countie of Berk[shire], And that so after as and whensoever yt shall fortune anye of the saide Governors to decesse [decease], or for anye reasonable cause seemyng good to the greatest pte [part] of the saide Governors to be removed, the resydue of the Governors for the tyme beinge shall and maye, wthin fouorte [forty] dauies [days] next after suche deathe or removnige from tyme to tyme hereafter for ever electe and choose one other of the better sorte of the Inhabitannte wthin the saide Towne or parrishe of Wantinge [Wantage], to be a Governor amongst the rest in the place Known and steede of the pte [party] that so shall dye, or be removed, And be yt further Inacted by the auothortie aforesaid, That all Messuages lands tenementes, and other hereditamente in the several parrisches hamlette Townes and fieldes of Wantinge [Wantage] Estchallowe [East Challow] Grove Charleton, Stevnington [Steventon] Hannye Woodhill and Letcome Rege [Regis] or anye of them comonlie called or Knowen by the name of the Towne lande of Wantinge [Wantage] And also one Messuage in Wantinge [Wantage] and one acre of land in Charleton called Sylvenlocke³ latelie purchased wth the proffitte of the saide Towne lande to be and contyneved [convened] as pte [part] of the saide Towne land, shall from hencefoorthe for ever be vested and settled in the said Governors, and their successors to be by their discrecons for ever used converted and ymployed yerely to and for reliefe of the poore people of the said Towne, and to and for the amendment of the highe waies of the said Towne and parrishe, And to and for the maynteynyng[e] of a Scoolemaster to teache Gramer wthin the said Towne of Wantinge [Wantage] Savinge to all and everie pson [person] and psons [persons] bodies pollitique and corporate, their heires and successors, and everie of them, other then the donors givers and ffeoffers of the saide Messuages landes tenementes and heredytamente or anye of them and all suche as clayme the same or anye pte [part] thereof from them or anye of them or from by or under anye pretended concealement, of the same landes or any pte [part] thereof, all suche estate right title and interest as they or any of them have of in to or not of the saide Messuages landes Tenemente and hereditamente aforesaide or any of them Provided allwaies nevertheles, that whereas divers sevall [several] leases have bene

made of divers severall pte [part] of the saide lande Tenement and hereditamente to dyvers and sondrye psons [persons] by the ffeoffees aforesaide. of wch [which] leases some have bene made for good consideracons of money payed, and some other and the greatest pte [part] have bene made for smalle or no consideracons to preferr the frende, children and Kyndred of the said ffeoffees, or of some of them, contrarie to the trust & good uses aforesaide Be it Inacted by auorthorite of this present p(ar)liament. That the Lorde Channccellor of Englande, or the Lorde Keep[er] of the greate Seale of Englande for the tyme benige, shall and maye wthin one yere next after the ende of this Session of Parliament awarde a Comyssion wote [out?] of her mate [majesty's] Courte of Channccerie under the greate Seale of Englande to be directed to suche psons [persons] as he shall thinke meete not exceeding the number of Seaven. And whereas Sr [Sir] John Popham Knight nowe Lorde chief Justice of the pleas before her highnes to be houlden, yf he shalbe then lyvinge [living], to be one, to assuige the saide leases, And to heere and determyne the estates, claymes pretencies and titles thereof, and to certife therie donigeie [doings?] to her mate [majesty's] saide Courte of Channccerie wch [which] comyssyoners or the greater number of them (whereof the said Lorde chiefe Justice yf he be then lyvinge to be one) by vertue of the saide Comission, and of this psent [present] Acte shall have full power and authortie to heare and determyne all and every the estates Interest claymes titles of the said Leases and to allowe or disallowe, of them or anye of them accordnige to their discrecions And shall and maye cause proclamiecons to be made in her mate [majesty] name in open markett wthin the saide Towne of Wantinge [Wantage] fouortene [fourteen] daies at the leaste before their syttnige upon the saide Comission, of the tyme and place of execucon of the saide Comission, Reguyrige [Requiring] by the saide proclamacon all and everye pson [person] and psons [persons] that have or clayme to have any estate or interest in possession or revercon, by from or under anye Lease or Leases for lyef lyves, yere or yeres of the lande and tenement aforesaide, or any of them to attende the saide Comyssyoners or the moste pte [part] of them (whereof the saide lorde chiefe Justice yf he be then lyvnige to be one) at the tyme and place appointed for execucon of the saide comyssion, And then and there to exhibite and prefer his and their and everie of their, Lease Estate and Interest, together wth [with] the iuste and treue consideracon of money, or other consideracon payed for the same, and to produce his and their wytnesses for prooffe thereof, And yf anye pson [person] or psons [persons] shall fayle of exhibitnige his saide Lease estate and interest before the saide comyssyoners or the moste pte [part] of them (whereof the saide Lorde Chiefe Justice yf he be then lyvnige to be one) at the tyme and place aforesaide, Then the saide Lease so not exhibited shalbe voided. And the saide Comissioners, or the most pte [part] of them (whereof the saide Lorde Chief Justice yf he be then lyvnige to be one) shall and maye nevertheles proceede upon suche other Informacon as they shall have to allowinge or disallowynged of the same Lease or Leases, estates or Interest in generall or pticuler [particular] woordes, as

to them shall seeme mete, And after certicate made and returned by the saide Comissyoners or the moste pte [part] of them (whereof the saide Lorde Chiefe Justice yf he then lyvnige to be one) into her mate [majesty] Courte of Channcherie, All suche leases, Estates Interest for yere or yeres, lyef or lyves as the saide Comissioners, or the most pte [part] of them (whereof the saide Lorde chiefe Justice yf he be then lyvinge to be one) shall certyfyte to be by them or the moaste pte [part] of them (whereof the saide Lorde chief Justice, yf he be then lyvinge to be one) disallowed shalbe voide and of none efforte, And all suche they or the most pte [part] of them (whereof the said Lorde chief Justice yf he be then lyvnige to be one) shall certifie to be by them or the most pte [part] of them allowed and approved shall stande good and effertuall [effectual], And in the meane tyme untill suche certyficat made Be yt Inacted, that the saide Leases and everie of them shall be of as good force and effecte and is no better as nowe they are at the makinge of this present Acte Any thinge before in this present Acte to the contrarye not withstandnige Provided Allwaies and be yt Inacted, that yt shall not be lawfull to or for the saide governors or anye their successors to make anyie grannte, demyses or Leases of the lande and Tenemente aforesaide or anyie of them for anyie longer tyme or terme, then for the terme of one

and twentie yeres or their lyeves in possession, and not in Revercon, whereupon the anoncyent [ancient] accustomed yerelie Rent or more shalbe resersoed payeable yerelie duringe the same termes, to the saide Governors and their successors Provided alwaies, and be it further enacted by the authoritie of this present Parliament That the saide Governors and their Successors in everie third yeare for ever heerafter from the end of this present Parliament, shall before the Bishopp of the diocesse of Salisburie and his successors Bishoppe of the saide diocesse for the tyme beinge, but in the vacacon [vacation] of the saide Bishoppwicke before the deane of the Cathedrall Church of Salisburie for the tyme being,⁴ make and deliver up in writinge a true, iust and perfect accompt, of all the Rentes, Revenues, ffynes, issues and proffitte wch [which] heerafter from tyme to tyme shalbe collected, taken ~~and~~ or received of the saide Towne Landes, and of all other landes and Tenement wch [which] they shall heerafter purchase to them and their successors, and of the bestowinge and imployinge of the same; And that anye of the saide Bishoppe for the tyme beinge, and duringe the vacacon [vacation] of suche Bishoppwicke, the said dean for the tyme being shall have authoritie by this present Acte to heare, determyne, and reform the saide accompte, accordinge to the true intende and meaninge of this Acte.

Soit bailleé aux
Commons A ceste'
Proviso Comons soit
assenties.⁵

[Verso]

A Acte for establyhyng the Townelandes of Wantinge in the countie of Berk to the reliefe of the poore, amedment of highe waies, and mayntey nynge a Scoolemaster wthin the said Towne.

Prima vice' Lecta Die
24 Novembris

Secunda vice Lecta die
26 Novembris

Tertia vice Lecta 3 du
Decembrie

Experlive
39 Eliz.

NOTES:

- 1 In a different hand from the main text.
- 2 In a different hand from the main text.
- 3 This has not been identified, no reference to it has been found in other documents nor is it listed in: Gelling, Margaret, *The Place-Names of Berkshire*, English Place Name Society, 1974, Part II. Wantage Hundred, pp.468-94.
- 4 John Coldwell the previous Bishop of Salisbury had died on 4 October 1596, Henry Cotton his successor was nominated on 6 September 1598 and formally admitted 12 November 1598.
- 5 In a different hand from the main text.

APPENDIX 1:

B: WANTAGE TOWN GOVERNORS, 1598 - 1750

| <u>Year Elected</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Residence</u> |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1598 | Edmund Fettiplace | Esquire | Childrey |
| | John Dolman | Esquire | Childrey |
| | Francis Moore | Esquire | Fawley |
| | Thomas Aldworth | Merchant | Bristol |
| | Robert Wirdnam | Gentleman | Charlton |
| | William Anger | | Wantage |
| | William Talbot | | Wantage |
| | William Tubb | Yeoman | Wantage |
| | Richard Webb | | Wantage |
| | Thomas Aldworth | Tanner | Wantage |
| | Thomas Clement | | Wantage |
| John Snodham | | Wantage | |
| 1598 | William Wilmot | Gentleman | Wantage |
| 1599 | Thomas Grove | Esquire | Grove |
| 1611 | Robert Hyde | Sir | Charlton |
| 1613 | Thomas Winterbourne | Yeoman | Grove |
| 1616 | George Wirdnam | Esquire | Wantage |
| | Thomas Webb | Gentleman | Charlton |
| 1619 | George Wilmot | Sir, Knight | Charlton |
| | William Grove | Esquire | Grove |
| | John Daniell | Yeoman | Wantage |
| | Richard Talbot | | Wantage |
| | Thomas Aldworth | Tanner | Wantage |
| | John Marriott | | Wantage |
| 1628 | Edward Cottrill | | |
| 1630 | William Talbot | | Wantage |
| 1632 | William Wythens | | |
| 1634 | Francis Slade | | Wantage |
| | Edward Samuell | | |
| 1638 | John Fettiplace | Esquire | Childrey |
| 1639 | Edward Blagrove | Esquire | |
| | Francis Poor | | |
| 1642 | John Jennings | | Wantage |

| <u>Year Elected</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Residence</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1656 | John Fettiplace | Esquire | Childrey |
| | Edward Keate | Esquire | Lockinge |
| | Lawrence Castle | | |
| | Richard Brooke | | Wantage |
| | William Masemore | The Younger | Wantage |
| | Richard Winterbourne | | Grove |
| | Thomas Clement | | Wantage |
| 1658 | Edward Blagrave | | |
| 1663 | Richard Lisset | | Wantage |
| 1665 | George Champion | Esquire | Wantage |
| | Henry Moore | Esquire | Fawley |
| 1667 | Robert Brooke | | Wantage |
| | John Collins | Esquire | Betterton |
| | Jasper Scholes | Esquire | Charlton |
| | Joel Pococke | | Childrey |
| 1670 | Richard Brooke | | Wantage |
| 1672 | Elias Clarke | | |
| | William Hardwick | | |
| 1675 | Thomas Brooke | | Wantage |
| 1676 | Alexander Fettiplace | | Childrey |
| 1680 | Edmund Wiseman | Esquire | Lockinge |
| | Adam Blandy | Esquire | Letcombe Regis |
| 1682 | John Haskins | | |
| 1684 | Arthur Evans | | |
| | Henry Knapp | | East Hanney |
| 1685 | Geoffrey Masemore | | Wantage |
| 1686 | Daniel Aldworth | | Wantage |
| 1688 | Thomas Butler | | Wantage |
| | Charles Collins | Esquire | Betterton |
| 1691 | John Harding | | |
| | Elias Clarke | | |
| | William Moore | | Fawley |
| 1692 | Richard Lisset | | |
| 1694 | John Loder | Esquire | Hinton |

| <u>Year Elected</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Residence</u> |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1696 | Charles Ambrose | | |
| 1698 | Giles Stamp John Wightwicke | | Wantage |
| 1699 | Gregory Geering | | South Denchworth |
| 1700 | Thomas P ? | | |
| 1701 | Richard Moore | Sir, Bart | Fawley |
| 1704 | Petley Price | Esquire | East Challow |
| 1707 | Charles Loder | Esquire | Hinton |
| 1709 | John Birch | Revd. | Wantage |
| 1711 | Alexander Boote | | Lyford |
| 1712 | George Fettiplace | | Childrey |
| 1721 | Thomas Pinnor | | |
| 1722 | Richard Acton | | |
| 1723 | Francis Loder Bartholomew Tipping Richard Francis Moore | Esquire Sir, Bart. | Hinton Woolley Park |
| 1725 | Francis White Robert Pinnock | The Younger | |
| 1726 | John Price | Esquire | Wantage |
| 1728 | Thomas Brewer | Solicitor | Wantage |
| 1729 | Henry Knapp | | |
| 1730 | John Bance Robert Butler | Royal Navy | Grove |
| 1732 | William Stanley | | |
| 1734 | William Birch | | |
| 1738 | Bartholomew Tipping John Moore | Esquire Sir, Bart. | Woolley Park Fawley |
| 1740 | Charles Malet | | |
| 1742 | Charles Price | Esquire | East Challow |

| <u>Year Elected</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Residence</u> |
|---------------------|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1743 | Thomas Goodlake Thomas Mills | Esquire Esquire | Letcombe Regis Faringdon |
| 1746 | Edward Towsey | | Wantage |
| 1750 | William Stirling Thomas Garrard Robert Butler | Solicitor | Wantage |

This list, with various additions of titles and residence, has been taken from Agnes Gibbons and E. C. Davey, Wantage Past and Present, London: William Walker, 1901. In this work it is stated that the list printed has been taken from Minute Books of the Town Governors seen by the authors, but to date these manuscripts have not been traced.

Appendix 1

D: Table Showing Population Totals for Wantage, Charlton, and Grove Using Different Multipliers

1522 Muster Certificate Household Totals

| | No. of Households | × 3 | × 4 | × 4.3 | × 4.5 | × 4.75 | × 5 | × 6.5 |
|----------|-------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|--------|-----|-------|
| Wantage | 54 | 162 | 216 | 232.2 | 243 | 256.5 | 270 | 351 |
| Charlton | 21 | 63 | 84 | 90.3 | 94.5 | 99.75 | 105 | 136.5 |
| Grove | 31 | 93 | 124 | 133.3 | 139.5 | 147.25 | 155 | 201.5 |

1663 Hearth Tax Household Totals

| | No. of Households | × 3 | × 4 | × 4.3 | × 4.5 | × 4.75 | × 5 | × 6.5 |
|----------|-------------------|-----|------|--------|-------|--------|------|-------|
| Wantage | 302 | 906 | 1208 | 1298.6 | 1359 | 1434.5 | 1510 | 1963 |
| Charlton | 82 | 246 | 328 | 352.6 | 369 | 389.5 | 410 | 533 |
| Grove | 43 | 129 | 172 | 184.9 | 193.5 | 204.25 | 215 | 279.5 |

APPENDIX 2:

A: CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF WANTAGE CHURCHWARDENS, 1564/5 - 1656/7

- 1564/5 Robert ALDWORTH, Stephen ANGER,
Edmund CLEMENT, John CLEMENT.
- 1565/6 Richard STANDISH, Richard TUBB,
Richard TULL, Bartholomew WEBB.
- 1566/7 John ALDWORTH, John ANGER,
Robert BARR, Richard WRIGHT.
- 1567/8 Richard ALDWORTH, John CARTER,
John KNOWLES, Eustace WHITE.
- 1568/9 Nicholas ANGER, Robert LOWCHE,
William TUBB, Thomas WYCKES.
- 1569/70 Richard BLAKE, Thomas BROOKE (gentleman),
Thomas STONE, William WIRDNAM (gentleman).
- 1570/1 John GROVE, Henry KEEPE,
Thomas LODER, Richard NOBES.
- 1571/2 John ALDWORTH, John CLEMENT,
William MARRIOTT, Thomas TUBB.
- 1572/3 William GEAST, Edward KEMYS (gentleman),
John SYMONS, Richard WRIGHT.
- 1573/4 John CLEMENT, John DANIELL,
Thomas WEBBE, William WEDON.
- 1574/5 & Stephen ANGER, Richard RADYSCHÉ (gentleman),
1575/6 Richard SMART, Richard STANDISH (gentleman).
- 1576/7 Richard ALDWORTH, John DANIELL,
Richard TUBB, Robert WHITE.
- 1577/8 William MARRIOTT, Leonard PRATT,
Andrew TAYLOR, William WILLMOT.
- 1578/9 John CLARKE, Nicholas JOHNSON,
William TUBB, Richard WRIGHT.
- 1579/80 Robert ALDWORTH, John CLEMENT,
Morrice JACKSON, William TALBOT.
- 1580/1 John ANGER, John HORSLIE,
Anthony WINTERBOURNE, John WIRDNAM (Mr).
- 1581/2 Richard BARRE, Robert CLEMENT,
William MARRIOTT, Richard WEBB.

- 1582/3 Thomas BARRE, Thomas LIANS,
John PALMER, Oliver WESTBROKE.
- 1583/4 William BARNEBYE, Robert GARRETT,
Nicholas JACKSON, John Tull.
- 1584/5 John ALDWORTH, Leonard PRATT,
William WEDON, William WILLMOT.
- 1585/6 Thomas CAMYELL, Henry KEEPE,
William SMART, William TUBB.
- 1586/7 Thomas AUSTEN, Thomas CLEMENT, John DANIELL.
- 1587/8 Nicholas CLEMENT, Robert KNOWLES,
John PAYNE, Thomas UNDERWOOD.
- 1588/9 Thomas STONE, Richard WEBB,
William WEDON, William WILLMOT (gentleman).
- 1589/90 Michael STREET, William WALLINGTON,
Gregory WEBB, Thomas WINTERBOURNE.
- 1590/1 Richard ALDWORTH, Richard BARRE,
William JENNINGS, William KNAPPE.
- 1591/2 John ANGER, Nicholas JOHNSON,
John LISSET, John PALMER.
- 1592/3 Thomas ALDWORTH, John HORSLIE,
Robert LOUCHE, William TALBOT.
- 1593/4 William ANGER, John SNODHAM,
Richard SYMONS, William TUBB.
- 1594/5 Thomas ALDWORTH, William MARRIOTT,
William TUBB, John TULL.
- 1595/6 John DANIELL, Robert GARRETT (gentleman),
Henry KEEPE, Richard WEBB.
- 1596/7 William ALDWORTH, Robert BARRE,
Nicholas FIELD, Richard STILEMAN.
- 1597/8 Thomas CLEMENT, Henry COULBOURNE,
John JENNINGS, Tristram PRATT.
- 1598/9 John HORSLIE, Richard LISSET,
William SMART, Richard WEDON.
- 1599/1600 Edward BLANDY, John KNOWLES,
William WILLMOT, Thomas WINTERBOURNE.
- 1600/1 William ANGER, Nicholas JOHNSON,
William TUBB, John WILSON.

- 1601/2 No names given.
- 1602/3 Anthony BURGES, John DANIELL,
John SNODHAM, Richard WEBB.
- 1603/4 Nicholas FIELD, Peter GRAY,
John LISSET, Gregory WEBB.
- 1604/5 Thomas ALDWORTH, Jeffrey ALLYE,
William TUBB, Thomas WICKES.
- 1605/6 Thomas SAMUELL (gentleman), William TUBB,
John TULL, Richard WEDON.
- 1606/7 William ANGER, Thomas GROVE,
John JENNINGS, William TALBOT.
- 1607/8 Francis CATER (gentleman),
William WILLMOT (gentleman), Thomas WINTERBOURNE,
Robert WIRDNAM (gentleman).
- 1608/9 Thomas ASTELL, John MARRIOTT,
John PRATT, William SMART.
- 1609/10 Alexander ALDWORTH, Henry CLEMENT,
Edward GALLAND, Peter GRAY.
- 1610/11 Peter BARRE, John SNODHAM,
Thomas WEBB, Richard WESTBROKE.
- 1611/2 John COOKE, Henry COULBOURNE,
William TUBB, Thomas WILTON.
- 1612/3 John KNOWLES, Richard STROWD,
Richard TALBOT, William TULL.
- 1613/4 Frances BARRE, Richard BROOKE,
Anthony BURGIS, John DOO.
- 1614/5 Henry ASTELL, Thomas CLEMENT,
Edward COTTERILL, John DANIELL.
- 1615/6 Nicholas ANGER, William TALBOT,
William TUBB, Thomas WEEKES.
- 1616/7 Thomas ALDWORTH, Peter GRAY,
Thomas SAMUELL (gentleman), Thomas WINTERBOURNE.
- 1617/8 William ANGER, Thomas GROVE,
John JENNINGS, William WILLMOT.
- 1618/9 John MARRIOTT, Richard ROWLAND,
Thomas TULL, George WIRDNAM (gentleman).

1619/20 Robert ESTMOND, Thomas FLUDDIER,
John PRATT, William SMART.

1620/1 Robert CLEMENT, John KNOWLES,
Thomas NUTT, Richard WESTBROOKE.

1621/2 William ANGER, Edward BLAGROVE,
Thomas DANIELL, Jeffery GRAYE.

1622/3 Henry ASTELL, Richard TALBOT,
John SNODHAM, William TULL.

1623/4 Thomas COATES, William KEEPE,
Thomas STONE, William WITHENS (gentleman).

1624/5 Edward BOWLE, Richard STROWDE,
William TALBOT, William TUBB.

1625/6 Bartholomew ALDWORTH, Anthony BURGES,
John DANIELL, John JENNINGS.

1626/7 William ALDWORTH, Edward COTTRILL,
Richard ROWLAND, Thomas WINTERBOURNE.

1627/8 Nicholas CLEMENT, Thomas CLEMENT,
Edward ROBBINS, Roger TULL.

1628/9 Peter BARRE, Richard BLAGROVE,
James SMITH, Ambrose SOUTHEY.

1629/30 Henry AUSTELL, Walter BATCHELOR,
Richard POYNTER, William WINTERBOURNE.

1630/1 Thomas CLEMENT, William GROVE,
William MASEMORE, Richard SMART.

1631/2 William AKERS, John COLLINS,
John KNOWLES, Thomas TULL.

1632/3 Robert ALDER, Jeffrey GRAY,
William JENNINGS, Thomas SMART.

1633/4 Robert CLEMENT, Richard FLUDDIER,
Edward GALLAND, Edward SAMUEL.

1634/5 Nicholas BACON, John MAGGOTT,
Robert NOKE, John TULL.

1635/6 Edward BLAGROVE, Thomas NUTT,
Richard WEDON, Richard WINCKWORTH.

1636/7 John COOKE, John NORTH,
William TALBOT, Richard WINTERBOURNE.

- 1637/8 William BURGESS, John CLEMENT,
Henry KNAPPE, Frances ROWLAND.
- 1638/9 William KEEPE, Richard LYFORD,
John MARRIOTT, Richard TULL.
- 1639/40 Laurence CASTELL (Mr), Richard FLUDDIER,
Thomas LOWCHE, William TALBOT.
- 1640/1 Edward COTTRILL, Alexander KEATE,
Ambrose SOUTHBY, John WINTERBOURNE.
- 1641/2 Walter BATCHELOR, John KNOWLES,
John SEVIER, John SMART.
- 1642/3 John ABDY, Richard BROOKE (Mr),
Thomas CLEMENT, Peter GRAY.
- 1643/4 until Dec. 1650.
William ALDWORTH, Thomas BUCKLE,
William TULL, John WEDON.
- 1650/1 Philip ALLIN, Richard FLUDDIER,
William SHEPHERD, Thomas WILLIS alias WESTBROOKE.
- 1651/2 William HARRIS, John HASKINS,
William MASEMORE, Ambrose SOUTHBY,
- 1652/3 Richard BROOKE (gentleman), John GERRING,
William LAY, Thomas WILLIAMS.
- 1653/4 Edward DAWSON, Richard LISSET,
Frances ROWLAND, John RUSSELL.
- 1654/5 Samuel BATHURST (Mr), Austin COOKE,
Richard GREGORY, Richard WINTERBOURNE.
- 1655/6 Richard BARRE, Richard MILLS,
William SMART, Edmund TULL.
- 1656/7 Thomas BLAGROVE (Mr), John COLE,
Bartholomew SLADE, Thomas SMART.

This list has been taken from the manuscript of Wantage Churchwardens' Account Book, for which only the years 1564/5 to 1656/7 have survived. (Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Berks. c. 44).

APPENDIX 2:

B: NAME LIST OF WANTAGE CHURCHWARDENS, 1564/5 - 1656/7

| | |
|-----------|--|
| ABDY | 1642/3 |
| AKERS | 1631/2 |
| ALDER | 1632/3 |
| ALDWORTH | 1564/5, 1566/7, 1567/8, 1571/2, 1576/7, 1579/80, 1584/5, 1590/1, 1592/3, 1594/5, 1596/7, 1604/5, 1609/10, 1616/7, 1625/6, 1626/7, 1643/4 until Dec. 1650. |
| ALLIN | 1650/1 |
| ALLYE | 1604/5 |
| ANGER | 1564/5, 1566/7, 1568/9, 1574/5, 1575/6, 1580/1, 1591/2, 1593/4, 1600/1, 1606/7, 1615/6, 1617/8, 1621/2. |
| ASTELL | 1608/9, 1614/5, 1622/3, 1629/30. |
| AUSTEN | 1586/7 |
| BACON | 1634/5 |
| BARNEBYE | 1583/4 |
| BARR | 1566/7, 1581/2, 1582/3, 1590/1, 1596/7, 1610/1, 1613/4, 1628/9, 1655/6. |
| BATCHELOR | 1629/30, 1641/2. |
| BATHURST | 1654/5 |
| BLAGROVE | 1621/2, 1628/9, 1635/6, 1656/7. |
| BLAKE | 1569/70 |
| BLANDY | 1599/1600 |
| BOWLE | 1624/5 |
| BROOKE | 1569/70, 1613/4, 1642/3, 1652/3. |
| BUCKLE | 1643/4 until Dec. 1650. |
| BURGES | 1602/3, 1613/4, 1625/6, 1637/8. |
| CAMYELL | 1585/6 |
| CARTER | 1567/8 |

| | |
|------------|---|
| CASTELL | 1639/40 |
| CATER | 1607/8 |
| CLARKE | 1578/9 |
| CLEMENT | 1564/5 (Edmund & John), 1571/2, 1573/4, 1579/80, 1581/2, 1586/7, 1587/8, 1597/8, 1609/10, 1614/5, 1620/1, 1627/8 (Nicholas & Thomas), 1630/1, 1633/4, 1637/8, 1642/3. |
| COATES | 1623/4 |
| COLE | 1656/7 |
| COLLINS | 1631/2 |
| COOKE | 1611/2, 1636/7, 1654/5. |
| COTTERILL | 1614/5, 1626/7, 1640/1. |
| COULBOURNE | 1597/8, 1611/2. |
| DANIELL | 1573/4, 1576/7, 1586/7, 1595/6, 1602/3, 1614/5, 1621/2, 1625/6. |
| DAWSON | 1653/4 |
| DOO | 1613/4 |
| ESTMOND | 1619/20 |
| FIELD | 1596/7, 1603/4. |
| FLUDDIER | 1619/20, 1633/4, 1639/40, 1650/1. |
| GALLAND | 1609/10, 1633/4. |
| GARRETT | 1583/4, 1595/6. |
| GEAST | 1572/3 |
| GERRING | 1652/3 |
| GRAY | 1603/4, 1609/10, 1616/7, 1621/2, 1632/3, 1642/3. |
| GREGORY | 1654/5 |
| GROVE | 1570/1, 1606/7, 1617/8, 1630/1. |
| HARRIS | 1651/2 |
| HASKINS | 1651/2 |
| HORSLIE | 1580/1, 1592/3, 1598/9. |

| | |
|----------|---|
| JACKSON | 1579/80, 1583/4 |
| JENNINGS | 1590/1, 1597/8, 1606/7, 1617/8, 1625/6, 1632/3. |
| JOHNSON | 1578/9, 1591/2, 1600/1. |
| KEATE | 1640/1 |
| KEEPE | 1570/1, 1585/6, 1595/6, 1623/4, 1638/9. |
| KEMPYS | 1572/3 |
| KNAPPE | 1590/1, 1637/8. |
| KNOWLES | 1567/8, 1587/8, 1599/1600, 1612/3, 1620/1, 1631/2, 1641/2. |
| LAY | 1652/3 |
| LIANS | 1582/3 |
| LISSETT | 1591/2, 1598/9, 1603/4, 1653/4. |
| LODER | 1570/1 |
| LOWCHE | 1568/9, 1592/3, 1639/40. |
| LYFORD | 1638/9 |
| MAGGOTT | 1634/5 |
| MARRIOTT | 1571/2, 1577/8, 1581/2, 1594/5, 1608/9, 1618/9, 1638/9. |
| MASEMORE | 1630/1, 1651/2. |
| MILLS | 1655/6 |
| NOBES | 1570/1 |
| NOKE | 1634/5 |
| NORTH | 1636/7 |
| NUTT | 1620/1, 1635/6. |
| PALMER | 1582/3, 1591/2. |
| PAYNE | 1587/8 |
| POYNTER | 1629/30 |
| PRATT | 1577/8, 1584/5, 1597/8, 1608/9, 1619/20. |
| RADISCHE | 1574/5, 1575/6. |

ROBBINS 1627/8
 ROWLAND 1618/9, 1626/7, 1637/8, 1653/4.
 RUSSELL 1653/4
 SAMJELL 1605/6, 1616/7, 1633/4.
 SEVIER 1641/2
 SHEPHERD 1650/1
 SLADE 1656/7
 SMART 1574/5, 1575/6, 1585/6, 1598/9, 1608/9, 1619/20,
 1630/1, 1632/3, 1641/2, 1655/6, 1656/7.
 SMITH 1628/9
 SNODHAM 1593/4, 1602/3, 1610/1, 1622/3.
 SOUTHBY 1628/9, 1640/1, 1651/2.
 STANDISH 1565/6, 1574/5, 1575/6.
 STILEMAN 1596/7
 STONE 1569/70, 1588/9, 1623/4.
 STREET 1589/90
 STROWD 1612/3, 1624/5
 SYMONS 1572/3, 1593/4.
 TALBOT 1579/80, 1592/3, 1606/7, 1612/3, 1615/6, 1622/3,
 1624/5, 1636/7, 1639/40.
 TAYLOR 1577/8
 TUBB 1565/6, 1568/9, 1571/2, 1576/7, 1578/9, 1585/6,
 1593/4, 1594/5, 1600/1, 1604/5, 1605/6, 1611/2,
 1615/6, 1624/5.
 TULL 1565/6, 1583/4, 1594/5, 1605/6, 1612/3, 1618/9,
 1622/3, 1627/8, 1631/2, 1634/5, 1638/9, 1643 until
 Dec. 1650, 1655/6.
 UNDERWOOD 1587/8
 WALLINGTON 1589/90
 WEBB 1565/6, 1573/4, 1581/2, 1588/9, 1589/90, 1595/6,
 1602/3, 1603/4, 1610/1.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| WEDON | 1573/4, 1584/5, 1588/9, 1598/9, 1605/6, 1635/6, 1643 until Dec. 1650. |
| WEEKES | 1615/6 |
| WESTBROKE | 1582/3, 1610/1, 1620/1, 1650/1. |
| WHITE | 1567/8 |
| WILLIAMS | 1652/3 |
| WILLMOT | 1577/8, 1584/5, 1588/9, 1599/1600, 1607/8, 1617/8. |
| WILSON | 1600/1 |
| WILTON | 1611/2 |
| WINCKWORTH | 1635/6 |
| WINTERBOURNE | 1580/1, 1589/90, 1599/1600, 1607/8, 1616/7, 1626/7, 1629/30, 1636/7, 1640/1, 1654/5. |
| WIRDNAM | 1569/70, 1580/1, 1607/8, 1618/9. |
| WITHENS | 1623/4 |
| WRIGHT | 1566/7, 1572/3, 1576/7, 1578/9. |
| WYCKES | 1568/9, 1604/5. |

APPENDIX 3:

A: CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF CHILDREY CHURCHWARDENS,
1567/8 - 1688/9

| | |
|---------|------------------------------|
| 1567/8 | Henry CHAMBERLAIN |
| 1568/9 | Nicholas FETTIPLACE |
| 1569/70 | William HASILL |
| 1570/1 | Robert BUNCE |
| 1571/2 | Thomas ALDWORTH |
| 1572/3 | Richard GODDARD |
| 1573/4 | John FREYMA |
| 1574/5 | Nicholas YOUNG |
| 1575/6 | Alexander ALDWORTH |
| 1576/7 | William RUDD |
| 1577/8 | John LOUCH |
| 1578/9 | John KEATE |
| 1579/80 | Nicholas FETTIPLACE |
| 1580/1 | Robert ALDWORTH |
| 1581/2 | William HASILL |
| 1582/3 | John LANGFORDE |
| 1583/4 | Robert BUNCE, John FERRYMAN |
| 1584/5 | John FERRYMAN |
| 1585/6 | John BUNCE |
| 1586/7 | Richard GODDARD |
| 1587/8 | Alexander MITCHELL |
| 1588/9 | William KEATE, William HOSTE |
| 1589/90 | William RUDD |
| 1590/1 | Robert ALDWORTH |
| 1591/2 | William GODDARD |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1592/3 | Richard BELCHER |
| 1593/4 | Thomas LANGFORDE |
| 1594/5 | Robert BUNCE |
| 1595/6 | John LONG |
| 1596/7 | Edward YOUNG |
| 1598/9 | Edward PAINE |
| 1599/1600 | Edward BARNES |
| 1600/1 | Robert ALDWORTH |
| Gap in the records until 1607/8. | |
| 1607/8 | Peter FERRYMAN, Anthony WALLINGTON |
| 1608/9 | John BUNCE, Walter BUSH |
| 1609/10 | William COX, Anthony WALLINGTON |
| 1610/1 | Peter FERRYMAN, William RUDD |
| 1611/2 | George BURGES, Alexander BARNES |
| 1612/3 | William GODDARD |
| 1613/4 | John BUNCE, George MUDGE |
| 1614/5 | George MUDGE, John VOKINS |
| 1615/6 | John VOKINS, Robert RUDD |
| 1616/7 | Robert RUDD, John BUNCE |
| 1617/8 | John BUNCE, John KEATE |
| 1618/9 | John KEATE, John BUNCE |
| 1619/20 | John BUNCE, George MUDGE |
| 1620/1 | George MUDGE, John VOKINS |
| 1621/2 | John VOKINS, John HASILL |
| 1622/3 | John HASILL, Samuel ORBOURNE alias TAYLOR |
| 1623/4 | Samuel ORBOURNE, William ALDWORTH |
| 1624/5 | William ALDWORTH, Edward TIDCOMB |

1625/6 Edward TIDCOMB, William COX
 1626/7 William COX, Walter BUNCE
 1627/8 Walter BUNCE, John BUNCE
 1628/9 John BUNCE, Robert WARDE
 1629/30 Robert WARDE, Robert RUDD
 1630/1 Robert RUDD, John BUNCE
 1631/2 John BUNCE, Walter BUSH
 1632/3 Walter BUSH, John VOKINS
 1633/4 John VOKINS, Henry ALDER
 1635/6 Richard TUB, John BUNCE
 1636/7 John BUNCE, Simon BENNETT alias TAYLOR
 1637/8 Walter BUSH, Thomas TAME
 1638/9 Robert RUDD, Walter BUSH
 1639/40 John BUNCE 'of ye Newhouse', John BUNCE 'of the
 upper end of town'
 1640/1 John HASILL 'of ye middle of the town', Thomas BUSH
 1641/2 Richard ALDWORTH, William BUNCE 'of ye Newhouse'
 1642/3 Richard PLEYDELL, Edward WEBB
 1643/4 Edward WEBB, John BUNCE
 1644/5 John BUNCE, John HASILL 'of West Stree'
 1645/6 John HASILL
 1646/7 William COX,
 1647/8 Richard SAWYER, Francis BUNCE
 1648/9 Francis BUNCE, John VOKINS
 1649/50 John VOKINS, Anthony COOKE
 1650/1 Anthony COOKE, Alexander FILLMORE
 1651/2 Alexander FILLMORE, John HOARE
 1652/3 John HOARE, Francis TAYLOR

1653/4 Francis TAYLOR alias ORBOURNE, Mr James FISHER
 1654/5 Mr James FISHER, Robert TAME
 1655/6 Robert TAME, Thomas BUSH
 1656/7 John BUNCE 'of ye pond', William BUNCE 'of ye New
 House'
 1657/8 William HASILL, James FREWIN
 1658/9 William HASILL, William COX
 1659/60 William COX, John HASILL
 1660/1 William COX, John DARELL
 1661/2 John HASILL, John HOARE
 1662/3 John HOARE, John BUNCE
 1663/4 John BUNCE, John COOKE
 1664/5 John COOKE, John KNAPPE
 1665/6 John KNAPPE, Thomas BUSH
 1666/7 Thomas BUSH, Richard SAWYER
 1667/8 Richard SAWYER, Alexander FILLMORE
 1668/9 Alexander FILLMORE, Andrew LAWRENCE
 1669/70 Andrew LAWRENCE, William HASILL
 1670/1 William HASILL, John ALDWORTH
 1671/2 John TAME, William BUNCE
 1672/3 William BUNCE, James FRAINE
 1673/4 James FRAINE, Thomas SEYMORE
 1674/5 Thomas SEYMORE, Thomas COOKE
 1675/6 Thomas COOKE, Thomas BUSH
 1676/7 Thomas BUSH, John COOKE
 1677/8 John COOKE, Richard GUNTER
 1678/9 Richard GUNTER, John COOKE
 1679/80 Richard GUNTER, John COOKE

1680/1 Robert HOARE, Richard GUNTER
1681/2 Robert HOARE, William BUNCE
1682/3 William BUNCE, Thomas SEYMORE
1683/4 Thomas SEYMORE, William COX
1684/5 William COX, Thomas SEYMORE
1685/6 Thomas SELLWOOD, Thomas BUNCE
1686/7 Thomas BUNCE, John TAME
1687/8 John TAME, John BUNCE
1688/9 Richard GUNTER, Nathaniel BUSH

APPENDIX 3:

B: NAME LIST OF CHILDREY CHURCHWARDENS, 1567/8 - 1688/9

| | |
|-------------|--|
| ALDER | 1633/4 |
| ALDWORTH | 1571/2, 1575/6, 1580/1, 1590/1, 1600/1, 1623/4, 1624/5, 1641/2, 1670/1 |
| BARNES | 1599/1600, 1611/2 |
| BELCHER | 1592/3 |
| BENNETT | 1636/7 |
| BUNCE | 1570/1, 1583/4, 1585/6, 1594/5, 1601/2, 1608/9, 1613/4, 1616/7, 1617/8, 1618/9, 1619/20, 1626/7, 1627/8 (John & Walter), 1628/9, 1630/1, 1631/2, 1635/6, 1636/7, 1639/40 (John & John), 1641/2, 1643/4, 1644/5, 1647/8, 1648/9, 1656/7 (John & William), 1662/3, 1663/4, 1671/2, 1672/3, 1681/2, 1682/3, 1685/6, 1686/7, 1687/8 |
| BURGES | 1611/2 |
| BUSH | 1608/9, 1631/2, 1632/3, 1637/8, 1638/9, 1640/1, 1655/6, 1665/6, 1666/7, 1675/6, |
| CHAMBERLAIN | 1567/8 |
| COOKE | 1649/50, 1650/1, 1663/4, 1664/5, 1674/5, 1675/6, 1676/7, 1677/8, 1678/9, 1679/80 |
| COX | 1609/10, 1625/6, 1626/7, 1646/7, 1658/9, 1659/60, 1660/1, 1683/4, 1684/5 |
| DARELL | 1660/1 |
| FERRYMAN | 1583/4, 1584/5, 1607/8, 1610/1 |
| FETTIPLACE | 1568/9, 1579/80 |
| FILLMORE | 1650/1, 1651/2, 1667/8, 1668/9 |
| FISHER | 1653/4, 1654/5 |
| FRAINE | 1672/3, 1673/4 |
| FREWIN | 1657/8 |
| FREYMAY | 1573/4 |

| | |
|------------|---|
| GODDARD | 1572/3, 1586/7, 1591/2, 1612/3 |
| GUNTER | 1677/8, 1678/9, 1679/80, 1680/1, 1688/9 |
| HASILL | 1569/70, 1581/2, 1621/2, 1640/1, 1644/5, 1645/6, 1657/8, 1658/9, 1659/60, 1661/2, 1669/70, 1670/1 |
| HOARE | 1651/2, 1652/3, 1661/2, 1662/3, 1680/1, 1681/2 |
| KEATE | 1578/9, 1588/9, 1618/9 |
| KNAPPE | 1664/5, 1665/6 |
| LANGFORDE | 1582/3, 1593/4 |
| LAWRENCE | 1668/9, 1669/70 |
| LONG | 1595/6 |
| LOUCH | 1577/8 |
| MITCHELL | 1587/8 |
| MUDGE | 1613/4, 1614/5, 1619/20, 1620/1 |
| ORBOURNE | 1622/3, 1623/4 |
| PAINE | 1598/9 |
| PLEYDELL | 1642/3 |
| RUDD | 1576/7, 1589/90, 1610/1, 1615/6, 1616/7, 1629/30, 1630/1, 1638/9 |
| SAWYER | 1647/8, 1666/7, 1667/8 |
| SELLWOOD | 1685/6 |
| SEYMORE | 1673/4, 1674/5, 1682/3, 1683/4, 1684/5 |
| TAME | 1637/8, 1654/5, 1655/6, 1671/2, 1686/7, 1687/8 |
| TAYLOR | 1652/3, 1653/4 |
| TIDCOMB | 1624/5, 1625/6 |
| TUBB | 1635/6 |
| VOKINS | 1614/5, 1615/6, 1620/1, 1621/2, 1632/3, 1633/4, 1648/9, 1649/50 |
| WALLINGTON | 1607/8, 1609/10 |

| | |
|-------|-----------------|
| WARDE | 1628/9, 1629/30 |
| WEBB | 1642/3, 1643/4 |
| YOUNG | 1574/5, 1596/7 |

Appendix 4

JOHN VINCENT (JOHN YATE) TO SIR FRANCIS ENGELFIELD¹ (JUNE 21) 1593

Right worshipping Knighte

My humble comendations to your Worshippe premised, I doe lett you to understande that your Worshippes letter dated the 28th Julie 1592 came happenlie in my hande in the middle of the monthe of Aprill of this present yere 1593, received of me wth suche joye & gladness as by worde I am not able to declare benige soe copious of consolations, notwithstandinge the relation of the miserable state of Europe and speciallye of Englande, therein conteyned, wherunto in this my thirde wth I have alredie wryten unto your w(orship). I doe brieflie answeere, and strayght awayes in the beginninge thereof I doe most humbly thanke & gratifie your w(orship) his sincere affection towarde me, and the like rembrances of me, not deservinge neither the one, nor the other by any merite of myne. Althoughe that I have not benne forgettfull of your w(orship) synce my departure from you in my devout prayers as bounde thereunto for divers causes pertayninge to me & my parents in tyme past, for the wth the faithful payers of everye good worke for his sake our lorde shall give unto your w(orship) the plentifull payment. As I sayed before this is the thyrd letter that I have wrytten unto your w(orship) sythens my arrivall in to this barbarious Brasill, the first in answeere to one of your worshippes dated at Madrid the 16the of Aprill 1584, the wth came to my handes some yeres after the date therof, the wth my answeere contayninge therin my humble recommendations, & thanks for your w(orship) his memorye to me, and for the various newes sent to me, and a brief rehersall of of my assaynes in this rusticall Region, I sent to your w(orship) by one father Christopher

Gonnea visitour of this province in the yeare 1589 who, although he was robbed by the pirates. yett as I was informed, dyd safelye come to lande wth all his letters; This father is presently Rector of the college of *Enora in portugall*, but the cause why my letter for your w(orship) was not delyvered I knowe not. The second I sent in the yeare 1591 wth other foure for father Good; f(ather) Gibbons in *Coinber* in answeare to one of his, to father John Gowlinge, and to Mr. William Giffarde at Rhemes, answeringe to each one of theirs to me, of the receyte of two of them onlie I have written, that is to saye of myne to father Gibbons whoe answeare it & came to me with your worshippes, and of one other to father John Gowlinge in *Lisburne* who likewise made answeare therunto two or three monthes before that I received your worshippes. As of those wth I sent to your w(orship), to father Goode, & to Mr Gifford I have hadd no answeare hither, suche is the worlde by sea & by land. And before the receyte of the seconde wth your w(orship) wrote to me, I had answered to that wth father Gowlinge sent me, god grant it worthy to his sighte whoe perhappes before that this my thirde shall be delyvered to your w(orship) will geve you newes of me & my assaynes, as he hathe done alredie of an other that I wrought to him. As he hathe done alredie of an other that I wrought to him. As he hathe signified to me in the last of his that I received for the wth cause I shall be in this more briefer gevinge your w(orship) w(ill) understand that goinge in fortie & three yeres of age, wth a whighte head, I never had better health of bodye than nowe att his present (god be alwayes prayesd). I doe enjoye excercising amongst these seelie soules in their language, (wth I understande & speake almost aswell as my native speeche, as after the portugualle tongue) the ordinarie ministeries of our societie. your w(orship) was the first that gave me intelligence of the deathe of f(ather) William Good from whom I received two or three letters, the last dated the 30th day of November 1584. full of spirituall confortes, and various newes of the parte of Europe wth diverse images of the English martyrs, and a booke of the newe martyrs in England in the english tongue, soe that by his deathe pretious, as I hope, in godes sight. I am deprimer of manie consolations wth he was wont in geve to me, and to well all in fewe wordes, who did regenerate me in Christe

for the entrance into this our Religion. for the wth I doubt not but that he hath received longe since a riche reward at godes hande. Soe that I can not tell to whose handes the last letter for him were delivered. One Mr. William Gifford from Rhemes in france sent to me a letter, almost nyne years agoe, wherin he gave me to witt that he knowed me at luayne in Brabant, & that my eldest brother called Edward Yate² (not Andrewe as your worshippe in his letter doth call him) was marryed wth his sister,³ and had of her three or foure children & was abydinge att Buckeland, and that my youngest brother called Thomas Yate⁴ lyved some litell tyme beyond the Englishe seas, & aftoward returned backe into England. He lykewise gave me newes of the deathe of my father & mother after her second marriage,⁵ for whose soweles I obtyned the almes of our fathers & brethrene of this our college in the Bay of All Saynts wth is in this minised. but dyinge my father in pryson, or, upon sureties for the Catholike religion, I suppose that his sowle dyd goe strayght into heaven father William Good gave me intelligence that, atthe last wyse, one of my auntes was a prisoner in Oxforde, & that, as he had hearde, I had a systere of myne a nunne of Syon,⁶ I leaste in England two marryed with catholike gentlemen, Mr Plore & Mr Arden & three unmarried, perhapps, one of them be her, that father good dothe make mention of.⁷ your worshippe may safelye knowe the truthe from Roun, from whome they doe sometymes wryte to your w(orship) for I have a prynted letter in the spanish tongue wrytten to your w(orship) by one of the Sisters of that hollye convent touchinge her imprisonment in England and her deliverance from them sett out by father Robert Personnes. The blinded Q(ueen) of England, and lametable estate thereof is to be comended from the bottom of our harte wthe mercifull & mightie goodness of him & in percucit et sanat, mortificat et inificat, deducit act inferos et reducit, in our continual prayers ut amertat flagilla ivacundiae suae to them that they may enjoy the true prosperitie & powere of bodie & sowle obtayned by the one onlie catholike & Romayne faithe, and not by soe monstrous heretical division. As the devilish ministers hath betwene them selves voyde of the peace temporall, cordiall & eternall. The like remedie is to be used for Scotlande and other heretical regions. And happie

be they, that suffer for the catholike faithe & iustice, but most happie those that have died in that cause, and not for treason forged & imagyned by starke traitors and sekers of their profitt, have & delighte in this life onlie, and not the perfitt dignitie of their prince & cuntrye. Of the convent of the Carthusians I have had noe newes of any person sithens my cominge out of flauders, perhapps your w(orship) forgett it in your letter. And to that wth your w(orship) doth wryte of the Erle of Cumberland I doe answere that so full of Rovers and the seas that they do issue into those counties, and as far from home towarde the Southepole, as England is from home towards the Northe, the first of them was the famous Drake as I thinke your worship have alredie heard; an other in the yere 1587 called Robert Woddington with three shippes who; as in the first wth I wrought unto your w(orship) after that he had done the harme that he could in this city wthout goinge out of his shippe, was after almost two monthes space, forced wth the losse of many of his souldiers to seke a better fortune. The third was Thomas Cavendishe who departinge out of England the 26th of August 1591 wth fyve shippes of his owne for to sayle into the Southern Seas (where a fyve yeres past he came wth two shippes & took a great shippe laden wth gold, silkes & much riches wth three boyes of Japan & soe wth the losse of one of his shippes turned withe into England) upon the wordes of the boyes of Japan so lade his shippes att his pleasure, and to come after three yeres finished into England, he came into the coste of this Region a hundred & fiftie leagues from home towards the southishe seas, and arryved att a villadge call St Vincent, and takinge the same wth muche artillarye, misusing & violatinge the churches and relics of ste in the Christmas weke last passed & after a month and a halfe space there vitinalinye his shippes, he departed thenne towarde the straight called Magellan wth six shippes but before he came thether he lost wth stormye weather two of his shippes, wth the men & munitions, and not able to sayle forthe the straytes by reason of contrarye wynds he turned bake towarde the forsayde villadge, and beinge in the heighthe where he lost the former two sayles, wth a storme of seven dayes, he lost two other greate shippes wth men & all, and after arryved at the sayd villadge with two sayles, where for lacke of virtuale and his men dyinge with hunger

he sent a bote ashore wth 26 soldiers the best that were lefte who, (except two or three of whom, one is a Japan boye) were all slayned by certayne portugalle & their slaves. This senige himselfe without shippes & men he came saylinge with his two shippes hitherward, and willinge to enter into an other villadge called Spiritu Sancto for to furnish him of those things that he did lacke he lost other fortie men, and were their taken alyve eight persons, seeinge nowe that the water and earth dyd fight agaynst him he burnt one of his sayles, for lacke of mayners & masters and went his wayes, whither no man knoweth wth one onlie well whipped wth the source of god for the irreverenne he committed agaynst his divine majestie & his saynte especiallie agaynst a holie headd of one of the eleven thousand virgins of England. Two of the said eight that were taken be here prisoners, one of them an Irish man, the other an English of Cornewall called Robert Arundell, Kinne, as he hath wrytten to me (for I hath not yet seen him) to Sir John Arundell, of whom, if your w(orsnip) hath any newes I woulde be gladd to knowe, for this prisoner has wrytten that he dyed in London catholike, and yt his bodie was carried into Cornwall with great prompe to be there buryed, wth I can not believe, that a catholike man shalbe suffered to be buryed after that sorte, This youthe semeth to have litell knowledge of the catholike religion, I have wrytten to him what he must doe concerninge religion, god geve him the lyght of grace for to believe & worke accordinge to the lawes of god & of his hollie name who severale of the names of the captayns & masters all deadd except the generall of one other or two I send to your for perhappes some of country men in those parts did know some of them. This as touching me, and my affayres, and the newes of the English pirate, and the answeere to your w(orsnip) his letter. The father of our Society called Abedenella of whom your w(orsnip) doth make mention came not into this province, I suppose that he went into newe Spayne and Peru, whither the Spanyards doe use to goe and the portugalle to come into this land farre distant from the other. havinge this nyneteen yeres ben absent from the numerous priests & gentlemen, wth I dyd knowe in flaunders, I have nowe forgott their names except the English Westmorland a verie fewe, as Mr Bailie, Webb, Bradshawe, Retchalls, Slade, a litell time of or complaine,

fen Henshawe, yt of these or of other that your w(orship) doe thinke that I dyde knowe, you have any particular newes for me, I beseeche your w(orship) to make me pertaker therof. In my second letter if I doe well remember I requested of your w(orship) certayne boke newly sett forthe by one English men in the latin of Spanish or in the english tongue and alsoe the revelations of Saynte Bridgett, wherewith I shoulde be muche comforted in this banishment, wheron I lyve as yett contented wth my vocation, and will not change it for any other Region, for that I see that I am wrapt for any other besides this....

(the concluding part of the letter has not survived)

NOTES

- 1 PRO. SP.12/45. Sir Francis Engelfield (d. 1596?), catholic exile, the eldest son of Sir Thomas Engelfield of Engelfield, Berkshire.
- 2 Edward died at Weston under Edge, Gloucestershire on 26 February 1596 and was buried at Buckland in March.
- 3 Edward married Jane, daughter of John Gifford of Ichell.
- 4 4th son of John (d. 1578).
- 5 John (d.1578) married Mary, daughter of William Justice of Reading; no trace of her second marriage has been found.
- 6 Elizabeth.
- 7 Bridgell (d. before 1578) married John Arderne; Mr. Plore may be a mistake for Richard Plott who married Marie; Martha married John Wirdnam; Dorothy married a Mr.Moseley.

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| Harleian MS. 6852. | John Clarke Ordered To Raise a Troop of Horse, 1642. |
| Lansdowne MS.5. | Freeholders of Berkshire. |

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| 83/1/1 | William Aldworth. 1583. |
| 83/1/3 | John Anger. 1589. |
| 83/1/5 | John Aldworth. 1596. |
| 83/1/6 | Stephen Anger. 1597. |
| 83/1/7 | Thomas Aldworth. 1597. |
| 83/1/8 | Agnes Aldworth. 1597. |
| 83/1/9 | Richard Aldworth. 1600. |
| 83/1/10 | William Aldworth. 1603. |
| 83/1/11 | John Anger. 1605. |
| 83/1/13 | Thomas Aldworth. 1609. |
| 83/1/14 | Thomas Anger. 1614. |
| 83/1/16 | Robert Anger. 1623. |
| 83/1/17 | Anne Anger. 1627. |
| 83/1/19 | Thomas Aldworth. 1633. |
| 83/1/21 | Thomas Aldworth. 1637. |
| 83/1/31 | Richard Brooke. 1620. |
| 83/2/1 | John Clement. 1582. |

83/2/2 John Clement. 1583.
 83/2/12 Nicholas Clement. 1604.
 83/2/18 Thomas Clement. 1621.
 83/2/27 Thomas Clement. 1635.
 83/2/30 Robert Clement. 1646.
 83/2/35 Richard Doo. 1597.
 84/1/5 Richard Lissat. 1604.
 84/1/18 William Marriott. 1617.
 84/3/3 William Stileman. 1583.
 84/3/28 William Smart. 1623.
 84/3/39 Thomas Samwell. 1636.
 84/4/3 Edmund Tull. 1601.
 84/4/10 William Tubb. 1623.
 84/4/21 Alice Wirdnam. 1593.

OTHER DOCUMENTS

Dash. III/xii/1 John Doo, Land in Kirtlington.
 Dash. III/xii/2 John Doo, Land and Manor of Kirtlington.

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PROB8/50 William Aldworth. 1656.
 PROB11/18 Thomas Aldworth. 1514.
 PROB11/21 Thomas Fettiplace. 1523/4.
 PROB11/21 John Aldworth. 1525.
 PROB11/21 John Fettiplace. 1524.
 PROB11/21 William Johnson. 1525.
 PROB11/22 John Aldworth. 1527.
 PROB11/22 Henry Carpenter. 1525.
 PROB11/23 William Fettiplace. 1528.
 PROB11/28 John Yate. 1537.
 PROB11/29 Thomas Chamberlain. 1542.
 PROB11/30 James Yate. 1543.
 PROB11/33 Edward Fettiplace. 1549.
 PROB11/38 Robert Aldworth. 1555.
 PROB11/39 Richard Clement. 1557.
 PROB11/39 Alice Aldworth. 1557.
 PROB11/40 John Doo. 1558.
 PROB11/47 Alexander Fettiplace. 1542.
 PROB11/52 John Clarke. 1568.
 PROB11/53 James Chamberlain. 1570.
 PROB11/56 John Chamberlain. 1578.
 PROB11/61 John Yate. 1578.
 PROB11/64 Richard Aldworth. 1581.
 PROB11/64 John Collins. 1579.
 PROB11/67 John Collins. 1584.
 PROB11/131 John Keate. 1616.
 PROB11/133 William Willmot. 1619.

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| PROB11/207 | John Doo. 1648. |
| PROB11/250 | Thomas Aldworth. 1655. |
| PROB11/257 | John Ashcombe. 1656. |
| PROB11/280 | Robert Clement. 1646. |
| PROB11/308 | William Aldworth. 1662. |
| PROB11/351 | George Champion. 1675. |

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| C2/James I/G13/40 | Greenaway v. Greenaway. |
| C2/James I/H12/18 | Hyde v. Cockayne. |
| C3/James I/K6/13 | Keate v. Keate. |
| C3/40/27 | Collins v. Latton. |
| C3/186/81 | Wirdnam, Anger, Clement v. John Clement. |
| C3/210/31 | Greenaway v. Greenaway. |
| C3/231/24 | Aldworth v. Lissat. |
| C3/390/79 | Ashcombe v. Croke. |
| C3/407/2 | Keate v. House. |
| C5/234/6 | Coxhead v. Ashcombe. |
| C5/315/2 | Ashcombe v. Coxhead. |
| C5/438/4 | Ashcombe v. Ashcombe. |
| C213/6 | 1695 Association Oath Roll. |
| E134/30 | Eliz.Hil.9. Withens & Hyde v. Eyston. 1587. |
| E134/31 | Eliz.East 22. Halliwell v. Fettiplace. 1589. |
| E179/73/126 | 1525 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/73/127 | 1524 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/73/128 | 1524/5 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/73/134 | 1523/4 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/74/195 | 1549/50 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/74/197 | 1550/1 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/74/215 | 1559/60 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/74/272 | 1592/3 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/75/292 | 1598/9 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/75/313 | 1603/4 Lay subsidy. |
| E179/75/341 | 1623/4 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/75/360 | 1640/1 Lay Subsidy. |
| E179/76/456 | 1678 Poll Tax. |
| E179/243/25 | 1663 Hearth Tax Return. |
| E179/243/26 | 1664 Denchworth Hearth Tax Return. |
| E315/464 | 1522 Muster Certificate. |
| E317/Berks/17 | Survey of East Hendred Manor, 1650. |
| E401/2586 | Privy Seal Loans, Berkshire, 1625. |
| E407/35 | 1632 Berkshire Knighthood Fines. |
| IRI/9 | William Eyston, Apprentice. |
| IRI/12 | John Eyston, Apprentice. |
| IRI/15 | William Clement, Master Mason. |
| IRI/17 | William Hobbs, Apprentice. |
| IRI/18 | Charles Eyston, Apprentice. |
| IRI/43 | Richard Clement, Chandler. |
| SP12/64 | 1569 Muster Returns. |
| SP12/245 | Letter of John Yate to Francis Engelfield, 21 June 1593. |
| SP16/180/24 | 1630 Berkshire Knighthood Fines. |

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| SP18/37 | Petition to Parliament by Wantage Baptists, 1653. |
| 15.Jas.1.Hil.3 | Wollascott v. Hyde. |
| 34/35 Chas.2.Hil.8 | Berks. Sawyer v. Yate. |
| 1654.Mich.2.Berks. | Page v. Wilson. |

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| XI.c.22 | Letter to Dr Bennett, 9 May 1597. |
| XV.40.3 | Alexander Doo, Purchase of Land, 1658. |
| XV.40.4 | Lease of Tullwick, Wantage. |
| XV.40.6 | Alexander Doo, Lease 1662. |
| XV.40.7 | Lease of West Ilsley to Francis Keate, 1620. |
| XV.54.147 | John Doo and Thomas Pomfrey, Lease of West Ilsley, 1595. |
| XV.54.148 | John Doo and Thomas Pomfrey, Lease of West Ilsley, 1595. |
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INDEX TO THE FAMILY CHARTS

- 1 ALDWORTH
- 2 ASHCOMBE
- 3 CLARKE
- 4 COLLINS
- 5 COXHEAD
- 6 DOO
- 7 EYSTON
- 8 FETTIPLACE
- 9 GREENAWAY
- 10 HYDE
- 11 KEATE
- 12 YATE

ABBREVIATIONS USED

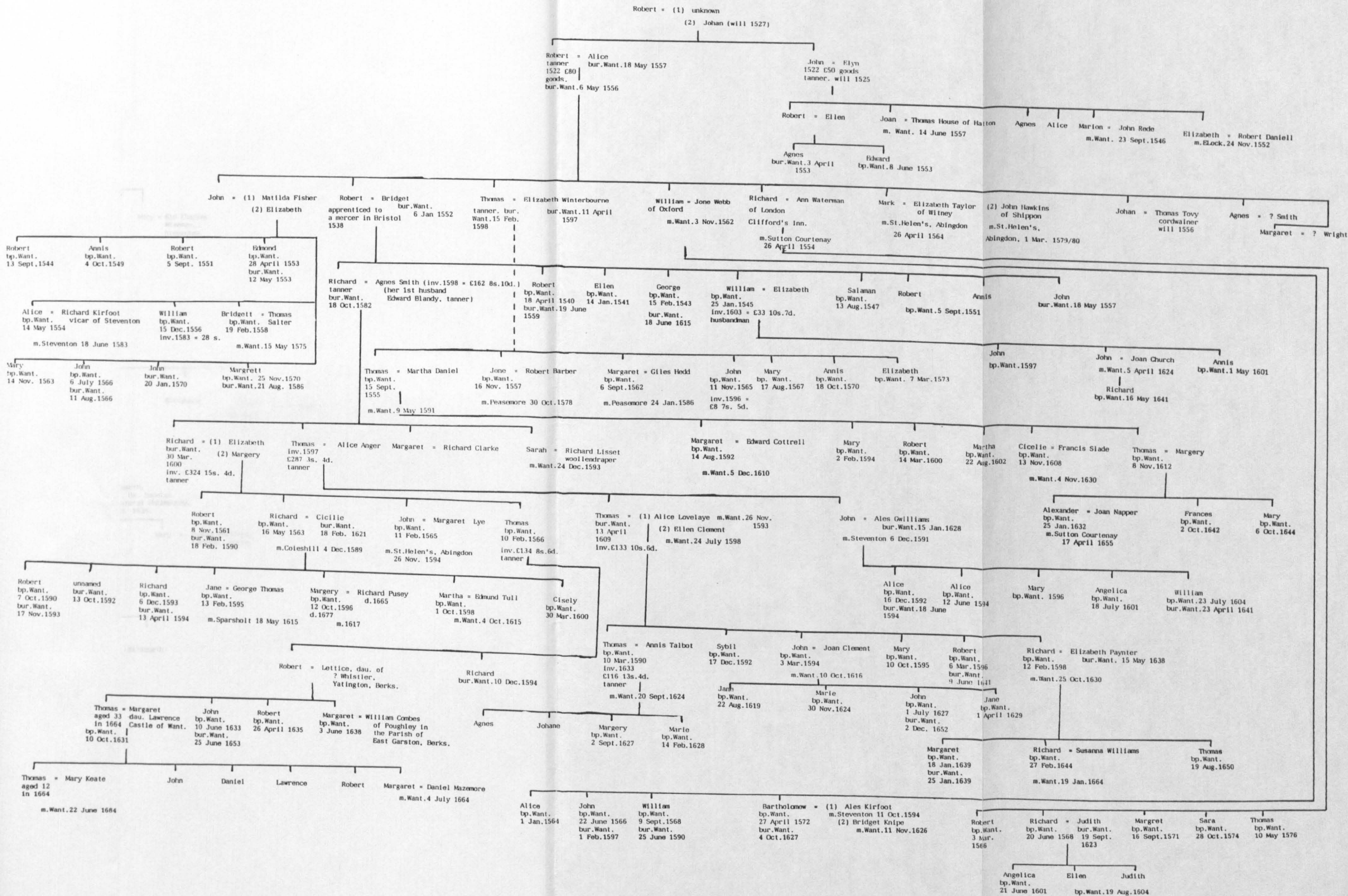
| | |
|-------|---------------|
| Wan | Wantage |
| Char | Charlton |
| Gr | Grove |
| Ard | Ardington |
| Bett | Betterton |
| Child | Childrey |
| Den | Denchworth |
| EGin | East Ginge |
| WGIN | West Ginge |
| EHan | East Hanney |
| WHan | West Hanney |
| Han | West Hanney |
| EHen | East Hendred |
| WHen | West Hendred |
| ELock | East Lockinge |
| WLock | West Lockinge |
| Spar | Sparsholt |

| | |
|-----|----------|
| bn | born |
| bp | baptised |
| d | died |
| dau | daughter |
| m | married |
| bur | buried |
| s | son |

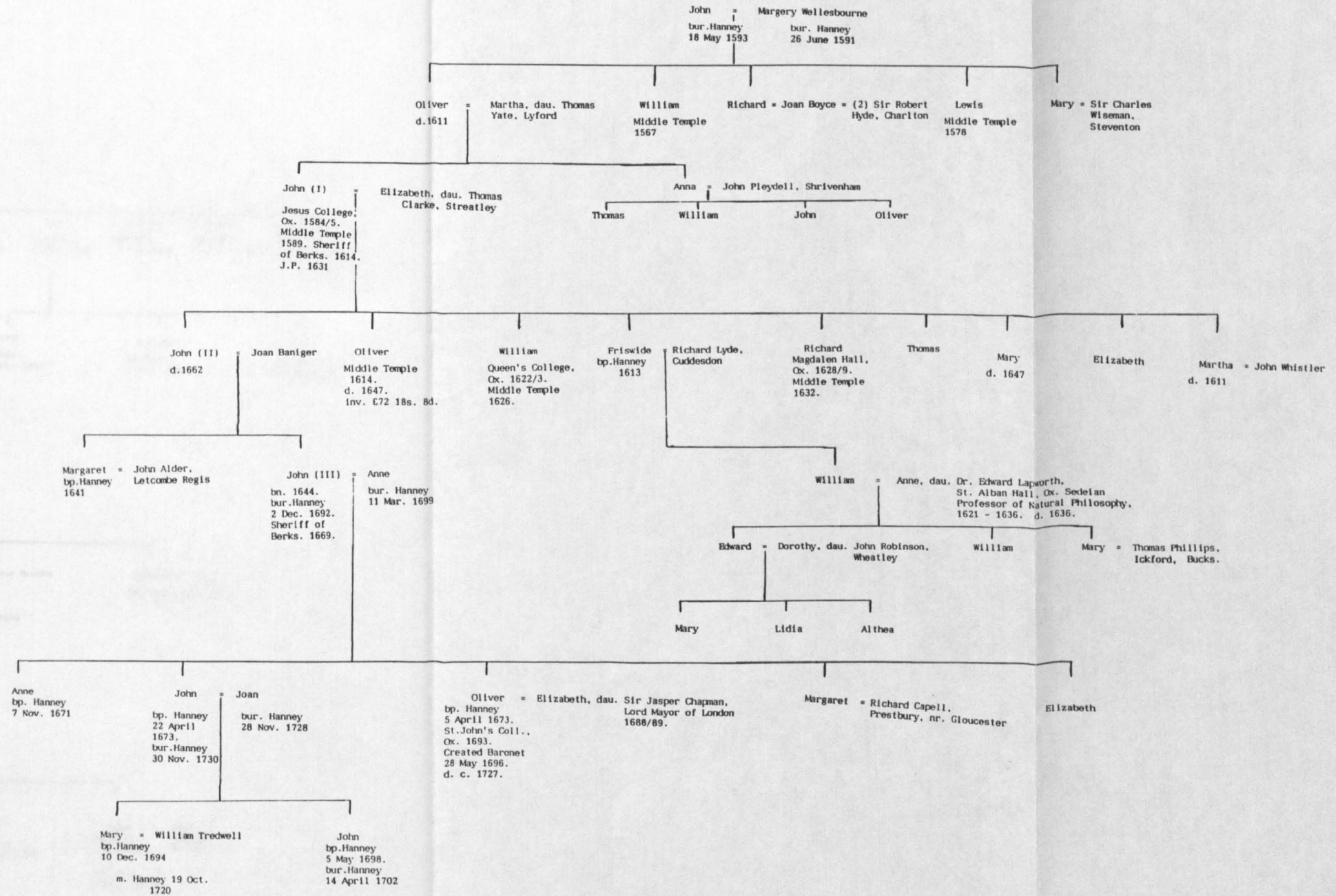
NOTES

West Hanney Parish Register includes entries for East Hanney and Lyford
West Hendred Parish Register includes entries for East Hendred and
East Ginge
East Lockinge Parish Register includes entries for Betterton, and
West Ginge and West Lockinge
Wantage Parish Registers includes entries for Charlton and Grove

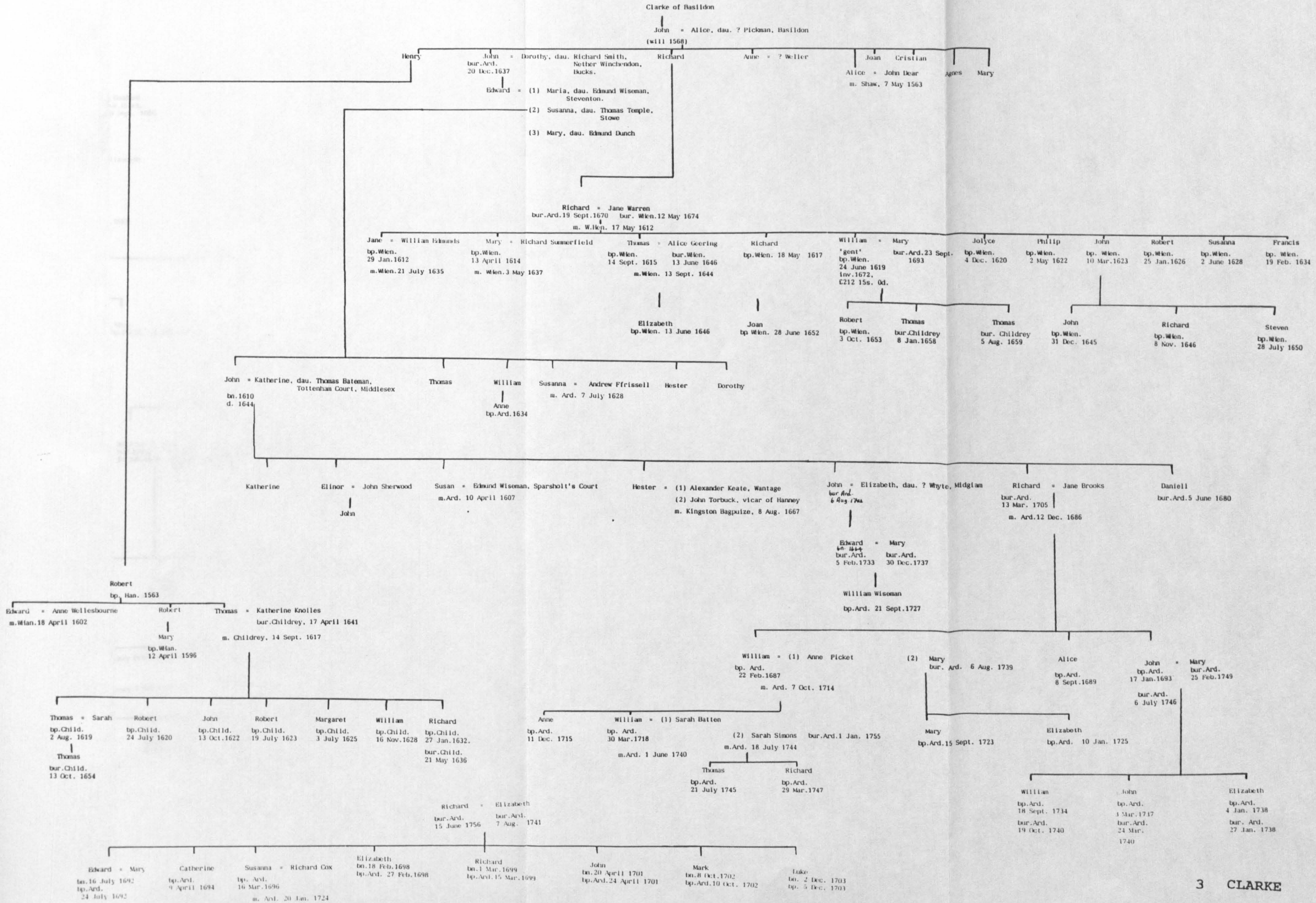
THE ALDWORTH FAMILY OF WANTAGE



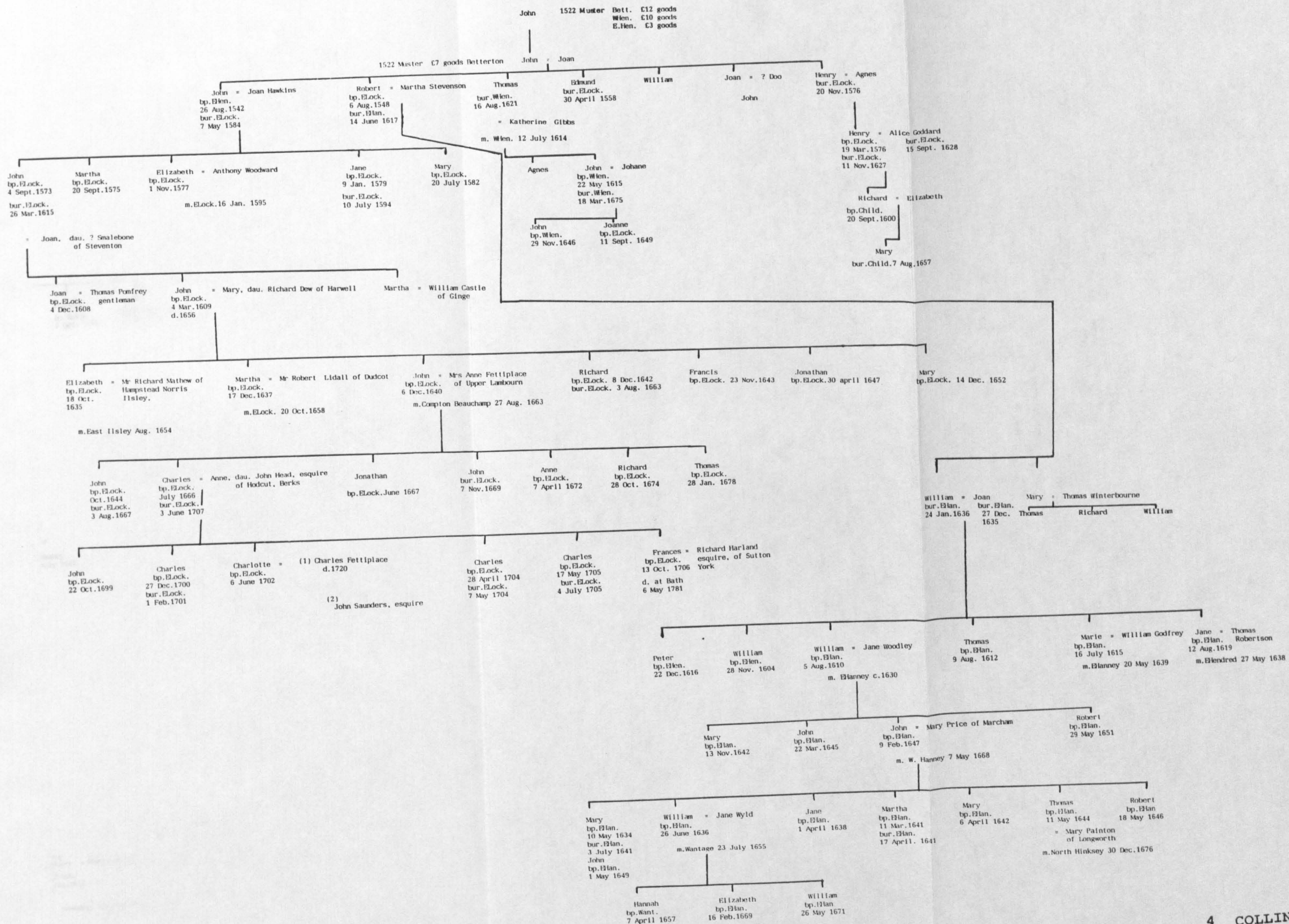
THE ASHCOMBE FAMILY OF EAST HANNEY



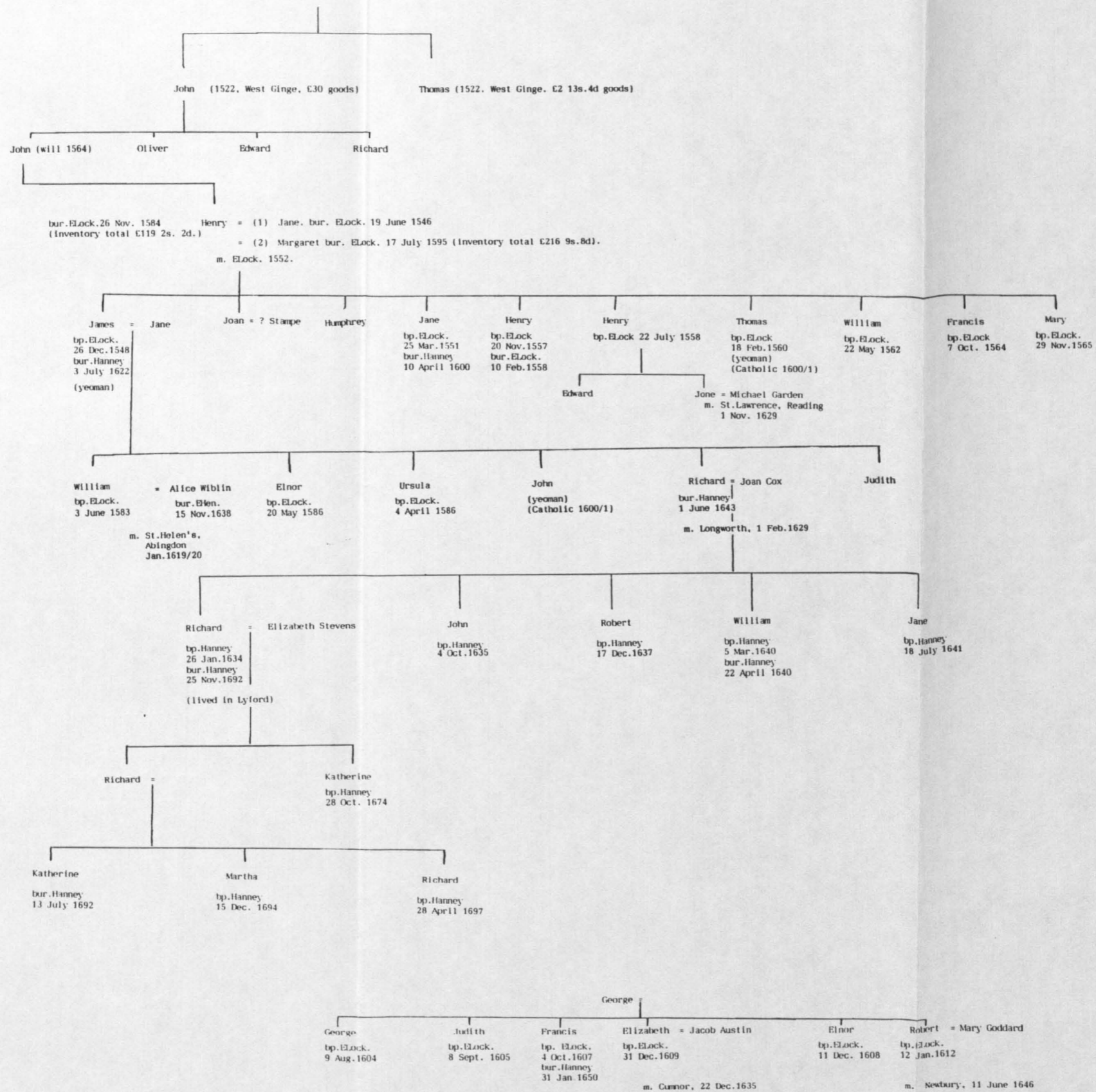
THE CLARKE FAMILY OF ARDINGTON



THE COLLINS FAMILY OF BETTERTON



THE COXHEAD FAMILY OF WEST GINGE,
WEST HANNEY AND EAST LOCKINGE



THE DOO FAMILY OF BETTERTON AND EAST LOCKINGE

Agnes (widow, 1522 C2 13s. 4d. goods, ELock.)

Robert = Jane
1522 C66 13s. 4d. goods
ELock.
inv. 1550 = C154 10s. 4d.

Richard = Agnes
1522 C2 13s. 4d. Han.
inv. C8 9s. 11d.

Richard Edward Thomas

Richard
1522 C1 6s. 8d. goods ELen
Aged 34 in 1547
inv. 1576 = C71 16s. 6d.

John = Anne
1522 C1 6s. 8d. goods.
will 1558
"child in hamstead"

Thomas = Alice Collins
inv. 1591
C112 18s. 4d.
m. ELock. 30 May 1559

William
yeoman, bur. ELock
18 Feb. 1588
inv. 1588 = C34 15s. 8d.

Robert = Joane Moore
bur. ELock.
24 June 1557
inv. C26 3s. 8d.
m. ELock. 5 Nov. 1552

Jane = John Duckett
m. ELock. 9 Oct. 1548

John = (1) Jane Whitbourne
yeoman m. Letcombe Regis.
will 1648 16 Nov. 1601

(2) Agatha Bunts
m. Childrey 8 July 1605
bur. Want. 2 Dec. 1635

Thomas = Marie Onion
bur. Want. 21 Feb. 1635
m. Letcombe Regis 5 June 1604
Marie
bp. Want. 28 May 1609

Joane = Edward Keate
(see Keate pedigree)

Agnes

John = Joane
bp. ELock. 15 Oct. 1550
bur. ELock. 5 Dec. 1625

Joan = William Tubb
bp. ELock. 11 Jan. 1546
m. Want. 18 June 1593

Anne

Katherine

Joan
bp. ELock. 22 Feb. 1560
bur. Want. 20 June 1579

Mary
bp. ELock. 19 Mar. 1563

Katherine = John Feild
bp. ELock. 23 April 1562
m. Wan. 10 July 1594

John

Alice
bp. ELock. 12 Mar. 1559
bur. ELock. 4 April 1589

Agnes = John Mason
bp. ELock. 28 June 1562
m. Chieveley 5 Oct. 1589

Robert
bp. ELock. 29 Mar. 1565
bur. ELock. 14 April 1565

Edward
bp. ELock. 23 May 1566
yeoman inv. 1627
C46 16s. 0d.

Anne
bur. ELock. 13 Feb. 1601

Friswith

Henry

Francis = Joan Smith
yeoman inv. 1627
C29 16s. 0d.
m. Want. 26 July 1589

John = Margaret Winterbourne
yeoman of ELen.
inv. 1586
C5 14s. 4d.

Helene

Robert

Richard
joiner of Want.
inv. 4 Aug. 1597
C6 13s. 6d.

Joan

Ethelbert

William Anne

Alice = Lawrence Barlowe

Mary
bp. ELock. 16 April 1592

William
bp. ELock. 7 April 1594

Margery
bp. ELock. 1 Nov. 1595

Agnes
bp. ELock. 29 April 1599

Elizabeth = Richard Day
bp. ELock. 18 July 1602
m. ELock. 25 June 1627

John
bp. ELock. 5 May 1605

Dorothy
bur. ELock. 23 May 1650

Jane = John Nevill
bp. Want. 7 June 1606
m. Want. 31 Aug. 1634

John = Elizabeth Magnet
bp. Want. 26 Aug. 1610
m. Stratfield Saye 1631

Marie = Roger Anger
bp. Want. 17 July 1608
m. Want. 26 May 1638

Richard
bp. Want. 6 Dec. 1612
bur. Want. 5 April 1631

Edward
bp. ELock. 23 Feb. 1574
bur. ELock. 18 June 1627.

John = Mary Lissett
bp. ELock. 30 Nov. 1576
bur. Want. 30 Mar. 1635

Robert
bp. ELock. 4 Dec. 1580

Francis = (1) Joane Pointer
bp. ELock. 31 Jan. 1582
bur. ELock. 10 May 1627

(2) Marie Alder
m. Want. 23 April 1615

Jane
bp. ELock. 25 July 1584
bur. ELen. 7 June 1594

Thomas
bp. ELock. 22 Aug. 1585
bur. ELock. 1 Jan. 1591

Mary = Ralph Cheeny
bp. ELock. 6 Mar. 1587
m. ELock. 3 Oct. 1614

Katherine
bp. ELock. 19 May 1588

Johanne
bp. ELock. 9 April 1592
bur. Want. 16 June 1615

Margaret
bp. Want. 30 Mar. 1595
bur. Want. 11 June 1616

Martha
bp. Want. 17 April 1596

Anne
bp. Want. 2 Oct. 1597

Jane
bp. Want. 16 Sept. 1600
bur. Want. 29 Oct. 1600

Susan
bp. Want. 12 July 1605
bur. Want. 20 July 1605

Marie
bp. Want. 18 Oct. 1618
bur. ELock. 13 Dec. 1634

Marie
bp. Want. 14 Mar. 1615

Katherine = Edward Bullpitt
bp. ELen. 21 June 1616
m. Denchworth 23 July 1649

Francis = Alice
bp. Want. 1 April 1618
Edward

Edward = Mary Benet
bp. ELock. 4 Dec. 1618
bur. Want. 1 May 1642
m. Cunnor 29 March 1636

Elizabeth
bp. Want. 10 Dec. 1620

Dorothy
bp. ELock. 30 Sept. 1621

Elizabeth
bp. ELock. 7 Mar. 1623
bur. ELock. 2 Nov. 1627

Joan
bp. Want. 18 April 1624
bur. ELock. 14 Mar. 1629

William
bp. Want. 15 April 1627

Thomas = Margery "M"
bur. ELock. 14 Dec. 1669
28 Feb. 1671

Edward = Ursula Hassall
bp. Want. 12 Mar. 1637
(Heralds' 1665/6)

John
bp. Want. 14 Oct. 1638
bur. Want. 24 Sept. 1639

Mary
bp. Want. 1 Jan. 1640
bur. Want. 15 July 1642

Phillip
bn. 15 Oct. 1670
bp. 26 Oct. 1670, Want.

Mary
bn. 11 July 1671
bp. 15 July 1671 (Want.)

Henry
bp. Want. 1 June 1615

Alexander = Alice
bp. Want. 11 Jan. 1618

William
bp. Want. 13 April 1620

Charles
bp. Want. 17 Nov. 1622

David = Katherine Adams
bp. Want. 27 June 1626
m. ELock. 5 Oct. 1645

Alexander
bp. Want. 14 Mar. 1647
bur. Want. 15 Mar. 1647

Alexander
bp. Want. 21 Oct. 1648

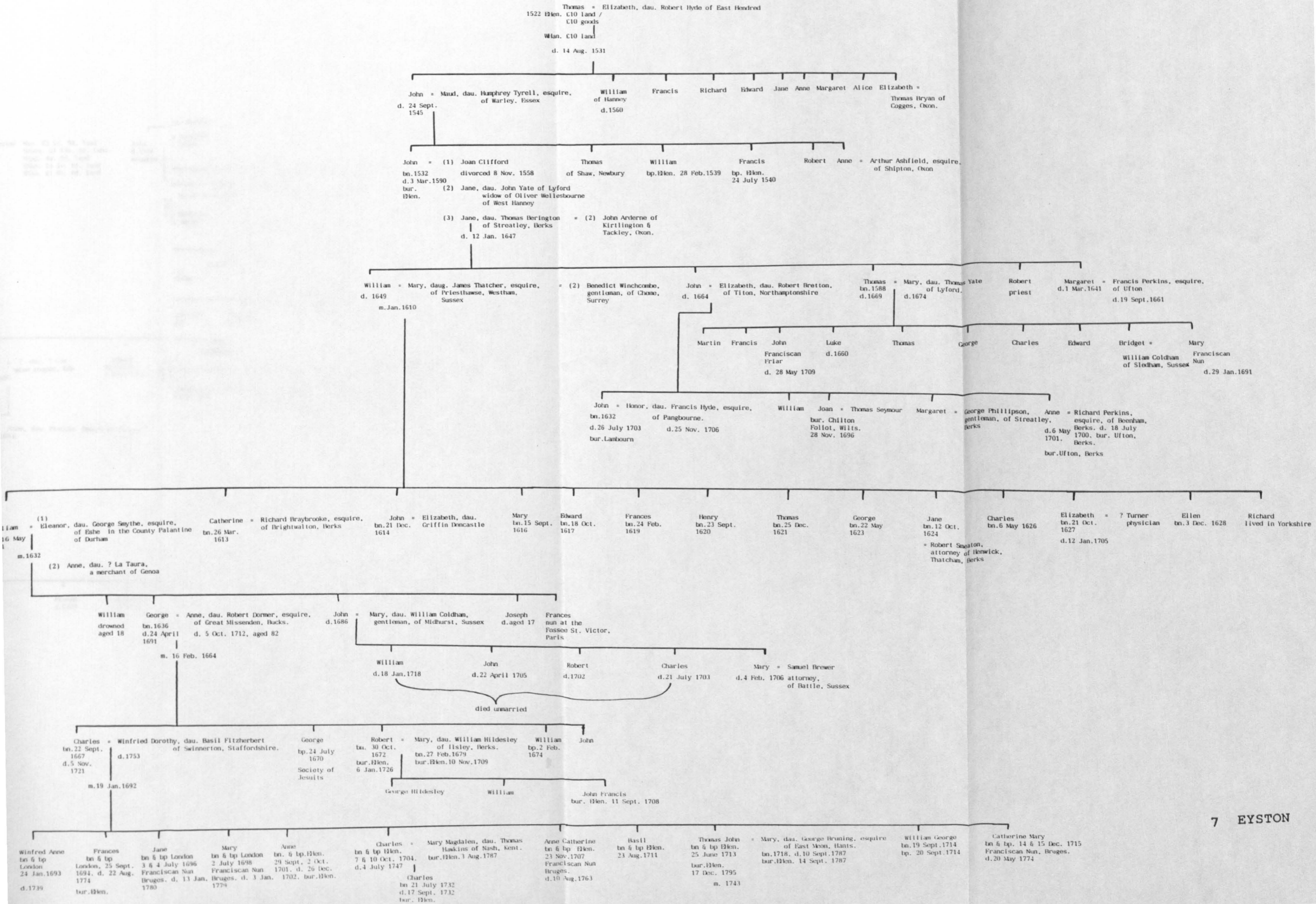
Mary
bp. Want. 13 Dec. 1647
bur. Want. 15 Oct. 1649

Richard
bp. Want. 26 Oct. 1649

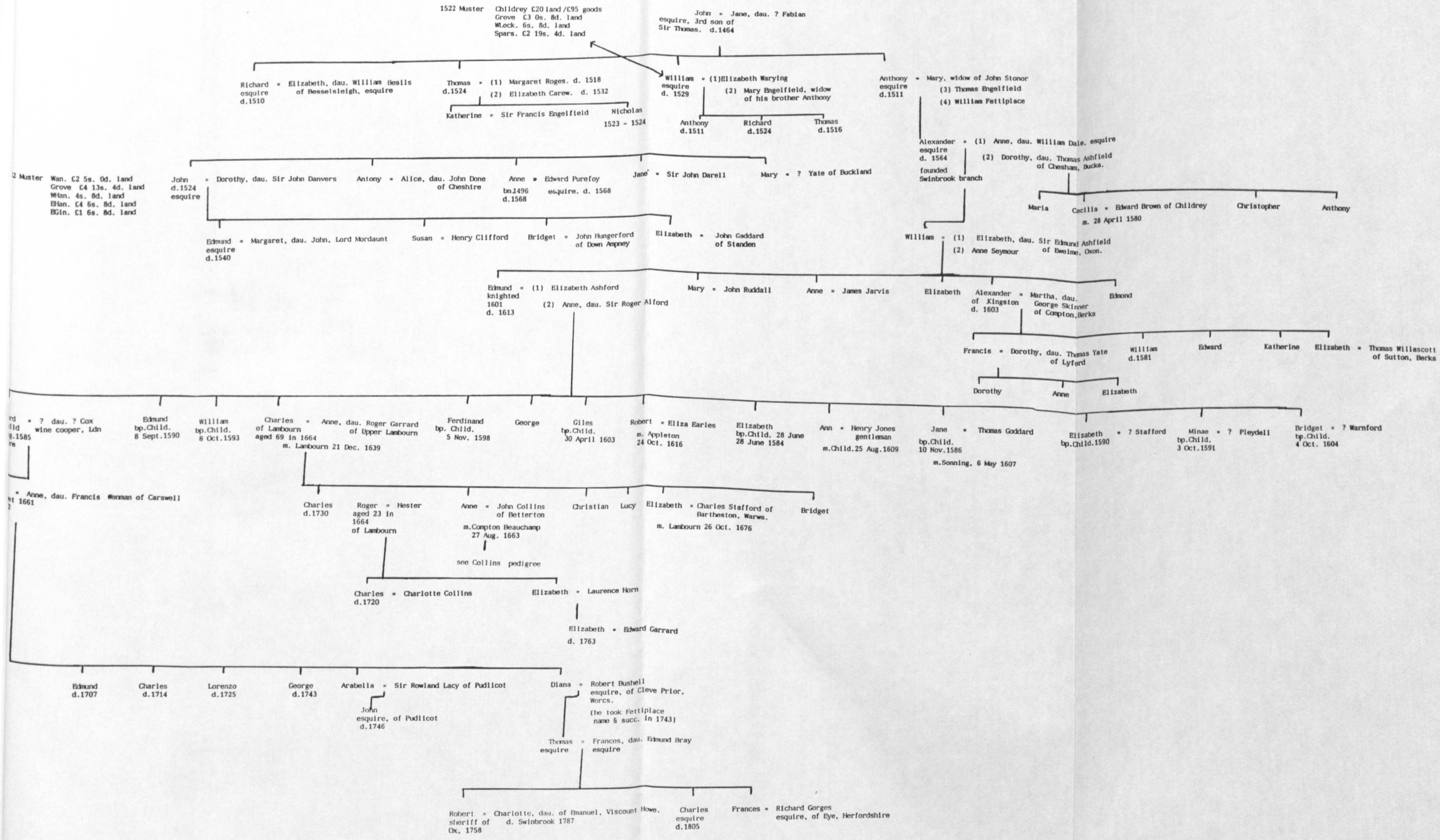
David
bp. Want. 13 Feb. 1652
bur. Want. 23 May 1672

John
bn. 19 Jan. 1657
bp. Want. 14 Feb. 1657

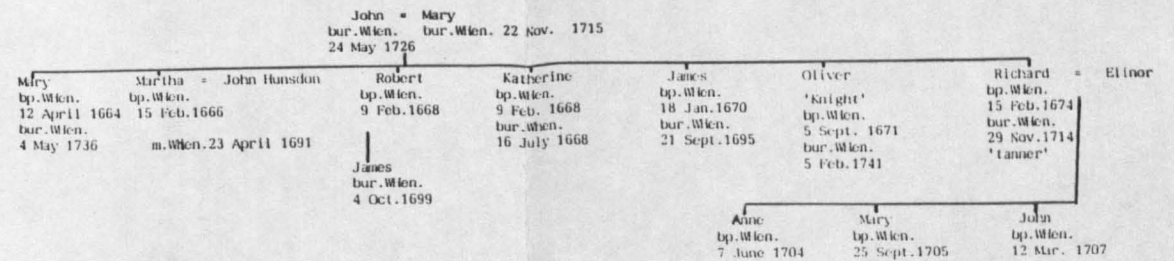
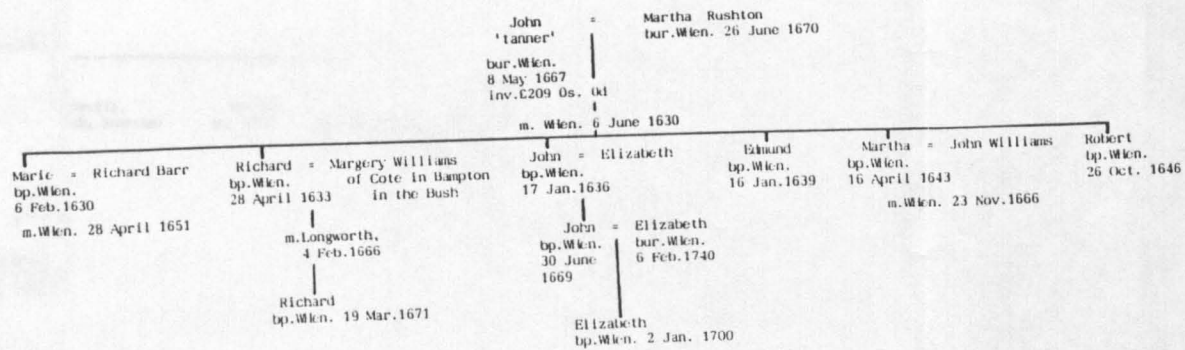
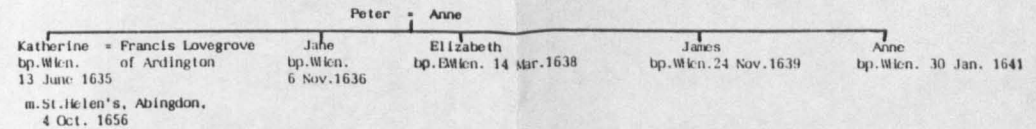
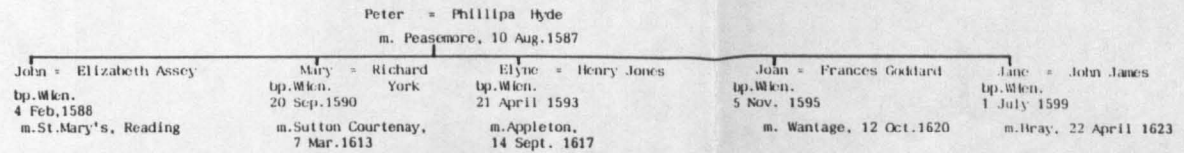
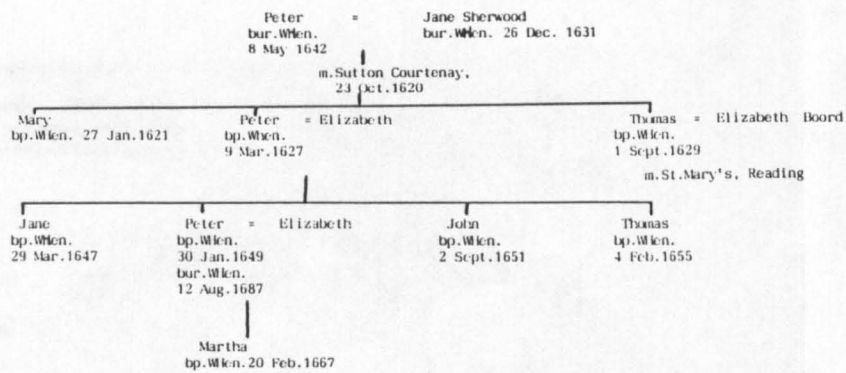
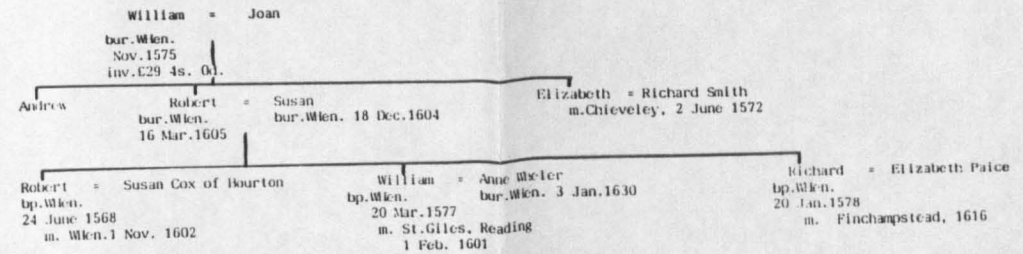
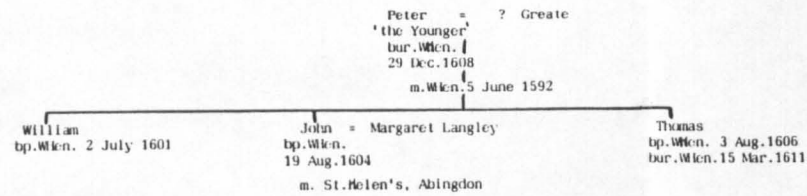
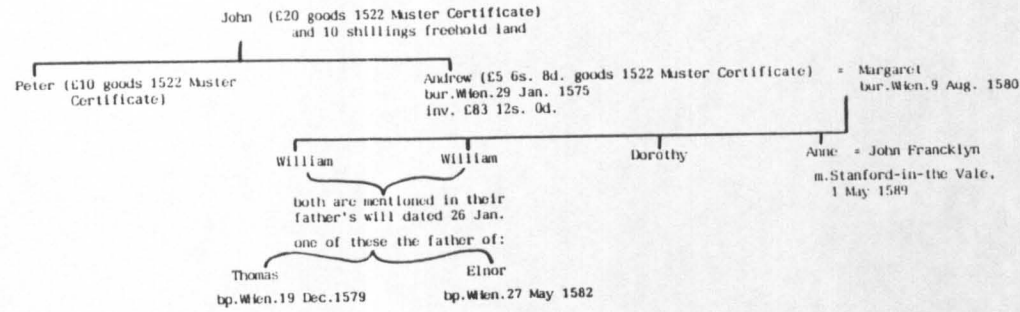
THE EYSTON FAMILY OF EAST HENDRED



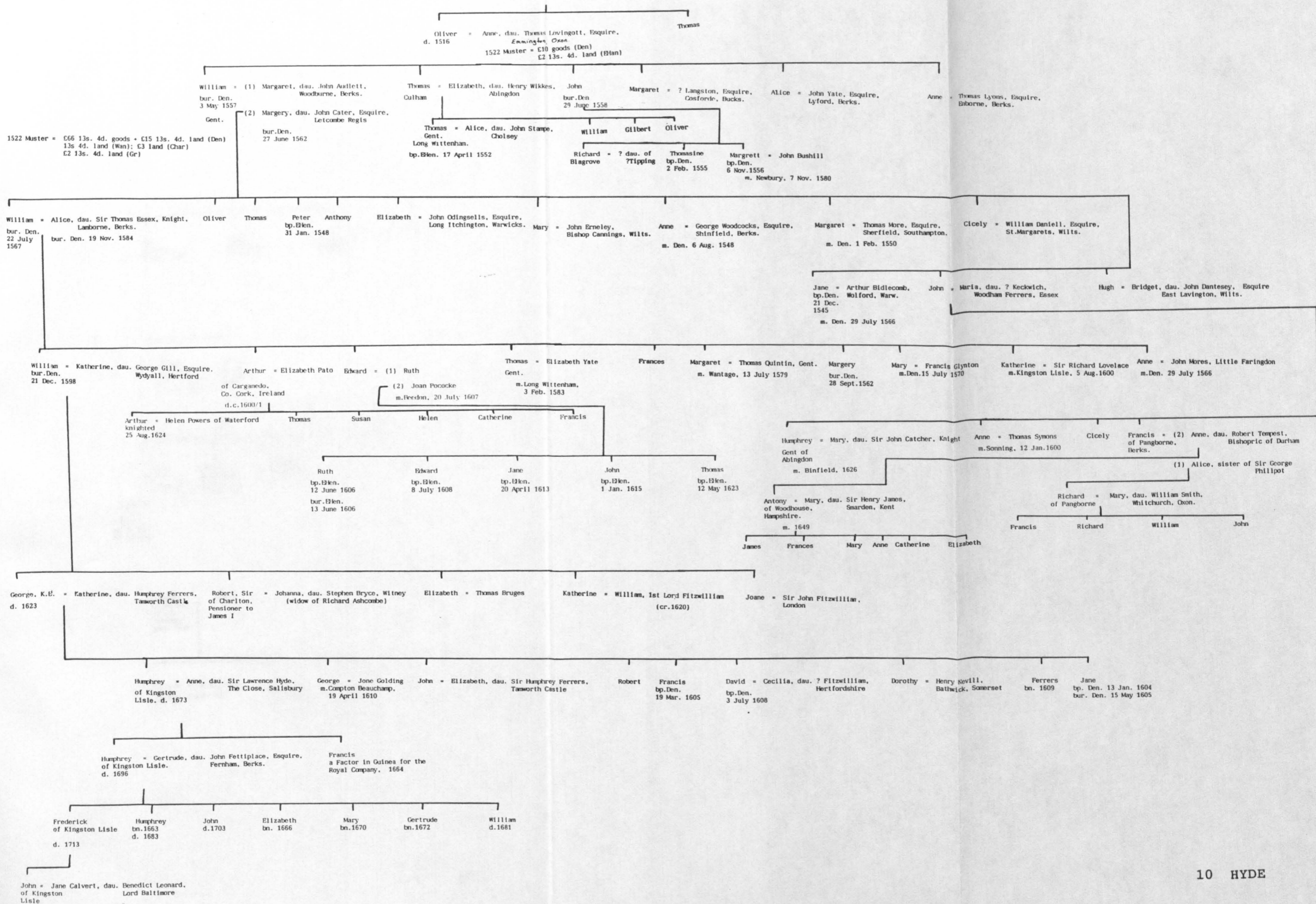
THE FETTIPLACE FAMILY OF CHILDREY



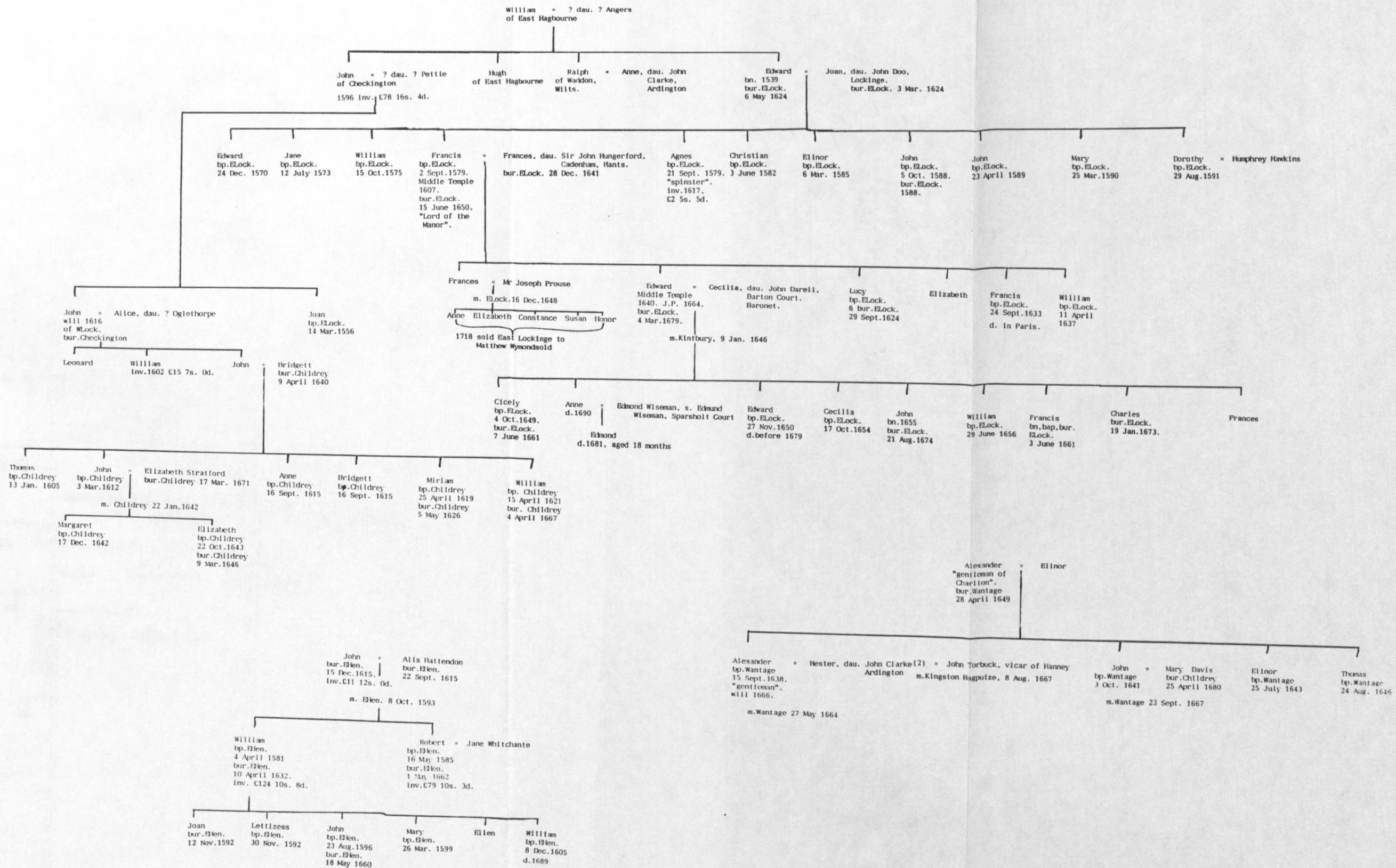
THE GREENAWAY FAMILY OF EAST GINGE



THE HYDE FAMILY OF DENCHWORTH



THE KEATE FAMILY OF EAST LOCKINGE



THE YATE FAMILY OF EAST HANNEY AND LYFORD

