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**Landownership and settlement change in south-west  
Cheshire from 1750 to 2000**

**Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the  
University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy**

**by Polly Bird**

**December 2007**

# Landownership and settlement change in south-west Cheshire from 1750 to 2000 by Polly Bird

## Abstract

This work analyses the impact of landownership on the physical development and other factors affecting settlements in south-west Cheshire between 1750 and 2000, seeking to demonstrate the hypothesis that landownership was the overriding influence on settlement growth or decline. To assist in this the work also addresses the related problem of how most accurately to analyse landownership in townships. It therefore presents an original methodology using the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) in an historical context to determine the amount of landowner concentration in a township.

The use of HHI as a measure of landownership concentration (indicating the extent of large landowner control) is presented as a more accurate, easy to use, quantifiable method of analysis than the traditional distinction between 'open' and 'closed'. Following a demonstration of HHI's superiority over the traditional terms using examples in south-west Cheshire, HHI is used to analyse the effect on settlement development of landownership trends in the area. HHI is then used to analyse the effect of dominant landowners on the main population trends, transport infrastructure, farming, enclosure and twentieth-century planning and legislation in relation to settlement development in the area.

HHI supports the main conclusion that decisions made by large landowners and subsequently planners in south-west Cheshire had a continuous and profound effect on settlement patterns and development from the mid-eighteenth century up to the end of the twentieth century. The intervention and influence of the major landowners and twentieth-century planners hindered settlement growth. Landowners had both a direct influence on settlement development through the buying and selling of land and an indirect influence through their role in determining the transport infrastructure and their bequest of a prevailing pattern of land use, which in turn was preserved via modern planning decisions. Following the decline of major landowners during the early twentieth century, planning laws restricted building in agricultural areas with the aim of preserving agricultural land.

Analysis of land tax records in conjunction with HHI shows that although landownership consolidation took place, the number of smaller landowners was maintained and even increased in places and such building as took place was focussed on the increasing number of smaller plots. HHI also demonstrates the discernible trend that in south-west Cheshire the settlements that were the larger, more open settlements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were those that increased in size both physically and in terms of population throughout the period while the smaller closed settlements tended to stagnate or decline.

Overall the research has demonstrated that settlements flourished in low HHI townships with less control by large landowners, that settlements in high HHI townships were rarely allowed to grow, and that patterns established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were perpetuated into the late twentieth and early twenty-first century by a conservative approach to planning.

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by Polly Bird

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## Abbreviations

<i>AgHR</i>	<i>Agricultural History Review</i>
CCALS	Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies (formerly Cheshire Record Office)
CLHA	Cheshire Local History Association
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
<i>Ec. HR.</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
edn	edition
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
<i>JCAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society</i>
OPSI	Office of Public Sector Information
OS	Ordnance Survey
ser.	series
<i>THSLC</i>	<i>Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire</i>
<i>TIBG</i>	<i>Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers</i>
<i>TLCAS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society</i>
TNA	The National Archives
<i>VCH</i>	<i>Victoria County History</i>

# **Landownership and settlement change in south-west Cheshire from 1750 to 2000**

**by Polly Bird**



## Chapter one

### Introduction

Buildings created by humans are arguably among their most prominent and long-lasting legacies. The clustering of these buildings into settlements of various sizes is therefore a testimony to the creative, cultural, social and economic systems used by the species. Landownership is one such system that influenced where and how settlements were built. The question is: why did some settlements grow, sometimes becoming towns, while others remained small or declined? It is impossible to understand fully the reasons for urban development if one does not have also an understanding of rural settlement development. As Duby and Wallon say in their study of nineteenth-century rural France ‘Les villes sont ce qu’elles sont parce que les campagnes sont ce qu’elles sont, et inversement.’ [Towns are what they are because the countryside is what it is, and vice versa.]<sup>1</sup> In choosing to look at the development of settlements in south-west Cheshire it is important to understand that the rural built environment cannot be separated from the countryside in which the settlements exist or existed.

Whatever the size of settlement investigated, the landscape helps to shape settlements as settlements create a new landscape. If we accept that landownership patterns affect the landscape, we accept that they ultimately affect settlement development (in this study changes in settlement size and distribution over time). In this context, the choice of a well-defined localised study was deliberate. As Liddiard has pointed out in his review of Hooke’s *Landscapes*, there is a need in landscape history to find out ‘more about regional variation before we can evaluate change at a national level’.<sup>2</sup>

South-west Cheshire was selected for study because in many respects its character has remained essentially unchanged for the last 250 years. Unlike the Midlands, it was not altered dramatically by parliamentary enclosure, nor did its settlements expand into large suburban sprawls. It remained, as did much of

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<sup>1</sup> M. Gervais, M. Jollivet and Y. Tavernier, *La Fin de la France Paysanne Depuis 1914*, ed. G. Duby and A. Wallon, *Histoire de la France rurale*, 4 vols (Éditions du Seuil, 1977), 4, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Review of *Landscape: The Richest Historical Record*, ed. D. Hooke (Amesbury, 2000) in R. Liddiard, ‘Review of Hooke’s *Landscapes*’, *Rural History, Economy, Society, Culture*, 13, 1 (2002), 112-113 (p. 113).

Cheshire, an area of 'occasional small, compact villages...in a broad spread of dispersed and semi-dispersed dwellings',<sup>3</sup> a typical dispersed landscape within Roberts's 'Cheshire Plain Sub-Province'.<sup>4</sup>

The area has been neglected in terms of historical studies. Although Cheshire has been studied on a county-wide level, and local studies addressing some of the issues here have been produced for other parts of the county<sup>5</sup>, south-west Cheshire has been subject to only three academic studies (by White, Stephenson and Vipond<sup>6</sup>), none of which tackled the whole area as defined in this study and all of which concentrated on the pre-modern period.

The area is neither a text book example of extreme rural countryside nor an example of urban-rural fringe. Far enough from Chester, Whitchurch and Bangor not to be part of a large sub-urban hinterland, nor yet so remote as to consist only of isolated hamlets, it exists as an agricultural area with a growing commuter base still confined (just) within limits imposed by twentieth-century planners.

This is a local study but not on the reduced scale of the new micro-history,<sup>7</sup> nor even as contained as the still traditionally-produced parish or community histories.<sup>8</sup> Although it examines a specific rural area, the area contains 34 townships (now civil parishes) and has clear physical boundaries. Nor is this study an economic or social history, although these subjects are touched on where necessary. Full scale economic or social histories are beyond the scope of this work, which concentrates on the relationship between landownership and the physical development of settlements in the area. This study therefore embraces the extent and distribution of settlements and their associated fields but does not attempt a politico-social history nor any detailed examination of building design.

<sup>3</sup> D. Sylvester, 'Rural settlement in Cheshire: some problems of origin and classification', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* (hereafter *THSLC*), 101 (1949), 1-38 (p. 1).

<sup>4</sup> B. K. Roberts and S. Wrathmall, *An Atlas of Rural Settlement in England* (London, 2000), p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. R. Kemsley, *Landowners and communities in the east Cheshire Pennines from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup>* (unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Liverpool, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> G. White, 'Open fields and rural settlement in mediaeval west Cheshire', in *The Middle Ages in the North-West*, eds. T. Scott and P. Starkey, (Oxford, 1995), pp. 15-35; J. Stephenson, 'No object of interest or curiosity? A landscape history of the township of Tilston', (unpublished Diploma dissertation, Chester College, 1990); P. M. Vipond, 'The landscape and settlement of south-west Cheshire: seventeen townships in the Dee Valley', (unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Liverpool, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> E.g. C. French, 'Taking up "the challenge of micro-history": social conditions in Kingston-upon-Thames in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries', *Local Historian*, 36, no.1 (2006), 17-28.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. see J. H. Jackson, 'Opinion: published parish and community histories - a starting point in adult learning and the retheorising of local history', *Local Historian*, 36, no.1 (2006), 42-50.

Although England and Wales are considered urban countries they are still predominantly rural. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) defines urban settlements as areas of at least 20 hectares with a minimum population of 1,000 and urban areas as urban settlements of >10,000 people.<sup>9</sup> As south-west Cheshire has always had a population of <10,000 people and only two settlements of more than 1,000, it is by these criteria a rural area. These criteria for urban settlements and areas are used in this study. In 1998 the English and Welsh urban landscape of settlements of more than 1000 people covered 1.7 million hectares, 13.2 per cent of the land area, and contained 35.6 million people, 71.9 per cent of the population. On the other hand, rural areas (with settlements of fewer than 1,000 people) covered 11.3 million hectares, 86.8 per cent of the land area, and contained 13.9 million people. 28.1 per cent of the population.<sup>10</sup> That is approximately a four per cent increase in the amount of developed land in rural areas since 1990.<sup>11</sup> It is important to demonstrate what effect this increase has at a local level and how landownership affects this.

Local studies of landownership and settlement development are important, particularly to counter a tendency to idealise rural settlements. As Yates said 'It is the illusion that beckons, not the reality'.<sup>12</sup> A generation ago, Thorpe rightly commented that landowners, particularly the 'lords of the manor' could, by influencing their community, 'change the very look of the landscape itself'.<sup>13</sup> In 1983, suggesting how historians should study the landscape, Aston warned that in order not to lose sight of the landscape they should focus on several important themes, one of which, 'settlement in all its forms...is the most important element to be considered.'<sup>14</sup> Referring to the study of territories he commented that 'All land belongs to somebody, and what they choose to do with it determines its appearance in the

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<sup>9</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (hereafter DCLG), *Urban and Rural Area Definitions: A User Guide* (London, 2006)

<<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1147751#TopOfPage>> [accessed 11 April 2006].

<sup>10</sup> DCLG, *Definitions*.

<sup>11</sup> S. Clifford, 'Identity Crisis', *Heritage Today*, (November 2005), 14; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Natural Environment Research Council and others, *Countryside Survey 2000* <[http://www.cs2000.org.uk/Report\\_HTML/08/index.htm](http://www.cs2000.org.uk/Report_HTML/08/index.htm)> [accessed 11 April 2006].

<sup>12</sup> E. M. Yates, 'The evolution of the English village', *Geographical Journal*, 148 no. 2 (1982), 182-206 (p. 201).

<sup>13</sup> H. Thorpe, 'The Lord and the Landscape', in *English Rural Communities: The Impact of a Specialised Economy*, ed. D. R. Mills, (London, 1977), pp.31-82 (p. 31).

<sup>14</sup> M. Aston, 'The making of the English landscape - the next 25 years', *Local Historian*, 15, 16 (1983), 323-332 (p. 326).

landscape.’<sup>15</sup> Although focussed mainly on the pre-modern period, his talk highlighted the importance of relating landownership to landscape studies which include settlement history.

## **Methodology**

When dealing with small, clearly defined but not county-wide areas an evidence-based approach without preconceptions is vital. General theories applicable nationally cannot always be used, so a grounded theory approach is necessary. This study naturally lent itself to such an approach with theories arising from and grounded in the data collected.<sup>16</sup> This involved analysis of documentary evidence and observation of the physical structure of settlements during field walking. Using a grounded theory approach guided by the overall hypothesis meant that the research involved the acquisition of a great deal of documentary and observational data from which broad themes were identified. These themes became more focussed and were formulated into hypotheses subsequently tested in the chapters. This resulted in a theory which expresses an interpretation of the relationship between the themes. This study presents an original methodology in the use of the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) in an historical context to determine the amount of landowner concentration in a township, that is how far the land in a township was controlled by large landowners. This was then used to examine how landownership patterns as measured by (HHI) affected settlement development in the area. Six townships considered typical of the area were examined in detail and provide a small sample study.

## **Aims**

This study analyses the impact of landownership on the physical development and other factors affecting settlements in south-west Cheshire between 1750 and 2000. This work proposes that the effect of landownership on settlement development in south-west Cheshire was profound, but as much indirect as direct, and that the effect was manifest in a discernible trend in settlement development in the area. It argues that the traditional terms ‘open’ and ‘close’ used in discussion about the effect of landowner control are inaccurate and unreliable as descriptive and predictive terms and proposes the use of the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) to provide a reliable

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<sup>15</sup> Aston, '25 years', p. 329.

<sup>16</sup> C. Goulding, *Grounded Theory* (London, 2002). I am grateful to Helen Hayes of the Business Department of the University of Chester for this reference.

quantifiable alternative. It also argues that changes affecting settlement development only took place where they satisfied a local need and not solely as a result of national influence. HHI is used to analyse landownership and its effects upon population, transport, farming and enclosure and planning and legislation in relation to settlement development in the area.

During the research several strong themes emerged, resulting in hypotheses which were tested in relation to the area. The main hypotheses were as follows. First, that traditional criteria for open and closed settlements cannot be used as a predictive model. Second, that the number of Cheshire's smaller eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landowners did not decrease, but in some cases increased. Third, that south-west Cheshire's settlement development was stunted by the inappropriate placing of transport infrastructure and the reluctance of some resident land owners to encourage expansion in their townships. Fourth, that modern planning regulations have restricted settlement growth physically to maintain a traditional 'feel' and to protect local agriculture while at the same time seeking to make settlements more attractive to commuters; in emphasising 'tradition', twentieth-century planners have largely reinforced the settlement pattern determined by landowners and by transport and drainage networks in earlier centuries. Modern needs such as commuter housing and the changing face of modern farming were studied as well as the effect of the decline of the railways and canals and new bypassing roads.

The project is organised thematically within a broadly chronological framework. After an overview of the relevant literature the terms 'open' and 'closed' are examined and a new way of analysing landowner concentration and by inference landowner control is proposed (HHI). Using this new tool the effect on the landscape of landownership patterns as measured by HHI is examined in chapters on population, transport, farming and enclosure, and planning. This shows not only how landownership affected the landscape of development but also demonstrates the use of HHI in an historical context. Sub-hypotheses emerged as each theme was researched, bearing in mind the main thesis and the trends indicated by HHI and population changes.

### ***Physical boundaries***

The research area was chosen because of its clear physical boundaries, centred upon the former market town of Malpas. This was large enough to provide scope for

comparison within the suggested boundaries. Although some of these physical features cross administrative boundaries they provided a clear focus for study. South-west Cheshire is a largely lowland area bounded by the river Dee on the west, the Peckforton Hills (Mid Cheshire Ridge) to the east and south, the Wych Brook to the south and the A534 from Broxton to Farndon on the north. The river Dee downstream from Shocklach Green was originally the boundary between England and Wales. However, the river has changed course over the years and the boundary follows the earlier river route along Shocklach Oviatt's western border while the river itself now flows into Wales.<sup>17</sup> This study followed a broad-based survey of settlement development within this area but narrowed the focus to specific areas within these boundaries. (Figures 1-3).

The term 'pays', borrowed from the French and used by geographers to denote a region with its own innate character, might be more appropriate here.<sup>18</sup> With its clear boundaries and distinct feeling of separateness from the rest of the Cheshire countryside this south-western part of the county has a definite character of its own.

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<sup>17</sup> The river used to be navigable by small craft between Chester and Holt until the seventeenth century. (S. Rhys Williams, *West Cheshire from the Air* (Chester, 1977), p. 6. The Dee and watercourses below Farndon and Holt are not navigable.

<sup>18</sup> C. Lewis, P. Mitchell-Fox and C. Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field: Changing Medieval Settlements in Central England* (Bollington, 2001), p. 8; Muir, *Approaches*, p. 12.

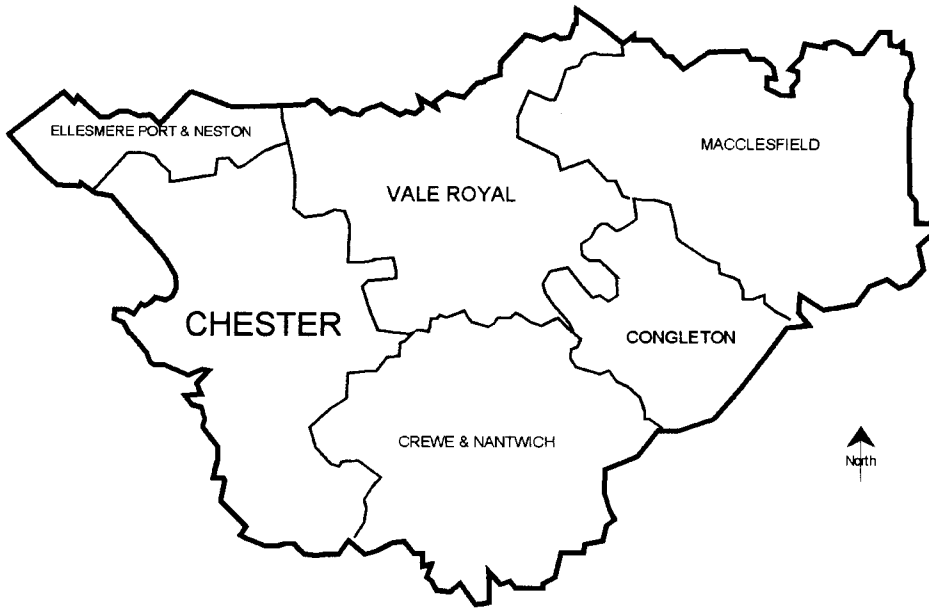
**Figure 1:1 England showing county of Cheshire (modern boundary).**



Source: Redrawn from <<http://www.picturesofengland.com/mapofengland/counties-map.html>>

Scale: 1:4,500,000.

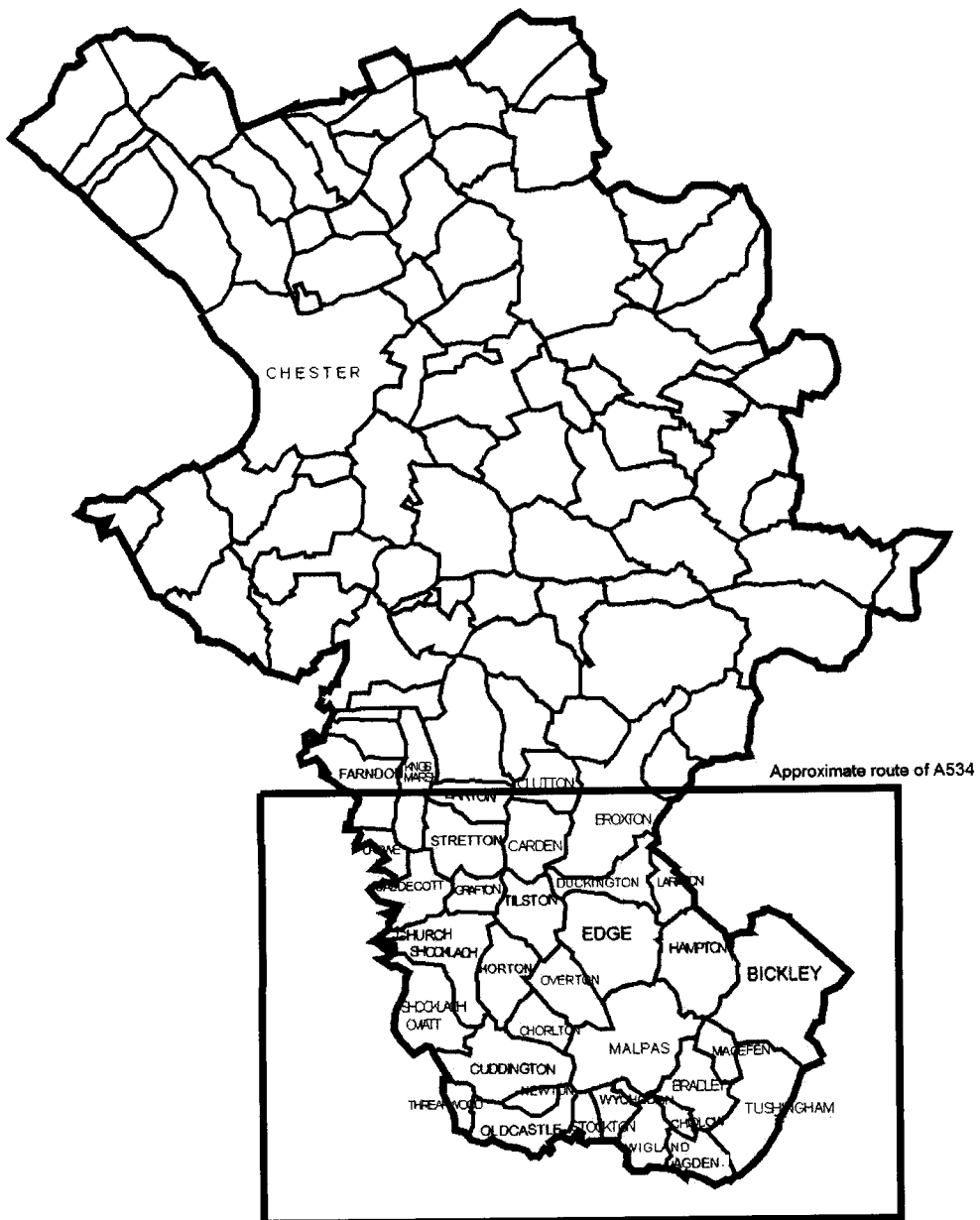
**Figure 1:2: Cheshire modern boundary showing the six districts.**



Source: Redrawn from <[www.cheshire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshire.gov.uk)> Scale 1:500,000.

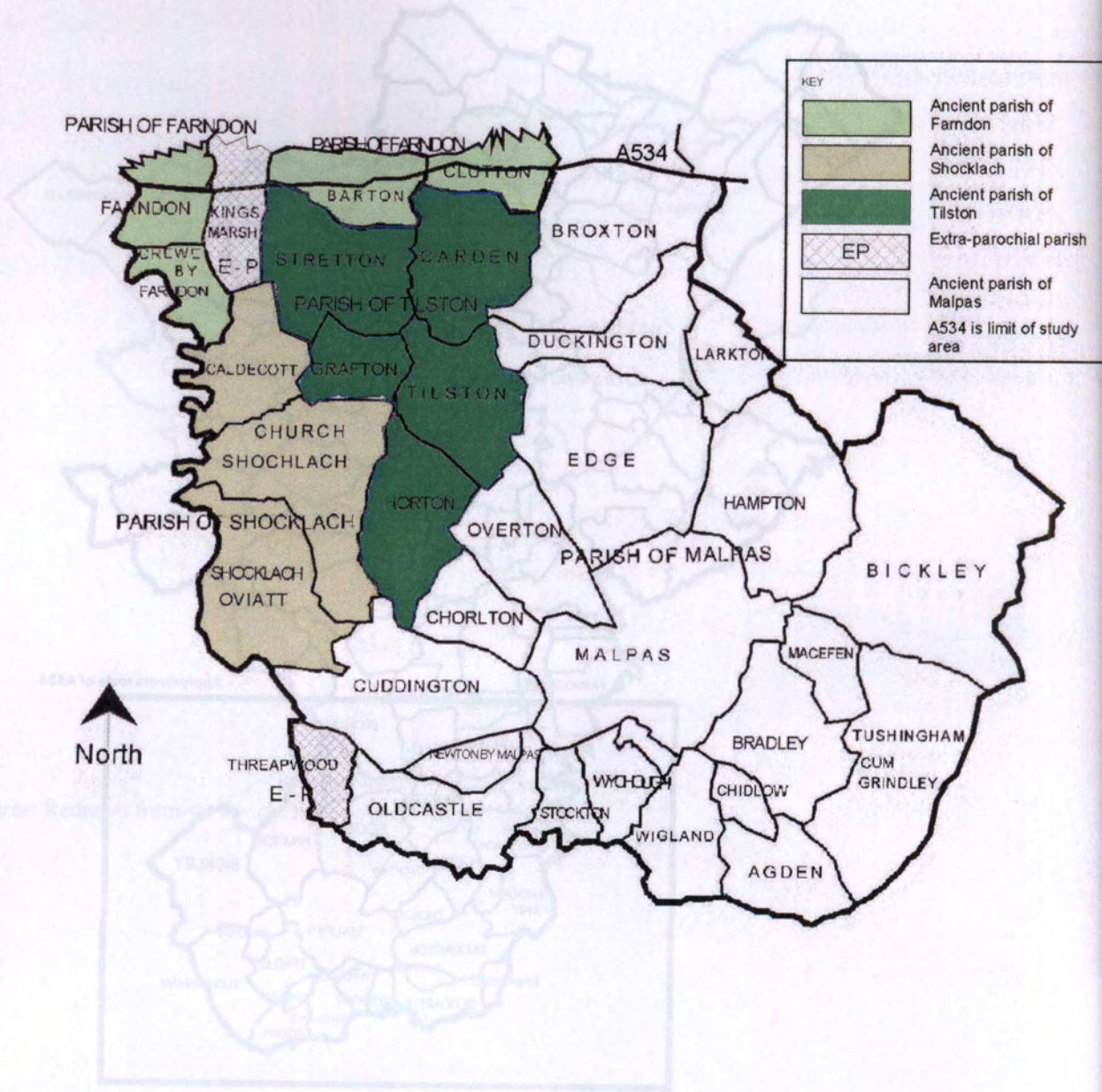


Figure 1:3: Chester District showing study area.



Source: Redrawn from <[www.cheshire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshire.gov.uk)> Scale: 1:200,000.

Figure 1:4 South-west Cheshire showing the ancient parishes.



Source : Based on OS Explorer 257, scale: 1:100,000.

Source: Redrawn from www.cheshire.gov.uk Scale: 1:200,000

Figure 1:5 Study area of 34 townships showing the six sample townships.



Source: Based OS Explorer 257, scale: 1:100,000

South-west Cheshire contains 34 townships belonging to the ancient parishes of Tilston, Shocklach, Malpas, and Farndon (Figure 1:4). (Bickerton, Bulkeley, Cholmondeley and Egerton in the parish of Malpas and the other townships of the parish of Farndon are beyond the physical borders defined by this study.) Kings Marsh and Threapwood were extra-parochial areas which became civil parishes by the Act of 20 Vict. c 19 in 1857.<sup>19</sup> Part of Threapwood was originally in Flint but came under Cheshire administration in 1896.<sup>20</sup> The names of settlements in the townships have been distinguished from their eponymous townships in this work where necessary.

Within this area townships have been used as the basic elements for research. The townships became civil parishes in 1871 with virtually no change to their original boundaries. By focussing on townships rather than ancient parishes it has been possible to maintain continuity from 1750 to 2000. Therefore the term township is used throughout this work to encompass both the older townships which were part of the ancient parishes and their modern civil parish equivalents.

The six townships chosen as representative of the area as a whole are: Tilston, Edge, Tushingam, Church Shocklach, Shocklach Oviatt and Malpas. (Figure 1:5). They represent the geographical, topographical and landownership differences in the area which in turn affected and were affected by agriculture, transport and field drainage. Until the twentieth century Tilston township had several major landowners, one of whom had a dominant share of land, but was a place where no one landowner had overall control. It also had a proliferation of 'small' owners and owner-occupiers. Edge township had, and still has, a dominant resident land-owning family (Dod) whose estate and family seat consist of a large proportion of the township, although there were other significant landowners in the township. The estate's size has remained virtually unchanged since 1750. This provides an example of continuity over a period of 250 years which can be contrasted with the changes that took place in other townships in the area. Malpas township embraced Malpas town, until the mid-nineteenth century the area's main market town. Tushingam-cum-Grindley is south-west Cheshire's only township with direct access to the Llangollen branch of the Shropshire Union Canal (formerly the Ellesmere Canal). It

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<sup>19</sup> *A History of the County of Chester*, ed. B.E. Harris, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, 2 (hereafter *VCH Chester 2*), ed. C. R. Elrington, 5 vols (London, 1979), pp. 219, 235.

<sup>20</sup> *VCH Chester 2*, p. 235 note y.

also represents a still-agricultural township where there are no well-defined settlements bearing the name of the township or its subsidiary. Both Shocklach townships represent an agricultural area close to the river Dee and Flennen's Brook with low-lying meadows and farmland affected by the proximity to water. The principal settlement of Shocklach is partly in Church Shocklach and partly in Shocklach Oviatt so the townships were treated as one unit.

### ***The land***

Much settlement development depends on the type of land available for building. Cheshire is largely lowland; as Holland said 'most of Cheshire is not more than 100 to 200 feet above sea level.'<sup>21</sup> It has a temperate and mild climate and clay or marl substratum only lightly covered by soft glacial drift and in some parts soil-drift caused rocks to weather and protrude through the drift leaving rocky 'islands': Malpas town, for example, stood upon 'a freestone rock covered with deep and good soil'.<sup>22</sup> The 'strong retentive clay', which Caird called 'strong, tenacious soil', predominates in the area which, combined with its damp climate, makes it particularly suitable for pastoral farming<sup>23</sup> while dairy farming remains south-west Cheshire's prime industry. South-west Cheshire is part of the Cheshire Plain which contains some upland in the form of the Bickerton Hills on Red sandstone to the east of the area (part of the Mid-Cheshire Ridge). The area contains many disused marl pits, some water-filled. Mercer noted that the Dee Basin drains approximately 30,000 acres and that the area was 'until recent years' [1960s] prone to flooding.<sup>24</sup> Flooding remains a major problem in south-west Cheshire.

Essentially, south-west Cheshire's eighteenth-century landscape differed little from that of the twenty-first with the obvious exception of buildings and the transport network. As an early enclosed area it already contained hedged fields, small nucleations and isolated farms. It also contained substantial areas of moss land and

<sup>21</sup> H. Holland, *General View of the Agriculture of Cheshire* (London, 1808), p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Holland, *Agriculture*, p. 11; W. Marshall, *The Review and Abstract of the County Reports to the Board of Agriculture: Northern Department* (York, 1808), p. 9; G. Scard, *Squire and Tenant: Rural Life in Cheshire 1760-1900* (Chester, 1981), p. 2; R. J. P. Kain and M. E. H. Harriet, 'Farming in Cheshire circa 1840: some evidence from the tithe files', *TLCAS*, 82 (1983), 22-57 (pp. 27-8).

<sup>23</sup> Holland, *Agriculture*, p. 11; Scard, *Squire*, p. 2, Kain and Harriet, 'Farming', p. 28; Sir J. Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850-51*, 2nd edn (London, 1852), p. 252.

<sup>24</sup> W. B. Mercer, *A Survey of the Agriculture of Cheshire*, County Agricultural Surveys (London, 1963), 4, pp. 2-4.

waste,<sup>25</sup> but this type of land decreased throughout the nineteenth century as it was drained and cultivated or otherwise developed.

### ***Time scale***

The time scale, from 1750 to 2000, ensured good map coverage of the area and was chosen to represent the full range of the modern era. 1750 represents the start of the period when the immense changes of the industrial revolution took place within Cheshire, including the new transport systems such as turnpike roads (already a feature of the south of England) and canals, and later the railways and modern road systems, which had an important effect on the landscape. These facilitated travel and provided a wider trade area for local produce. The new building materials of brick and slate were more easily and quickly transported into rural areas, thus changing the physical aspect of the settlements. It was considered particularly important to include the entire twentieth century in order to demonstrate the extent to which in some places basic landowning structure and physical landscape have remained largely unaltered, for example in Edge, while in others changes have had a more profound effect. The inclusion of the most recent part of the twentieth century emphasises the ongoing importance of the impact of modern national and regional planning decisions on the area's settlement development and the effects of modern changes to the environment such as field drainage and new road systems. The consequences of local authority planning on the area also cannot and should not be ignored if a clear picture of settlement development is to emerge. The research therefore had well-defined physical and temporal limits and yet was large enough to offer the potential for significant comparisons and contrasts to be drawn.

### ***Sources***

Sources for the area consist of primary and secondary printed material, manuscripts, maps, illustrations and Internet sources. As far as possible the same type of sources were consulted for each of the six sample townships studied and information about the other townships gathered during the course of research was noted. Certain sources were studied in detail for the six sample townships so that their specific landownership patterns and settlement changes could be analysed: tithe maps, land

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<sup>25</sup> *A Survey of the County Palatine of Chester*, P. P. Burdett, 1977, eds. J. B. Harley and P. Laxton, (Liverpool, 1974).

tax, and census records. Other sources such as maps and the 1910 Inland Revenue District Valuers records ('Domesday') have been studied for the whole area.

### **Primary sources**

The main primary sources include the 1910 'Domesday' survey<sup>26</sup> and the district valuers' Working Sheets, rough copies of the surveyors' maps and the main copies held in The National Archives (TNA).<sup>27</sup> Census population totals and summaries were consulted, from the first British national census of 1801 to that of 2001,<sup>28</sup> to enable population trends to be examined (although population figures for the eighteenth century had to be estimated). In addition, for the six main townships, the census enumerators' returns for 1841 to 1901, were studied. However, the originals of the 1841 census are missing for Malpas and both Shocklach townships and there are no copies extant. Tithe awards exist for all but one of the 34 townships in the area (Threapwood) and enclosure maps or awards relating to waste areas for nine of the townships.<sup>29</sup> Land tax records from 1784 to 1832 exist for all the townships except Threapwood. However, accounts for one or more different years are missing from each township.<sup>30</sup> 25 inch Ordnance Survey (OS) maps exist for most of the area in the 1872, 1899 and 1910 editions as well as a series of six inch and modern maps.<sup>31</sup> Other sources examined include parish registers for christenings, marriages and burials (CMBs), Overseers accounts, Glebe Terriers, Bishops Visitations, charity records, OS maps, town books, parish council Minutes, Malpas Rural District Council Minutes, Tarvin Rural District Council Minutes, Turnpike Trust records and estate records as well as general council records and aerial photographs.

Records of major landowners' estates were consulted. These included, in the centre and east of the area, estates belonging to Drake, Leche, Egerton of Oulton,

<sup>26</sup> Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies, NVA 1/18, 20, 22, 23.

<sup>27</sup> TNA, IR 58.

<sup>28</sup> *VCH Cheshire 2*, pp. 202-40, *1981 Census - Cheshire. Area Profiles. Chester District - Parishes and Towns* (Chester, 1981), *Chester District Ward Atlas* (Chester, 1993); Chester City Council, *Chester in Context: Census 2001* (Chester, 2005) <http://www.chester.gov.uk/main.asp?page=257> [accessed 15 Jan 2006]; Office for National Statistics, *200 years of the Census in Cheshire* (London, 2001) < <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/bicentenary/pdfs/cheshire.pdf> > [accessed 27 February 2004].

<sup>29</sup> Threapwood was extra-parochial and not subject to tithes. Cheshire County Council, *Tithe Maps at the Cheshire Record Office* (Chester, 1998) p. 41; CCALS, QDE. This includes the enclosure award for Bickerton Hills which, although mostly outside the research area, includes enclosure in Broxton.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>30</sup> CCALS, QDV2.

<sup>31</sup> CCALS, OS 25 inch and six inch maps, 1st edition, 2nd edition, 3rd series, and post-1930 editions.



Vawdrey, Dod, Tollemache and Cholmondeley, and minor estates to the west.<sup>32</sup> Estate records of landowners just outside the area, for example Cholmondeley, were also consulted because many landowners resident outside the area held considerable property within it. Where estate records were lacking, use was made of documents in the solicitors' collections of Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies service (CCALS). Parish records are available for most parts of the area but these vary in coverage and relevance.<sup>33</sup> Modern council records, maps and plans were also consulted.<sup>34</sup>

The physical aspect of the settlements in the landscape can be understood fully only through field work and by combining documentary with physical information. Therefore a survey of building materials was completed for each of the six sample townships and physical features such as modern roads, enclosure roads, footpaths, and the layout of the settlements were examined.

Visits were made to several residents in the area: Ken Bourne, a farmer in Shocklach Oviatt, to view the land drains on his farm and two houses, one in each Shocklach township;<sup>35</sup> three residents in Edge including Horace Tailor, a former worker on the Dod estate;<sup>36</sup> Mr Moore-Dutton, a descendant of the Vawdrey family of Tushingham Hall, who provided a tour of Tushingham Hall estate;<sup>37</sup> and Simon Jones and John Hollins who showed their farms in Tushingham and Bradley.<sup>38</sup> David Hayns, who has published work on the local history of Malpas, was also visited.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Limitations of the research***

As explained above, although the primary sources are extensive, their content, range and survival vary. This meant that data analysis for the six sample townships was necessarily incomplete. Similar problems arose when evaluating tithe maps, enclosure records, maps and estate records. Although these resulted occasionally in incomplete data sets, enough information was available from alternative sources such as solicitors' records to enable the research to proceed with justifiable confidence. Environmental conditions caused practical problems for much of the proposed

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<sup>32</sup> CCALS, DTD, DLE, DEO, DMD, DBC, DTW, DCH and others.

<sup>33</sup> CCALS, P, DDX.

<sup>34</sup> CCALS, C, CPL, CPLX, CCCDP.

<sup>35</sup> 20 November 2001, 12 March 2002.

<sup>36</sup> 29 January 2002

<sup>37</sup> 29 April 2005

<sup>38</sup> 28 April 2004, 10 June 2004.

<sup>39</sup> 23 November 2001.



fieldwork. Although field walking was always envisaged as an important part of this research it was hampered by the restrictions placed on access, first by the foot and mouth epidemic of 2000 to 2001 and later the flooding of part of the area which left the ground impassable for a long time. This was compensated for by discussions with local farmers and the completion of a detailed building survey. However, this also had limitations because access to a number of private landholdings was impossible and recording had to take place from permissible public viewpoints.

The decennial national censuses have been used to provide population figures for the period 1801 to 2001. There was no national census for 1941. Although historians use census records extensively and the statistical digests are assumed to be accurate, there are problems with using census information. Pooley and Turnbull, for example, have warned of the severe limitations of census records as the result of inaccurate recording. They also noted that all kinds of records are subject to researchers' bias and errors.<sup>40</sup> Unreliable recording included omission of the very young, mis-statements and mis-recording of ages, birthplaces and dates, occupations and individual census enumerators' assessment of what defined a household.<sup>41</sup> The information in census records was often 'fragmentary and unsatisfactory' and the range and organisation of the data before and after 1841 varied.<sup>42</sup>

Short has pointed out possible problems with the use of the 1910 'Domesday', including local variations in the extent and completeness of records held, incorrect compilation of the records, the overlap of the valuation unit between more than one civil parish, subdivisions of parishes being renumbered and unclear alterations. Fortunately, the Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies (CCALS) holds all valuation books covering south-west Cheshire and, because each civil parish is, as Short noted of other parishes, 'synonymous with and spatially identical with' its earlier township there was no problem with identifying the correct records.<sup>43</sup> As far as it was possible to tell, the valuation records were complete with no unreadable changes.

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<sup>40</sup> Pooley and Turnbull, *Migration*, pp. 25,30.

<sup>41</sup> W.A. Armstrong, 'The census enumerator's books: a commentary', in *The Census and Social Structure*, ed. R. Lawson (London, 1978), pp. 28-70 (pp. 34, 48).

<sup>42</sup> Armstrong, 'Census', p. 37.

<sup>43</sup> Brian Short, *The Geography of England and Wales in 1910: an evaluation of Lloyd George's 'Domesday' of landownership* (London, 1989), pp.15,22; Brian Short, *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 145, 147-8.

The land tax records had specific problems relating to their use. Land tax records are a primary source for tracing landownership during this period but they can be inconsistent. Although they need to be treated with caution, they provide a broad picture of landownership changes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The problems with using land tax records are well known to historians; they arise from matching entries horizontally, ambiguous use of 'ditto', out of sequence listings and unreliable accounting. Records could be drawn up annually or quarterly making comparison difficult unless the period is established. Names of landowners and tenants could be transposed and names of owners of redeemed land were omitted from the records as were the names of between 50 and 80 per cent of smallholders.<sup>44</sup> In Malpas township, for example, when the number of dwellings in the land tax is compared to the estimated number of houses prior to 1841, about 40 per cent of the buildings, and therefore smallholders, were unrecorded. The tax was also paid on some profit-making positions, buildings and tithes, although the latter can be identified by the title of the incumbent. Land tax assessments also do not record acreage and it was not reassessed, so landowners in some parishes overpaid tax. Nominal linkage might be uncertain across records and when using the land tax records to assess ownership shares in a township or parish it must be remembered that the tax applied only to that one place and individual landowners could own land in several townships or parishes. After 1826 buildings tended to be included, but not their position, and new buildings were sometimes omitted. Notwithstanding all this, the records can be used with caution to show changes in landownership patterns although they cannot show the distribution of the individual landholdings.<sup>45</sup>

Unlike the tithe and 'Domesday' records, land tax records do not provide property acreage. However, they can be used to calculate the *proportion* of a township's land tax paid by individuals and because the tax was intended to be a standard rate, 4s in the pound from 1798,<sup>46</sup> it should be possible to deduce the relative size of land holdings. Mingay, however, in his overview of land tax studies, noted evidence from several authorities that the relationship between taxes and acreage differed in individual counties, and that there were irregularities within

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<sup>44</sup> Hey, *History*, p. 273.

<sup>45</sup> H. G. Hunt, 'Land tax assessments', in *Short Guides to Records*, 1st ser. Guides 1-24, (London, 1994), pp. 86-8; Overton, *Revolution*, p. 176; D. E. Ginter, *A Measure of Wealth: The English Land Tax in Historical Analysis* (London, 1992), pp. 14-51.

<sup>46</sup> For general problems in using land tax records, see next chapter. Hunt, 'Land tax', p. 86.

counties, with some landowners using their influence to obtain a reduced assessment.<sup>47</sup>

Ginter suggested using an ambiguous term such as ‘property bundle’ to include scattered holdings but for the purposes of this study this seems unnecessary as long as the problems noted in the preceding paragraph are borne in mind.<sup>48</sup> He remarked that before the period of enclosure tithes were not real property (that is, they did not represent land) but because Cheshire was enclosed early it is likely that tithes did represent property and they are therefore included here. Ginter also suggested that salaried officers such as excise officers should be omitted,<sup>49</sup> but none were identified in the land tax records examined in south-west Cheshire.

### ***The importance of this research***

When this research began there had been few other studies of the development of modern rural settlements, particularly in lowland areas and for this timescale, although more recent researchers are beginning to address this.<sup>50</sup> The lack of rigorous academic investigation and comparative studies made it important that a study of this nature was undertaken. Most books that included modern settlements did so as a much smaller part of the whole and, like the *Making of the English Landscape* county series, lacked detail and lapsed into generalisation.<sup>51</sup> Most books on the history of settlement concentrate on the pre-modern period, often providing disproportionate emphasis on settlements up to and including the medieval period. However, relevant chapters from books by authors such as Roberts, Taylor and Rowley provide an overview.<sup>52</sup> Until recently no study of settlements had been done on this scale for this period, but historians are now beginning to address the subject. Kemsley’s work on east Cheshire covers seven centuries and takes a comparative

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<sup>47</sup> G. E. Mingay, ‘The land tax assessments and the small landowner’, *Ec. HR*, 2nd ser., 17 (1964), 381-8 (p. 384).

<sup>48</sup> Ginter, *Land Tax*, p. 33.

<sup>49</sup> Ginter, *Land Tax*, p. 19.

<sup>50</sup> E.g. R. M. Kemsley, ‘Landowners and Communities in the East Cheshire Pennines from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup>’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Liverpool, 1999).

<sup>51</sup> Various authors, *Making of the English Landscape*, County series, 1950s to 1980s, e.g. W. G. Hoskins, *Leicestershire: An Illustrated Essay on the History of the Landscape* (London, 1957); T. Rowley, *Shropshire Landscape* (London, 1974); D. Dymond, *The Norfolk Landscape* (London, 1985).

<sup>52</sup> E.g. B. K. Roberts, *Rural Settlement in Britain* (London, 1977); W. G. Hoskins and C. Taylor, *The Making of the English Landscape*, (London, 1988); C. Taylor, *Village and Farmstead: A History of Rural Settlement* (London, 1983); T. Rowley, *The English Landscape in the Twentieth Century* (London, 2006).

and more sociological approach including administrative, economic and religious perspectives as well as landownership. She focussed on four townships and particular landowning families.<sup>53</sup> This study examines the effect of landownership on an area of 34 townships focussing on the broader effect of landownership patterns using the new methodology of HHI to examine the extent of landownership concentration and therefore by implication the extent of control by large landowners. This work therefore complements Kemsley's study by making a more detailed examination of the effects of landownership over a broader area, albeit covering a shorter period.

South-west Cheshire in particular has been neglected from an historian's point of view as the paucity of secondary literature testifies (see the literature review in the chapter which follows). However, more considered studies of south-west Cheshire and its environs emerged towards the end of the twentieth century. White, for example, contributed a section on several townships in the north of the area to a book on the north-west during the medieval period.<sup>54</sup> Stephenson's Diploma dissertation examined the landscape history of Tilston township.<sup>55</sup> The most recent major study relevant to south-west Cheshire was a thesis by Prudence Vipond. Although the emphasis was on the pre-modern and early-modern period, she considered some aspects into the twentieth century. As a geographer she addressed the subject from the viewpoint of the underlying topography, relying heavily on a detailed study of ridge and furrow and a discussion of hedge dating in seventeen townships, eight of which overlap this study. She followed this with more detailed histories examining settlement changes of her chosen townships in terms of broad landscape changes but this was not the main focus.<sup>56</sup> While the emphasis of her work was elsewhere she provided useful basic information and left the way open for a wider, more historical approach.

This research differs from Vipond's in a number of ways. First, our definition of south-west Cheshire differs. Of Vipond's 17 townships only eight occur in this work's study area. This study defines south-west Cheshire with more restrained and explicit physical boundaries and concentrates on the physical development of the settlements in the modern era specifically in relation to landownership. Second, she focused strongly on the geology as a basis for the topography and did not investigate

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<sup>53</sup> Kemsley, *Landowners*.

<sup>54</sup> White, 'Open fields'.

<sup>55</sup> Stephenson, 'Tilston'.

<sup>56</sup> Vipond, 'Seventeen townships'.

changes in settlement structure in detail. Vipond's work is important in showing how the landscape itself affected the placing of settlements and how this relates to the distribution of settlements in the area. This research therefore expands and refines Vipond's work while acknowledging the debt in relation to the understanding of the pre-modern topography of the area.

### **Terms used**

Use of the terms hamlet, village and town (or market town) is not straightforward. Although without clear definitions comparative discussion might be difficult, many historians such as Hoskins relied on lay people's intuitive recognition of a hamlet, village, town or city judged subconsciously on a combination of the physical area covered by buildings, perceived size of population and the number and type of services provided.<sup>57</sup> In this vein, Roberts at a lecture in 2003 said 'We know essentially what a village is.'<sup>58</sup> Other writers used simple comparisons (for example, a village is larger than a hamlet) but such definitions are self-referring and clearly to make comparisons at least one settlement type must be defined.<sup>59</sup>

Thorpe produced the most widely used settlement definitions in Britain based on size.<sup>60</sup> He defined a hamlet as 'a nucleated settlement, with or without a parish church, with 3-19 homesteads i.e. dwellings with dependent buildings and ground' and a village as 'a nucleated rural settlement of 20+ homesteads'.<sup>61</sup> His definition is still quoted by settlement historians. Its apparent exactitude and simplicity have ensured its longevity.<sup>62</sup> However, a problem arises when defining the quantitative

<sup>57</sup> W. G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (London, 1955, repr. 1983); W. G. Hoskins, *Fieldwork in Local History* (London, 1967); W. G. Hoskins, *Local History in England*, 3rd edn (London, 1984).

<sup>58</sup> B. Roberts, 16 October 2003, Villages. Lecture presented for the Chester Society for Landscape History at the University of Chester, Cheshire.

<sup>59</sup> E.g. 'A town or city is bigger than a village community' (E. Jones, *Towns and Cities* (Oxford, 1966), p. 3); 'Hamlet 'A small village...'' (J. Richardson, *The Local Historian's Encyclopaedia*, 2nd edn (Hertfordshire, 1986), p. 33); 'Hamlet: A small settlement...', 'Village: ... too difficult to define in Britain...', 'Town: A relatively small urban place.', 'City: A large urban centre...' (S. Mayhew and A. Penny, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Geography* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 36, 103, 233, 243); a town is 'a relatively large cluster of dwelling places, with buildings and people concentrated in a relatively small area.', (Roberts, *Landscapes*, p. 18); 'hamlets are 'normally regarded as settlements smaller than villages and larger than farmsteads' (R. Muir, *The New Reading the Landscape* (Exeter, 2000, p. 77).

<sup>60</sup> H. Thorpe, 'Rural Settlement', in *The British Isles: A Systematic Geography*, ed. J. Wreford Watson and J. B. Sissons, (Edinburgh, 1964), pp. 358-379 (p. 359).

<sup>61</sup> Thorpe, 'Rural settlement', p. 359.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. a village was a 'nucleated rural settlement to twenty or more homesteads, a large village being distinguishable from a small market town by its paucity of services' (T. Rowley, *Villages in the Landscape* (1978), p. 7); 'A hamlet is usually defined as a settlement housing from three to nineteen families'; 'a village has been described as a settlement of twenty or more individual homesteads or

limits of a small village and a large hamlet. Other criteria such as function, population or land-use have been used,<sup>63</sup> but whatever the criteria, exceptions can be found.

Bearing in mind the problem of using any criteria for defining types of settlement, in this study the term settlement has been used to denote any nucleation of inhabited houses of any size. The terms market town and farmstead have also been used where applicable. Where historians refer specifically to the terms village and hamlet these terms have been used when discussing their work. A community is the social network of inhabitants in a settlement. This can extend to include outlying smaller settlements. As south-west Cheshire's townships (civil parishes) generally contained only one major settlement as well as outlying but socially connected farms and other buildings, the term township has been used to include these, with, if necessary, a distinction made between the settlement and the administrative area.

Roberts and Wrathmall pointed out an additional problem of how to decide boundaries between nucleated and dispersed settlement.<sup>64</sup> In this study farmsteads and other individual dwellings are considered part of the main nucleation of a settlement if the land connected to their dwelling, as opposed to agricultural land, is adjacent to that of the settlement. This is in line with Best and Rogers.<sup>65</sup> Miles are used in preference to kilometres because they are referred to in many sources.

This study starts with an overview of the relevant literature and its relevance to the work in hand.

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families.' (Taylor, *Village*, p. 15); 'Hamlet is a neutral term for a settlement comprising a cluster of six to eight farmsteads' (B. K. Roberts, *Landscapes of Settlement: Prehistory to the Present* (London, 1966), p. 16);

<sup>63</sup> E.g. Roberts has written that hamlets usually lack such things as Post Offices, garages, shops and a 'true' church (Roberts, *Landscapes*, p. 6) and Aston argues that many medieval hamlets have become modern villages and acquired a church making a hamlet, by default, a settlement without a church. (M. Aston, *Interpreting the Landscape* (London, 1985), p. 82).

<sup>64</sup> B. K. Roberts and S. Wrathmall, 'Dispersed settlement in England: a national view', in *The Archaeology of Landscape*, ed. P. Everson and T. Williamson, (Manchester, 1998), pp. 95-116 (p. 112).

<sup>65</sup> R. H. Best and A. W. Rogers, *The Urban Countryside: The Land-Use Structure of Small Towns and Villages in England and Wales* (London, 1973), pp. 28-9.

## Chapter two

### Literature review

There are three main literature themes relevant to this study: landownership from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, rural settlement development focussing on the physical changes of settlements in the landscape, and the history and geography of south-west Cheshire in relation to landownership. These are dealt with in turn in this section, examining in particular how historians have dealt with the relationship between landownership and settlement development.

Had this study been attempted 40 years ago it would have been heavily influenced by Hoskins and Beresford on landscape and the Marxists on landownership, and also to some extent by traditional parish histories. This section examines the changes in approach to rural landownership and landscape studies and identifies the influences on this study and how this study contributes to the genre.

Knowles said that 'The first concern of the landscape historian is to identify patterns...'<sup>1</sup> It is this movement towards physical and theoretical pattern in the landscape of settlement development that is the main thrust of the recent development of landscape history. This has been combined with a move away from regarding the pre-modern period, and particularly the medieval period, as the natural home of local and landscape historians.

Few larger studies exist at detailed local level relating landownership to settlement development, although recent work by historians such as Kemsley has begun to tackle this.<sup>2</sup> Landownership is usually studied in relationship to economic and social history and rural settlement development as part of landscape studies has largely been studied as overviews and at local level, usually focused on one settlement or parish. Local and landscape history are interdisciplinary subjects and draw methods and methodology from many sources, and the subject is often approached from an archaeological, geographical, social, economic, or morphological perspective. Rarely is a study of rural settlement a pure narrative

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<sup>1</sup> C. C. Knowles, *The Nature of Landscape* (London, 1983), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Kemsley, *Landowners*.

history in the parish or local history tradition.<sup>3</sup> All types of rural settlement studies borrow from each other and the distinction between these types of approaches is not always evident. In particular the distinction between landscape historians (with their alter-egos local historians) and historical geographers (drawing on work by landscape archaeologists) is confusing and often unnecessary. This study is based in landscape and local history but acknowledges the debt to practitioners from many other disciplines.

Landownership research has usually been a subject for economic or social historians, initially interested primarily in the pre-modern period, particularly lords of the manor. Subsequently they concentrated on the impact that great landowners had on smaller landowners during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their work influenced settlement development studies, and therefore landscape studies, through examination of the effect on rural settlements of parliamentary enclosure and the consolidation of large estates. This was brought up to date by social historians studying the effect of the decline of major landowners on rural housing and the impact of two world wars. These are themes that are tackled in this study.

As well as work on landownership there are essentially four distinct phases for the study of rural settlement development in terms of landscape change as related to landownership. These are, successively, pre-World War Two documentary and excavation-based work; the post-war and 1950s move to combine fieldwork with documentary work; a phase from the late 1960s when maps and plans themselves acquired an importance in their own right as a way of showing rural settlement change; and, finally, from the late-twentieth-century onwards the comprehensive analysis of the landscape to inform heritage and planning decisions. This sequence demonstrates how the focus of researchers moved from record offices and excavations to the landscape itself, encouraged by the 'new' local history popularised by Hoskins in the age of increased personal mobility through car ownership during the 1950s. The landscape itself became the palimpsest from which historians worked with its implications of the old being overwritten by the new.

The dominating theme of recent work on settlement development has been the changes in the morphology of settlements, their distribution throughout the landscape and what has affected this. During the past forty years there has been a

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<sup>3</sup> The production of parish and local histories is still popular today. (Jackson, 'Opinion').



trend towards attempting formulaic answers to settlement development. This study rejects such an approach as too simplistic but does contribute to the theme of physical settlement change by concentrating on the effects of landownership.

This chapter discusses first the literature relating to landownership in England and Wales. Subsequent sections examine the literature of landownership related to rural settlement development before and just after World War Two, the growing importance of mapping and landscape analysis and the limited secondary sources for south-west Cheshire.

## ***Landownership***

Landownership, which historians have long equated with ‘lords of the manor’, the landowning elite, has been closely connected to studies of settlements. Nineteenth-century historians became interested in who owned what land. Several lists of landowners, although not wholly accurate, provided a starting point for discussions about landowners’ power and influence.<sup>4</sup> Bateman provided a useful series of books discussing landownership which included detailed lists of nineteenth-century landowners and their acreages.<sup>5</sup> This encouraged a Marxist viewpoint spurred by the revelation that the lists showed that the majority of England and Wales was owned by a small number of people.

Thorpe observed that landowners, by influencing how their communities lived, ‘might change the very look of the landscape itself’<sup>6</sup> and Thompson equated nineteenth-century landed society with the acquisition of wealth and status.<sup>7</sup> The subject, when combined with rural settlement studies, is often tackled from a socio-economic standpoint as in Thorpe’s investigation of Wormleighton which also studied it as an end product of occupation over time.<sup>8</sup>

Research on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landownership progressed from the studies derived from work by Trelawney and Habakkuk on the rise of the major landowners prior to 1740 to research concentrating on the economic, political

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<sup>4</sup> E.g. *Return of the Owners of Land 1873 Vol: 1 England and Wales*, (London, 1873).

<sup>5</sup> J. Bateman, *The Great Landowners of England and Wales* (London, 1876); J. Bateman, *Great Landowners* (London, 1883); *The Great Landowners of Britain and Ireland*, 4 edn (London, 1883, repr. Leicester, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> Thorpe, ‘Lord’, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1963), p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Thorpe, ‘Lord’. More recent social studies of rural England include, for example, A. Howkins, *The Death of Rural England: A Social History of the Countryside*, (London, 2003).

and social aspects of landownership, including relating the effects of land sales and house building to economic trends, rather than their effect on the landscape.<sup>9</sup> However, many of these are overviews of rural settlement development in individual places, within which landownership was only one aspect.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Mingay identified 'landownership and its influence on the countryside' as part of a recent trend to investigate hitherto rarely considered subjects such as rural housing. Among subjects yet to be explored in detail he suggested eighteenth- and nineteenth-century housing problems and agriculture from the aftermath of World War One to the present.<sup>11</sup> Mingay thought that rural history concentrated too much on agricultural and social rural history and that there was a tendency for historians to stick to one period, and one subject within that period, of which landownership was one such subject. This study therefore answers some of these needs by addressing landownership's effect on rural settlement development from 1750 to the end of the twentieth century.

Until recently the dominant theme of landownership studies, particularly among economic historians, has been landownership and power with a strongly Marxist deterministic theoretical base. Landownership and the landscape were linked through an examination of the destruction of villages, the expulsion of small farmers and labourers because of enclosure, and the subsequent exodus of poorer rural inhabitants to the town. This was regarded as an episode in the class struggle which was to end with the overturning of the landowning elite by the bourgeoisie.<sup>12</sup> Marx and Engels regarded the process by which the labouring classes reasserted themselves as part of an ongoing 'history of class struggles'.<sup>13</sup> Since the 1920s the Marxist view has been challenged with varying degrees of success; far from being demolished this point of view has continued to be debated until at least the 1990s.<sup>14</sup> Winstanley, for example, regards the idea of capitalist farmers employing landless

<sup>9</sup> G. E. Mingay, 'British rural history: themes in agricultural history and rural social history', in *Rural Studies in Britain and France*, eds. P. Lowe and M. Bodiguel, (London, 1990), pp. 76-89 (pp. 84-5). E.g. H. J. Habbakuk, 'English landownership, 1680-1740', *Ec. HR*, 10, 1 (1940), 2-17.

<sup>10</sup> See <<http://www.rhs.ac.uk/bibl/dataset.asp>>

<sup>11</sup> Mingay, 'Rural History', p. 86.

<sup>12</sup> K. Marx, *Capital: Volume 1*, trans. by B. Fowkes, (London, 1976), p. 887.

<sup>13</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, 'The Communist manifesto', in *On Revolution*, eds. W. Lutz and H. Brent, (Cambridge, USA, 1971), pp. 3-23.

<sup>14</sup> Mingay, 'Rural History', p. 77.

labourers as a 'stereotypical view'.<sup>15</sup> The Marxist approach also highlighted the way that landowners had the power to build or destroy settlements on land that they owned. Although enclosure by large landowners forms part of this study in relation to settlement change, it adopts an empirical rather than Marxist deterministic approach to available evidence.

Habakkuk, Mingay, Beckett, Thompson, Davies, Spring and others provided the theoretical background to English landownership studies.<sup>16</sup> Mingay approached the subject as an economist and distinguished the size of landowners by their income. Beckett assessed the broad trends in landownership between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries which supported Thompson's belief that concentration of estates took place over a long period and that small landowners survived in some places contrary to previous beliefs.<sup>17</sup> As this study will show, small landowners certainly survived in south-west Cheshire and made their own distinctive contribution to the development of settlements.

From the 1960s there was an increased interest in small landowners and small owner-occupiers.<sup>18</sup> However, the view of landownership as mainly the prerogative of the wealthy and owners of large estates continued well into the 1980s. The ability of large landowners to shape rural settlements, including their physical presence in the landscape, was taken for granted. So Clemenson wrote, 'perhaps more symbolic of the power of the large landowners was their ability to influence rural settlement'. This was achieved by the destruction and creation of cottages, houses, and whole settlements which not only altered the size of settlements but also their distribution in the landscape.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> M. J. Winstanley, 'Industrialisation and the small farm: family and household economy in nineteenth-century Lancashire', *Past and Present*, 152 (1996) 157-195, p.158.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. E. Davies, 'The small landowner, 1780-1832, in the light of the land tax assessments', *Economic History Review* (hereafter *Ec. HR.*), 1st ser. 1 (1927 - 1928) 87-113; H. J. Habakkuk, 'English landownership 1680-1740', *Ec. HR.*, 10, 1 (1940) 2-17; Thompson, *Landed Society*; G. E. Mingay, *The Size of Farms in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1961), *The Gentry: Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class* (London, 1976); J. V. Beckett, 'The decline of the small landowner in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England: some regional considerations', *Agricultural History Review* (hereafter *AgHR*), 30 (1982) 97-111; 'The pattern of landownership in England and Wales, 1660-1914', *Ec. HR.*, 37 (1984) 97-111; J. V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy of England, 1660-1914* (Oxford, 1986); D. Spring, *The Great Landowners of Britain and Ireland* (Leicester, 1971).

<sup>17</sup> Beckett, 'Decline'; Beckett, 'Pattern'.

<sup>18</sup> Mingay, 'Rural History', pp. 81-2; P. Hindle, 'Enclosure Roads and Landscapes', *Local History Magazine*, 83 (2001), 13-17.

<sup>19</sup> H. A. Clemenson, *English Country Houses and Landed Estates* (Beckenham, 1982), p. 79.

Landownership as control by an elite continued in discussions about ‘open’ and ‘close’ (closed) parishes, townships or settlements, both physical and social aspects, and emphasis is still laid on the importance of these terms. Historians such as Holderness and Banks challenged the nineteenth-century view that these were clear-cut distinctions,<sup>20</sup> although modern historians still use the nineteenth-century definitions as convenient shorthand.<sup>21</sup> Mills, an historical geographer, related settlement differences to social structure, especially the estate and peasant systems.<sup>22</sup> Short described Mills’s outlook as ‘regional positivism’, explanatory and predictive social science reflecting nineteenth-century thought.<sup>23</sup> In a largely socio-political work mainly related to south-east England, he analysed how and why differences between settlements arose and emphasised their interdependency. He considered the main debate about these terms was about power and that landownership was clearly the dominant force over settlement change.<sup>24</sup> He challenged nineteenth-century definitions of ‘open’ and ‘close’ as ‘inexact’ but noted that these settlement types remain in the south-east. This study contributes to the debate by proffering the use of the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) to measure the extent of landownership control as a replacement for the terms ‘open’ and ‘close’, arguing that the terms cannot be used with any degree of certainty.

Interest in the effects of landownership on enclosure increased from the 1990s with some more recent historians arguing that it did not just affect the lowlands and did not necessarily result in huge changes to the landscape.<sup>25</sup> Williamson in his study of medieval landscape linked settlement types with field

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<sup>20</sup> B. A. Holderness, ‘‘Open’ and ‘close’ parishes in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’, *AgHR.*, 20 part 2 (72) 126-139; S. Banks, ‘Nineteenth -century scandal or twentieth-century model? A new look at “open” and “close” parishes’, *Ec.HR.*, 2nd Ser. 41, 1 (1988), pp. 51-73.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., *The English Rural Landscape*, ed. J. Thirsk (Oxford, 2000); K. Tiller, ‘Hook Norton, Oxfordshire: an open village’ in J. Thirsk, ed., *The English Rural Landscape* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 277-89 (p. 280).

<sup>22</sup> D. Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1980), pp. 24, 43, 116.

<sup>23</sup> B. Short, ‘Images and realities in the English rural community: an introduction’, in *The English Rural Community*, ed. B. Short, (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 1-18 (p.40).

<sup>24</sup> B. Short, ‘The evolution of contrasting communities within rural England’, in *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis*, ed. B. Short, (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 10-43 (pp. 10, 11, 12, 20, 28, 36, 40).

<sup>25</sup> I. Whyte, *Transforming Fell and Valley: Landscape and Parliamentary Enclosure in North West England* (Lancaster, 2003); I. Whyte, ‘Taming the Fells: parliamentary enclosure and landscape in northern England’, *Landscapes*, 1 (2005), 46-61; T. Williamson, ‘Understanding Enclosure’, *Landscapes*, 1, 1 (2000), 56-79; J. A. Yelling, *Common Field and Enclosure in England 1450-1850* (London, 1977).

systems and topography.<sup>26</sup> However, he moved on to discussing the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, calling them 'neglected', but like many historians before him, failing to discuss in detail the twentieth century.<sup>27</sup>

The link between landownership in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries was made possible from the late 1970s by the release to record offices of the 1910 valuation records (the 1910 'Domesday'). This, coupled with Short's valuable commentary on the records and their problems and uses, meant that analysis of landownership in the early twentieth century was possible and was an encouragement to historians to make use of this source.<sup>28</sup>

Although the early-twentieth-century break-up of great estates has always interested historians studying the complexities of economic and social power, the relationship of landownership to rural twentieth-century settlement development has been neglected. However, recently the twentieth century has received more attention and historians such as Hill, Evans and Marsden have produced local, regional and national studies.<sup>29</sup> Some social histories of rural society have also studied the development of countryside settlements as they attempted to describe rural society and how residents influenced and were affected by local and national events.<sup>30</sup>

Modern planners are interested in landownership in order to understand the resources available to rural inhabitants and landownership is seen as one of a number of limiting factors.<sup>31</sup> Social historians such as Wild and Howkins discuss rural settlement development as a product of social change. Howkins stops mid-twentieth century but Wild continues to the end of the century, thus demonstrating the growing interest in recent development.<sup>32</sup> In its turn, this study takes the story to the end of

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<sup>26</sup> T. Williamson, *Shaping Medieval Landscapes* (Macclesfield, 2003).

<sup>27</sup> T. Williamson, 'The rural landscape: 1500-1900, the neglected centuries', in *Landscape: The Richest Historical Record*, ed. D. Hooke, (Amesbury, 2000), pp. 109-131.

<sup>28</sup> B. Short, *The Geography of England and Wales in 1910: an evaluation of Lloyd George's 'Domesday' of landownership* (London, 1989); B. Short, *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain* (Cambridge, 1997).

<sup>29</sup> M. Hill, *Rural Settlement and the Urban Impact on the Countryside* (London, 2003); E. J. Evans, 'Landownership and the exercise of power in an industrializing society: Lancashire and Cheshire in the nineteenth century', in *Landownership and Power in Modern Europe*, eds. R. Gibson and M. Blinkhorn, (London, 1991), pp. 45-163; M.T. Marsden, and others, *Constructing the Countryside* (London, 1993); J. Murdoch, and others, *The Differentiated Countryside* (London, 2003).

<sup>30</sup> E.g. G. E. Mingay, *A Social History of the English Countryside* (London, 1990); Howkins, *Reshaping*; Howkins, *Death*.

<sup>31</sup> R. Norton-Taylor, *Whose Land is it Anyway: Agriculture, Planning and Land Use in the British Countryside* (London, 1982); M. J. Moseley, *Accessibility: The Rural Challenge* (London, 1979).

<sup>32</sup> A. Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History 1850-1925* (London, 1991); Howkins, *Rural England*; Trevor Wild, *Village England: A Social History of the Countryside* (London, 2004).

the twentieth century, acknowledging the importance of post-World War Two planning decisions to the physical development of settlements in the modern landscape.

### ***Rural settlement development as landscape change***

Alongside landownership studies there was an emerging interest in the history of settlements. The two subjects were linked through the mutual interest in the effect of the great landowning families on settlement change, including the physical changes of settlements in the landscape.

### **Pre-World War Two documentary and excavation-based work**

Settlement histories traditionally encompassed local and parish histories, often created by well-informed amateurs, most popular during the nineteenth century. Although claiming to be complete parish or settlement histories, they usually concentrated on the genealogy of notable residents (who were often the major local landowners), the church and its workings and manorial history. Landownership was mentioned only to define the status of the country house, school, church or chapel that was the prime focus of interest. As the author of one typical Victorian parish history commented 'it is not in any way an ambitious book, but simply a collection of facts concerning a parish with which I am officially associated...'<sup>33</sup>

Although interest in local histories continued, during the early part of the last century geology was the main focus for landscape studies (with therefore little place for landownership) and, by the 1920s, place names. Additionally, during the 1920s and 1930s general writers began to write local travel and topographical books and archaeologists began to relate their discoveries to the landscape.<sup>34</sup> The result was a basic narrative history based on the broad theory that change in an historic environment was evolutionary and that an older form was replaced by a newer one. This study, although maintaining a broad chronological approach within each theme, is both thematic and chronological in approach. It moves beyond the confines of one parish or settlement and examines the complex influences of landownership influences upon settlement development over a period of 250 years.

<sup>33</sup> W. Harnett Blanch, *Parish of Camberwell* (London, 1875), p. vii.

<sup>34</sup> *The English Rural Landscape*, ed. J. Thirsk (Oxford, 2000), pp. 12, 13.

## Post-World War Two landscape history

Shortly after World War Two interest in local history, including rural settlement studies, increased and the subject introduced methods and methodology into landscape studies pioneered during the war years. War-inspired innovations such as aerial photography allowed access to data unavailable to previous generations of historians and this new data, together with a focus on fieldwork, transformed the subject.<sup>35</sup> Landownership study was necessary only as a way of linking documentary evidence to fieldwork.

Thorpe, in his 1949 work on rural settlement types, studied lowland villages with greens which he divided into three types based on their form or plan.<sup>36</sup> Although less detailed than Roberts's later work on settlement plans, it was a primary source of Roberts's ideas. Thorpe emphasised the regional contrasts in rural settlement and based the difference between villages and hamlets on size rather than function. His work on rural settlement continued with a general history of rural settlement in Britain referring particularly to nucleated and dispersed settlement patterns and their regional distribution.<sup>37</sup> Geographers such as H.C. Darby also became interested in the way the landscape affected settlements from the point of view of their topographical placing, publishing on this topic from 1951 onwards, although landowners were of interest only for their ability to embellish the natural landscape.<sup>38</sup> Modern settlement studies, including the present work, draw on this distinction between nucleated and dispersed settlement patterns.

Crawford, an archaeologist, began to use non-excavation techniques such as aerial photography, maps and fieldwork to examine sites, and extended excavation work to examine the landscape in which the sites existed.<sup>39</sup> Crawford and Beresford contributed to the fieldwork-based methodology that was so well refined and

<sup>35</sup> E.g. O. G. S. Crawford, *Archaeology in the Field* (London, 1953); M. W. Beresford, *History on the Ground* (London, 1957); Hoskins, *Making*.

<sup>36</sup> H. Thorpe, 'The Green Villages of County Durham', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (hereafter *TIBG*), 15 (1949), 155-180.

<sup>37</sup> H. Thorpe, 'Rural Settlement', in *The British Isles: A Systematic Geography*, eds. J. Wreford Watson and J. B. Sissons, (Edinburgh, 1964), pp. 358-79.

<sup>38</sup> H. C. Darby, 'The changing English landscape', *The Geographical Journal*, 117, 4 (1951), 337-398.

<sup>39</sup> C. Taylor, 'W. G. Hoskins and *The Making of the English Landscape*', *Local Historian*, 35, no. 2 (2005), 74-81 (p. 74); Crawford, *Archaeology*, M. Bowden, 'Mapping the past: O. G. S. Crawford and the development of landscape studies', *Landscapes*, 2, no. 2 (2001), 29-45.

popularised by Hoskins in his seminal books on local history, *Fieldwork in Local History*, *The Making of the English Landscape* and *Provincial England*.<sup>40</sup>

Beresford combined field studies with topographical case studies, at first confining his studies to deserted medieval settlements, but later suggesting that these could be conducted in urban as well as rural areas. Beresford's early works, *The Lost Villages of England* (1954) and *History on the Ground* (1957) investigated (mainly medieval) settlement changes, the former book using fieldwork to detect 'lost' medieval villages and the latter relating document work to field work by topic 'journeys'. Again, landownership linked documentary sources and fieldwork. Beresford, writing about the same time as Hoskins, attributed his interest in field walking to both Darby and Hoskins.<sup>41</sup>

Hoskins, trained as an economic historian, is usually credited with acknowledging the importance of the landscape itself. He changed the focus from the general to the particular, from landscape as a whole to individual features of settlements<sup>42</sup> and was in turn drawing on the work by Crawford and Beresford. Hoskins departed from the tradition of topographical books to focus on how the human-created landscape evolved. He inspired and was inspired by the members of workers' adult education classes that were popular after World War Two.<sup>43</sup> In the late 1950s Hoskins encouraged a new way of working involving a combination of close observation fieldwork with documentary evidence. He concentrated on the physical facts of landscape change rather than the relationship between the shape of settlements and landownership. The nearest he came to linking the two was in brief references to planned towns where he said 'a variety of ownerships and rights ... precluded a unified plan'.<sup>44</sup>

However, Hoskins considered twentieth-century built development detrimental to the landscape. In the final chapter of *The Making of the English Landscape*, writing within recent memory of World War Two, he dwelt on the destruction of rural England. Hoskins lamented that from the end of the nineteenth

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<sup>40</sup> W. G. Hoskins, *Provincial England* (London, 1975); Hoskins, *Fieldwork*; Hoskins and Taylor, *Making*.

<sup>41</sup> Beresford, *History*, pp. 9, 13.

<sup>42</sup> Hoskins, *Making*, pp. 10, 12.

<sup>43</sup> C. Taylor, 'The Making of the English Landscape and beyond: inspiration and dissemination', *Landscapes*, 2 (2005), 96-104 (pp. 98, 101).

<sup>44</sup> Hoskins, *Making*, p. 230.



century, especially since 1914, the countryside had been 'uglified' and he was particularly upset by the effects of military installations such as airfields.<sup>45</sup> Taylor chided Hoskins for assuming that the English landscape could remain static and pointed out that it 'had always been changing for better or worse'. He exonerated planners and other decision-makers from blame for the twentieth-century landscape, averring that people in a democratic society got the landscape they demanded (and thus, he inferred, they deserved).<sup>46</sup> Until recently, historians tended to follow Hoskins's lead and, even if not matching his loathing of the modern landscape, have avoided the study of modern rural settlement. Historical geographers, less constrained by this legacy, took a new interest from the 1970s onwards in twentieth-century settlement development, particularly urban studies. Meanwhile, other writers turned to the study of rural settlement development, notably Mills who edited a series of essays under the title *English Rural Communities* which took an economic approach to both landownership and rural settlement.<sup>47</sup> In it he acknowledged that 'the institution of landownership was one of the most potent forces acting on rural communities'.<sup>48</sup> Landownership therefore began to be taken seriously as a major influence on landscape change rather than of secondary importance to the study of the landscape itself.

In his introduction to the 1985 reprint of his pioneering book *The Making of the English Landscape* Hoskins paid tribute to archaeologists' recovery of the landscape's history but observed that he tried to make 'what can be seen on the surface today as an end in itself'.<sup>49</sup> He maintained that settlements were older than previously supposed and that study of settlement development in its own right led to a greater understanding and appreciation of the landscape. The inclusion of urban as well as rural settlements by Beresford and Hoskins foreshadowed the increased interest in urban studies as a separate discipline from the late 1960s and early 1970s. The interest in landscape studies that Hoskins inspired was echoed in *The Making of*

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<sup>45</sup> Hoskins, *Making*, pp. 298-9.

<sup>46</sup> Hoskins and Taylor, *Making*, p. 237. Early nineteenth-century rural life was not idyllic compared to urban life. Although some agricultural workers were well-housed the myth of 'typical English country life' had been perpetuated on television in particular (D. Vincent, 'Rural life - beneficial, urban life - detrimental; image and reality', *Open History*, Special Conference Edition (1999), 19-26 (pp. 23, 26).

<sup>47</sup> *English Rural Communities: The Impact of a Specialised Economy*, ed. D. R. Mills (London, 1977), pp. 10-11.

<sup>48</sup> Mills, *Rural Communities*, p.11.

<sup>49</sup> Hoskins, *Making*, pp. 10, 12.

*the English Landscape* series of county overviews begun in the late fifties, continued into the 1980s and still today being printed and revised (although Cheshire is still omitted from the series).<sup>50</sup>

Although this study is not based on the type of detailed fieldwork pioneered by Hoskins, and owes more to post-1970s interpretations of settlement change, some limited fieldwork was undertaken. It is a tribute to Hoskins's influence that settlement studies are nowadays rarely conducted purely from documentary evidence.

### **Maps and plans in their own right: spatial awareness**

The next important change in settlement studies came with the way maps and plans were used to examine settlement changes in the landscape for which landownership was one contributing factor. Until the late 1960s maps and plans were used in this context primarily to explain changes in individual settlements or excavation results. Historians subsequently became interested in using these tools to explain spatial relationships between settlements in the landscape and to relate them to the underlying topography. While still drawing on the disciplines of geography and archaeology, local and landscape historians began to create maps and plans that in themselves resulted in new insights into the landscape and the elements within it. Maps and plans became prime tools in morphological studies of settlements, which in turn were related to landownership patterns.

Since the late 1970s settlement development has been increasingly studied in terms of a defining morphology, especially by historians such as Thorpe, Rowley, Roberts and Taylor. Thorpe concentrated on the size of settlements and their distribution in the landscape and asserted that size, not form, was the key.<sup>51</sup> He also, like others acknowledging the importance of landownership, noted that the influence of a major landowner 'might change the very look of the landscape itself'.<sup>52</sup> Rowley's interest in types of village plans set a trend followed by Roberts which

<sup>50</sup> *The Making of the English Landscape* series includes Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Sussex, and the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire.

<sup>51</sup> H. Thorpe, 'The lord and the landscape', in *English Rural Communities: The Impact of a Specialised Economy*, ed. D. R. Mills (London, 1977), pp. 31-82.

<sup>52</sup> Thorpe, *Lord*, p.31.

culminated in Roberts's detailed morphology of settlement structure and guide to settlement shape.

A major change in the last fifty years has been the concept borrowed from archaeology that the human-created landscape can be considered as layers of change. This point of view is particularly evident in the trend towards morphology and mapping seen in Roberts's definitions of settlement form and mapping of spatial settlement patterns and the more recent interest in landscape analysis in which elements in the built landscape are perceived as layers on a map. In such a methodology, landownership patterns are also layers on the same map.

Awareness of the weakness in simple chronological exposition encouraged researchers such as Roberts, a geographer, to investigate patterns created by mapping the historical elements of the landscape and to formulate theories from the relationship between this mapping and the topographical base.<sup>53</sup> Roberts introduced in an article 'Village Plans' the concept of similar village plans and their grouping into types. His books *Village Plans*, *Rural Settlement in Britain* and *Landscapes of Settlement*, taken together, provide an excellent overall view of the physical changes in settlements in Britain and abroad and definitions of settlement types. He specifically referred to the 'importance of landownership as a mechanism controlling settlement'.<sup>54</sup> However, he continued to concentrate on the morphology of settlement change. In *Rural Settlement in Britain* he drew attention to spatial patterns as an indication of dispersal, as well as a broad correlation between dispersed settlement and uplands, while reminding the reader that external physical and economic factors could account for regional settlement differences. Roberts attempted to resolve the 'tension' between analysing specific locations and presenting a broader view with the focus on classification as a base. His use of maps was based on the premise that generalisations are useful for understanding reality. If one can overcome the problems of classification then patterns can be found and forms, including settlement

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<sup>53</sup> B. K. Roberts, 'The study of village plans', *Local Historian*, 9 no. 15 (1971); B. K. Roberts, 'The anatomy of the village: observation and extrapolation', *Landscape History*, 4 (1982), 11-20; B. K. Roberts and S. Wrathmall, *Terrain and Rural Settlement Mapping: The Methodology and Preliminary Results* (Durham, 1995); B. K. Roberts, S. Wrathmall and D. Stocker, 'Rural Settlement in England: an English Heritage mapping project', *Ruralia 1, Památky Archeologické-Supplementum 5 Praha 1996*, (1996), 72-79; Roberts and Wrathmall, 'Dispersed', pp. 95-116; Roberts and Wrathmall, *Atlas*.

<sup>54</sup> B. K. Roberts, *Rural Settlement in Britain* (London, 1977), p. 59; B. K. Roberts, 'Village plans in Britain', *Recherches de Géographie Rurale*, (1979); B. K. Roberts, *Village Plans* (Princes Risborough, 1982); Roberts, *Plans*; Roberts, *Landscapes*.

forms, found within patterns, but one should bear in mind that rural settlement is hardly ever stable and suffers expansion, contraction, reorganisation and movement.<sup>55</sup>

Other geographers took up the challenge of relating settlements to spatial concepts. Chisholm, for example, used distance as the major theme in a study of rural settlement and land use. He used world-wide examples of fragmented farming systems to show that farm land nearer to farmsteads is more economic than farm land more distant from them, and related farmstead to village and farmland.<sup>56</sup>

Geographers also studied the relationship between rural settlement patterns and 'physical, economic and social conditions'.<sup>57</sup> There was a crossover from the geographers' use of spatial elements as a means of describing and defining elements in the landscape to the historians' use of morphology as a means of uncovering truths about the evolution of human-created landscapes such as settlements. However, while noting the importance of landownership's influence on settlements, the relationship between the two was still of less importance than examining the resulting facts.

Hudson, reminding readers that farming was not the only rural industry, dismissed size as a criterion of settlement definition and preferred population density. He acknowledged the problems of catering for a growing population by extending villages sensitively and imaginatively. He also noted that economic conditions led to changes in social structure and described three types of urban development: Burgess's concentric, Hoytg's wedge and Harris's multiple nuclei, the latter reminiscent of Taylor's polyfocal settlements.<sup>58</sup>

Rowley and Wood continued Beresford's work.<sup>59</sup> Rowley in *Villages in the Landscape* (1978) tackled settlements' development by examining their physical changes. He created a settlement morphology with an attempt to trace the history of English villages<sup>60</sup> using a multidisciplinary approach and subsequently collaborated

<sup>55</sup> B. K. Roberts, *Rural Settlement: An Historical Perspective*, Historical Geography Research Series (London, 1982), pp. 4, 5, 8, 31.

<sup>56</sup> M. Chisholm, *Rural Settlement and Land Use: A Study in Location*, 3rd edn (London, 1979).

<sup>57</sup> D. R. Mills, 'The Development of Rural Settlement around Lincoln', in *English Rural Communities: The Impact of a Specialised Economy*, ed. D. R. Mills (London, 1977), pp. 83-97 (p.83).

<sup>58</sup> F. S. Hudson, *Geography of settlements*, 2nd edn (Plymouth, 1976).

<sup>59</sup> T. Rowley and J. Wood, *Deserted Villages*, 3rd edn (Princes Risborough, 2000).

<sup>60</sup> T. Rowley, *Villages in the Landscape*, (London, 1978).

with John Wood on deserted villages<sup>61</sup> from an archaeological viewpoint. He specifically related changes in landownership and settlement patterns to 'the willingness or otherwise of the landowner or owners ... in the communities to initiate or tolerate change'.<sup>62</sup> Rowley brought to a wider audience succinctly and clearly the concept of defining physical changes in settlement and the importance of defining terms. Since the 1980s there has been more emphasis on finding patterns and creating schemata for settlement patterns and change. Aston, for example, did so from the viewpoint of a landscape archaeologist,<sup>63</sup> but Roberts took this to new heights with his theoretical models of settlement patterns and settlement forms.

In the later 1980s there was an increasing trend towards a socio-economic analysis of landscape and settlements. Yates presented four of Bobeck's 'socio-economic structured stages' as a method of analysing English rural settlement development to relate settlements' physical changes to social changes in their communities. This included different types of landownership systems. It was distinctive in that a detailed analysis of the effect of landownership was related to the changes in the physical structure of settlements. He concluded that change in settlements reflected economic changes in economy and compared the nostalgic image of a stable rural life with the reality of social mobility.<sup>64</sup>

Of Taylor's many books on landscape history, *Village and Farmstead* is the most important for this study.<sup>65</sup> Taylor drew attention to the complexity of rural settlements, introducing the concept of multi-nucleated or 'polyfocal' settlements (settlements with more than one focus for growth), and stressed the migration of sites.<sup>66</sup> He pointed out that the surviving form of settlements was the result of 'human (rather than physical) determinism'.<sup>67</sup> He used Thorpe's definitions of settlement types but drew attention to the modernity of many villages in their present form, the complexity of their development and the many changes over time. Like Roberts, he advocated examination of the process of nucleation by using old maps, stressing the importance of local factors in the landscape. However, he did not

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<sup>61</sup> Rowley and Wood, *Deserted*.

<sup>62</sup> Rowley, *Villages*, p.3.

<sup>63</sup> M. Aston and T. Rowley, *Landscape Archaeology* (London, 1974); M. Aston, *Interpreting*.

<sup>64</sup> Yates, 'Evolution'.

<sup>65</sup> Taylor, *Farmstead*.

<sup>66</sup> C. Taylor, 'Polyfocal Settlement and the English Village', *Medieval Archaeology*, 21 (1977), 189-193; Muir, *Approaches*, p. 34.

<sup>67</sup> Taylor, *Farmstead*, p.15.

wholeheartedly agree with Roberts's definitions, regarding many settlements as too complex to be confined to one type. Unlike Beresford or Thorpe, Taylor referred to modern settlement patterns and included twentieth-century deserted villages caused by military training areas, flooded land for reservoirs, slate quarrying, estate and council housing and commuter villages. He stressed the importance of including the modern era up to the present day in historical research into the landscape and has been keen to see historians tackle the modern era with as much enthusiasm as they do the pre-modern period. This study therefore acknowledges the importance of studying the modern era and is one of the new generation of landscape studies to reach the end of the twentieth century.

Muir's important book on settlement development, *The Lost Villages of England*,<sup>68</sup> included modern villages 'lost' to water supplies and wartime army needs. It also provided brief general explanations for modern village desertion and mentioned settlements overtaken by suburbia, industry or transport that had essentially lost their hearts if not technically 'lost'. He attributed settlement decline to social and economic conditions. His more recent books explored how to read the landscape as an historian, returning to Beresford and Hoskins's fieldwork and documentary approach.<sup>69</sup> However, although, like others, he related landownership to such landscape changes as enclosure or planned settlements, he did not attempt a detailed explanation of the link.

While villages and hamlets received attention as part of a largely pre-modern interest in rural settlement, the other extreme was an interest in large urban areas fostered by Dyos, Carter and others.<sup>70</sup> However, some historians have taken a more measured look at the development of small towns, such as rural market towns. But there is no consensus about what defines a town and, as Corfield said in *The Impact*

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<sup>68</sup> Muir *The Lost Villages of England* (London, 1982).

<sup>69</sup> R. Muir, *Reading the Landscape* (London, 1981); Muir, *Approaches*; R. Muir, *The New Reading the Landscape* (London, 2000); R. Muir, *Landscape Detective: Discovering a Countryside* (Macclesfield, 2001).

<sup>70</sup> E.g. *Study of Urban History*, ed. H. J. Dyos, (London, 1976); H. J. Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: A study of the growth of Camberwell* (Leicester, 1977); *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History*, ed. H. J. Dyos, (Cambridge, 1982); H. Carter, *The Study of Urban Geography*, 4th edn (London, 1965); H. Carter, *An Introduction to Urban Historical Geography* (London, 1983); H. Carter and C. R. Lewis, *An Urban Geography of England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1990); R. H. Best, 'Extent of urban growth and agricultural displacement in post-war Britain', *Urban Studies*, 5, 1 (1968), 1-23; *Small Towns in Early Modern Europe*, ed. P. Clark, (Cambridge, 1995); *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, eds. D. M. Palliser, P. Clark and M. J. Daunton (Cambridge, 2001).

of *English Towns*, 'there was no simple definition of what constituted a town.'<sup>71</sup> Corfield defined towns by social and economic realities, rather than their physical structure.<sup>72</sup> However, the changing physical form of towns was studied through analysis of landownership in relation to speculative builders, a more detailed level of approach to the effects of landownership than was normally attempted for rural settlements.<sup>73</sup>

The study of settlement development requires an understanding of settlement boundaries which is usefully discussed in Best and Rogers's *The Urban Countryside: The Land-Use Structure of Small Towns and Villages in England and Wales* (London, 1973). This defined the area of small urban settlements (<10,000 population) by land use based on the Department of the Environment's five categories. They concluded that 80 per cent of the total area of hamlets, villages and very small towns was occupied by housing and pointed out that regional studies often ignored the larger picture. They also noted the predominance of small villages and hamlets in the pattern of rural settlement.<sup>74</sup> Landownership was notably not one of the components of their study although they mentioned in passing 'land holding' as a constraint upon land-use structure.<sup>75</sup> Their book provided a useful discussion of the problem of defining settlement boundaries.

Aston, an archaeologist, based his work firmly in fieldwork starting from settlement as the primary need of humans who shaped the landscape.<sup>76</sup> Writing in 1983 about the future of the human-created landscape, he observed that it is older and more complex than previously thought and identified five themes for settlement historians: settlement, land use, focal places, communications and estates. He suggested that it is necessary to consider how much settlement development is recent and how much a continuation of a much older tradition.<sup>77</sup> However, although he briefly mentioned the post-medieval period, the emphasis was on the medieval and pre-medieval period. Again, landownership documentation was included as a means of establishing a basis for fieldwork. The present study combines analysis of

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<sup>71</sup>P. J. Corfield, *The Impact of the English Town 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1982), p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> Corfield, *Town*, p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> E. g. C. W. Chalkin, *The Provincial Towns of Georgian England: A study of the building process 1740-1820* (London, 1974).

<sup>74</sup> Best and Rogers, *Land-Use*, pp. 29-30, 87.

<sup>75</sup> Best and Rogers, *Land-Use*, p. 79.

<sup>76</sup> Aston, *Interpreting*.

<sup>77</sup> Aston, '25 years'.

settlement with discussion of landownership, thereby incorporating several of Aston's themes.

### **Landscape analysis and characterisation**

The increased enthusiasm for mapping larger areas of land continued as part of an ongoing interest in settlement distribution and the physical evolution of settlements as part of the landscape, particularly whether they were dispersed or nucleated, and settlement studies focussed on whether or not there was change. However, the focus on the medieval period also continued. There was also an awareness that Hoskins's theories of settlement evolution and age were no longer reliable.<sup>78</sup>

Taylor, as editor of the revised edition (1988) of Hoskins's book, *The Making of the English Landscape*, questioned the evolutionary idea of settlement development, and stressed that settlements changed over time. He saw settlement evolution, the process of physical settlement change, as a dynamic and complex process and considered some morphological studies to be simplistic and 'largely nonsense' when they advocated a largely unchanging settlement form. He noted the change towards more nucleated settlements from the eighteenth century which might be reflected in polyfocal settlements in spite of later nucleation, particularly visible in the 'regulated villages' of northern England.<sup>79</sup> Subsequently, Taylor regarded the section on villages in Hoskins's book as 'completely outdated' and stated that no work on English villages prior to the 1970s was worth reading. He stressed the lack of information about twentieth-century landscapes in the book and called the chronological approach outdated as new interpretations of the landscape had emerged. However, Hoskins's original book remains an important text.<sup>80</sup> Taylor also drew attention to what he considered Hoskins's serious omission: the impact on landscape of improvements in public amenities introduced in the second half of the nineteenth century. He also criticised Hoskins's unfavourable evaluation of developments in the first half of the twentieth century and suggested that Hoskins's dislike of towns might have coloured his judgement about them.<sup>81</sup> However,

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<sup>78</sup> Lewis, Mitchell-Fox and Dyer, *Village*, p. 8.

<sup>79</sup> Taylor, '25 years', pp. 198-9.

<sup>80</sup> Taylor, 'Hoskins', pp. 79, 81.

<sup>81</sup> Hoskins and Taylor, *Making*, p. 176.



although Hoskins disliked the worst elements of modern progress his information on 'decoding' a town is valuable today and can be applied to rural settlements.<sup>82</sup>

Roberts almost single-handedly introduced a system of morphology based on Rowley's work. He thought that uncovering the past landscapes was a key to understanding the present landscape<sup>83</sup> and that the farmstead was the 'building block' of rural settlement.<sup>84</sup> Roberts pioneered a detailed descriptive morphology backed by a systematic schema using a unique diagrammatic system of symbols and description enabling the morphology of settlements to be compared. He described settlement development, whether growth, decline or stasis, as the story of urban living in a rural context and emphasised the effect of outside influences.<sup>85</sup> Many of Roberts's schemata add clarity to complex ideas; others appear fanciful and of less practical use. Roberts's work with Stuart Wrathmall, *An Atlas of Rural Settlement in England*, formulated a methodology for mapping settlement dispersal according to type and size for both medieval and nineteenth-century settlement. It determined boundaries of settlement and landscape types on a national scale. He regarded landownership as just one 'layer' in the landscape, something that could be mapped.<sup>86</sup> Roberts asserted that 'rural settlement is always experienced through the particular' from individual buildings, plans, village shapes (morphology) which reflect cultural elements within an overall awareness of time.<sup>87</sup> However, in his *Atlas* he examined patterns of settlement nationwide, thus taking a broad view.

This is a very important work which defines and maps the distribution of nineteenth-century settlements using OS maps. Therefore information on settlement dispersal is available for south-west Cheshire which was unavailable to researchers such as Vipond. While there was an element of subjectivity as to which buildings to include in any settlement, it provides the nearest to an accurate settlement mapping of the area to date.<sup>88</sup> Roberts and Wrathmall have continued to study and evaluate relationships between different mapped data, believing that mapping could indicate the characteristics of different areas and used local examples to explain national data

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<sup>82</sup> Hoskins and Taylor, *Making*, pp. 221, 17; Taylor, '25 years on', p. 199.

<sup>83</sup> Roberts, *Landscapes*, p. x.

<sup>84</sup> Roberts, *Landscapes*, pp. 15, 19.

<sup>85</sup> Roberts, *Landscapes*, Fig. 1.5, p. 11.

<sup>86</sup> Roberts and Wrathmall, *Atlas*.

<sup>87</sup> Roberts, *Landscapes*, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>88</sup> Roberts and Wrathmall, *Atlas*, p. 11.

followed by examination of individual examples.<sup>89</sup> However, although valuable, much of Roberts's recent work with Wrathmall on mapping settlement distribution in England has concentrated on the nineteenth century. Although his work attempted to answer questions of settlement definition initially posed by Thorpe, Roberts pointed out that Thorpe left no notes on his sources or methodology.<sup>90</sup> Even today there is no absolute agreement on settlement definition.

Others besides Taylor regarded Roberts's morphological settlement definitions as too confining. Mike Headon studied the morphology of settlements in Wales and tried to apply 'a reasoned taxonomy'.<sup>91</sup> He rejected Roberts's and others' categories as oversimplified and discerned 14 distinct settlement types<sup>92</sup> raising questions about the nature of dispersed settlements and their boundary positions, drawing attention to the restraints on settlements of physical geography. The question of settlement boundaries still occupies historians today.

Whyte suggested that settlement plans had evolved with more changes from their original form than most people assumed.<sup>93</sup> Whyte's recent work includes an overview of landscape and settlement.<sup>94</sup> In 'The historical geography of Britain from AD 1500' he emphasised that settlements are not invariably in their original form and that landscape changes began on home farms on some estates as early as the seventeenth century with increased investment in the nineteenth century and improvement to farms and workers' cottages.<sup>95</sup>

Stephen Rippon, writing for the Council of British Archaeology (CBA), emphasised the importance of the landscape itself to historical studies, but noted the importance of focussing on the processes that created the modern landscape. He suggested that this would mean concentrating on the medieval and post-medieval periods implying that the modern period is as important as older periods. He also advocated the use of morphology to cope with the demands of the inclusivity of

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<sup>89</sup> B. K. Roberts and S. Wrathmall, *Region and Place: A Study of English Rural Settlement* (London, 2002), pp. 1-9.

<sup>90</sup> B. K. Roberts, personal communication to P. Bird, 16 January 2002.

<sup>91</sup> M. Headon, 'The morphology of settlements in north-east Wales: an attempt at a reasoned taxonomy' (unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Liverpool, 2000),

<sup>92</sup> Headon, 'Morphology', pp. 4, 13.

<sup>93</sup> I. Whyte, 'The historical geography of Britain from AD 1500', in *The Archaeology of Britain*, (London, 1999), pp. 264-79 (p. 265).

<sup>94</sup> I. Whyte, *Landscape and History since 1500* (London, 2002).

<sup>95</sup> Whyte, 'Britain', pp. 264-79.

modern landscape studies of whatever size of area thus bringing the study back to Rowley and Roberts.<sup>96</sup>

Although the emphasis on rural settlement studies has been mainly on the pre-modern period, it was not until the end of the twentieth century that landscape historians began to show an interest in the modern period for its own sake. The importance of twentieth-century studies has been emphasised by at least two major historians specialising in rural settlements. Mingay in 1990 commented on the lack of twentieth-century studies and, while drawing attention to the huge volume of local rural studies, said that historians were only just beginning to produce work on the twentieth century, albeit generally only to World War One.<sup>97</sup> Taylor said that the settlement of any period can change in unusual ways, so it was important to include the twentieth century especially post World War Two.<sup>98</sup>

This section has shown that until the 1980s, although historians acknowledged the importance of landownership as an influence on the physical development of settlements, few attempted a detailed analysis of the relationship between the two. Although this is being addressed by more recent historians, there is still ample scope for detailed studies, particularly at a local level.

### ***Secondary sources for south-west Cheshire***

South-west Cheshire is neglected in terms of secondary sources, including those related to landownership and landscape. For a comprehensive overview of the history of any area one would turn to the ongoing series of the Victoria County Histories, where available. However, so far the five completed Cheshire volumes focus largely on the city of Chester and on the broad historical developments of Cheshire and therefore could only be used for general information such as population figures.<sup>99</sup> It is hoped that the present study will contribute to a future volume.<sup>100</sup>

South-west Cheshire, although the focus of few secondary studies, features in several important general histories of Cheshire. The Cheshire volume of the *Magna Britannia* series is a general topographical account of the county, which Ormerod

<sup>96</sup> S. Rippon, *Historic Landscape Analysis* (York, 2004), pp. 3-4.

<sup>97</sup> Mingay, 'Rural History', p. 85.

<sup>98</sup> C. Taylor, 1 June 2002, 'People and places: local history and landscape history'. Lecture presented for the British Association for Local History at the British Library, London.

<sup>99</sup> *VCH Chester 2*.

<sup>100</sup> The former editor of the Cheshire *VCH*, Dr. C. P. Lewis, encouraged the author to undertake this study with such an outcome in mind.

considered not entirely reliable.<sup>101</sup> Hanshall's *History of the County Palatine of Chester*, is similar to the *Britannia*, and contributed little more.<sup>102</sup> Ormerod's comprehensive nineteenth-century coverage of *Cheshire History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, particularly the second edition edited by Thomas Helsby, is still the standard starting point for any research into Cheshire history.<sup>103</sup> It provides details of landowning families and therefore the transfer of township and manors up to the mid-nineteenth century and describes important buildings such as churches and halls in varying detail. The subjective snapshots of each settlement, which Ormerod claims to have visited personally, vary from one sentence to several paragraphs but generally describe the physical aspect, local landscape and type of settlement of each township. Although limited in scope, it nevertheless provides useful background.

Relevant modern Cheshire histories include Davies's *The Agricultural History of Cheshire 1750-1850* and Sylvester's work on the county's rural settlement and historical maps of Cheshire maps.<sup>104</sup> Although more recent research has modified their conclusions, they remain fundamental to rural study of the area. Scard and Scholes also provide useful historical county-wide overviews.<sup>105</sup> An important modern county source is Phillips and Phillips's *A New Historical Atlas of Cheshire*<sup>106</sup> which provides historical mapping of the county in line with the trend for large scale landscape analysis as practised by Roberts.

Aside from these county histories, secondary sources for the townships in south-west Cheshire from 1750, including the six sample townships, vary in content, range and availability. Other works on Cheshire as a whole tend to make scant

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<sup>101</sup> Rev. D. Lysons and S. Lysons, *Magna Britannia Being a Concise Topographical Account of the Several Counties of Great Britain*, 2 vols (London, 1810); P. Warburton, 'In Ormerod's shadow', *Cheshire History*, 44 (2004/5), 109-119.

<sup>102</sup> J. H. Hanshall, *History of the County Palatine of Chester* (Chester, 1817).

<sup>103</sup> G. Ormerod, *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester. Incorporated With a Republication of King's Vale, Royal, and Leycester's Cheshire Antiquities*, rev. and enl. by T. Helsby. 2nd edn (London, 1882).

<sup>104</sup> C. S. Davies, *The Agricultural History of Cheshire, 1750-1850*, Remains Historical and Literary connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester, 3rd ser. 10 (Manchester, 1960); D. Sylvester, 'Rural settlement in Cheshire: some problems of origin and classification', *THSLC*, 101 (1949), 1-38; D. Sylvester, 'Parish and township in Cheshire and north-east Wales', *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society* (hereafter *JCAS*), 54 (1967), 23-35; D. Sylvester, 'The Open Fields of Cheshire', *THSLC*, 1908 (1956), 1-33; D. Sylvester, *A history of Cheshire* (Henley-on-Thames, 1971); D. Sylvester and G. Nulty, eds., *The Historical Atlas of Cheshire* (Chester, 1958).

<sup>105</sup> Scard, *Squire*; R. Scholes, *Cheshire, Towns & villages of Britain* (Wilmslow, 2000).

<sup>106</sup> A. D. M. Phillips and C. B. Phillips, *A New Historical Atlas of Cheshire* (Chester, 2002).

reference to south-west Cheshire unless to mention the largest settlements – Malpas or Farndon – in passing. The area's few local histories have been created by F. A. Latham with the help of volunteers from south-west Cheshire townships who collected various aspects of their community history. Two are relevant to this study<sup>107</sup> but the content is piecemeal and anecdotal interspersed with lists of vicars or the history of the local school, a format reminiscent of the older parish histories. The redeeming feature of each book is the initial chapter by Keith Matthews, until 2004 an archaeologist working for Chester City Council's Chester Archaeology, on the archaeology of the specific areas. *Cheshire Life* occasionally features brief descriptive articles of south-west Cheshire's townships aimed at tourists including some about the sample townships.<sup>108</sup>

White, Stephenson and Vipond's academic work has already been assessed but additional secondary sources for the six sample townships are also sparse. A 1920s monograph by Major Packman, *Bygone Tilston*, dealt mainly with the history of the land-owning families before 1760 and the history of the church, both largely drawn from Ormerod.<sup>109</sup> More recent sources for Tilston consist of brief mentions in guidebooks<sup>110</sup> and a section in one of Latham's aforementioned community books.<sup>111</sup> Malpas is mentioned in general books about Cheshire,<sup>112</sup> brief articles in local history publications such as the *Malpas Field Club Journal* mainly detailing the history of specific buildings in the town,<sup>113</sup> and local memoirs.<sup>114</sup> Local historian, David Hayns, has produced a number of descriptive booklets, articles and leaflets on various aspects of Malpas's history.<sup>115</sup> Tushingam has attracted little attention from journalists or local historians and is mentioned in only three general books on

<sup>107</sup> *Farndon: The History of a Cheshire Village*, ed. F. A. Latham, (Farndon, 1981); *Tilston, Shocklach & Thrapwood*, ed. F. A. Latham (Whitchurch, 2001).

<sup>108</sup> E.g. H. Dixon, 'Don't pass Malpas' *Cheshire Life*, September 1999, pp. 84-87 and similar articles; R. Haslam, 'Edge Hall, Cheshire', *Country Life*, 21 November 1985, pp. 1612-14; 'Tilston 20 years ago', *Cheshire Life*, February 1999.

<sup>109</sup> Major Packman, *Bygone Tilston* (1923).

<sup>110</sup> E.g. Scholes, *Cheshire*; R.A. Dutton, *Hidden Highways of Cheshire* (Chester, 1999).

<sup>111</sup> Latham, *Tilston*.

<sup>112</sup> E.g. A. Crosby, *A History of Cheshire* (Chichester, 1996); Scholes, *Cheshire*.

<sup>113</sup> D. Hayns, ed., *Malpas Field Club Journal* (Malpas, 1981-1988).

<sup>114</sup> W. G. Coffin, 'Back in Five Minutes' *Childhood and Teenage Memories of Malpas in the 1940s and 1950s* (Malpas, 2001).

<sup>115</sup> E.g. D. Hayns, *The Jubilee Hall Malpas* (Malpas, 1987); D. Hayns, *Malpas and the Great War 1914-1918* (Malpas, 1993), et al. D. Hayns was a regular contributor to the *Local Historian* who specialised in the history of Malpas and the surrounding area.

Cheshire<sup>116</sup> and two of these references are solely to the seventeenth century.<sup>117</sup> Scholes's book provides a brief half-page description of Tushingham, relying heavily on the Domesday Book, and a description of the seventeenth-century St Chad's chapel.<sup>118</sup> The remaining secondary sources include a short history of St Chad's chapel<sup>119</sup> and a brochure describing a walk from Tushingham including snippets of local interest.<sup>120</sup> Church Shocklach and Shocklach Oviatt are both referred to in Scard's general overview of rural life in Cheshire from the second half of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>121</sup> He concentrated on the relationship between county family landlords and tenant farmers and used original material, some of which related to south-west Cheshire. Unfortunately, although the book contributes to a general understanding of local agriculture, it does not provide references to the original material nor relate its bibliography to the text. Rhys Williams's book of aerial photographs includes several pages about both Shocklach townships in reference to medieval remains, ridge and furrow and the river Dee boundary.<sup>122</sup> Both Shocklach townships are mentioned very briefly in two other general histories of Cheshire<sup>123</sup> and in an eight-page booklet about St Edith's church in Church Shocklach.<sup>124</sup> Chester City Council has produced occasional documents as part of its overall planning, environmental and conservation policies during the second half of the twentieth century which refer to townships in the area.<sup>125</sup>

Therefore, the secondary sources for south-west Cheshire are limited and this lack of information in itself provides an adequate reason for investigating settlement development within the area.

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<sup>116</sup> Crosby, *Cheshire*; Scholes, *Cheshire*; N. Pevsner and E. Hubbard, *The Buildings of Cheshire* (London, 1971).

<sup>117</sup> Crosby, *Cheshire*, p. 69; Pevsner and Hubbard, *Cheshire*, pp. 23, 365.

<sup>118</sup> Scholes, *Cheshire*, p. 153.

<sup>119</sup> Rev. T. M. Hearn, *Brief History of Old St Chad Chapel Tushingham* (Malpas, 1970).

<sup>120</sup> Cheshire County Council Countryside Management, 'Alone in the Fields'. *A Circular Walk from Tushingham, near Whitchurch* (Chester, n.d.).

<sup>121</sup> Scard, *Squire*.

<sup>122</sup> S. Rhys Williams, *West Cheshire from the Air* (Chester, 1997), pp. 6, 78.

<sup>123</sup> Crosby, *Cheshire*; R. N. Dore, *Cheshire* (London, 1977).

<sup>124</sup> *St Edith's Church, Shocklach* (leaflet).

<sup>125</sup> e.g. D. Hayns, 'It's Not All Roses Round the Door': *Report of the Proceedings and Findings of a Community Participation Day for Young People and Older Residents of Chester District* (Chester, 2000).

## **The current situation - 1990s onwards**

Recent research indicates a number of trends. First, the effects of landownership on the physical aspects of rural settlement development is being recognised as having a wider significance beyond traditional examination of the effects of enclosure.

Second, the localised nature of settlement studies has embraced the new 'micro' history with ever smaller areas of the landscape being researched, such as one or more streets in a larger settlement, in particular from a socio-economic standpoint.<sup>126</sup>

Although at present more prevalent in urban studies, it suggests where rural settlement studies will head. At the same time the subject is broadening out as the nationwide settlement mapping typified by Roberts's attempts to find new information in spatial relationships. Landownership has a place within this as its relationship to mapped elements of the landscape can be examined. There is also an interest in county-wide landscape characterisation which reduces the elements in settlements to layers in an analysis of the historic landscape. Landscape characterisation aims to uncover the essential character of an area to obtain an overview of the human-created landscape features from all periods mainly through map-based recording.<sup>127</sup> This is used as a tool for historians, archaeologists and planners to peel back the layers of historical landscape.<sup>128</sup> Historic landscape characterisation records the placing of historical elements visible in the present day landscape to examine what earlier characteristics of previous communities are still present today. Although it records single elements it is their combination into wide area mapping using standard classification generalisation that provides a new focus for research.<sup>129</sup> This is clearly an area in which the relationship of the landscape to landownership can be examined.

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<sup>126</sup> French, 'Micro-history'.

<sup>127</sup> G. J. Fairclough, *Historic Landscape Characterisation*, 2005, HELM <[www.helm.org.uk/server/show/category.7716](http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/category.7716)> [accessed 3 February 2006]; G. J. Fairclough, 'Cultural landscape and spatial planning: England's historic landscape characterisation programme' in *Historic Environment of the North Sea InterReg IIC Conference*, eds. L. M. Green and P. T. Bidwell (Shaftesbury, 2002), pp. 123-149; G. J. Fairclough, 'Boundless horizons. Historic landscape characterisation', *Conservation Bulletin*, March 2001, pp. 23-26; 'Historic landscape characterisation' in *English Heritage Seminar at the Society of Antiquaries*, ed. G. J. Fairclough (London, 1999); Rippon, *Analysis*.

<sup>128</sup> Rippon, *Analysis*.

<sup>129</sup> O. Aldred and G. Fairclough, *Historic Landscape Characterisation. Taking Stock of the Method* (London, 2003).

Additional sub themes of settlement studies have also evolved such as historical ecology (of which Rackham is probably the best known practitioner), culture and environment research.<sup>130</sup> Landownership's relationship to local topography clearly relates to settlement development.<sup>131</sup>

From the last quarter of the twentieth century a few more historians have taken their research further into the twentieth century bringing rural settlement studies, including the relationship with landownership, to the door of the twenty-first century and thus bringing them up to date. At the time of writing, Rowley's latest book *The English Landscape in the Twentieth Century* (2006) provides the first overall assessment of landscape changes throughout the whole of the twentieth century, although the emphasis is on urban change.<sup>132</sup> The new English Heritage series *England's Landscape*, also includes changes to the end of the twentieth century.<sup>133</sup> However, there is still a gap in this period for locally-based rural settlement studies; the emphasis remains on the pre-modern period or pre-World War Two period and some studies are still overviews. The twentieth century is tackled more often by planners, environmentalists and economists.

Planners, traditionally more concerned with urban development, have recently produced a number of rural studies which include settlement development from an historical perspective in order to understand the planning process.<sup>134</sup> Modern commentators, such as Blunden and Curry, acknowledge that modern planning policies 'reflect' historical landownership and settlement patterns,<sup>135</sup> but some experts argue that rural planning had not always been successfully controlled. According to Green, 'Rural planning policies have generally meant, in practice, the imposition of *ad hoc* control of new development,' but he also points out that new development has usually been constrained by the desire to conserve older settlement

<sup>130</sup> Muir, *Approaches*, pp. xiv, 10, 12; O. Rackham, 'Prospects for landscape history and historical ecology', *Landscapes*, 2 (2000), 3-15; O. Rackham, *The History of the Countryside* (London, 1986); O. Rackham, *Trees and Woodlands in the English Landscape* (London, 1976).

<sup>131</sup> E.g. B. Stanfield, J. Bliss, T. Spies, 'Land ownership and landscape structure: a spatial analysis of sixty-six Oregon (USA) Coast Range watersheds', *Landscape Ecology*, 17, 18 (2002) 685-97.

<sup>132</sup> Rowley, *English Landscape*.

<sup>133</sup> *The North West*, eds. A. J. L. Winchester and A. G. Crosby, *The South West*, ed. R. J. P. Kain, *The South East*, ed. B. Short, *The East Midlands*, ed. D. A. Stocker, *The West Midlands*, ed. D. Hooke, *The North East*, ed. F. Aalen, *East Anglia*, ed. T. Williamson, *The West*, ed. B. Cunliffe, all in the series *England's Landscape*, ed. N. Cossons, (London, 2006).

<sup>134</sup> E.g. R. J. Green, *Country Planning: The Future of the Rural Regions* (Manchester, 1971); M. C. Whitby, and others, *Rural Resource Development* (London, 1974); Hall, *Planning*.

<sup>135</sup> J. Blunden and N. Curry, *A Future For Our Countryside* (Oxford, 1988), p. 83.



patterns.<sup>136</sup> Planners admit that planning in rural areas is on a different scale to that of urban communities, while Moseley emphasises the need to address rural development at a local level, in particular the problem of 'sustainability'.<sup>137</sup>

This research therefore follows the trend for interdisciplinary research while locking the study of landownership and the development of rural settlements firmly into the landscape. As such it answers Mingay's and Taylor's call for more research into the twentieth-century landscape while remaining in the tradition of chronological analysis. This research fills the gap by analysing a larger area than a parish but not attempting a county-wide analysis. It concentrates on the effect of landownership on settlements in south-west Cheshire and, although acknowledging national and county trends, does not attempt a broad social, cultural or economic overview. However, it does take the history of settlement development in the area to the end of the twentieth-century, a feat not often accomplished at local level.

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<sup>136</sup> Green, *Planning*, pp. 3, 40.

<sup>137</sup> Moseley, *Development*.



## Chapter three

### 'Open' and 'closed' ('close') – an outmoded concept?

In the nineteenth century, in response to the need to describe the new enclosure landscape at a national level, a new way of referring to the amount of landowner control in a parish or village emerged. Commentators, attempting to explain an increase in rural unemployment and poverty that followed enclosure, began to refer to parishes and villages as 'open' (generally freer from landowner control) or 'closed' ('close') (with a few large controlling landowners). These terms were shorthand for a variety of social and physical situations within settlements and their administrative areas and are still used as such by modern historians.<sup>1</sup> However, as this chapter will show, an analysis of the use of the terms 'open' and 'closed' demonstrates that these terms are subjective, have varied among historians and have not always been based on landownership. There has been no definitive method of determining the degree to which a settlement is open or closed, although the number of landowners controlling most of a parish may be commonly used as shorthand for open and closed status.

This chapter analyses how the terms open and closed are used by historians and shows that, while the number of landowners is still used as the main predictor, landownership was not always the main distinguishing variable. However, in order to discuss the effect of landownership on physical settlement change within the landscape it is necessary to have a reliable method of measuring landownership concentration, one which is capable of measuring landownership change over time. Historians' use of the terms open and closed in the context of landownership is unreliable because it is not based on a quantifiable concept.

Therefore this chapter argues that the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (a measure of concentration originally used in relation to industrial companies in evidence studies of competition policy) is a better indicator of the extent of landlord control in townships, that is, to what extent a township was controlled by large

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<sup>1</sup> In this work the term township, rather than settlement, will be used because the evidence is township-based and townships in south-west Cheshire had one main settlement.

landowners. It begins by explaining how historians have defined the terms ‘open’ and ‘closed’. The chapter then offers a methodology using the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (hereafter HHI) as a new way of comparing how concentrated ownership was within a township and the methodology is explained.

### ***Open and closed settlements – problems with definitions***

The terms ‘open’ and ‘closed’ (or ‘close’) are a traditional shorthand for the amount of landlord control in rural parishes, townships and settlements, and therefore the physical size and condition of such places. The problem is that individual historians have used different criteria and different statistical methods to calculate how far the terms can be applied to individual places, which makes comparisons difficult.

However, virtually all historians start from the premise that the number of landlords in an area played a part in how much control was applied. Usually the concentration of landowners in a parish is used to explain the growth or decline of settlements and as shorthand to describe the size and physical condition of rural settlements within them. This section contains a brief explanation of the terms ‘open’ and ‘closed’ and their historical and present use, as well as problems associated with the terms. The subsequent section discusses the use of HHI to calculate the degree of landowner control in a township.

### **What do the terms ‘open’ and ‘closed’ mean?**

Although the terms ‘open’ and ‘closed’ are still used by modern historians, we need to decide whether they have any significance beyond their nineteenth-century context. Nineteenth-century Poor Law Commissioners and contemporary commentators wrote about the problem of settlement. Based on common knowledge they identified two kinds of parishes – open and closed – describing a process where landowners in closed parishes restricted the building of cottages in order to keep the number of wage dependent labourers in the area to a minimum to save on poor relief. The terms possibly dated from the 1830s, although descriptions of parishes conforming to both types occurred earlier.<sup>2</sup> The 1834 Poor Law Report used the term ‘open’ to describe a Vestry, and by implication a parish, which was not under the

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<sup>2</sup> Holderness, ‘Open’ and ‘close’, p. 127; B. K. Song, ‘Landed interest, local government, and the labour market in England, 1750-1850’, *Ec. HR.*, 51.3 (1998), 465-458 (pp. 475-6).

control of a few dominating landowners and local grandees.<sup>3</sup> Nineteenth-century reports often described a closed parish as under the control of a few proprietors, generally assumed to be between one and three landowners,<sup>4</sup> who used their power to restrict building in their area and so force surplus labourers who might become a burden on the poor rates to move elsewhere. Caird, for example, described

the system of 'close' and 'open' parishes, by which the large proprietors are enabled to drive the labourer out of the parish where he works, to a distant village, where property being more divided, there is not the same combination against poverty.<sup>5</sup>

Some commentators had a more precise definition, as did Weale writing on Bedfordshire

by a "close" parish is meant one in which the property belongs to a single proprietor, or to such a limited number of proprietors that they can prevent the increase of cottage accommodation.<sup>6</sup>

Banks, however, pointed out that not all commentators thought that the number of landowners made a difference to whether a parish was open or closed.<sup>7</sup> For example, Piggott concluded that the term 'close' also included parishes where there were many owners but 'where the whole parish is rented by one or a few persons, who pay the whole rates, and have a like interest in keeping them [the number of resident labourers] down'.<sup>8</sup>

The concern with the number of potential dependants on the parish was due to the prevailing Poor Laws, based on sixteenth-century settlement law, which gave every citizen the right of settlement in one parish which was responsible for supporting them.<sup>9</sup> If a man could work for a full year in another parish he and his entire family could claim settlement rights there. Open parishes were faced with problems if too many labouring families or illegitimate children of single women

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<sup>3</sup> *The Poor Law Report of 1834: Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws*, eds. S. G and E. O. A. Checkland, (London, 1974), p. 190.

<sup>4</sup> Holderness, 'Open' and 'Close', p. 131.

<sup>5</sup> Caird, *Agriculture*, p. 516.

<sup>6</sup> R. Weale, 'Report on settlement in Bedfordshire', in *Reports to the Poor Law Board on the Laws of Settlement and Removal of the Poor*, ed. Poor Law Board, PP 37 (London, 1850), p. 146.

<sup>7</sup> Banks, 'Scandal', p. 53.

<sup>8</sup> Poor Law Board, *Poor Law Board on the laws of settlement and removal of the poor*, PP 37 (London, 1850), p. 167.

<sup>9</sup> 4 & 5 Will. IV c.36 (1834); Williamson, *Transformation*, p. 46; R. Muir, *The English Village* (London, 1980), p. 37; S. Webb and B. Webb, *English Poor Law History. Part 1: The Old Poor Law*, 2 vols (London, 1927; repr. 1963), p. 315.

acquired settlement. The result was usually a significant increase in population and this was a potential drain on the poor rates if any newly settled in-migrants needed poor relief.<sup>10</sup> It was therefore in landowners' interests to reduce or limit the number of potential paupers.

Conventional opinions on the differences between open and closed townships and settlements may be summarised as follows. Building in closed parishes was controlled by declining to build new dwellings, or, it was rumoured, deliberately destroying dwellings. Closed villages were assumed traditionally to be tidy and well built with strictly controlled housing and a stable population.<sup>11</sup> Open parishes had many landowners and were not under the control of a powerful few. Building was allowed and even encouraged and there was a large number of poor because of immigration from closed parishes or villages. Open villages were described as highly populated and squalid with multiple landlords and speculative investment in cheap housing to make a profit.<sup>12</sup>

However, although the terms are widely used, they are not always defined in exactly the same way. An important article by Holderness written in 1972 is still cited by modern historians.<sup>13</sup> Although he generally accepted the nineteenth-century definitions, he also classified closed parishes as deficient in agricultural labour while open parishes had a surplus work force, as simply using the number of landowners as the sole criterion to define either a village or a parish did not always provide an accurate picture. Some villages, even with sufficient labourers, would be called closed. Holderness suggested that most parishes probably had enough agricultural labour and that these were the norm; by his definitions they were neither open nor closed. Moreover, housing in closed villages was not necessarily better than in open villages and open villages were often small market towns which were, in fact, good for labourers because they provided more facilities. He attempted to discover the distribution of closed villages in an area by a number of indicators: using population density, the increase in population and the number of houses, poor law expenditure and social structure. He suggested that some nineteenth-century farmers preferred non-resident labourers because they worked harder and this was an incentive to keep

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<sup>10</sup> Porter, *English Society*, p. 127; Williamson, *Transformation*, p. 162.

<sup>11</sup> Muir, *Village*, p. 163.

<sup>12</sup> Mills, *Lord*, p. 24; Porter, *English Society*, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> Holderness, 'Open' and 'close'; e.g. Williamson, *Transformation*, p. 46; Williamson, 'Neglected centuries', pp. 109-131; Song, 'Landed interest', p. 476.

some villages closed while using labour from open villages. However, Holderness added that landowners considered that the distinction was not between 'open' and 'closed', but between large open parishes or larger settlements, such as small towns, and any smaller rural settlements whether closed or not.<sup>14</sup>

For some years Holderness's views on 'open' and 'closed' prevailed, but in 1980 Mills approached the subject as an historical geographer. He suggested that rural society was divided into estate and peasant systems: the former was the result of a lord controlling and caring for the people who lived on his land, while the latter represented the survival of peasant families in areas where many smaller landowners exerted no overall control. These systems led to two kinds of 'village social structure and landscape' that was evident in the difference between closed and open landscape, in particular between champion (unenclosed) and hamlet landscape: both types could contain open and closed communities, these could be subdivided within the two types of landscape.<sup>15</sup> A simplified version of his chart appears below (Figure 3:1). However, Mills's model was not devised for north-west England, and his diagram makes it clear that the divisions are imprecise and overlapping: the identification of a particular type of landscape with open or closed settlements is therefore unreliable.

Mills also suggested that if between one and three landowners controlled more than 50 per cent of a parish, village or township then these communities were closed. He tested Holderness's claim that population density could be used to determine whether a parish was open or closed with an open parish having a higher population density. While accepting that a high concentration of landownership could be related to low population density and that fragmented ownership patterns encouraged population growth, Mills was cautious about using population density to identify open and closed communities because his studies of Lincolnshire townships showed no clear division between the two types. He concluded that, although there was a clear distinction between the estate and peasant systems in terms of township governance, there was no clear distinction between open and closed townships.<sup>16</sup> To summarise, Holderness and Mills defined the terms 'open' and 'closed' by different criteria, that is Holderness by labour supply and Mills by landownership, with the former finding the definition useful, the latter not.

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<sup>14</sup> Holderness, 'Open' and 'close', pp. 126, 132-9.

<sup>15</sup> Mills, *Lord*, pp. 24, 43, 116.

<sup>16</sup> Mills, *Lord*, pp. 91, 94, 74, 83.

Figure 3:1 Open and closed communities in hamlet and champion England, following Mills.

		HAMLET			
OPEN		Mostly open communities	Closed communities scarce		CLOSED
		Large parishes/townships formed from wood pasture/moorland settlement	Extra parochial areas common		
		Weak common field/manorial systems	No common field tradition		
		Pasture farming/rural industries	Pasture farming/late arable		
		Mixture open and closed	Mixture open/closed		
		Settlement laws important	Settlement laws important		
		Large townships with nucleated villages and dispersed population	Small compact townships/strong manorial tradition		
		Parliamentary enclosure usual	Early enclosure usual		
		Late survival of commons	Early loss of commons		
		Arable farming/often labour intensive specialities	General arable farming		
			CHAMPION		

Source: Based on Mills, *Lord*, p. 63.

An important contribution to the discussion came in 1988 with the publication of an article by Banks. She argued that the problem of open and closed settlements was exaggerated by nineteenth-century commentators who supported changes in the settlement laws but that later historians, including Holderness, had taken the nineteenth-century definitions of 'open' and 'closed' at face value. She suggested that the nineteenth-century literature revealed inconsistencies which had been repeated by modern historians. She claimed that such historians had been misguided because they had tried to make what was a nineteenth-century 'scandal' into a twentieth-century model of nineteenth-century society.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, Banks identified three ways of discussing 'open' and 'closed'. First, a *causal* explanation whereby the landownership structure of a parish meant that landowners influenced social and economic factors, especially population change and poor law expenditure, either generally or in particular cases. Second, a *classification* of parishes (townships or villages) as defined by one or several specific attributes. These could include landownership, poor law expenditure, population change or labour distribution but

<sup>17</sup> Banks, 'Scandal', pp. 55-6.



without any causal explanation. Third, a *parish system* explanation that suggested an interrelationship between open and closed parishes with a migration of labour from closed to open parishes and that landowners in closed parishes were dependent on open parish labour.<sup>18</sup> On this basis, Holderness generally used a classification approach but refers to peasant system use of labour,<sup>19</sup> which Mills developed further, although he later adopted a causal model for population change.<sup>20</sup>

Banks, commenting on Holderness and Mills, observed that a relationship between population density and the open or closed status of a township might simply reflect an area's housing density, as neither low population density nor population growth demonstrated differences between open and closed townships.<sup>21</sup> Her own work supported the thesis that population density was related to a township's status whether open or closed but there was little evidence of a strong relationship with population change, expenditure on the poor, or landownership patterns.<sup>22</sup>

She tested the classification approach by using cluster analysis, but this did not fully support her thesis. Landownership did not appear to be the main distinguishing variable, because some parishes with few owners had high rates of population increase while others with similar ownership concentration had low rates of population change. She claimed that historians had been misled by confusing causal, classification and interrelationship approaches to open and closed parishes and that nineteenth-century commentators had exaggerated causal claims to gain support for settlement law reform. She concluded that this was not a reliable model for classifying nineteenth-century settlements and that causal explanations based on landownership influence, the movement of labourers or poor law expenditure had limited predictive value in distinguishing between open and closed parishes.<sup>23</sup>

### **Recent historians and 'open' and 'closed'**

Recent historians have been inconsistent in their use of causal, classification and parish system explanations, as defined by Banks, for distinguishing between 'open' and 'closed'. For example, Thirsk in her introduction to *The English Rural Landscape* repeated the formula based on a standard classification model that

<sup>18</sup> Banks, 'Scandal', p. 55.

<sup>19</sup> Holderness, 'Open' and 'close', p. 137.

<sup>20</sup> Mills, *Lord*, e.g. pp. 78-83.

<sup>21</sup> Banks, 'Scandal', pp. 57-8.

<sup>22</sup> Banks, 'Scandal', p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> Banks, 'Scandal', pp. 66, 71.

‘settlements became what we call closed villages under the authority of one lord, in contrast with the “open” villages in the hands of several gentry or freeholders who could not command single authority.’<sup>24</sup> Dyer, Hey and Thirsk described a closed village as one where ‘one lord reigned supreme’ and discouraged incomers for fear of them becoming a burden on the poor rates of the parish: by contrast open villages had a non-resident landowner or several landowners. They therefore relied on the causal model of landowner influence and suggested that in open villages where power had been devolved to the freeholders, in-migrants were encouraged because money could be made from building cottages to rent.<sup>25</sup> Significantly they included non-resident landowners in this model and focussed on villages rather than parishes, commenting that the Poor Law Commissioners understood the differences between the two types well.<sup>26</sup>

Tiller described Hook Norton, Oxfordshire, as a classic open village in a large parish area with a high population by rural standards which increased rapidly between 1801 and 1841. The village had a wide range of amenities, high poor rates, many farmers, and a large housing stock under diverse ownership.<sup>27</sup> In other words, a large sprawling settlement with many owners was clearly ‘open’ in both causal and classification senses. However, according to Hey ‘close’ (closed) was a term coined by the Poor Law Commissioners which in the causal model involved one or few landowners who excluded in-migrants in order to keep poor rates low. Such villages could also be classified as neat with few public houses and rarely non-conformist chapels unless the landowner was a dissenter. By contrast, open villages were those where control was lax, populations large and whose labourers often walked to work on farms in closed villages,<sup>28</sup> an interrelationship typical of Banks’s parish system definition. Both Short and Williamson used classification to define closed villages, the former defining them as ‘completely dominated by individual families’ and the latter as ‘owned by a single individual or a small number of proprietors and generally enclosed at a very early date’.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Thirsk, *Rural Landscape*, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> C. Dyer, D. Hey and J. Thirsk, ‘Lowland Vales’, in *The English Rural Landscape*, ed. J. Thirsk, (Oxford, 2000), pp. 78-96 (p. 90).

<sup>26</sup> Dyer, Hey and Thirsk, ‘Lowland Vales’, p. 92

<sup>27</sup> Tiller, ‘Hook Norton’, p. 280.

<sup>28</sup> Hey, *History*, pp. 475-6.

<sup>29</sup> Short, ‘Evolution’, p. 20; Williamson, *Transformation*, p. 44.

A summary of commonly used criteria for identifying open and closed parishes, townships or villages appears below (Figure 3:2), but although this summary is useful, one should remember that some places had attributes from both categories according to the generally accepted criteria.

**Figure 3:2 The differences between nineteenth-century open and closed communities.**

<b>Open</b>	<b>Close</b>
More than three landowners,	Between one and three landowners probably controlling at least 50 per cent of the area
Unrestricted building,	Restricted building
Squalid appearance of settlements,	Tidy, well-built housing
High and rising population	Static or declining population
High numbers of poor	Few poor
Excess of agricultural labourers	Shortage of agricultural labourers
No restriction on incomers	Incomers discouraged
Many pubs	Few pubs
Non-conformist chapels	Rarely non-conformist chapels
High housing density	Low housing density

Source: Based on Short, 'Evolution', pp. 29-32; Mills, *Lord*, pp. 23, 63, 125.

Therefore, despite the work of Holderness, Mills and Banks, virtually every modern historian writing about whether a village is open or closed begins by accepting the number of landowners as a defining criterion.<sup>30</sup> It is clearly important to establish a more reliable indicator of the likely effects of landowner control. Accordingly, the next section looks at an alternative method (HHI) of determining an accurate measure of landownership concentration.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. D. Hey, 'Sons of Toil', *Ancestors*, July (2004), 23-27 (p. 25).

## ***Use of the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) as a measure of landownership concentration***

Disparate criteria for distinguishing between the different effects of landownership control in parishes, townships or villages make it difficult to compare townships (or parishes and villages) across the country accurately and easily. This is why most historians have resorted to the shorthand of the number of controlling landlords as a key criterion. However, this provides no precise indication of the likely extent of landowner control and therefore, in traditional terms, the effect of such control on a township.

To measure the extent of landownership concentration and therefore the likely extent of landowner control, we need one method that can be applied everywhere using data that is often incomplete. Various alternative methods of measuring concentration, including those borrowed from economics, all have their difficulties. The Lorenz Curve, for example, plots cumulative percentages of companies and their outputs against each other: although sometimes used as a measure of concentration, this is actually a comparison of inequality and is recorded in the form of a diagram.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, simple percentages do not always show the true extent of control. Landownership patterns are more complicated than company outputs and the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index would seem to offer a solution by providing an easily calculated figure for nationwide comparisons of landownership.

The HHI is used in economics to measure the concentration of market share. First proposed in 1945, it became more widely known after the American State Department of Justice began to use it in 1982 as a measure of monopoly control. The Department wanted an easily calculated and understood way of determining which firms would need to be investigated for possible monopoly holdings.<sup>32</sup> The result was HHI. The calculation involves working out the percentage market share of each

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<sup>31</sup> D. Brewster, *Business Economics* (London, 1997), p. 14. Historians and historical geographers often check the degree of correlation between two ranked sets of figures by using Spearman's Rank Correlation coefficient. This is unnecessary in most cases where there is enough quantifiable data to produce a graph. The weak point in using this correlation method is that all the data are given equal weight.

<sup>32</sup> I thank my husband's colleague Dr. J. France for suggesting that the similarity between open/close landownership system and HHI was an area that merited further investigation (as reported by Dr J. Bird). *Economic History Services* <<http://eh.net/atp/answers/0640.php>> [accessed 25th May 2003]; *Applied Economics: An Introductory Course*, eds. A. Griffiths and S. Wall. 5th edn (New York, 1993), pp. 105-106.

company in a market sector and squaring it. The squared results are then added together to produce the HHI figure. This gives a number between 0 and 10,000. If the shares are expressed as decimals rather than percentages the results are multiplied by 10,000 to give the HHI. Either way, the result is rounded to the nearest whole number. Generally, the former method is used (Table 3:3).

**Table 3:3: Example of HHI in use to calculate market share.**

Company	Per cent share	Per cent squared
1	30	900
2	25	625
3	20	400
4	15	225
5	10	100
	Total 100	HHI 2250

The formula for calculating HHI is written as

$$HHI = \sum_{i=1}^n (\text{per cent market share})^2 \quad \text{where } n = \text{all companies}$$

The State Department of Justice uses HHI 1800 as the point at which companies are investigated for potential monopoly behaviour. The larger the number, the more control a company has. The maximum possible is 10,000 (i.e. 100 x 100) where one company controls the entire market. In economics an HHI of less than 1000 is regarded as highly competitive, 1000 to 1800 as moderately competitive, and 1800 or more as highly concentrated and therefore in need of monopoly investigation.<sup>33</sup> However, the HHI base figure that would be useful in historical research differs from the HHI of 1800 used in industry for company monopoly situations. This is because four companies is the minimum acceptable to avoid a monopoly or dominant situation occurring (e.g. the 'big four' banks, supermarkets, etc.). A minimum HHI for four companies is 2500. Therefore an HHI of more than 1800, a number that

<sup>33</sup> M. Parkin, *Economics*, 3rd edn (New York, 1996), p. 299.

indicates between five and six owners, is a warning that a monopoly situation is possible if two or more companies combine and that there needs to be an investigation into the possibility of a monopoly occurring. However, when dealing with townships we are investigating an historical situation and we need only decide what number HHI indicates a township with high landownership concentration. The HHI figure of 1800 used in industry might therefore be too low to determine the difference between low and high landownership concentration (and therefore control by large landowners), as will be examined in the next chapter.

In economic terms a basic concentration ratio could be used instead of HHI. This would measure the total percentage market share of the largest three or five firms. However, this does not tell us about the other firms, nor the percentage share of the largest individual firms. HHI overcomes this by using all the firms and by squaring the percentages.<sup>34</sup> If there are no accurate data for the smallest firms the errors will be small.<sup>35</sup> By analogy, the data for the smallest owners in a township will not affect the outcome unduly.

Traditionally in economics all available components have been used to calculate an HHI if there are fewer than 50 components, and up to a maximum of 50 if there are more than 50 components. However, this is time consuming and, as the more landowners there are the less the smaller landowners contribute to HHI, it is acceptable for practical purposes in the present context to take the top ten (or as many as there are up to ten) landowners only and use them as the basis for calculation of the HHI figure. As we shall see in the next chapter, we also need to be clear about what it is actually telling us. Our findings are best confirmed from other sources.

### ***HHI as a tool in historical research***

A variety of sources can be used to calculate the HHI of a township and consequently its degree of subservience to landownership. Any set of documents that can be used to estimate landownership share can also be employed to calculate HHI, including tithe records, land tax records, the 1910 'Domesday', and rate returns. As long as when making calculations over a wide area the same type of document is used, then the results should provide a reliable basis for comparison. With such disparate

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<sup>34</sup> Worthington, Britton and Rees, *Economics*, pp. 218-9.

<sup>35</sup> C. Mulhearn, H. R. Vane and J. Eden, *Economics for Business* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 98.

sources HHI has many advantages over the more usual methods of calculating concentration. First, the documentation used, for example tithe awards or land tax records, are often incomplete at the lower end of the scale;<sup>36</sup> this becomes largely irrelevant when using HHI because the figures are weighted towards the large owners, the ones who are in fact recorded. Second, in the absence of an alternative, universally agreed index of landowner concentration, the HHI can serve as a useful means of comparison between one settlement and another. A statement that a township in one area has an HHI of 5678 in 1831 will indicate that the ownership of the township was concentrated in the hands of a few landowners, thus indicating a relatively high landowner control township (using the traditional terms). Conversely, a township with an HHI of 1374 in 1831 would show that there was no concentrated landlord control during that period. Third, because HHI works by ownership share rather than by deploying particular figures, for example, money or acreage, it can be used across time in one parish, settlement or township or to compare several places at one period of time by using similar documents.

The 1831 land tax, tithe and 1910 'Domesday' records for all townships in south-west Cheshire were used to calculate HHI for this work. It is possible to extract information about relative landownership proportions at different periods by using land tax records, censuses, tithe records, poor law records, surveys and directories, but they do not always provide the same coverage for each township. However, these records can provide detailed information relating to the percentage of land held by individual owners and may also be used as an indicator of population trends. An example of how the HHI for south-west Cheshire was calculated for this study is given in the next section.

### ***HHI methodology***

In the research area of south west Cheshire there are 34 townships. To test the relevance of HHI by using it in this study it was necessary to find a set of records common for this area over one period of time. The 1831 land tax records were available for all the townships except Threapwood. The date was sufficiently close to the dates of the tithe maps that landownership comparisons for selected townships could be made.

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<sup>36</sup> Hey, *History*, p. 273.

The method can be demonstrated by using Tilston township and the 1831 land tax records. (Table 3:4). First, the percentage landownership share for each landowner in return was calculated. The calculation was repeated using only the ten largest landowners. (In other townships where there were fewer than ten landowners overall, all the landowners were used.) Where all the landowners were used the squaring of the percentages reduced any bias towards the smaller owners. As 50 to 80 per cent of the smallest owners were unrecorded in land tax returns<sup>37</sup> it was necessary to discover whether using more than ten of the largest landowners would give a significantly different HHI. HHI does not require the complete range of elements to be usable. The HHI was calculated and recorded as a four figure number (i.e. to the nearest whole number). This was compared with the HHI for the other five example townships. The HHI was then calculated for 1831 for all the remaining townships (except Threapwood).

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<sup>37</sup> Hey, *History*, p. 273.



Table 3:4: Calculation of HHI score for Tilston township from land tax returns, 1831.

	Owners	Land Tax payment	Percentage share	Percentage share squared (rounded up)	Percentage share squared of ten largest owners
1	JH Leche esq	£11-14-11¼	36	1296	1296
2	O Magwel Goodwin	£4-10-8	14	196	196
3	Jas. Thos. Campbell	£2-16-10	8.7	76	76
4	J Hignett	£2-13-10	8.3	69	69
5	Wm Johnson	£2-5-5	7	49	49
6	Sir [?] T Drake	£1-16-10½	5.7	32	32
7	Jos Allen	£1-14-7	5.3	28	28
8	Richard Weaver	£1-9-10½	4.6	21	21
9	Iate J Halmark	£0-16-3	2.5	6	6
10	Ralph Stevenson	£0-8-8¾	1.3	2	2
11	Mrs Smith	£0-6-11	1.2	1	
12	J Butler	£0-5-6	0.85	1	
13	Poor of Bunbury	£0-4-2	0.64	0.4	
14	Sir JT Stanley	£0-3-9½	0.58	0.3	
15	John Mate	£0-3-8	0.56	0.3	
16	Joseph Dutton	£0-3-6	0.54	0.3	
17	Newel & Gaman	£0-2-1	0.32	0.1	
18	John Caldecott	£0-2-0	0.31	0.1	
19	Chas Caldecott	£0-2-0	0.31	0.1	
20	Dn Capper	£0-1-6	0.23	0.1	
21	Mrs Dutton	£0-1-1½	0.17	0.02	
22	Hannah Weaver	£0-1-0	0.15	0.02	
23	James Faulkes	£0-0-11	0.14	0.02	
24	John Fairclough	£0-0-6	0.077	0.01	
	<b>Total</b>	£32-6-8		1778.76	1775
			<b>HHI</b>	<b>1779</b>	

Source: CCALS, QDV 2/405.

The sum for the HHI of Tilston is

$$HHI = \sum_{i=1}^n (\% \text{ share})^2 \text{ where } n = \text{all landowners}$$

Initially the landownership share of all the landowners was included in the sum which gave an HHI of 1779. This was compared with the HHI using the share of the ten largest landowners giving an HHI of 1775. The nature of HHI means that the smallest numbers when squared add very little to the final number. The result was a difference of only 0.2 per cent between the HHI using all the landowners and the HHI using the ten largest landowners. It was concluded that it was reasonable therefore to use the ten largest landowners for the purposes of HHI, or all the landowners where there were fewer than ten. This has the advantage of making calculation of HHIs from large numbers of documents easier. This method was therefore used to calculate HHIs for all the townships in south-west Cheshire using the 1831 land tax, tithe awards and the 1910 'Domesday'. These HHIs are used in this study to enable broad comparisons to be made. Throughout this work the six sample townships, broadly representative of the area in terms of geography, topology and landownership, are used to provide a detailed demonstration of the use of HHI.

## ***Conclusion***

The traditional nineteenth-century criteria for defining landowner control (open and closed) townships, villages or parishes had limited predictive value. Nor does a reliance on the number of controlling landowners alone provide a true picture of landowner concentration. In spite of the work of more recent commentators such as Holderness, Mills and Banks, the terms remain shorthand for the effects of landownership. The result is wide acceptance of the terms accompanied by a lack of rigour about their use. As they are still used by historians as shorthand for landowner control, it is important to find a reliable indicator of landownership concentration that can be used across the country. By contrast, HHI is a simple, accurate and effective means of measuring landownership concentration in a township. It has the advantage of being a quantifiable and easily understood method of assessing the likely extent of landowner control (control by the largest landowners). HHI will therefore be used in subsequent chapters to replace the traditional terms and to examine the effect of landownership on the physical landscape of settlements in south-west Cheshire.

Throughout this work the HHIs for south-west Cheshire will be based on the ten largest landownership shares (or all landownership shares if there are fewer than

ten landowners recorded) derived from land tax, tithe and 1910 'Domesday' records. Where necessary the HHIs from these records are distinguished by the subscripts <sub>LT</sub>, <sub>T</sub> or <sub>D</sub>, to indicate that they derive from land tax, tithe Award or 1910 'Domesday' respectively.



## Chapter four

### Landownership

‘variations in ownership had ...major effects upon the development of settlement’.<sup>1</sup>

The ability of landowners to affect the physical development of settlements and therefore the landscape depended on prevailing landownership patterns, measured in this work by HHI, and the power over the landholdings that this represented. Changing landownership patterns during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries affected the fieldscape and, alongside this, settlement development. Nationally the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the growth of large estates while during the first half of the twentieth century large landowners began to sell their estates. This chapter examines changing pattern of landownership in south west Cheshire from 1750 until the break up of the great estates during the first half of the twentieth century. It uses HHI to determine the landownership concentration of townships in the area and therefore how landownership concentration impacted on settlement change

Modern historians regard landownership as an important influence on the shaping of settlements in the early modern and modern era. As Roberts said, the idea of landownership or ‘territoriality’ is one of several factors ‘superimposed’ on the landscape, thus creating a ‘framework’ for settlement development.<sup>2</sup> The idea that landownership in its various forms was an important influence on the landscape is supported by Williamson who asserted that ‘the social distribution of landownership was the crucial causative factor in rural life’. He argued that the distribution of wealth, the influence of the national economy and the ways in which these were manifested in class structure influenced the rural landscape through landownership.<sup>3</sup>

Before the era of modern planning landowners had considerable control over the extent and type of development on their property. Clearly, owners of large and consolidated estates had more leeway over construction than owners of small or scattered holdings or people who were illegally occupying (squatting) on commons

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<sup>1</sup> Williamson, 'Neglected centuries', p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Roberts, *Landscapes*, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> T. Williamson and L. Bellamy, *Property and Landscape* (London, 1987), pp. 6, 136.

or waste. Owners of large estates could move, build, destroy or allow the decline of settlements on their land, perhaps through emparkment or by dictating a building style. However, smaller owners could also build what and where they liked on their own property. As the previous chapter discussed in detail, using HHI rather than the terms 'open' and 'closed' provides a more accurate measure of landownership concentration. This concentration of ownership (and therefore landowner control) influenced the size and shape of settlements and how they developed in the landscape. The amount of land and where it was situated was therefore critical to the amount and type of building that occurred.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter will focus on a number of key issues. First, it asks who were the landowners in south-west Cheshire during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? The chapter then tests HHI methodology across settlements in south-west Cheshire generally while critically reviewing aspects of the methods adopted by Holderness, Mills and Banks for defining open and closed status. The six sample townships are used to examine the effects of landownership and demonstrate the use of HHI. Having established how HHI can be used the chapter then uses HHI to examine the changing patterns of landownership by analysing the land tax records. Finally, the chapter examines the extent and effect of the sale of great estates in south-west Cheshire during the first half of the twentieth century.

This chapter argues that although there is evidence for an increase in large holdings, the number of smaller landowners did not decrease and indeed actually increased in places, although the size of their holdings fell. It demonstrates that landownership changes in the area were closely related to landownership patterns established by the mid-eighteenth century. Tithe awards, land tax records, enclosure maps and awards, the 1910 'Domesday' and directories are used to analyse the area's settlements. Other information was extracted from relevant estate surveys, parish minutes, overseers' accounts, charity records and various estate and parish papers.

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<sup>4</sup> The terms 'open' and 'close' are used in this chapter as shorthand for the extent of landowner power in a township and this will be examined further in chapter six.

## **Who were the landowners in south-west Cheshire?**

From the late eighteenth until the end of the nineteenth century, Cheshire was the seventh highest county in terms of the number of aristocratic seats per county<sup>5</sup> and was dominated by large estates.<sup>6</sup> This tallies with Theobald's assertion that the largest estates were in the north of the country (or on poor soils where land prices were relatively low).<sup>7</sup> Cheshire was also one of the areas with a concentration of holdings caused by the county's early enclosure.<sup>8</sup> Most of Cheshire was already enclosed by the mid-eighteenth century through a gradual process of purchase, exchange and agreement during the 250 years before parliamentary enclosure.<sup>9</sup>

Most substantial holdings were in the form of estates or farms.<sup>10</sup> South-west Cheshire was typical of the county as a whole; it was dominated by large estates until the 1920s and, therefore, it is reasonable to assume that major landowners might have influenced the development of settlements in terms of their placement, growth and building type. There were at least ten major estates in the area (Figure 4:1) and until the early-twentieth century most of the local townships landowners had at least some share of the available land (the exceptions were Chorlton, Macefen, Agden, Tushingham and Wychough).

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<sup>5</sup>Mingay, *Agrarian History* 6, p. 838. (The highest counties were Rutland, Staffordshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Kent and Northamptonshire; the eighth was Dorset.); J. Theobald, "Distant lands": the management of absentee estates in woodland high Suffolk, 1660-1800', *Rural History, Economy, Society, Culture*, 12, 1 (2001), 1-18 (p. 4).

<sup>6</sup>An aristocrat's 'seat', that is his main (usually ancestral) residence, was not necessarily his estate as he might have owned land in several counties.

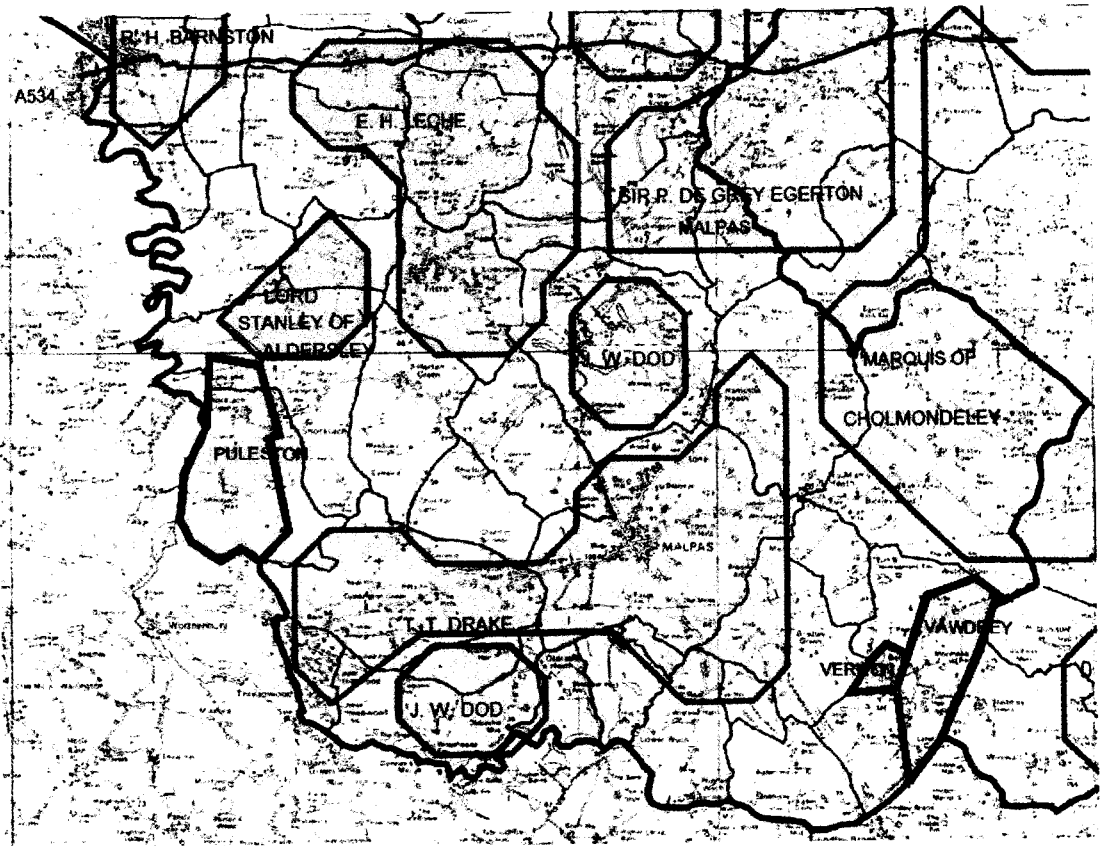
<sup>7</sup>Theobald, 'Distant Lands', p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Mingay, *Agrarian History* 6, p. 849.

<sup>9</sup> Scard, *Squire*, p. 5; A. R. H. Baker and R. A. Butlin, *Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 40. According to Yelling, enclosure in Cheshire was more substantial after 1660 (Yelling, *Common Field*, p. 28).

<sup>10</sup> OS maps; tithe maps.

Figure 4:1 Diagrammatic representation of proportional distribution of some nineteenth-century major landowners' holdings in south-west Cheshire.



Source: Cheshire County Council, derived from tithe awards; tithe awards.

By the mid-nineteenth century there were 47 major owners of land in Cheshire of which 35 had holdings of over 500 acres each and eleven held all their land in the county. Another three landowners held more than 75 per cent of their land in Cheshire, while six more held more than half their land in Cheshire.<sup>11</sup> South-west Cheshire's most prominent eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landowning families were Cholmondeley, Dod, Tyrwhitt-Drake, Egerton, Kenyon, Leche, Puleston, Stanley, Vawdrey and Vernon.<sup>12</sup>

Bateman's late-nineteenth-century analysis of landowners, although generally regarded as somewhat inaccurate,<sup>13</sup> seemed to show that landownership at that time was concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, with four-fifths of the acreage of

<sup>11</sup> Bateman, *Landowners 1883* p. 502.

<sup>12</sup> Cheshire County Council. Map showing distribution of nineteenth-century major landowners' holdings in south-west Cheshire; tithe awards.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. T. Nicholas, 'Businessmen and land ownership in the late nineteenth century', *Ec. HR*, 52, 1 (1999), 27-44 (p. 31).



England and Wales in the 1880s owned by only 7,000 people.<sup>14</sup> Bateman identified seven categories of landowners in England and Wales as shown in table 4:2.

**Table 4:2 Types of landowners in England and Wales and in the County of Chester in the mid-nineteenth century.**

Type of landowners	Number of landowners in England and Wales	Number of landowners in Cheshire	Percentage of Cheshire landowners in England and Wales (to nearest whole number)	Acreage held in England and Wales	Acreage held in Cheshire	Percentage of acres held by Cheshire landowners (to nearest whole number)	Average size of holdings in England and Wales (in acres)	Average size of holdings in Cheshire (in acres)
Peers	400	13	3	5,728,979	160,655	3	6,822	12,358
Great Landowners	1,288	27	2	8,497,699	157,451	2	6,598	5,832
Squires	2,529	30	1	4,319,271	66,300	2	1,707	2,210
Great Yeomen	9,585	122	1	4,782,627	61,000	1	499	500
Lesser Yeomen	24,412	309	1	4,144,272	52,530	1	172	170
Small Proprietors	217,049	5,296	2	3,931,806	77,922	2	18	15
Cottagers	703,289	17,691	3	165,427	4,664	3	0.2	0.3
Public Bodies	223	14,459	98.5	1,443,548	21,696	2	65	2
Waste	97,301			1,524,624	6,707		16	
Total	1,056,076	37,947		34,538,253	608,925		33	16
Totals excluding waste	958,775	37,947		33,013,629	602,218		17	16

Source (first five columns): Bateman, *Landowners, 1883*, pp. 502, 515.

Note: Waste was included as a separate category

Table 4:2 shows that the average size of peers' holdings in Cheshire was nearly twice the average size of their holdings in England and Wales. Great landowners and squires held slightly smaller and larger holdings respectively in Cheshire than their average elsewhere, but in general the average size of holdings for the smaller landowners was about the same in Cheshire as the rest of England and Wales. In south-west Cheshire five peers (Cholmondeley, Egerton, Kenyon, Puleston and Stanley) held 15 per cent of area's land, five times the percentage of peer held land in Cheshire as a whole (4:2, 4:3). The average size of holdings by public bodies was smaller than elsewhere in the country. In south-west Cheshire the only land held by a public body at the time of the tithe maps of the 1830s and 1840s was approximately eight acres held by the Ellesmere and Chester Canal Company in

<sup>14</sup> Beckett, 'Pattern', p. 1.

Tushingam township. But by 1872, only eleven years before Bateman's survey, this was supplemented by land held by the London and North West Railway Company.<sup>15</sup> There were evidently few public bodies in south-west Cheshire. Generally, therefore, Cheshire was close to the national norm for all categories of landowners except peers and public bodies. This substantiates the point made on page 87 of this thesis that Cheshire was more dominated by great estates than was average for the rest of the country if peers are included. The domination of Cheshire by great estates is borne out by Bateman's analysis.

**Table 4:3 Major landowners in south-west Cheshire in the mid-nineteenth century**

Major landowning families in south-west Cheshire in mid-nineteenth century	Main landowner in mid-nineteenth century	Acreage in south-west Cheshire from tithe awards (to nearest whole acre)	Acreage in south-west Cheshire as percentage of total south-west Cheshire acreage of approximately 25,270 acres [from tithe awards]
Cholmondeley	Marquis of Cholmondeley	660	3%
Dod	J.W. Dod	1601	6%
Drake	Thomas Tyrwhitt-Drake	4574	18%
Egerton	Sir Philip de Grey Egerton	1230	5%
Kenyon	Lord Kenyon	644	3%
Leche	E.H. Leche	2955	12%
Puleston	Sir R. Puleston	654	3%
Stanley	Lord Stanley of Alderley	695	3%
Vawdrey	B.L. Vawdrey	369	1%
Vernon	J. Vernon	227	1%
	TOTAL	13,609	55%

Source: Bateman, *Landowners, 1883*; CCALS, EDT.

Note: Acreage includes land north of the Broxton to Farndon road in Barton, Clutton, Broxton and Kings Marsh.

Table 4.3 shows that ten people owned just over half the land (55%) in south-west Cheshire at the time of the tithe awards with a combined acreage of 13,069

<sup>15</sup> CCALS, EDT 405/1, QDP 447.

acres. Just four families (Dod, Drake, Egerton, Leche) owned 41 per cent of the land in the area with two families (Drake, Leche) owning 30 per cent of the land and Drake's 18 per cent making his family the largest landowning family in the area. Control over the land in the mid-nineteenth century was therefore firmly in the hands of a few major landowners. Only the largest of the ten major landowners lived outside Cheshire (Drake) and four lived in Cheshire but not in south-west Cheshire (Cholmondeley, Egerton, Puleston, Stanley). The rest, therefore, were in the same county, if not south-west Cheshire, and were well-placed to exert influence on their property in the area either personally or through their agents. Of those that lived in the area, Dod of Edge and Leche of Carden owned enough land in those townships to make them, by traditional terms, closed (high HHI)<sup>16</sup> (see chapter three).

The main landowners in the six sample townships are shown in figure 4:3. Many other names appear owning land in several townships e.g. Done, Nickson, Brassey. But they were not owners of major estates or large areas of the townships. The large landowners effectively controlled more than half the land in the area.

Some of these powerful landowners lived outside the area. Figure 4:4 shows that of the ten nineteenth-century major landowners in south-west Cheshire, two (Kenyon and Stanley) who owned six per cent of the total acreage had sold all their land in the area before 1910 and were therefore not part of the traditionally defined break-up. By the same year the acreage of four major landowners had increased slightly and four had decreased since the creation of mid-nineteenth century tithe awards.

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<sup>16</sup> *Return of Owners of Land 1883*, 2 vols (London, 1875), Chester section, pp. 1-40.

**Table 4:4: Changes in acreage owned by the major landowners in south-west Cheshire between the mid-nineteenth century and 1910.**

Major landowning families in south-west Cheshire in mid-nineteenth century	Main landowner in mid-nineteenth century	Acreage in south-west Cheshire from tithe maps (to nearest whole acre) c.1840	Acreage in south-west Cheshire as percentage of total south-west Cheshire acreage of approximately 25,270 acres [from tithe awards]	Main landowner in 1910	Acreage in south-west Cheshire from 1910 Domesday (to nearest whole acre)	Acreage in south-west Cheshire as percentage of total south-west Cheshire acreage of approximately 25,270 acres [from tithe awards]
Cholmondeley	Marquis of Cholmondeley	660	3%	Marquis of Cholmondeley	1,186	5%
Dod	J.W. Dod	1601	6%	F.W. Dod	920	4%
Drake	Thomas Tyrwhitt-Drake	4574	18%	W. J. Drake	4877	19%
Egerton	Sir Philip de Grey Egerton	1230	5%	Sir Egerton	1197	5%
Kenyon	Lord Kenyon	644	3%		0	0%
Leche	E.H. Leche	2955	12%	J. Leche	1317	5%
Puleston	Sir R. Puleston	654	3%	Lady Puleston	72	0.3%
Stanley	Lord Stanley of Alderley	695	3%		0	0%
Vawdrey	B.L. Vawdrey	369	1%	Rev. Le B. Vawdrey	607	2%
Vernon	J. Vernon	227	1%	J.M.L. Vernon	404	2%
	TOTAL	13,609	55%		10,580	42.3%

Source: CCALS, EDT.

Note: Acreage includes land north of the Broxton to Farndon road in Barton, Clutton, Broxton and Kings Marsh.

Overall, the total acreage owned by the major landowners had decreased by some 12.7 per cent between the late 1830s and 1910. This is a clear indication that, in spite of increase and consolidation by some landowners, the decline in large estates had already begun.

### Absentee landowners

Some historians have suggested that new building and therefore the development of settlements depended on whether landowners were resident on their land or were absentee. They argued that resident landowners promoted building and settlement growth while neglect of settlements by absentee landlords tended to curtail new building. Absentee landlords were commonplace in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because new owners were more involved in urban life or had financial

reasons for staying away from their estates.<sup>17</sup> Land speculation and inheritance patterns often meant that land was owned at a distance from the main seat of a family. Many landowners were therefore absent from at least part of their property. They often had little knowledge of agricultural issues and relied on an agent (steward) with whom they communicated through letters.<sup>18</sup> In this context absentee landowners in south-west Cheshire are considered absentee if they lived outside south-west Cheshire, either elsewhere in the county or outside Cheshire.<sup>19</sup>

Hollowell has suggested that a high proportion of owners of enclosed land were absentee.<sup>20</sup> However, in south-west Cheshire only 22 (26 per cent) of the 84 owners of parliamentary enclosed land could definitely be identified as absentee and of these 12 lived outside the county. Most of the landowners of parliamentary enclosed land in the area therefore appear to have been resident, if not on the land enclosed, at least within south-west Cheshire. They were therefore living close enough to the newly enclosed land to influence its development although, as we shall see later, little building took place on land enclosed by parliamentary means.

Turner, in his study of old enclosed pasture in Buckinghamshire in 1785, asserted that old enclosed parishes were typified by greater absentee ownership,<sup>21</sup> with the implication that, if Hollowell is correct, the majority of all landowners in early enclosed areas were absentee. Forty-seven absentee landowners in south-west Cheshire were identified from the list in Bateman's book.<sup>22</sup> Many smaller owners, more tied to their land, were presumably resident owner-occupiers. As we shall see, the number of smaller owners increased during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century and it is often on the smaller plots of land that new building occurred.

## Size of holdings

In order to discuss landownership in terms of size of holdings we need to define the terms 'small', 'medium' and 'large' in context, particularly as historians use different

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<sup>17</sup> J. V. Beckett, 'Absentee landownership in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries: the case of Cumbria', *Natural History*, 19 (1983), 87-107 (pp. 87-8).

<sup>18</sup> Theobald, 'Distant Lands', p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Evidence from Suffolk appears to suggest that absentee landlords did not adopt new agricultural practices as quickly as resident ones. When they did so new cow houses were among the earliest improvements made from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards. Theobald agreed with Beckett that absenteeism was not necessarily detrimental to rural life but said that a reliable steward was necessary. (Theobald, 'Distant Lands', pp. 13, 15, 16.)

<sup>20</sup> S. Hollowell, *Enclosure Records for Historians* (Chichester, 2000), p. 35.

<sup>21</sup> M. Turner, *Enclosures in Britain 1750-1830* (London, 1984), pp. 163-9.

<sup>22</sup> Bateman, *Landowners 1883*, pp. 93-116.

definitions for large or small landowners. In areas like south-west Cheshire most landowners were farmers, either as owner-occupiers, or, in the case of large landowners as owners of several farms.<sup>23</sup> However, many farmers were tenants. Mingay, for example, distinguished between small tenant farmers and owner-occupiers and utilised nineteenth-century statistics to determine that small farms were those between 20 and 100 acres.<sup>24</sup>

Holland, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, considered that most small farms in Cheshire were between 30 to 60 acres and at that size were not viable, although he conceded that amalgamating small farms might cause unemployment. He considered this to be a temporary setback and decided firmly in favour of the development of larger farms with over 60 acres.<sup>25</sup> However, Beckett argued that nationally there was a wide range of farm sizes in the eighteenth and nineteenth century run by both landowners and tenants.<sup>26</sup> Scard asserted that nineteenth-century Cheshire farms averaged 80 acres, although there were many smaller farms of less than 50 acres.<sup>27</sup> Cheshire's farm sizes tended to be smaller because they were often dairy farms rather than arable or sheep farms.<sup>28</sup> This contrasted with the large farms of the Midlands area of parliamentary enclosure. Although many historians considered farms less than 100 acres small, Holland and Scard, with their greater knowledge of Cheshire and although writing nearly two centuries apart, placed small farms between 30 and 80 acres.

<sup>23</sup> Williamson warned against equating small owners with small farmers. (Williamson and Bellamy, *Property*, p. 74.) However, in south-west Cheshire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries most landowners of all sizes were involved in agriculture and can therefore be generally equated to farmers.

<sup>24</sup> Mingay, *Small Farmer*, pp. 15-16. Both Grigg and Beckett also suggest that small farms could be described as between 5 acres and 100 acres and large farms over 100 acres. (D. B. Grigg, 'Farm size in England and Wales from early Victorian times to the present', *AgHR*, 35 (1987), 179-189, p. 179; Beckett, *Revolution*, p. 48).

<sup>25</sup> Holland, *Agriculture*, pp. 97-8. Many small farmers did not just work their own acres but rented land from other people. Some let their own land and rented all their farm land from others.

<sup>26</sup> Beckett, *Revolution*, p. 48.

<sup>27</sup> Scard, *Squire*, p. 60.

<sup>28</sup> J. T. Coppock, *An Agricultural Geography of Great Britain* (London, 1971), p. 60; Yelling asserted that in areas where piecemeal enclosure had occurred most farm sizes were between 50 and 100 acres. However, when demesne land was enclosed this resulted in large holdings from the start. (Yelling, *Common Field*, pp. 94, 102, 113, 119, 127) Beckett found no such link. He drew attention to the difficulty of comparing data about great and small landowners pointing out that twentieth-century historians sometimes used different acreages to define great and small landowners. For example, he noted that for Bateman great landowners owned >10,000 acres while Mingay put this at >5,000 acres. (Beckett, 'Pattern', p. 9). Williamson called the issue is 'confused' and noted that enclosure little affected the increase in farm sizes occurring in all areas during the post-medieval period. (Williamson, 'Understanding', p. 74, 75).

Because historians have different opinions about the various maximum sizes of small farms and the size of large farms, it is also necessary to define a category of medium-sized farms. Yelling suggested that farms of 'moderate extent' were between 50 to 150 acres,<sup>29</sup> but bearing in mind the generally smaller size of Cheshire's farms, for the purposes of this study farms or other landholdings were defined as follows: small - less than 50 acres; medium - between 50 and 100 acres and large - more than 100 acres.

### ***HHI and landownership patterns in south-west Cheshire***

As the previous chapter established, HHI is a more accurate measure of landownership concentration than other measures of concentration. Before we can use it in landownership studies we need to examine how it relates to the traditional methods of describing or predicting the effects of landownership control as have been indicated by the terms 'open' and 'closed'. Having ascertained the major landowners we can now examine the landownership patterns in south-west Cheshire using HHI. The three main series of documents analysed were the land tax, tithe and 1910 'Domesday' records which provided a series for HHI covering a period of nearly 80 years and provided information for many of the conclusions reached in this chapter. The effectiveness of HHI will be tested against the traditional terms 'open' and 'closed'. The method of calculating HHI was explained in the previous chapter. The result of the calculations is table 4:5 and these HHI will be used throughout this work.

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<sup>29</sup> Yelling, *Common Field*, p. 119.

Table 4:5: HHI 1831 to circa 1910.

Township	HHI 1831 (land tax)	HHI c1840 (tithe)	HHI 1910 (Domesday)
Grafton	10000	6922	10,000
Bickley	9802	8500	10,000
Wychough	9232	10,000	5161
Larkton	9043	8500	9409
Carden	8712	8514	8836
Newton by Malpas	8545	10,000	10,000
Duckington	6885	9802	9605
Stockton	6314	7738	7058
Stretton in Tilston	6246	7169	7192
Barton	6244	7256	10,000
Clutton	6237	6733	6930
Crewe by Farndon	6189	3063	4579
Oldcastle	5729	5968	1658
Macefen	5626	9802	9025
Chidlow	4570	6458	6458
Bradley	3789	3933	3204
Agden	3713	3744	4247
Shocklach Oviatt	3499	2730	2752
Edge	3110	3059	2312
Broxton	2986	3655	4051
Chorlton	2571	2721	2375
Caldecott	2373	2547	2297
Malpas	2080	2664	2388
Wigland	1900	2762	5003
Tilston	1775	1984	2828
Cuddington	1770	2499	2348
Hampton	1428	1513	1399
Tushingam	1363	1645	2494
Kings Marsh	1222	1414	2324
Horton	1103	1316	2284
Church Shocklach	1056	1104	889
Farndon	978	1551	2188
Overton	975	1354	1968

Source: CCALS, QDV, 1831, EDT, IR 58.

Note: Grey cells denote open townships, HHI <3000.

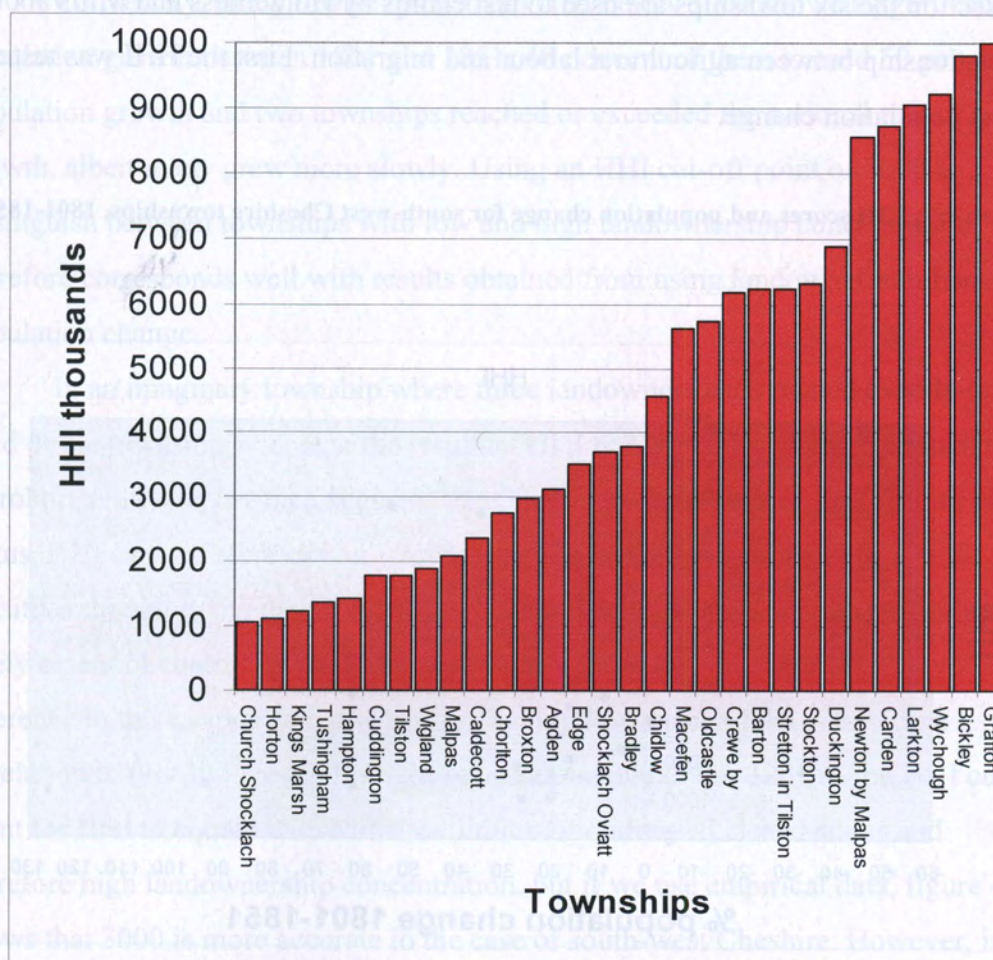


### HHI and south-west Cheshire townships

In using HHI to analyse the effects of landownership control we can seek to establish whether there is a threshold for determining what the distinction between high and low HHI (high and low landownership concentration) should be. Additionally we can examine whether HHI tells us about the distribution of the land.

The 1831 land tax records for townships in south-west Cheshire were used as a basis for calculation and comparison. The HHI range for 1831 rises in a steady line on the graph from the lowest of 975 (Overton township), through, for example, 2373 (Caldecott), 3110 (Edge), 5729 (Oldcastle), 8545 (Newton) to 10,000 (Grafton township) (Figure 4:6).

Figure 4:6: HHI for townships in south-west Cheshire based on 1831 land tax records.



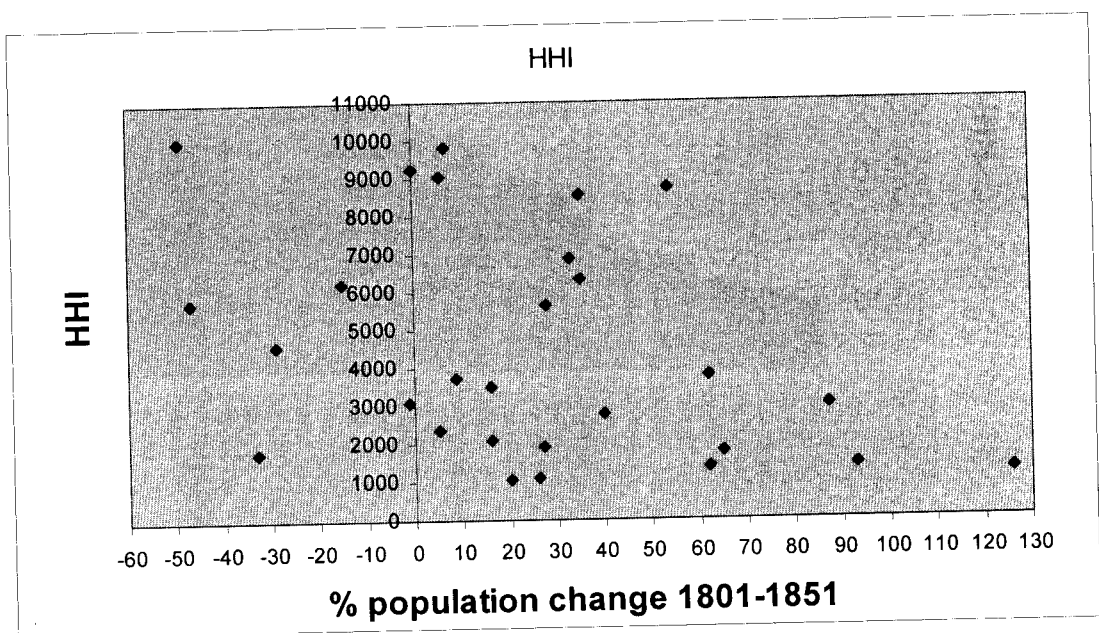
Source: CCALS, QDV, 1831.

This shows no obvious cut-off point for claiming that townships with HHIs above a certain number have high landownership concentration and the rest low. If

landownership concentration was so securely linked to the notion of distinct levels of landownership concentration (and therefore by inference landowner control – the traditional ‘open’ and ‘closed’) that it was indisputable, then there should be more clustering at both extremes of measurement. All any calculation can reasonably do is provide an accurate measure of landowner concentration. Whether this amounts to high or low landownership control, as determined by the nineteenth-century commentators, will be discussed later.

The HHI calculated for the townships in south-west Cheshire in 1831 was tested against several traditional indicators of open and closed status (population change, population density, housing density, number of farms, number of incomers, number of non-conformist chapels, number of pubs) to see how securely landownership concentration as measured by HHI could be linked to these. In the next section the six townships are used to test claims by Holderness and Mills about the relationship between agricultural labour and migration. First the HHI was tested against population change.

**Figure 4:7: HHI scores and population change for south-west Cheshire townships, 1801-1851.**



Source: National census data, 1801 to 1851.

Note: Threapwood had no tithe award and is therefore omitted from this graph. Townships showing the same rate of growth and are represented by one diamond.

If population change in the townships between 1801 and 1851 is then compared to their HHIs, it can be seen that townships with a low rate of population growth tended to have an HHI of 3000 or higher. Figure 4:7 clearly shows that most townships with an HHI of 3000 and above registered population growth of less than 35 per cent between 1801 and 1851, compared with a national growth rate of 93 per cent (see chapter five). Just over half of these high HHI townships had a population growth rate of less than ten per cent or actually underwent a population decline. Few townships with an HHI of over 3000 recorded a population growth of more than 55 per cent. However, we need to remember that even a very small increase in population among smaller townships in the area had a large impact. There are bound to be exceptions to the general link between high HHIs and low population growth, but generally the data reveal that HHIs show an excellent rate of correlation.

Conversely, many townships with an HHI below 3000 showed significant population growth between 1801 and 1851; 40 per cent of them exceed 50 per cent population growth and two townships reached or exceeded the national rate of growth, albeit many grew more slowly. Using an HHI cut-off point of 3000 to distinguish between townships with low and high landownership concentration therefore corresponds well with results obtained from using landowner numbers and population change.

In an imaginary township where three landowners each owned exactly one-third of the township's acreage the resultant HHI is 3267.<sup>30</sup> This is near enough to corroborate the graph which suggests that 3000 is a useful indicator of open or closed status. HHI can therefore not only reveal the number of landowners, but it is sensitive enough to indicate the degree of landowner concentration and therefore likely extent of control by taking into account smaller owners. Hereafter, any reference in this chapter to a township as having low or high HHI is based on its HHI in relation to this 3000 level. It might seem reasonable to use 3267 as the HHI cut-off point for HHI to equate with Mills' definition of traditional closed status and therefore high landownership concentration, but if we use empirical data, figure 4:7 shows that 3000 is more accurate in the case of south-west Cheshire. However, if 3267 was applied, this would merely change Edge township from barely high to barely low. The advantage of HHI is that these slight differences in landownership

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<sup>30</sup> Three landowners is the maximum number used in traditional definitions of open and closed communities.

concentration can be perceived immediately. However, more research into HHI is needed nationally so that an increased data base could substantiate a widely acceptable cut-off point between high and low landownership concentration. Figure 4:7 shows that the townships with a low HHI (< 3000) often recorded the highest population growth. By contrast there was a substantial fall in four of those townships with high HHIs which could be deemed to have high landowner concentration. Both of these results would be expected using traditional criteria for determining open and closed status. The exception to this is the low HHI township of Cuddington (HHI 1770) where the population declined by 33 per cent between 1801 and 1851. There is no specific explanation for this but possibly, following the turnpiking of the Malpas to Bangor road in 1767, the improvement in transport meant that high speed carriages had no need to stop at the township's settlement because of its close proximity to Malpas (see chapter four).

Generally, although there was a tendency for growth in all townships (albeit lower than the national average), there was more growth and less decline in low HHI townships than in high ones. The rate of growth for high HHI townships was low or declining but low HHI townships had a range between low (or even negative) growth and high growth. This wide range for low HHI townships is at variance with the assumption generally made for traditionally defined open townships.

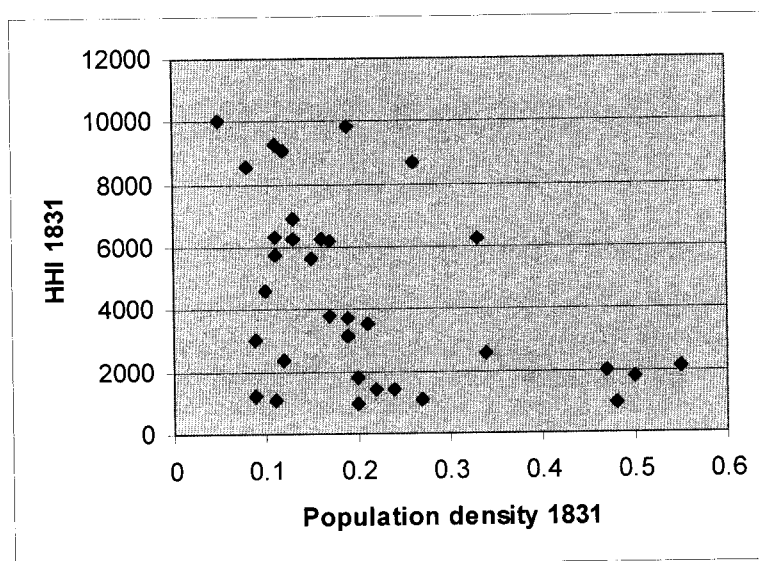
Other predictive measures of high and low landownership concentration (and therefore control) mentioned by Mills and Banks were also tested – population density, housing density and the incidence of paupers. Figures 4:8 and 4:9 show that although population density broadly follows the traditional assumption, that townships with high HHIs had low density populations, in south-west Cheshire low HHI townships (traditional open townships) had a range of densities. Therefore there are enough exceptions to suggest, as Banks commented, that in a rural area such as south-west Cheshire low population density was more likely a result of low housing density.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Banks, 'Scandal', p.55.



**Figure 4:8: HHI scores compared to population density of townships in south-west Cheshire in 1831**

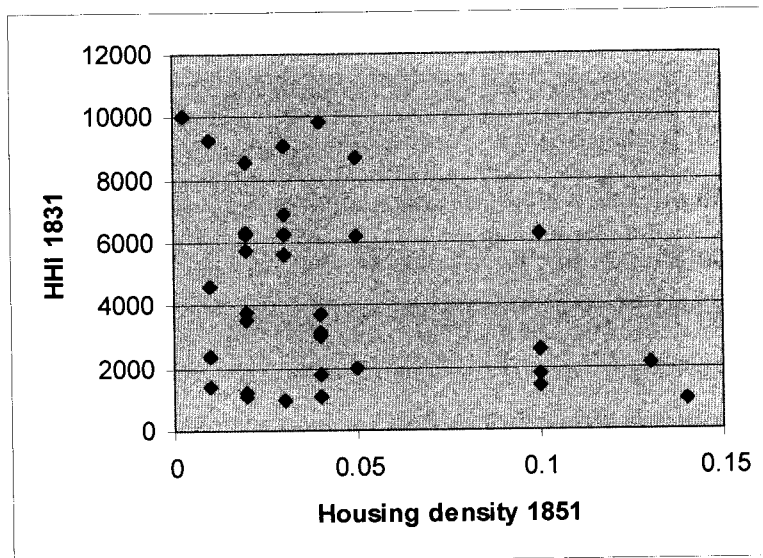


Sources: Tithe awards for south-west Cheshire; national census 1831.

Note: There was no tithe award for Threapwood which is therefore omitted from this graph.

Figure 4:9 shows that most townships had a low housing density. A comparison of tables 4:8 and 4:9 shows that a number of townships did not conform to the traditional theory that those with more landownership control (HHI above 3000) had low population and housing densities and those with low landownership control (HHI below 3000) had higher densities. Figures 4:8 and 4:9 therefore demonstrate that although there was a broad correlation between both population change and density and low and high landownership concentration in townships, neither indicator can be used with precision or absolute reliability. For example, although Grafton, with one owner in 1831, had a low housing and population density and Malpas, with its market town clearly with low landownership concentration, had high density, Church Shocklach, a township with a very low landownership concentration, had a low housing density. What HHI offers is a more accurate and reliable measure of landownership concentration than has hitherto been used: this can then supplement or replace other criteria for determining the effects of landowner control.

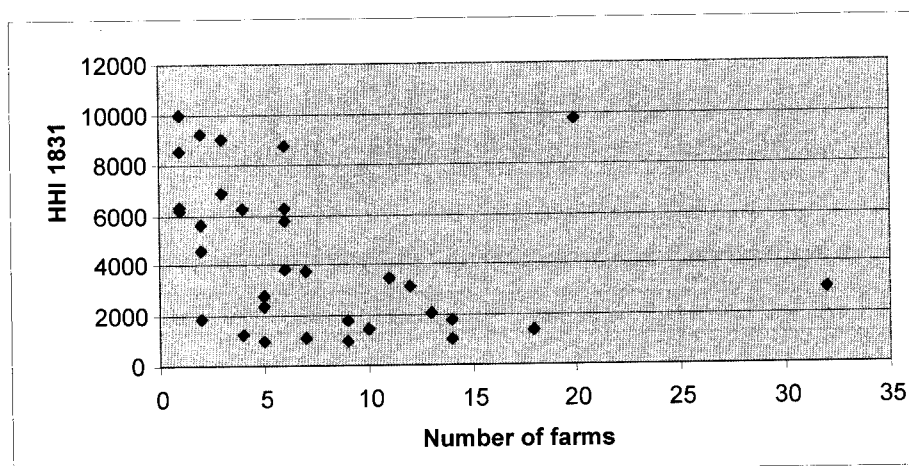
**Figure 4:9: A comparison of HHI and housing density in south-west Cheshire townships, 1851.**



Source: National census, 1851.

Banks also tried using the number of farms in an area as a predictor of the strength of landowner control in a parish (traditionally open or closed). As figure 4:10 shows, high HHI townships (townships generally with fewer landowners) tended to have fewer farms, although this was not always the case, while many low HHI townships also had a small number of farms. Low HHI townships with a small number of farms were often located on more difficult farming land: Overton and Wigland were situated on comparatively steep land for the area, Crewe was next to the Dee and therefore inclined to get waterlogged and Kings Marsh, as the name suggests, was on marshy land (although much of this is beyond the area of this study). The difficulty of farming such land no doubt acted as a disincentive to create farms.

Figure 4:10: HHI in relation to the number of farms in south-west Cheshire townships, 1831.



Source: Land tax 1831.

The two townships with an exceptionally high number of farms shown in figure 4:10 were Bickley (20 farms, HHI 9802<sub>LT</sub>) and Broxton (32 farms, HHI 2986<sub>LT</sub>). These two townships had the largest areas in south-west Cheshire which explains the high number of farms (Bickley, c.2473 acres; Broxton, c.2131 acres).<sup>32</sup> The fact that in 1831 Bickley had a high HHI and Broxton a low HHI reinforces the argument that the number of farms does not correlate well with high or low HHI.

<sup>32</sup> Phillips & Phillips, *Atlas*, p. 107.

**Table 4:11: Low or high HHI compared against criteria for traditional open or closed townships**

	HHI 1831	No. of owners	1-3 landowners of 50 per cent 1831	3+ landowners of 50 per cent 1831	Static/declining population 1801-	Households per cent with pauper as head	Households with ag. lab. as head 1841	Incomers per cent 1851	Number of pubs 1850	NC chapels	Housing Density per acre 1851	Population Density per acre 1831
Grafton	10000	1	✓		-	0		100	0	0	0.003	0.05
Bickley	9802	2	✓		+				0	0	0.04	0.19
Wychough	9232	2	✓		=				0	0	0.01	0.11
Larkton	9043	3	✓		+				0	0	0.03	0.12
Carden	8712	7	✓		+				1	0	0.05	0.26
Newton	8545	2	✓		+				0	0	0.02	0.08
Duckington	6885	2	✓		+				0	0	0.03	0.13
Stretton	6246	4	✓		-				0	0	0.02	0.13
Clutton	6237	5	✓		+				0	0	0.03	0.16
Stockton	6314	3	✓		+				0	0	0.02	0.11
Crewe	6189	3	✓		+				0	0	0.05	0.17
Barton	6244	4	✓		+				1	1	0.1	0.33
Oldcastle	5729	3	✓		-				0	0	0.02	0.11
Macefen	5626	3	✓		+				1	0	0.03	0.15
Chidlow	4570	3	✓		-				0	0	0.01	0.1
Bradley	3789	17			+				1	0	0.02	0.17
Agden	3713	8	✓		+				0	0	0.04	0.19
Shocklach Oviatt	3499	12	✓		+	0	53.1	47	1	1	0.03	0.21
Edge	3110	10	✓		-			72	0	0	0.04	0.19
Broxton	2786	18	✓		+				3	0	0.04	0.09
Chorlton	2571	11	✓		+				1	0	0.06	0.34
Caldecott	2373	7	✓		+				0	0	0.01	0.12
Malpas	2080	44	✓		+		18.7	47	5	2	0.13	0.55
Wigland	1900	17	✓		+				1	0	0.05	0.47
Tilston	1775	24	✓		+	3.1	34.4	56	2	1	0.1	0.5
Cuddington	1770	12	✓		-				2	0	0.04	0.2
Tushingham	1363	14	✓		+	12	38.8		1	3 (1857)	0.03	0.24
Hampton	1428	11	✓		+				3	0	0.01	0.22
Horton	1103	27	✓		+				0	0	0.04	0.27
Kings Marsh	1222	13		✓	+				0	0	0.02	0.09
Church Shocklach	1056	16		✓	+	34.4	37.5	95.5	1	0	0.02	0.11
Farndon	978	32	✓		+				4	0	0.14	0.48
Overton	975	11	✓		+				0	0	0.03	0.2

Sources: Land tax 1831; National census records 1831, 1841, 1851; Directories 1850, 1857; Tithe awards.

Note: Threapwood was an extra-parochial parish and so omitted. Grey cells show the townships with HHI <3000.



Using HHI for 1831 we can calculate that in south-west Cheshire during the early nineteenth century there were 19 high HHI townships out of the 34 in the area, excluding Thrapwood. These had varying number of owners but none had more than two landowners of more than 50 per cent of the acreage. Of the remaining 14 low HHI townships again the total number of landowners varied but the number owning at least 50 per cent of the land was no more than four. The high HHI townships were therefore dominated by large landowners who could restrict the type, location and construction method of buildings, whereas the low HHI townships tended to be subjected to the influence of such people to a lesser extent.

It is clear from Table 4:11 that, although low and high HHI townships on the whole fulfilled the main traditionally accepted criteria, there was no consistent pattern. Although the lack of information for some of the sample townships makes it difficult to draw any definite conclusions, pauper households were more likely to be found in low HHI townships. In all the sample townships the number of households headed by agricultural labourers was high, as might be expected in a rural area, and as was the number of incomers, that is people born outside the township. If nothing else, the data show that in both low and high HHI townships there was population movement between townships as well as from outside the area.

Other conclusions can be drawn from Table 4:11. Most of the low HHI townships had pubs, as did most of the low HHI townships, but so did five high HHI townships; Carden, Barton, Maccfen, Bradley and Shocklach Oviatt. The number of non-conformist chapels was equally complex: although more of the low HHI townships had non-conformist chapels there are exceptions in that the high HHI townships of Barton and Shocklach Oviatt also had them. The number of landowners in each township has already been discussed but again although the difference between high and low HHI townships seems clear, there are exceptions. In general the data suggests that although the traditional criteria are useful, care should be taken before using them as definitive indicators of open or closed townships.

HHI, however, does provide an accurate measure of landowner concentration which can be compared with townships across the country. Although traditional criteria can indicate generally whether a township had high or low landowner control, there are too many exceptions. HHI has the advantage of enabling an historian to judge the degree of landowner control and is easier to use than other measures of concentration. However, HHI, used with a 3000 cut-off point, closely

correlates with the number of landowners and population change: HHI is therefore potentially more useful than basic correlation techniques.

### **Changes over time**

Although this chapter has so far concentrated on the mid-nineteenth century in order to demonstrate the use of HHI, such an approach can also be used with later documents, for example the 1910 'Domesday', to see whether townships had changed their landownership concentration over time. Table 4:12 shows 18 high HHI townships in south-west Cheshire in 1910, only one less than the mid-nineteenth-century as indicated by HHI based on tithe awards. However, these were not necessarily the same as the high townships of the tithe awards. The low HHI township of Wigland had become a high HHI township and three high HHI townships had become low HHI (Edge, Agden and Oldcastle). HHI can therefore be used to track the changes in landownership concentration.

The table below shows that during the nineteenth century, with few exceptions, the landownership concentration in south-west Cheshire townships had increased from the land tax records of 1831 to the tithe awards in the 1830s and 1840s with an increase in HHI scores. However, during the second half of the nineteenth century and certainly by the time of the 1910 'Domesday' records this increase in concentration had slowed down; there had been a decrease in landownership concentration in about a third of the townships, while in nearly a sixth of the townships it remained virtually the same. This foreshadowed the growing diversification of landownership during the twentieth century.

The ability to track changes in landownership concentration through place and time depends on there being an agreed cut-off point for HHI. 3000 has been used consistently in this study, because it correlates closely with the traditional criteria of landowner numbers and population change.

Table 4:12 Changes in HHI 1831 to circa 1840 and 1910.

Township	HHI 1831 (land tax)	HHI c1840 (tithe)	HHI 1910 (Domesday)
Grafton	10000	6922	10,000
Bickley	9802	8500	10,000
Wychough	9232	10,000	5161
Larkton	9043	8500	9409
Carden	8712	8514	8836
Newton by Malpas	8545	10,000	10,000
Duckington	6885	9802	9605
Stockton	6314	7738	7058
Stretton in Tilston	6246	7169	7192
Barton	6244	7256	10,000
Clutton	6237	6733	6930
Crewe by Farndon	6189	3063	4579
Oldcastle	5729	5968	1658
Macefen	5626	9802	9025
Chidlow	4570	6458	6458
Bradley	3789	3933	3204
Agden	3713	3744	4247
Shocklach Oviatt	3499	2730	2752
Edge	3110	3059	2312
Broxton	2986	3655	4051
Chorlton	2571	2721	2375
Caldecott	2373	2547	2297
Malpas	2080	2664	2388
Wigland	1900	2762	5003
Tilston	1775	1984	2828
Cuddington	1770	2499	2348
Hampton	1428	1513	1399
Tushingam	1363	1645	2494
Kings Marsh	1222	1414	2324
Horton	1103	1316	2284
Church Shocklach	1056	1104	889
Farndon	978	1551	2188
Overton	975	1354	1968

Source: CCALS, QDV, 1831, EDT, IR 58.

Note: Grey cells denote open townships, HHI <3000.

However, the level of ownership concentration as indicated by HHI is only one factor among several that affected landlord control and therefore the landscape.<sup>33</sup> These included not only the size but the position and proportion of holdings to the township area as a whole. Regardless of the size of an individual estate, it is its share of the township's acreage and its physical location that was important. For example, Dod's estate at Edge took up about a third of the township and was far *larger in proportion* to other holdings and therefore the landlord was still able to exert considerable influence over smaller owners and tenants.

### HHI in the sample townships

We can assess how far the six sample townships in south-west Cheshire had patterns of high or low landownership concentration as measured by HHI and were therefore more or less likely to be subject to landowner control. As the introduction to the thesis explained, the sample townships were chosen to represent different geographical, topographical, and landownership situations. In spite of this, and although initially two townships were closed, two open, and two indeterminate, by 1910 all six had low HHIs. Although eleven high HHI townships maintained their HHI or had higher HHI by 1910 (HHI>3000), five high HHI townships decreased their HHI. The number of low HHI townships (HHI<3000) increased from 14 to 15 which can be demonstrated showing the change on the HHI chart from earlier in this chapter. (Table 4:12). This gradual move towards lower HHI was a general trend in all the townships towards the end of the nineteenth century. Therefore, although the sample townships all had low HHI by 1910 they were still typical of the townships in the area. However, to act as a check, three townships with high HHIs which remained closed throughout the period were also examined: Agden, Duckington and Larkton.

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<sup>33</sup> E.g., Beckett suggested a relationship between absentee landowners and a settlement's open or closed status and that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the degree of control was less when an agent ran an estate. (Beckett, 'Absentee', pp. 88, 89, 97). In south-west Cheshire the phenomenon of absentee landowners appeared to have no bearing on whether a township was open or closed. The 33 townships with 1831 land tax records (Threapwood had no land tax record) show that 22 had more than 50 per cent of the acreage owned by absentee landlords (67 per cent) with a further three townships (Farndon, Horton and Broxton) where the owners of 50 per cent of the acreage were owned by residents on the one hand and absentees almost exactly on the other. Using the HHI of 3000 or above as a standard for identifying closed townships, eight out of thirteen (62 per cent) of the open townships and 14 out of 20 (70 per cent) of the closed townships had absentee landowners controlling more than 50 per cent of the acreage. As the percentage of absentee landowners appears to have been virtually identical in both open and closed townships in the area this did not appear to affect a township's status.

Using a definition of high and low landownership concentration based on an HHI score being above or below 3000, the results (Table 4:12) were tested against the traditional nineteenth-century criteria for an open or closed township, as postulated by Holderness, Mills and Banks. As the following analysis will demonstrate, the HHI score rather than the number of dominant landowners provides a more reliable indicator than the traditional criteria of whether a township was subject to landowner control. It will also be shown that using 3000 as the cut off level is the HHI baseline that more usefully differentiates between high and low landownership concentration townships.

First, let us examine Holderness's claim that high landownership control (traditional 'closed') as inferred by high HHI could be associated with an adequate number of agricultural labourers. Table 4:13 suggests that in 1851 all six townships, except Malpas which contained the market town, had a broadly similar percentage of agricultural labourers based on the percentage of households headed by agricultural labourers. Although the two high HHI townships (Shocklach Oviatt, Edge) appear to have had enough agricultural labourers to work the townships' land, so too did the low HHI townships. The numbers declined generally by 1891, but the overall differences were not significant. Malpas, a low HHI township, had the lowest concentration of agricultural labourers, but generally the data suggests that the number of agricultural labourers is a poor predictor of landownership concentration. Its reliability is also placed in doubt by significant intercensal variation, for example in the case of Church Shocklach, between 1851 and 1871, while the gradual decline in agricultural labour by the late-nineteenth century also undermined the usefulness of this indicator. Moreover, there is no way of telling from the census how many labourers commuted from villages with low landownership concentration (<3000 HHI) to those with high (>3000 HHI).

**Table 4:13: Percentage of household heads recorded as agricultural labourers in the six sample townships.**

	HHI 1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
Church Shocklach	1056	Missing	38	19	41	33	31
Tushingam	1363	55	39	49	32	20	8
Tilston	1775	35	34	39	28	13	18
Malpas	2080	Missing	19	21	15	15	10
Shocklach Oviatt	3499	Missing	53	44	26	28	22
Edge	3110	52	40	45	35	18	30

Source: National census returns.

Note: percentages to nearest whole number.

**Table 4:14: Percentage of household heads recorded as agricultural labourers in three high HHI townships.**

HHI	HHI 1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
Agden	3713	38	30	37	15	29	
Duckington	6885	29	29	47	50	21	56
Larkton	9000	57	22	0	25	43	43

Source: National census returns.

The high HHI townships (Table 4:14), although showing slightly lower percentages of agricultural labourers, also show marked intercensal changes, such as Larkton between 1851 and 1861, and equally high percentages in some years. Generally these townships had lower population levels so the base for change was small, making percentages misleading.

The number of in-migrants to a township is traditionally considered to be predictive of a township's status: a low HHI township had a high number of in-migrants whereas a low number indicated a high HHI township in which landowners restricted the settlement of possible paupers.<sup>34</sup> However, the six sample townships demonstrate that this also is not reliable (Table 4:15). Using landownership concentration as measured by HHI to determine the amount of landowner control in a township, Edge, a high HHI township, had a much lower proportion of head of households born in the township, than Church Shocklach, a low HHI township. The

<sup>34</sup> Banks, 'Scandal', pp. 68-9.

number fluctuates more in Tushingam during the nineteenth century which might indicate movement of population typical of a low HHI township. If so, then it is this variation in number of in-migrants rather than the number present in a township that predicts low HHI status. However, Tushingam's comparatively low number of paupers compared with the other sample townships supports the evidence of HHI that it was moving towards high HHI status. (See table 4:19). Edge, also with a high HHI in 1831, has a lower number of paupers overall than the other townships (albeit marginally so).

**Table 4:15: Percentage of household heads born in the six sample townships.**

	HHI 1831	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	HHI 1910 (Domesday)
Church Shocklach	1056	47	34	53	27	45	889
Tushingam	1363	18	4.5	0	22		2494
Tilston	1775	35	34	29	38	34	2828
Malpas	2080	44	35	33	33	34	2388
Shocklach Oviatt	3499	53	70	37	33	42	2752
Edge	3110	28	18	17.3	12.3	16	2312

Source: National census returns.

Note: Data for 1841 refer to household heads born in the County.

**Table 4:16: Percentage of household heads born in three high HHI townships.**

	HHI 1831	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	HHI 1910 (Domesday)
Agden	3713	5	0	5	0	0	4247
Duckington	6885	33	29	29	67	40	9605
Larkton	9043	0	50	25	0	0	9409

Source: National census returns.

The three townships with high HHIs also show no definitive correlation, with Agden showing low percentages of heads of household born in the township, Duckington high percentages, and Larkton a mixture.

Table 4:17 shows that there were slightly fewer farms in those of the six sample townships for which the HHI indicates a higher level of landowner control compared to those with a low HHI township. However, the number of farms was too dissimilar and there are exceptions as demonstrated by the low number of farms in the open township of Tilston. Therefore, as in the area as a whole, the number of farms does not necessarily tell us anything about the landownership status of the township.

**Tables 4:17 and 4:18: The number of farms in the six sample townships and three high HHI townships.**

	HHI in 1831	Number of farms 1841
Church Shocklach	1036	14
Tushingham	1393	18
Tilston	1779	9
Malpas	2080	10
Shocklach Oviatt	3499	11
Edge	3110	12

	HHI 1831	Number of farms 1841
Agden	3713	5
Duckington	6885	3
Larkton	9043	2

Source: Land tax returns 1831.

In the three other higher HHI townships (Agden, Duckington and Larkton) the number of farms was fifty per cent or more lower than in the sample townships suggesting a closer correlation with the traditional criterion. However, Shocklach Oviatt, with a high HHI only 204 lower than Agden, had over twice as many farms as that township. The number of farms as an indicator of townships with high or low landownership control should therefore be used with caution.

A further traditional criterion for assessing how much landowner control a township had involves estimating the number of poor that were supported in each township. Low HHI townships or parishes tended to have larger numbers of poor.<sup>35</sup>

Few of the area's records relate to the poor and therefore the number of poor in each township is difficult to calculate. No overseers accounts exist for the largest

<sup>35</sup> Of the six sample townships, Tilston and Edge belonged to Great Boughton Poor-Law Union from 1837-1871, subsequently renamed as Tarvin Poor-Law Union until 1930. Both Shocklach townships belonged to Wrexham Poor-Law Union until 1897, then Tarvin Poor-Law Union. Between 1837 and 1853 Malpas belonged to Wrexham Poor-Law Union, Tushingham belonged to Nantwich Poor-Law Union and then both became part of Whitchurch Poor-Law Union until 1930. (P. Higginbottom, *Great Boughton (Tarvin from 1871) in Cheshire*, (27 Apr 2004) <<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~peter/workhouse/GreatBoughton/GreatBoughton.shtml>> [accessed: 9 Nov 2004].)



ancient parish, that of Malpas, and therefore for most of the townships. Although overseers records exist for Shocklach and Tilston parishes, most of the information has to be extracted from census records which only provide a general indication of the trend for the number of paupers between 1841 and 1891 (Table 4:19).<sup>36</sup> These records do not reveal any clear differences between low and high HHI townships and indeed both types of townships show high levels of pauperism at different times. For example, Shocklach Oviatt demonstrated a high level of pauperism despite its high HHI status, whereas Malpas, a low HHI township, had a comparatively low level of pauperism. Pauperism levels were subject to high intercensal variation, (as was the case in closed Shocklach Oviatt) compared with pauperism's steady decline in the other high HHI township of Edge. The level of pauperism in Malpas declined, while in Tilston, also low HHI, it rose over time. This confirms Banks's view, that a comparison of the levels of pauperism is not reliable enough to determine the difference between townships with more or less landowner control (traditionally 'open' or 'closed'). Such a conclusion is reinforced by evidence from three high HHI townships (Table 6:28).

**Table 4:19: Percentage of households with a pauper as head in the six sample townships.**

Percentage of pauper household heads							
	HHI 1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
Church Shocklach	1056	Missing	34	3	19	0	3
Tushingam	1363	2	12	1	1	0	0
Tilston	1775	13	3	0	8	0	1
Malpas	2080	Missing	1	0.4	0	0	0
Shocklach Oviatt	3499	Missing	0	11	5	0	6
Edge	3110	0	11	0	6	2	0

Source: National census returns.

<sup>36</sup> The six sample townships have census records for 1841 to 1891 but the originals of Malpas's and Shocklach's censuses for 1841 are missing and TNA cannot trace them.

**Table 4:20: Percentage of households with a pauper as head in three high HHI townships.**

	HHI	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
	1831						
Agden	3713	Missing	5	5	0	0	0
Duckington	6885	0	7	0	0	0	0
Larkton	9043	14	0	33	0	0	0

Source: National census returns.

All three townships had high HHIs but pauper numbers in Larkton were higher than in the six sample townships. This supports the view that a township's level of pauperism is no sure indicator of its landownership concentration and therefore landowner control status.

### Landowner control in the six townships

A more detailed analysis of the six sample townships will demonstrate how closely they fitted the traditional definitions as well as the effectiveness of HHI in determining the general attributes of high and low landownership concentration and therefore control.

Edge had been dominated since the eighteenth century by the Dod family who owned over 50 per cent of the land (and who still own a substantial part of it today). Its low population and comparatively few paupers, no pubs or non-conformist chapels and few houses even today make the township a high HHI (or 'classic' closed) area. However, in 1831 the township had an HHI of only 3110<sub>LT</sub>, just over the limit of the HHI cut off point since there were a few other minor landowners in the township. Edge had a generally low number of paupers indicating good employment levels, but the rise in pauper numbers in 1851 coincided with a substantial fall in population of 16 per cent since 1831 - implying a lack of available work for that period. The presence of several pauper families, on a par with the nearby low HHI township of Tilston, is unusual in a high HHI township, but possibly indicated Dod's paternalistic attitude towards the inhabitants as demonstrated by the family's close involvement in the township school.<sup>37</sup> The township appears to have had adequate numbers of agricultural labourers, although lower than most of the other five townships, and the percentage declined over time, which is usually indicative of a low HHI township. The township's nineteenth-century housing

<sup>37</sup> CCALS, SL88 1/1, 2.

density was low, traditionally indicative of a high HHI township, but population density is not a reliable predictor of landowner control and Edge's 0.2 population density in 1831 was similar to that of many low HHI townships in the area.<sup>38</sup> Edge had fewer farms than the lowest HHI townships of Church Shocklach and Tushingam. Edge, therefore, fulfils the traditional criteria for a high HHI township in terms of landownership, amenities, farm numbers and an adequate supply of agricultural labourers. However, it had a high number of paupers, an average population density and comparatively high number of residents from outside the township. The township can therefore generally be regarded as low HHI, but showing some anomalies. This is reflected in its HHI, which is close to the borderline between low and high HHI (low or high landownership concentration). As we shall see, the other townships too do not necessarily fulfil all the traditional criteria related to their low or high HHI status.

Shocklach Oviatt's high HHI status (HHI 3499<sub>LT</sub><sup>39</sup>) was tempered by its link with Church Shocklach (low HHI 1056<sub>LT</sub>) for administrative purposes. In Shocklach Oviatt, Puleston was the dominant owner in 1784, paying 64 per cent of the total land tax, a situation virtually unchanged in 1831.<sup>40</sup> Neither Shocklach township appears to have had many poor inhabitants. According to the 1815 overseers accounts for Shocklach parish, which provide an indication of the number of poor in the parish, payments were made to between 15 and 20 individuals in need between 1815 and 1829. Caldecott, the third township in the parish of Shocklach, only had between 56 and 84 inhabitants at this time and therefore most of the poor probably came from the two Shocklachs. The poor amounted to about four per cent of the parish, or five per cent of the Shocklach townships.<sup>41</sup> This does not indicate a high rate of poor relief and although Church Shocklach was a low HHI township according to the degree of landownership concentration, the resident landowner dominated its neighbouring and closely related township and made them both high HHI in character. On the other hand, Shocklach Oviatt's population peak in 1821 contradicts the notion that it might have been under much landowner control during the nineteenth century. However, there is no evidence from the census of rapid building despite an overall rise in

<sup>38</sup> Population density = population over acreage. A similar methodology is used for calculating housing density, i.e. number of houses over acreage.

<sup>39</sup> As noted at the end of chapter three, where it is necessary to distinguish between HHIs from the different document sources, subscripts are used: land tax <sub>LT</sub>, tithe <sub>T</sub>, 1910 'Domesday' <sub>D</sub>.

<sup>40</sup> CCALS, QDV, 1831.

<sup>41</sup> CCALS, P308/4772/36.

population in Shocklach Oviatt of 16 per cent between 1801 and 1851 (figure 5:20). By contrast, this was generally lower than that of Church Shocklach (low HHI) which rose by 20 per cent during the same period.

Shocklach Oviatt's 1831 housing density was low (0.03 houses per acre) with an average of 0.2 housing density conforming to a closed township.<sup>42</sup> There was one pub and one non-conformist chapel in the township, generally more common in low HHI townships. However, it had slightly fewer farms (11) than two of the four low HHI townships and consistently had a very high number of residents born in the township. Generally, with the exception of the inconclusive evidence on population density and the presence of a pub and chapel, Shocklach Oviatt was, as its HHI suggests, a high HHI township.

Church Shocklach, in contrast to its neighbour Shocklach Oviatt, had a low HHI in 1831. In 1784 Puleston's land taxes amounted to 44 per cent of the township's total but by 1839 they represented only 13 per cent. By 1831 Church Shocklach had an HHI of 1056<sub>LT</sub>, giving it a very low landownership concentration. The township had a low housing and population density normally characteristic of a high HHI township; it had a pub, but no non-conformist chapel. Throughout the nineteenth century it had a variable number of residents born in the township, although as we have seen, this is not a reliable indicator of its status. Although both Church Shocklach and Shocklach Oviatt are clearly similar in environment and share the church and principal settlement, the pattern of landownership was different in each township. This meant that in other characteristics as well as landownership concentration, Shocklach Oviatt was closed and Church Shocklach open.

The other three example townships had low HHIs, including Malpas township which contained the area's central market town (HHI 2080<sub>LT</sub>). Malpas township was a small market town typically low HHI with a rising population and many landowners. However, in the nineteenth century it was dominated by two landowners, Drake and Cholmondeley, who owned 56 per cent of the land between them. In addition there were 37 smaller owners plus two rectories and the school.<sup>43</sup> Using Mills's definition of the number of owners of 50 per cent of the acreage, Malpas township would have a high landownership concentration and probably control; however, such a conclusion would clearly be misleading. The presence of

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<sup>42</sup> Housing density = number of houses over acreage.

<sup>43</sup> CCALS, Mf. 208/28.

only a small number of influential landowners did not necessarily make a township high HHI. The HHI for Malpas is 2080<sub>LT</sub> demonstrating that it was a low HHI township because HHI takes into account the other landowners. By the time of the tithe map and apportionment of 1839 both Tyrwhitt-Drake and Cholmondeley were undisputed owners of most of Malpas and between them they owned 67 per cent or approximately two thirds of the land; of the fifty landowners only two owner-occupiers recorded in Malpas in 1839.<sup>44</sup> Malpas was therefore a town and a township of tenants. This, together with a steady increase in the number of houses and owners and a population growth of 16 per cent between 1801 and 1851, shows that although Malpas township was dominated by two very powerful landlords, it had low landownership concentration (low HHI), a result confirmed by its HHI score of 2080 in 1831. As expected from a low HHI township Malpas had a high population density compared with other local townships (0.5) and a comparatively high housing density (0.1). It had a large number of pubs (five in 1851) and two non-conformist chapels. There were virtually no families headed by paupers, although this was unusual in an low HHI township. It had proportionally fewer agricultural labourers as heads of families than the other sample townships, expected from a market town with its more diverse range of occupations. Although Malpas fulfilled all the criteria for a low HHI township, except a lack of control by a few landowners, once again HHI allows an reliable judgement to be made on the realities of a township's condition.

An HHI score of 1775<sub>LT</sub> also indicates that Tilston was a township with low landownership concentration because it is well below the 3000 level. It had four landowners of more than half its land, with Leche owning the largest (of four) share, but there were as many smaller owners. The four main landowners owned a third of the buildings between them so although they controlled most of the land and buildings they did not control all of it. The remainder was controlled by individuals of varying degrees of prosperity.<sup>45</sup> In terms of the number of paupers shown by heads of household (figure 4:19) Tilston's level of pauperism was above that of the low HHI township of Tushingham during the second half of the nineteenth century. Tilston's only surviving overseers accounts from 1816 reveal that the overseers paid relief to 78 people, including 11 individuals and two families of 5, or 27 per cent of

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<sup>44</sup> CCALS, EDT 257/1, 2 .

<sup>45</sup> CCALS, EDT 395/1.

the township's population.<sup>46</sup> Altogether 48 separate families of one person or more were assessed in the township in 1816.<sup>47</sup> This supports the status of Tilston township as low HHI. However, this is only a snapshot and the high proportion receiving assistance might be explained by high food prices immediately after the Napoleonic Wars. Even so, it shows that many people in Tilston were dependent on the poor rates for support, and presumably had settlement rights there.

Tushingam's HHI of 1363<sub>LT</sub> also indicates a low HHI township inferring low landownership control. Between 1784 and 1832 there were four major landowners of whom only Vernon and Cholmondeley were constant. By the time of Tushingam's 1838 tithe award<sup>48</sup> Vawdrey, Vernon, Cholmondeley and Benyon were the major landowners in Tushingam owning approximately 72 per cent of the land. Census records (1841-1891) record five paupers as heads of household (two per cent of the total) in 1841, a peak of eight paupers (12 per cent) in 1851, but only one pauper was recorded in 1861 and 1871, while in 1881 and 1891 no paupers were recorded.<sup>49</sup> Clearly there were needy people in the township but a low population and predominantly farm-based families meant that there were few paupers. This does not indicate a high HHI area so much as a township that had adequate labourers for its needs. This is supported by table 4:13 which shows a reasonable number of agricultural labourers until 1871, after which the level declines. Tushingam had a low population density (0.24) and low housing density (0.03) which is more consistent with a high HHI township. However, it had a pub and three non-conformist chapels by 1857 indicative of a low HHI township. In the case of this township, therefore, it is the pattern of landownership concentration and amenities that class it as an 'open' township and this is reflected in its HHI.

These six townships illustrate that townships with high or low landownership control did not always demonstrate the full range of traditional characteristics as the indications are often ambiguous. The terms low and high HHI can only be used to suggest a *probable* range of attributes, but not a definitive set of criteria. We are on surer ground when suggesting a link with population change, the number of farms and landowner concentration.

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<sup>46</sup> The census figures for 1811 have been used as the nearest indicator of population.

<sup>47</sup> CCALS, DX 360.

<sup>48</sup> CCALS EDT 405/1, 2.

<sup>49</sup> CCALS, Mf. 146/1, Mf 265/43.

These examples show that while a township or settlement with high landownership control would be reasonably deduced by the presence of one dominant landowner, where there is more than one landowner it becomes more problematic, as the example of Malpas shows. The number of landowners owning 50 per cent of the township correlates well with the HHI and could be used as a crude replacement for it. But using HHI with a suitable cut off point, which this chapter suggests should be 3000, gives a far more accurate picture of whether the concentration of major landowners is enough to mark a township as likely to have low or high landowner control.

### **HHI in the twentieth century**

HHI can be used to bring our knowledge of changes in landownership concentration into the twentieth century. Similar criteria as those examined for the nineteenth century can be analysed against HHIs produced from the 1910 'Domesday'.

Table 4:21: Township ownership patterns from the 1910 'Domesday' for south-west Cheshire.

Townships	HHI 1910	Township acreage (to nearest acre)	No. of landowners	1-3 landowners of 50 per cent 1831	3+ landowners of 50 per cent 1831	Housing Density per acre 1910	Population Density per acre 1910	Average plot size in acres	Number of farms	Number of houses	Number of cottages	Number of other recorded buildings	Total number of dwellings
Bickley	10,000	2405	3	√		0.03	0.16	27	0	21	52	1	74
Newton	10,000	210	3	√		0.02	0.01	35	0	2	2	0	4
Barton	10,000	513	2	√		0.03	0.2	15	7	4	7	0	18
Grafton	10,000	334	8	v		0.01	0.01	38	2	2	0	0	4
Macefen	9025	321	1	√		0.03	0.22	25	0	8	2	10	20
Duckington	9605	671	4	√		0.01	0.09	45	0	10	0	0	10
Larkton	9409	403	3	√		0.01	0.11	40	0	5	1	1	7
Carden	8836	783	2	√		0.04	0.02	20	0	23	7	1	31
Stretton	7192	802	3	√		0.02	0.1	36	0	11	3	1	15
Stockton	7058	263	3	√		0.02	0.01	24	0	2	4	0	6
Clutton	6930	612	5	√		0.02	0.1	31	2	8	0	0	10
Chidlow	6458	153	3	√		0.01	0.1	38	0	2	0	0	2
Wychough	5161	323	6	√		0.01	0.03	54	0	2	0	0	2
Wigland	5002	567	12	√		0.06	0.27	11	0	13	22	0	35
Crewe	4579	292	8	√		0.03	0.14	11	0	5	5	0	10
Agden	4247	552	10		√	0.02	0.13	23	0	0	9	0	9
Broxton	4051	2155	28	√		0.05	0.25	17	0	106	5	7	118
Tilston	2828	799	26	√		0.09	0.48	6.2	2	21	45	6	74
Shocklach Oviatt	2752	1018	24	√		0.02	0.19	18.5	6	11	0	0	17
Tushingham	2494	1351	14	√		0.03	0.19	35	0	9	12	0	21
Chorlton	2375	460	13	√		0.04	0.2	19	0	9	12	0	21
Cuddington	2348	1291	22	√		0.04	0.21	59	1	27	28	2	58
Malpas	2338	1828	89	√		0.16	0.64	5.8	3	109	164	22	298
Kings Marsh	2324	788	10	√		0.01	0.11	28	1	7	4	0	12
Edge	2312	1601	19	√		0.03	0.12	18.5	0	28	21	1	50
Caldecott	2297	631	13	√		0.02	0.08	27	0	5	5	0	10
Farndon	2188	880	42		√	0.16	0.62	5.3	1	46	78	13	138
Overton	1968	796	12		√	0.03	0.14	16	0	12	13	0	25
Oldcastle	1658	901	18	√		0.03	0.01	60	3	9	3	1	16
Hampton	1464	1243	17	√		0.05	0.28	14	0	43	20	4	67
Bradley	1399	529	11		√	0.05	0.22	19	0	28	1	0	29
Church Shocklach	889	1278	19		√	0.01	0.13	27	2	12	2	0	16
Horton	888	540	23		√	0.03	0.2	6.2	1	14	7	0	22
TOTAL		27,293											

Sources: CCALS, EDT; 1910 'Domesday'.

Note: Grey denotes open townships with HHI <3000. For the sake of continuity acreage from the title maps has been used in this table. The total area of south-west today Cheshire is 29,306 acres according to Phillips and Phillips, *Atlas*, pp. 107-9. That reassessment makes no significant difference to the calculations in this table.



A comparison of figure 4:21 with figure 4:11 shows a gradual increase in the number of low HHI townships with decreased landowner control: that is, an increase from two to six townships in which with more than 50 per cent of each township's acreage was owned by more than three people. Similarly Bradley, although still with a high HHI, moved much closer to the low HHI category. (See 4:22)

**Table 4:22: Comparison of Table 4:21 with Table 4:11 showing townships with 3+ landowners of 50 per cent of acreage.**

	3+ landowners of 50 per cent 1831	3+ landowners of 50 per cent 1910	HHI 1831	HHI 1910
Agden		√	3173	4247
Farndon		√	978	2188
Overton		√	975	1968
Bradley		√	3789	3204
Church Shocklach	√	√	1056	889
Horton		√	1103	2284
Kings Marsh	√		1222	2324

Source: CCALS, QDV2, 1831, NVA.

**Table 4:23 Population density of south-west Cheshire townships, 1910.**

Townships	HHI 1910	Housing Density per acre 1910	Population Density per acre 1910
Grafton	10,000	0.01	0.01
Bickley	10,000	0.03	0.16
Newton	10,000	0.02	0.01
Barton	10,000	0.04	0.2
Duckington	9605	0.01	0.09
Larkton	9409	0.01	0.11
Macefen	9025	0.03	0.22
Carden	8836	0.04	0.02
Stretton	7192	0.02	0.1
Stockton	7058	0.02	0.01
Clutton	6930	0.02	0.1
Chidlow	6458	0.01	0.1
Wychough	5161	0.01	0.03
Wigland	5003	0.06	0.27
Crewe	4579	0.03	0.4
Agden	4247	0.02	0.13
Broxton	4051	0.05	0.25
Bradley	3204	0.03	0.22
Tilston	2828	0.09	0.48
Shocklach Oviatt	2752	0.02	0.19
Tushingam	2494	0.03	0.48
Chorlton	2375	0.03	0.2
Cuddington	2348	0.04	0.21
Malpas	2338	0.16	0.64
Kings Marsh	2324	0.02	0.11
Edge	2312	0.03	0.12
Caldecott	2297	0.02	0.08
Horton	2284	0.03	0.24
Farndon	2188	0.16	0.62
Overton	1968	0.03	0.14
Oldcastle	1658	0.02	0.01
Hampton	1399	0.1	0.3
Church Shocklach	889	0.01	0.13

Source: CCALS, NVA.

Note: Townships with low landownership concentration according to HHI are shown grey.

If we compare the housing density of townships in 1910 with 1831 and 1851 (Figures 4:11, 4:23) we see that housing density in most of the low HHI and

generally less well-populated townships had decreased by the early twentieth century, while in most high HHI townships it had remained the same or actually increased. However, the trend in population density did not depend on township type: the number of townships in which population density increased, decreased or remained the same was almost equal in both low and high categories, although Malpas, Tilston, Farndon and Barton townships increased their population density and these settlements were singled out by planners for development later in the twentieth century.

The number of farms shows no clear relationship to landownership concentration and therefore to the extent of the built up area. However, the number of houses, cottages and other buildings was generally higher in the low HHI townships which accords with their freedom from landlord control to build. Again Malpas and Farndon, the largest low HHI townships, had the highest number of buildings in 1910. Broxton, a 'high HHI' township but not far above the 3000 threshold, also had a large number of houses as did Cuddington on the route from Malpas to Bangor. Bickley, probably owing to its proximity to the A49 to Whitchurch, also had a large number of houses.

An analysis of the six sample townships shows that those that had low landownership concentration in 1910 according to HHI (Malpas, Tilston, Tushingham, Church Shocklach) tended to have the highest numbers of single (as opposed to multiple) owners of plots and dwellings. Edge, which had reached a lower HHI since the mid-nineteenth century also had a high number of houses, while Shocklach Oviatt, which had a high HHI but was just in the low HHI category by 1910, still had a low number of houses compared with most of the low HHI townships.

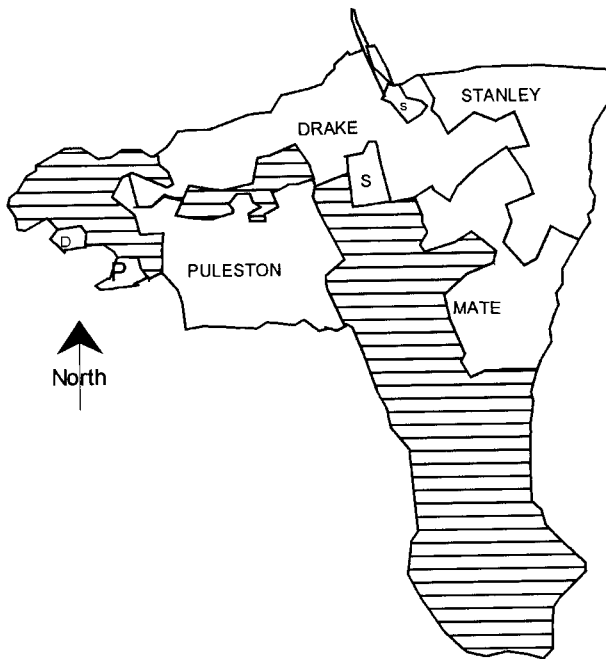
As this chapter demonstrated at the start, in 1910 the major landowners of the nineteenth century still held a large part of the available land in south-west Cheshire. Although the largest landowners had retained or slightly increased their holdings, this was not the case with other important landowners who had reduced or sold theirs. The 1910 valuation demonstrates the generally higher level of population and housing in many of the settlements with low landownership concentration that were to be singled out by twentieth-century planners. The continued importance of farming in the area would ensure the continuation of landownership patterns – as will be demonstrated in chapter seven using the 1910 HHI.

## The distribution of land

HHI as a measure of landownership concentration can only tell us about overall land distribution. A high HHI generally indicates fewer landowners and therefore the likelihood that land was held in larger blocks, while a low HHI indicates many smaller owners and therefore a likely 'patchwork' of holdings.

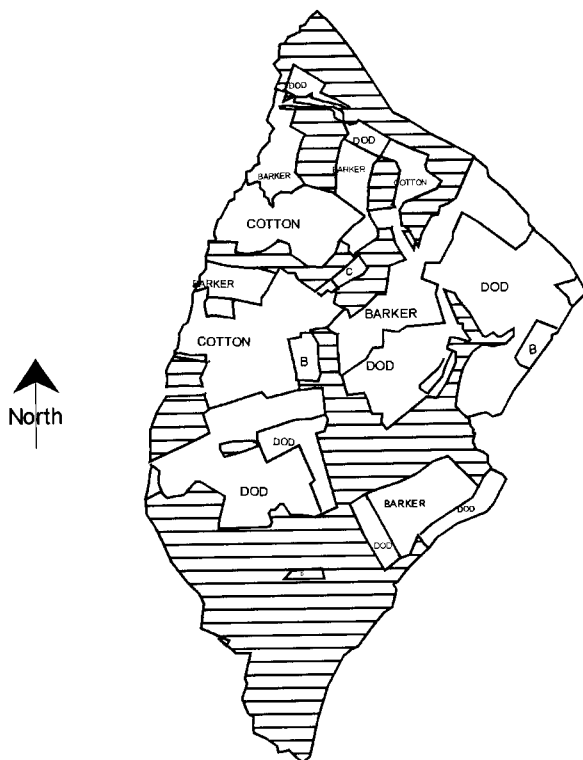
Landownership maps created from some of the tithe maps for the townships in south-west Cheshire and compared with tithe HHIs show that the distribution of holdings was more scattered in townships with a lower HHI. The maps show the ownership pattern of landowners who together owned at least 50 per cent of their township. The higher the HHI, the fewer the number of landowners and the more compact their holdings were. It was possible, of course, for three major landowners to have a large number of scattered holdings but this was unlikely given the tendency to consolidate land where possible (see later in this chapter); equally, more landowners could have their land blocked together, as in Church Shocklach (HHI 1104). However, the evidence suggests that, as a general principle, the fewer the landowners the more consolidated their holdings. In Tilston (HHI 1984) and Tushingham (HHI 1645), both low HHI townships, the holdings were small and scattered (Figures 4:37, 4:28) while in Edge (HHI 3059), a high HHI township, the holdings were grouped in much larger blocks (Figures 4:31). Townships with one or two owners naturally only had large blocks of holdings, for example Stretton (HHI 7169) and Carden (HHI 8514) (Figures 4:32, 4:33). Although HHI cannot tell us where the holdings were distributed, it can give an indication of whether they were likely to be scattered or compact. (Figures 4:24-33).

Figure 4:24: Church Shocklach township landownership distribution, (HHI 1104<sub>T</sub>).



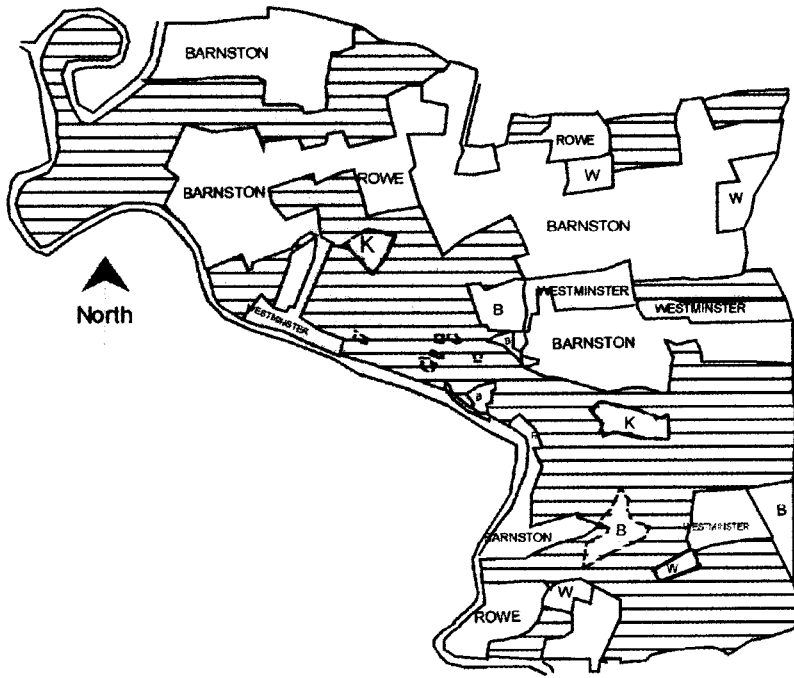
Source: CCALS, EDT 355/2.

Figure 4:25: Horton township landownership distribution, (HHI 1316<sub>T</sub>).



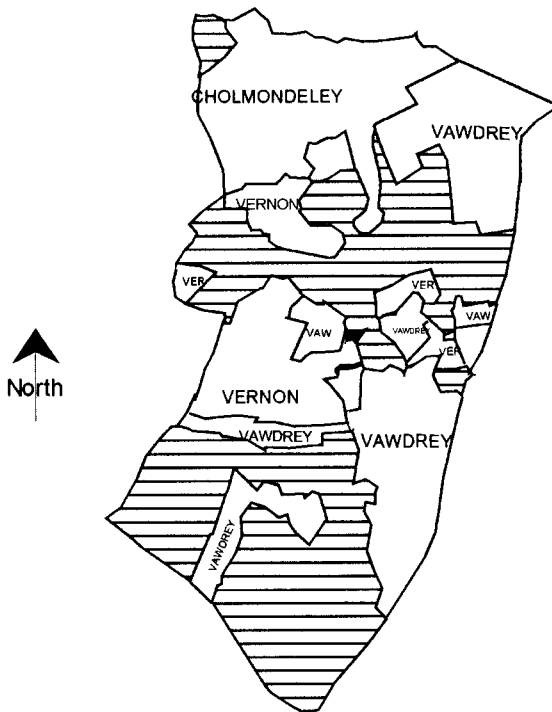
Source: CCALS, EDT 208/2.

Figure 4:26: Farndon township landownership distribution, (HHI 1551<sub>T</sub>).



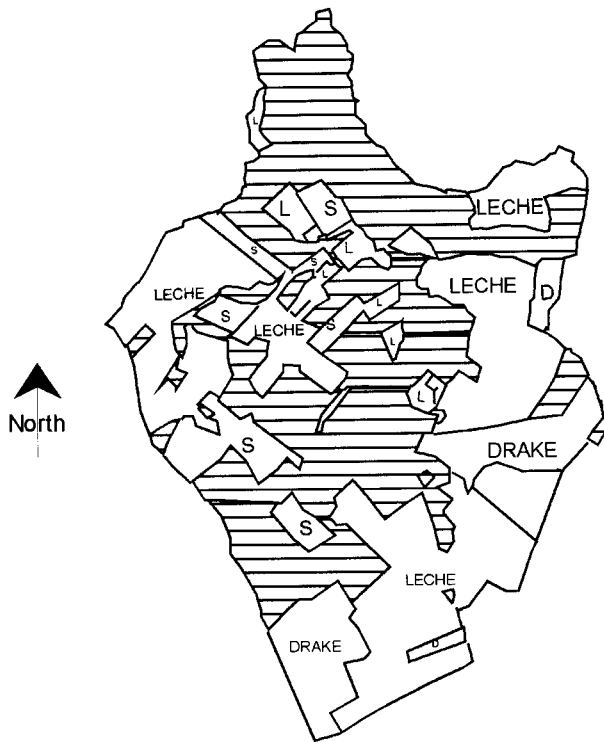
Source: CCALS, EDT 159/2.

Figure 4:27: Tushingham township landownership distribution, (HHI 1645<sub>T</sub>).



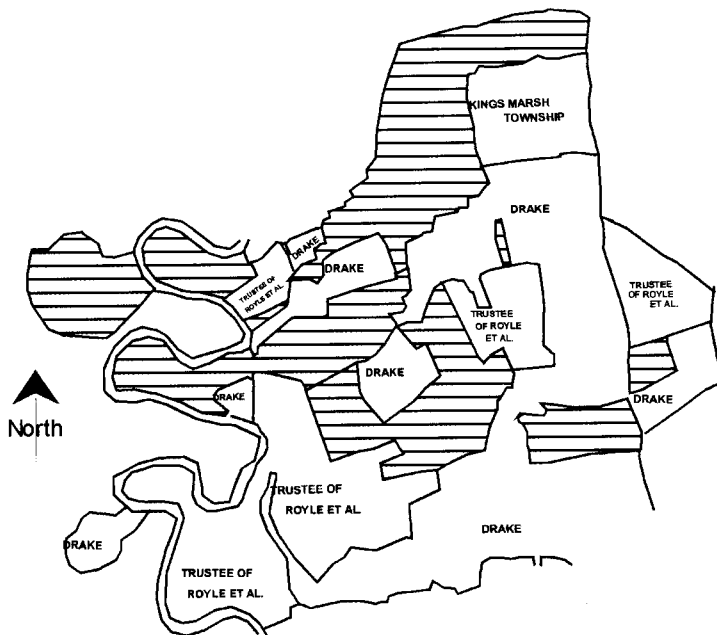
Source: CCALS, EDT 405/2.

Figure 4:28: Tilston township landownership distribution, (HHI 1984<sub>T</sub>).



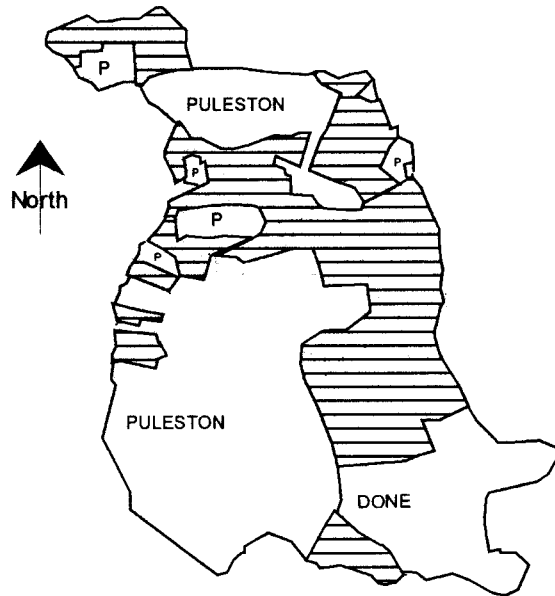
Source: CCALS, EDT, 391/2.

Figure 4:29: Caldecott township landownership distribution, (HHI 2547<sub>T</sub>).



Source: CCALS, EDT 150/2.

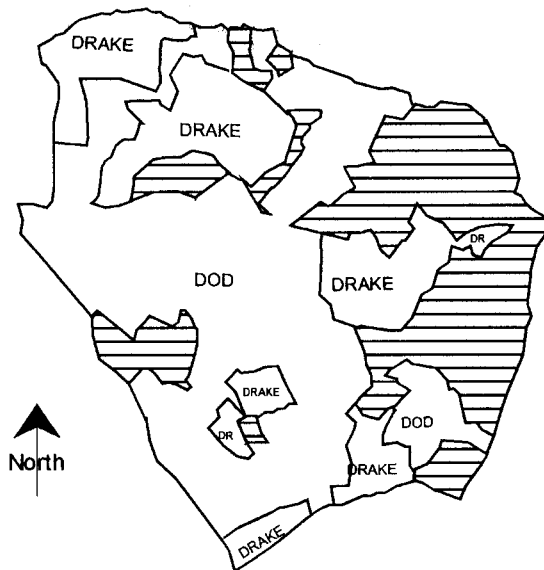
Figure 4:30: Shocklach Oviatt township landownership distribution, (HHI 2730<sub>T</sub>).



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Source: CCALS, EDT 355/2.

Figure 4:31: Edge township landownership distribution, (HHI 3059<sub>T</sub>).

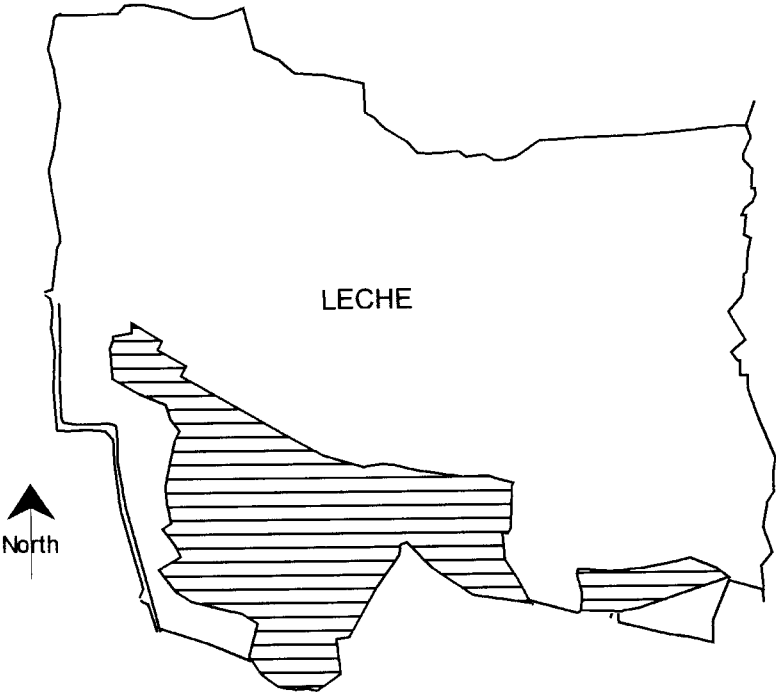


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Source: CCALS, EDT 152/2.



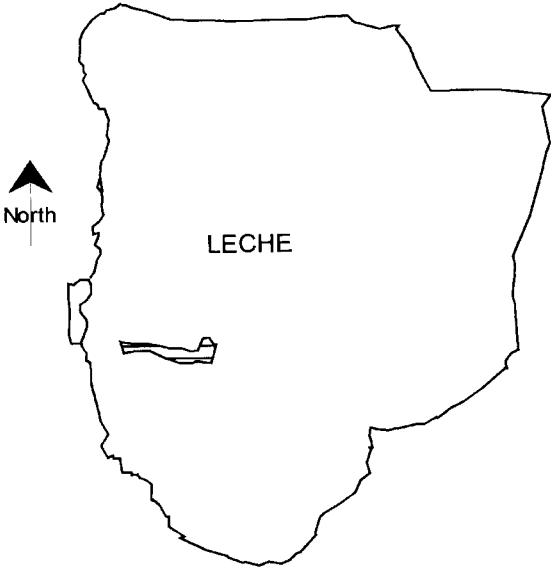
Figure 4:32: Stretton township landownership distribution, (HHI 7169<sub>T</sub>).



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Source: CCALS, EDT 377/2.

Figure 4:33: Carden township landownership distribution, (HHI 8514<sub>T</sub>).



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Source: CCALS, EDT 87/1.

The distribution maps confirm that generally high HHI townships had a more compact distribution of landownership concentration while that of low HHI townships was more dispersed. This again would imply a greater level of landownership control in high HHI townships. To explore the implications of changes in landownership concentration in more detail, we need to turn to examine the land tax records.

### ***Changing landownership patterns***

Having established that HHI can be used to examine differences in landownership concentration we can investigate the changes in landownership in south-west Cheshire.

### **Eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries**

Landownership changes between 1750 and the early-nineteenth century can be studied using the land tax records. Problems with using land tax records have been discussed in the introduction but here we mention the use made of the records for the purposes of examining the effect of changing landownership patterns. No attempt has been made to convert land tax payments into exact acres. However, as a comparison needs to be made between townships in terms of their size of individual land holdings, three broad categories of land tax were used to identify small, medium and large landowners. A comparison was made between the 1831 land tax records for the townships in the area and the acreage of the tithe records in the 1830s and 1840s where individual nominal linkage could reasonably be assumed to be accurate. There could, of course, have been changes in individual landownership shares between these two documents, but given the short intervening period, it has been assumed that the holdings were approximately the same. By using proportions of land tax payments as a substitute for small, medium and large landholdings, a general trend in ownership patterns can be established. A comparison of owners' total landholdings in a township in the 1832 land tax records with, where possible, their landholdings at the time of the tithe awards, suggests that, using the terms small, medium and large landowners as defined in this chapter, small landowners (less than 50 acres) paid less than £2 in land tax, medium owners (50 to 100 acres) £2 to £10, and large

landowners (over 100 acres) more than £10.<sup>50</sup> Even allowing for a few borderline cases in the 'wrong' category this should allow us to get a general idea of the trend in ownership between the period of the land tax records (1784 to 1832) (Figure 4:34). As Ginter suggests 'size should be thought of as a percentage of tax paid'.<sup>51</sup> Even if we cannot assume an accurate tax to acreage relationship, the proportion of tax assessed should provide some indication of the relative size of each landowner's holding and a picture of the consolidation or otherwise of holdings.

Following Yelling's suggestion that individual cases be examined to show what land was amalgamated or divided,<sup>52</sup> land tax records are used for the six selected settlements to demonstrate the process.

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<sup>50</sup> Among others, comparing the Malpas 1832 land tax returns with the tithe award of 1839 we can identify Cholmondeley paying c.£24 on c.100 acres (large), Drake paying c.£24 on c.1,213 acres (large), Vaughan paying c.12 s on c.14 acres (small) and Kenyon paying c.3s on c.2 acres (small). The landownership size refers only to the holdings in each individual township.

<sup>51</sup> Ginter, *Land Tax*, p. 288.

<sup>52</sup> J. A. Yelling, *Common Field and Enclosure in England 1450-1850* (London, 1977), p. 107.

Table 4:34: Land tax records showing ten-yearly changes in landownership size.

EDGE	Ten year intervals. Total holdings within township only.					Average Land Tax						
	1784	1794	1804	1814	1824	1832	1784	1794	1804	1814	1824	1832
<b>EDGE</b>												
Land Tax	11	5	3	2	1	4	£1-00-10	£0-12-07	£0-08-09	£0-13-07	£0-05-07	£0-12-00
<£2	11	13	4	4	3	3	£4-03-02	£3-18-06	£5-12-08	£5-16-00	£5-04-10	£4-12-06
£2-£10	1	2	2	2	2	2	£25-11-06	£13-5-18	£29-10-18	£29-13-11	£33-19-08	£32-04-09
>£10												
<b>Shocklach</b>												
<b>Owsett</b>												
Land Tax	8	8	6	7	6	10	£0-16-08	£0-19-05	£0-16-02	£0-14-03	£0-16-02	£1-01-08
<£2	6	6	5	7	7	6	£5-17-03	£5-17-02	£5-19-11	£5-09-07	£5-16-09	£5-03-04
£2-£10	1	1	1	1	1	1	£62-08-00	£62-08-04	£62-02-02	£60-12-10	£63-04-10	£64-16-02
>£10												
<b>Church</b>												
<b>Shocklach</b>												
Land Tax	4	1	6	5	6	5	£0-10-05	£0-08-00	£0-13-02	£0-14-01	£1-01-07	£1-08-11
<£2	5	5	8	7	9	8	£3-14-09	£3-18-00	£3-10-01	£4-3-07	£4-04-03	£3-17-02
£2-£10	2	2	1	2	1	1	£17-08-08	£18-03-02	£23-08-04	£10-00-10	£18-04-11	£10-05-05
>£10												
<b>MALPAS</b>												
Land Tax	17	20	33	32	33	36	£0-19-02	£0-11-02	£0-08-02	£0-18-0	£0-07-10	£0-08-06
<£2	6	5	4	5	5	5	£4-08-04	£3-03-07	£2-05-04	£2-12-12	£2-16-03	£2-15-00
£2-£10	2	3	2	2	2	2	£24-0-0	£21-11-04	£18-01-18	£21-15-11	£24-08-02	£22-12-06
>£10												
<b>TILSKON</b>												
Land Tax	13	12	19	28	21	19	£1-08-04	£0-18-10	£0-11-28	£0-16-02	£0-10-02	£0-04-10
<£2	4	7	6	5	5	6	£3-13-06	£3-11-03	£3-12-18	£3-08-02	£3-16-02	£4-12-06
£2-£10	0	0	0	0	0	0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
>£10												
<b>Tushingham</b>												
Land Tax	6	9	6	8	5	4	£0-09-04	£0-13-02	£0-16-07	£0-13-0	£0-11-10	£1-06-10
<£2	9	9	10	5	8	6	£4-17-08	£4-17-11	£4-09-07	£5-04-10	£4-07-06	£5-01-08
£2-£10	0	0	0	1	1	2	£0	£0	£0	£12-19-06	£12-18-06	£10-01-08
>£10												

Source: CCALS, Mf. 208/25/158, Mf. 208/48/275, Mf. 208/68/381, Mf. 208/82/433, Mf.208/17/113.

Note: The holdings refer to total land held by individual owners within each township. These do not necessarily represent amalgamated pieces of land.

The sample townships in Figure 4:34 show that although certain characteristics in landownership change appear to be connected with how much landowner control there was (i.e. the extent to which a township had high or low HHI), in borderline cases the distinction is not always clear. In the high HHI township of Edge from the late eighteenth century, we can see that the larger landowners were clearly gaining land at the expense of both the medium and small landowners. The average land tax figures show that the number of holdings in the case of the smaller landowners (paying less than £2) decreased by 50 per cent between 1784 and 1832. At the same time the average size of the land tax payments for small owners decreased by 40 per cent, not only was the number of small owners decreasing, but so was the size of their holdings. The number of large landowners doubled, at the expense of both the small and medium landowners.

By contrast, in Shocklach Oviatt township, also with a high HHI, there was little change in the number of medium-sized owners between 1784 and 1832, but by the 1830s the number of smaller owners had increased as had the size of holdings. The average land tax paid by the largest owners also fell, so the small owners appeared to have benefited at the expense of both the medium and large owners. Malpas contained the area's market town and had the characteristics of a low HHI township. Although the number of large and medium owners showed little change between 1784 and 1832, the number of small owners increased significantly. However, the size of their holdings had fallen by more than 50 per cent by 1832. The number of medium-sized owners remained virtually the same, but their average land tax payment had fallen by nearly 50 per cent. The number of large landowners hardly varied, but their average land tax payments decreased slightly. As a result, the number of small landowners had risen at the expense of the other groups, although their holdings had decreased.

Tushingam township had a low HHI in the early nineteenth century, but this gradually rose. The number of small landowners generally decreased although by 1832 their average land tax had almost tripled since 1784. After peaking in the early 1800s, the number of medium-sized landowners also fell although their average land tax payment increased slightly. At the same time one larger landowner, Vawdrey (and by 1832 additionally Vernon) emerged in the early nineteenth century having acquired holdings from both small and medium owners. The reason for the emergence of a larger landowner was probably related to two events – the proposed

canal to the east of the area that was completed in 1804 and the parliamentary enclosure of part of Willey Moor in the township in 1798 which was prompted by the canal. The enclosure and the subsequent related exchange and sale of portions of land evidently enabled two medium landowners to increase their holdings sufficiently to fall into the largest land tax-paying bracket.

Tilston and Church Shocklach were both townships with low HHIs. In Tilston the number of small and medium owners increased between 1784 and 1832. However, the average land tax of the small owners significantly decreased, while that of the medium owners increased slightly. Here it appears that many small plots were sold, benefiting the medium-sized owners in terms of holding size and the smaller owners in terms of the number of available plots. Church Shocklach had low HHIs. The smallest owners almost doubled their average land tax payment while that of the largest owners decreased. There was little change in the tax paid by medium owners and it appears that the smallest owners were benefiting at the expense of the largest.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, therefore, the smallest owners tended to decrease in clearly high HHI townships such as Edge and latterly Tushingham and increase in low HHI townships such as Malpas and Tilston. However, this is not straightforward. In Shocklach Oviatt, a high HHI township, there was a slight increase in smaller owners at the expense of the holding size of large owners. In the low HHI township of Church Shocklach the number of smaller landowners increased as at Malpas and Tilston. In only two of the townships did the number of medium owners decrease. Generally they increased their numbers or remained much the same. Therefore the medium owners did not decrease either in numbers or holdings size as much as the smaller owners.

### **Changes to building 1784 to 1832**

It is possible to draw some general conclusions about building from the land tax records and occasionally it is possible to follow the history of particular buildings in a township. Table 4:35 shows the number of buildings in the sample townships between 1784 (1787 in Tilston and 1820 in Edge because information was omitted in some records). Although it is possible to calculate the number of recorded buildings it is not always possible to distinguish between farms and houses because in many records, such as the first eighteenth-century Malpas land tax records, they are clearly combined. Also, as previously noted, many of the smallest proprietors and their

cottages were not recorded, although a trend in the number of larger dwellings can be established with some certainty.

Table 4:35 Dwellings in the sample townships in south-west Cheshire from land tax records.

	LAND TAX RECORDS FOR THE SIX SAMPLE TOWNSHIPS					BUILDINGS							
		1784	1787	1790	1795	1800	1805	1810	1815	1820	1825	1830	1832
TILSTON	No. of farms			15	15		10	9	9	7			
	No. of houses		27	11	11		15	24	24	22		29+	29+
	Total number of buildings		27	26	26		25	33	33	29		29+	29+
MALPAS	No. of farms	0	0	0	20		15	12		20	17	13	16
	No. of houses	97	79	80	93		82	84		69	74	78	75
	Total number of buildings	97	79	80	103		97	96		89	91	91	91
EDGE	No. of farms									0	13	11	12
	No. of houses									17	22	16	16
	Total number of buildings									17	35	27	28
CHURCH SHOCKLACH	No. of farms	11	12	10	9	9				7	0	14	10
	No. of houses	0	0	0	0	0				4	11	0	0
	Total number of buildings	11	12	10	0	9				11	11	14	10
SHOCKLACH OVIATT	No. of farms	8	8	12	12	11			11	13	11	13	13
	No. of houses	0	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0	0
	Total number of buildings	8	8	12	12	11			11	13	11	13	13
TUSHINGHAM	No. of farms Sources: land tax Records	0			12		12	1	16	15	15	18	18
	No. of houses	23			19		7	19	7	6	6	10	10
	Total number of buildings	23			31		19	20	23	21	21	28	

Source: CCALS, Mf. 208/25/158, Mf. 208/48/275, Mf. 208/68/381, Mf. 208/82/433, Mf.208/17/113.

Note: Omissions indicate information unrecorded in the document.

There was no great change in dwelling numbers between 1784 and 1832, and some sample townships witnessed a slight decrease (Table 4:35). However, there was a general increase in building from the 1790s although the number of houses built in



most of the townships was very small. This was at a time when there was a national population increase of 50 per cent and an increase in south-west Cheshire of 26 per cent (see chapter five, Figure 5:9).

It is possible to trace the construction or designation of particular buildings, for example, the first shop to be recorded for the land tax in Malpas township was Peter Barlow's house which was renamed a shop in 1814, but by 1817 it had reverted to a house. Egerton sold land to Barlow and Dean in 1822 and a house was built on it, and in 1827 Barlow and Dean's barn and land was registered as a house and land, while in 1830 a building was erected on the land of Drake's tenant Hunt. Any annual change in dwelling numbers may have been caused by houses becoming uninhabitable or when barns were redesignated as houses: the shop and one school came and went, and a pub was created. Although these alone did not account for the fluctuations, the general impression is of a town with a stable core of housing that was very little changed over the 48 years of the land tax records.

In Tushingham township only four properties were named in the land tax records - The Bell Inn until 1823 (still in existence), Chapel Croft until 1810, Gill's land from 1829 to 1832 and Lower House from 1830 to 1831.<sup>53</sup>

In Edge during the period of the land tax records, although the trend was towards creating smaller tenancies and building houses, owners tried to consolidate their holdings. This was particularly evident during the end of the first third of the nineteenth century. As was the case elsewhere, the population was increasing and dwellings were needed to keep pace with this.

The detailed study of land tax records for the six sample townships, reinforced by estate papers and other relevant documentation shows therefore that while the consolidation of holdings continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was an increase in the availability of smaller plots. Although the records do not always allow us to follow exactly the change in building patterns, the trend on newly released smaller plots of land as well as on consolidated plots can be established with some certainty. It seems, therefore, that while consolidation continued in the area during this period, it was the increase in smaller holdings generally that encouraged building and increased the size of settlements. South-west Cheshire therefore followed the national trend of consolidation of

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<sup>53</sup> CCLAS, QDV 2, Mf. 208/82/433.

holdings but also, like the county as a whole, increased its numbers of small farmers.<sup>54</sup> This was important for settlement development.

### Mid-nineteenth century

Subsequent trends in landownership patterns can be followed using the tithe awards of the 1830s and 1840s, shortly after the end of the land tax records. Tithe awards record acreage so they can be used to assess landownership changes between the period of the tithe awards and the early twentieth century as represented by the 1910 Domesday (Figure 4:36). This national register of landownership predated the major period of great estate sales from about the 1920s onwards.

**Table 4:36: Landowner numbers at the time of the tithe awards and the 1910 ‘Domesday’ in the six sample townships.**

	Date of tithe award	Holdings <50 acres	Holdings 51-100 acres	Holdings >100 acres	1910 Domesday	<50 acres	50-100 acres	>100 acres
Edge	1838	6	3	2	Edge	14	1	3
Shocklach Oviatt	1839	11	1	3	Shocklach Oviatt	22	1	1
Church Shocklach	1839	5	5	5	Church Shocklach	14	3	5
Malpas	1839	44	1	5	Malpas	46	3	3
Tilston	1840	37	4	1	Tilston	22	3	1
Tushingham	1838	14	3	4	Tushingham	6	0	3

Source: CCALS, EDT 152/1, EDT 355/1, EDT 257/1, EDT 405/1, EDT 391/1, NVA/1/18, 20, 23.

Note: The acreage of very small plots of land was not always recorded. Tithe owners have been included in the numbers.

Table 4:36 shows that during the second half of the nineteenth century the number of owners of plots less than 50 acres increased in three of the six sample townships. The number of small landowners in the high HHI townships of Edge and Shocklach Oviatt, doubled while in Church Shocklach (with a low HHI), their numbers tripled. In Tilston and Malpas, low HHI townships, there was either no change or a decrease. In Tushingham (with a rising HHI), where the number of larger owners had increased in the early-nineteenth century, and the low HHI township of Tilston, the number of smaller owners fell. In four of the townships the number of

<sup>54</sup> Addy, *Revolution*, p. 46.

medium owners decreased (Edge, Church Shocklach, Tilston, Tushingam), while Shocklach Oviatt registered no change. In the high HHI townships of Edge and Shocklach Oviatt, its neighbour Church Shocklach, and Tushingam the number of large owners remained constant. In Malpas (low HHI) the number of large owners rose and in the open township of Tilston they decreased. It was during the second half of the nineteenth century, therefore, that the medium-sized landowners began to disappear while smaller landowners began to increase in the more closed townships. However, the fact that there was little change in the township containing the main market town and a decrease in small landowners in the open township of Tilston suggests that although there was a move towards an increase in smaller landowners during this period, the low HHI townships had reached a natural limit. It is important to note that these results demonstrate the lack of a clear correlation between consolidation or fragmentation of holdings and whether a township had a high or low HHI (or was 'open' or 'closed' in traditional terms) and therefore the extent of landowner control.

Landownership changes in all the south-west Cheshire townships during the second half of the nineteenth century can be compared using the land tax from the census year 1831 as a base, because records exist for all the townships in the area except Threapwood. We must be careful when comparing land tax estimates of small, medium and large landowners with data from the tithe awards as we are not comparing like with like. Although very small owners were unrecorded in the tithe awards and land tax payments only provide the approximate proportions of landowners' share of the township acreage, the data suggest that in more than 50 per cent of south-west Cheshire's townships the number of small landowners increased between 1831 and the time of the tithe awards, a period of not more than ten years. In the same period most of the townships experienced a fall in the number of medium-sized owners, while the number of large landowners increased in more than 50 per cent of the townships. In over 30 per cent of the townships the decrease in medium-sized landowners was matched by an increase in the number of smaller owners. This was not necessarily due to the disappearance of medium-sized owners, but might have occurred if the former lost land and so became smaller owners. The larger owners increased even in townships where the number of medium owners remained the same or went down (table 4:37).

During the second half of the nineteenth century the number of owners of small holdings increased in virtually all townships in the area, 44 per cent of the medium holdings decreased and 26 per cent remained the same. The number of owners of large holdings mostly remained the same or decreased, with only 15 per cent registering an increase in the townships. This suggests that the amalgamation of holdings to create larger holdings had slowed, if not declined by the early twentieth century.

**Table 4:37: Changes in landowner size in south-west Cheshire, 1832 to 1910.**

	Number of small landowners (<50 acres)			Number of medium landowners (50-100 acres)			Number of large landowners (>100 acres)		
	1831 land Tax (<£2)	Tithe Award (<50 acres)	1910 Domesday (<50 acres)	1831 land tax (£2-£100)	Tithe Award (50-100 acres)	1910 Domesday (50-100 acres)	1831 land tax (>£10)	Tithe Award (>100 acres)	1910 Domesday (>100 acres)
Agden	8	3	8	3	0	0	0	2	2
Barton	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	1
Bickley	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
Bradley	15	15	16	2	1	1	1	1	1
Broxton	10	33	66	5	3	3	2	2	9
Caldecott	2	4	4	4	1	1	1	3	3
Carden	3	7	1	3	0	0	1	1	1
Chidlow	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	1
Chorlton	7	12	9	4	2	2	0	1	0
Church Shocklach	5	5	14	7	5	3	1	5	5
Clutton	1	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	1
Crewe by Farndon	2	5	8	1	1	0	0	1	1
Cuddington	4	9	24	7	3	1	1	3	3
Duckington	0	7	3	1	2	0	1	2	1
Edge	4	6	14	3	3	1	2	2	3
Farndon	26	44	59	5	4	1	2	2	2
Grafton	0	0	5	1	1	2	0	1	1
Hampton	2	8	24	10	3	2	0	4	3
Horton	9	27	19	4	0	0	1	4	2
Kings Marsh	7	7	7	5	3	1	0	3	2
Larkton	2	2	3	2	0	0	1	1	1
Macefen	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Malpas	35	44	46	5	1	3	2	5	3
Newton by Malpas	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	1
Oldcastle	1	3	11	1	0	1	1	2	4
Overton	5	6	19	5	4	2	1	2	2
Shocklach Oviatt	10	11	22	6	1	1	1	3	1
Stockton	3	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	1
Stretton	2	1	0	1	2	2	1	1	1
Threapwood									
Tilston	19	37	22	6	4	3	0	4	1
Tushingam	4	14	6	6	3	0	2	1	3
Wigland	16	18	9	1	0	1	0	1	1
Wychough	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1

Source: CCALS, QDV2, Mf. 208, EDT, 1910 'Domesday'.

## Early-twentieth century

A major effect on landownership during the first half of the twentieth century was the sale of estates by major landowners. To discover the effect of such sales in south-west Cheshire we must examine the situation of township landholdings before the sales. We can do this by looking at the 1910 'Domesday' for all the settlements in the area and for the six sample settlements (which contain much of the holdings sold in the 1920s).

The first major change in twentieth-century landownership that affected settlements was the break-up of the great estates. It is often assumed that large estates were broken up into much smaller plots. However, farms were usually sold as going concerns to the tenants who farmed them.<sup>55</sup> As estates in south-west Cheshire, a primarily agricultural area, consisted mainly of farms, the majority of land sales from the break up of great estates in the area consisted largely, but not entirely, of working farms or previously developed smaller plots. However, some of this farm land was sold later as smaller plots and used for building. Also, at the start of the twentieth century, the great landowners in the area owned little more than half of south-west Cheshire (55 per cent) of which 19 per cent was owned by one man, William Drake. Therefore, much of the land did not belong to the great landowners and so the changes caused by the break up of their estates were not as important to the pattern of landownership as in other parts of the country.

The break-up of the great estates in England and Wales, and the changing landownership pattern from great estates to a myriad of small owners, was a recognised phenomenon throughout England and Wales, although most land sales appeared to take place in the north and Midlands.<sup>56</sup> It occurred against the background of continuing agricultural depression, slightly relieved by World War One, and the introduction of planning laws which reduced the power of landowners to develop their land.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping*, p. 280.

<sup>56</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping*, p. 280; Howkins, *Rural England*, p. 55.

<sup>57</sup> The Elementary Education Act 1870 and later legislation required that school buildings be constructed to specific standards. County Councils were created in 1888 and national and local government imposed increasingly more restrictions on the size and construction of dwellings to improve people's health. These supplemented other restrictions on landowners' power such building costs, compulsory purchase of land for utilities and transport networks, demands from workers for improved work places and pressure from other landowners. (Wild, *Village*, pp. 109-11; C. Greed, *Introducing Planning* (London, 2000), pp. 81-4).

Gradually these outside influences forced landowners to restrict their building. Until after World War One, restrictions on building in south-west Cheshire were imposed by the landowners themselves, for example, in the form of covenants on leases. When landowners began to sell rather than lease land in the Chester suburb of St Oswalds from the mid-nineteenth century, they often imposed restrictive covenants.<sup>58</sup> Increasingly landowners began to lose control over the development of their land and power was transferred to civic bodies which used not only land purchase but also planning laws to control building development. However, it was during the early twentieth century that restrictions on development through planning laws began.

This gradual erosion of landowners' powers over their own land was strengthened by the introduction of twentieth-century legislative planning control (until 1940 under the Office of Works) and the 1909 Housing and Town Planning Act which enabled local authorities to devise a planning scheme for any land or development liable to be used for building. This Act is generally regarded as the starting point for the break up of the great estates of England<sup>59</sup> and Cannadine suggests the process had definitely started by 1911.<sup>60</sup> Following the 1909 Act, there was also a growth in owner-occupied housing. For example, in 1909 only 13 per cent of holdings were owner-occupied compared to 36.6 per cent in 1927. By 1927 this included 146,887 out of 401,734 farm holdings.<sup>61</sup> Although building controls had been largely ineffective until this point, following the Act planning laws increased landowners' problems by making it more difficult to develop land at will. The Act also encouraged more local authorities to emulate their forward-thinking colleagues and instigate slum clearance, although the War put an end to this.<sup>62</sup>

By the start of World War One major landowners were already under pressure to sell as a result of increased inheritance taxes, the problems of primogeniture, the higher costs of running estates, and government taxes. By the end of the War there were increased pressures arising from the loss of male heirs and a

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<sup>58</sup> C. W. Chalkin, *The Provincial Towns of Georgian England: A Study of the Building Process 1740-1820* (London, 1974), p. 61; P. Bird, 'Who built St Oswalds? A study of land ownership and the physical development of Chester's northern suburb from the 17th century to the present', (unpublished Master's dissertation, University of Liverpool, 1998), pp. 19, 46.

<sup>59</sup> Howkins, *Rural England*, p. 14; Howkins, *Reshaping*, p. 279; Clemenson, *Country Houses*, pp. 89, 111-14.

<sup>60</sup> Cannadine, *Decline*, p. 103.

<sup>61</sup> Mark Clapson, *Invisible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns* (Manchester, 1998), p. 28.

<sup>62</sup> Clapson, *Invisible*, pp. 28, 32.

reduced workforce, as the war eliminated large sections of the labouring community and others left the land.<sup>63</sup> Cheshire's large landowners were not exempted from these pressures and they also found their estates too expensive to run as labourers' wages had risen and rising land taxes and inheritance tax became too onerous.<sup>64</sup>

Landowners also wanted to benefit from the post-war rise in agricultural land prices.<sup>65</sup> These problems hastened the decline in landowners' powers and a national surge in land sales began in 1919. By spring 1919 half a million acres were for sale.<sup>66</sup>

There were three years of post-war prosperity coupled with stable prices and rising rents. Many large landowners sold all of their smaller estates to pay for investments. Earl Spencer, for example, faced with heavy death duties when he succeeded to the title in 1922, sold four farms in Wormleighton, Warwickshire, in 1924 and 1926 and consolidated his agricultural buildings and land by regrouping them.<sup>67</sup> By the end of 1922 about a quarter of England had changed hands since 1919.<sup>68</sup> The major landowners in south-west Cheshire began selling their estates in the early 1920s, a few years after the national surge in land sales had begun. This implies that initially they were better placed to withstand the effects of the War. As owners of dairying land, the products of which were in demand during the War, south-west Cheshire landowners, mainly farmers, survived better than landowners with arable tenant farmers elsewhere. However, even in south-west Cheshire, the financial pressures eventually proved too much for the major landowners. Clemenson has, however, warned against equating an increase in owner-occupation with the decline of landed estates because many landowners adapted to the post-war situation by buying back vacant farmland that they had previously rented out.<sup>69</sup> Cannadine noted that although some landed families disappeared, many great landowners survived in reduced circumstances.<sup>70</sup> Evans observed that in Lancashire and Cheshire, as elsewhere, old landed estates 'retrenched' during the twentieth century but were rarely sold in their entirety.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Mingay, *Social History*, pp. 204, 206.

<sup>64</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping*, pp. 277, 279; Wild, *Village*, p. 115.

<sup>65</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping*, p. 278.

<sup>66</sup> Cannadine, *Decline*, p. 111.

<sup>67</sup> Thorpe, 'Lord', p. 73.

<sup>68</sup> Thompson, *Landed Society*, p. 332.

<sup>69</sup> Clemenson, *Country Houses*, p. 115.

<sup>70</sup> Cannadine, *Decline*, p. 128.

<sup>71</sup> Evans, 'Landownership', p. 160.

Landed gentry with no capital and small estates probably fared worst while farmers (especially arable farmers) probably did best. New wealth generated by the War's increased agricultural demands enabled tenants to buy farms coming onto the market as estates were sold,<sup>72</sup> and this, Howkins suggests, 'marked a speeding up in power from one class to another.' The decline in landowners' power, therefore, was not just the loss of land, which in many cases was compensated for by increased consolidation of estates, albeit with smaller acreage, but the loss of control over the use of their land. This control was particularly noticeable on undeveloped land upon which, until planning laws were introduced, landowners had been free to build.<sup>73</sup> It was these declining landowner powers, changing landownership patterns involving an increase in individual ownership and, as chapter eight will show, the introduction of planning regulations and, from 1919, the increase in state-controlled housing, that altered the landscape by changing the context of settlement development.

Following the national trend, estates in south-west Cheshire were sold mainly as viable farms, although some land was sold as building land. However, smaller landowners continued to sell plots and it was largely this, rather than the break up of the estates, which encouraged housing development. Most development therefore took place in the settlements with low landownership concentration (low HHI) which already had smaller plots of land.

Until recently the study of twentieth-century rural settlement development has been rather neglected,<sup>74</sup> as the work of many historians on settlement development tended to stop just prior to or shortly after World War One.<sup>75</sup> Interest in twentieth-century settlement development has focussed primarily on the expansion of large urban centres, suburbs and dormitory towns,<sup>76</sup> and it was left to geographers and planners to discuss issues affecting twentieth-century rural settlement development, in particular 'counter-urbanisation', or the relocation of urban dwellers to rural areas. This section therefore looks from the perspective of the historian at the development of settlements in south-west Cheshire during the break-up of the great estates in the early-twentieth century and the parallel effects of the initial introduction of planning laws until the start of World War Two. The effects of

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<sup>72</sup> Howkins, *Death*, pp. 36-7, 276

<sup>73</sup> Howkins, *Death*, pp. 37-8, 40, 63; Bryant, Robinson and McLellan, *Countryside*, p. 54.

<sup>74</sup> Exceptions include e.g. Rowley, *Villages*; Rowley, *English Landscape*.

<sup>75</sup> E.g. Howkins, *Reshaping*; Hoskins, *Making*; Wild, *Village*.

<sup>76</sup> E.g. *Study of Urban History*, ed. H. J. Dyos, (London, 1976).



landownership on the landscape during the second half of the twentieth century through the application of ever more prescriptive planning laws are the subject of chapter eight. As such, this work offers an approach which differs from most previous studies of the subject.<sup>77</sup>

The initial individual freedom of increasing numbers of smaller owners to purchase land and build on it during the first part of the twentieth century might well have instigated dramatic changes in the landscape of south-west Cheshire. However, they were slow to take advantage of the release of land from the control of major landowners. The introduction of national planning laws administered by local authorities restricted settlement growth in some places, although it did allow some types of development elsewhere according to local needs.

Figure 4:37 shows that during the second half of the nineteenth century the number of small landowners was increasing but that the increase in the number of large landowners was slowing and in some townships was actually decreasing. The number of medium landowners either stayed the same or decreased. By 1910, although the large nineteenth-century landowners still controlled 42 per cent of south-west Cheshire, their numbers were beginning to decline. It was from the 1920s, however, that a great deal of land from the great estates of the areas was sold.

This section examines the break up of the major large estates in south-west Cheshire and its effect on settlement development. The six sample townships are used to demonstrate development progress utilising a wide range of sources, including the 1910 'Domesday', estate maps and documents, ordnance survey maps, modern planning reports and council documents, aerial photographs and fieldwork.

### ***The sales of estates***

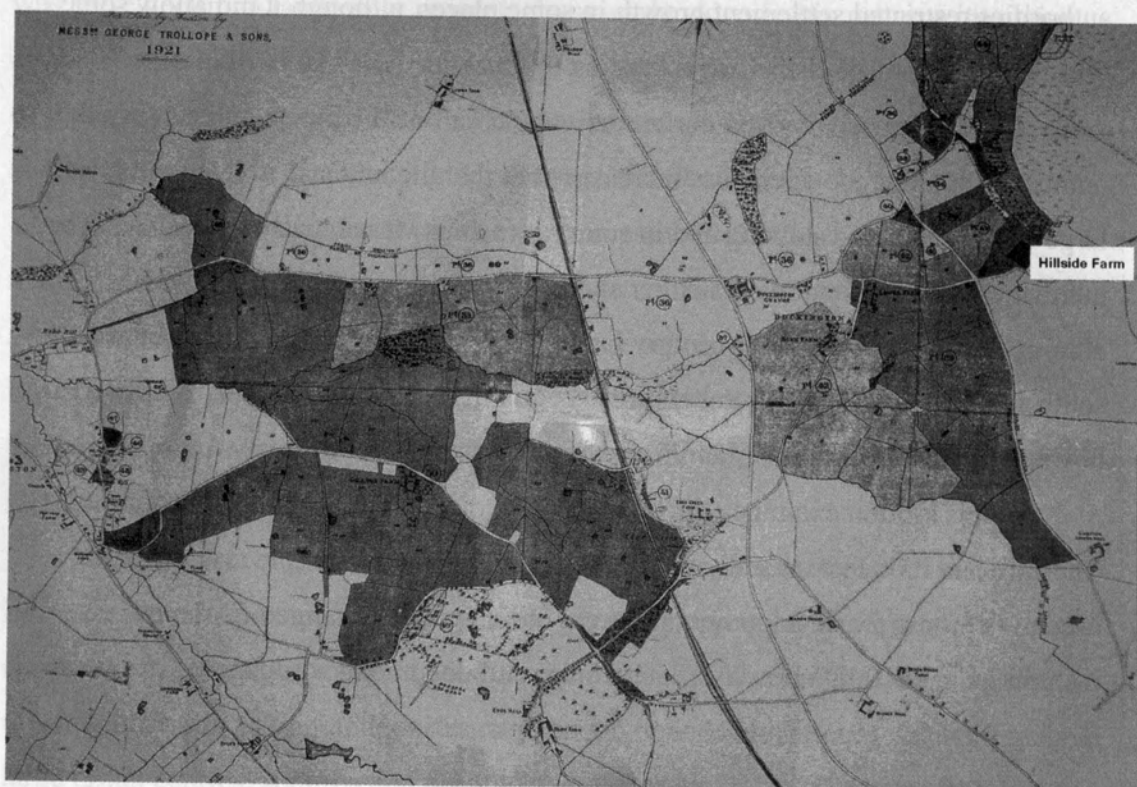
After 1921 land sales started to fall throughout many parts of the country, but sales of large acreages of land continued throughout this decade in south-west Cheshire. In 1921 E.T. Drake, of the Drake family who had owned between 18 and 19 per cent of the land in south-west Cheshire for at least 70 years, sold his Cheshire estates in Duckington and Edge because of increased inheritance tax and death duties.<sup>78</sup> Drake sold seven dairy and cheese farms, a stone quarry at Edge, various buildings and

<sup>77</sup> E.g. Wild, *Village England*.

<sup>78</sup> CCALS, DDX 315.

several plots suitable for building as well as pasture 'in and around' Malpas (HHI 2338<sub>D</sub>) and Malpas station.<sup>79</sup> The map of the Duckington (HHI 9605<sub>D</sub>) and Edge (HHI 2312<sub>D</sub>) properties survives and comparison with a modern ordnance survey map shows that virtually all of the pre-1921 farmland remained farmland at the end of the twentieth century. Only one extra dwelling appears to have been built on the land Drake sold: Hillside Farm on field 85 of Plot 43 in Duckington on the west side of the Maiden Castle wood (Figure 4:38).

Figure 4:38: Sale of Drake estate in Duckington, 1921.



Source: CCALS, DDX 315.

Note: The dark areas are those marked for sale.

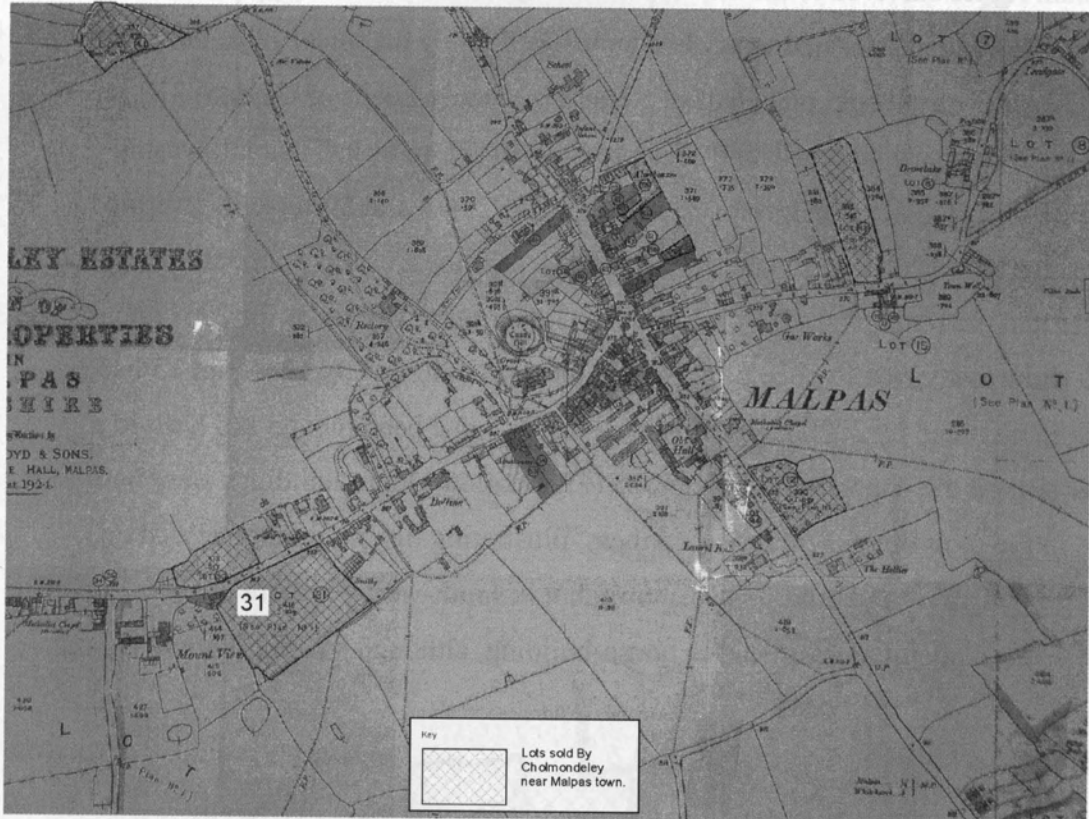
The Earl of Cholmondeley sold 1,168 acres of land in Malpas and Larkton (HHI 9409<sub>D</sub>) in 1924 including nine dairy farms, three smallholdings, 'important residential and business properties', 'desirable town and country cottages' and many other dwellings and land suitable for building.<sup>80</sup> As Figure 4:39 shows, the part of his

<sup>79</sup> CCALS, DLB 1144/17.

<sup>80</sup> CCALS, DLB 1546 Box 4, Sales catalogue, 1924,

land in Malpas consisted of a sizeable part of the valuable central properties in the township.<sup>81</sup>

Figure 4:39: Sale of Cholmondeley estate in Malpas, 1924.



Source: CCALS, DLB/1144/18.

Of Cholmondeley's 76 lots, ten were dairy farms (including Old Hall and Larkton Hall), three were smallholdings and 34 already had cottages, houses or shops on them. The remaining 39 plots were sold as building land. Plot 25, for example, was recommended for building because it was close to Malpas town.<sup>82</sup> Of these 39 plots only seven are marked on the surviving plan<sup>83</sup> and only four plots in the town of Malpas were built on by the year 2000.<sup>84</sup> The other three plots, further out from the town, have been preserved as agricultural land. Particularly interesting is Plot 31 which, although it borders the Bangor and Wrexham road into Malpas and is within a

<sup>81</sup> CCALS DLB/1144/18.

<sup>82</sup> CCALS, DLB 1548 Box 4.

<sup>83</sup> CCALS, DLB/1144/18, Plan 2.

<sup>84</sup> OS, Explorer 257.

mile of the centre of the town, has been preserved as agricultural land.<sup>85</sup> This supports the theory that smaller plots in established settlements developed as building land while agricultural land was preserved where possible, even when close to a town. As will be seen, this phenomenon of preserving agricultural land bordering the main routes survived to the end of the century.

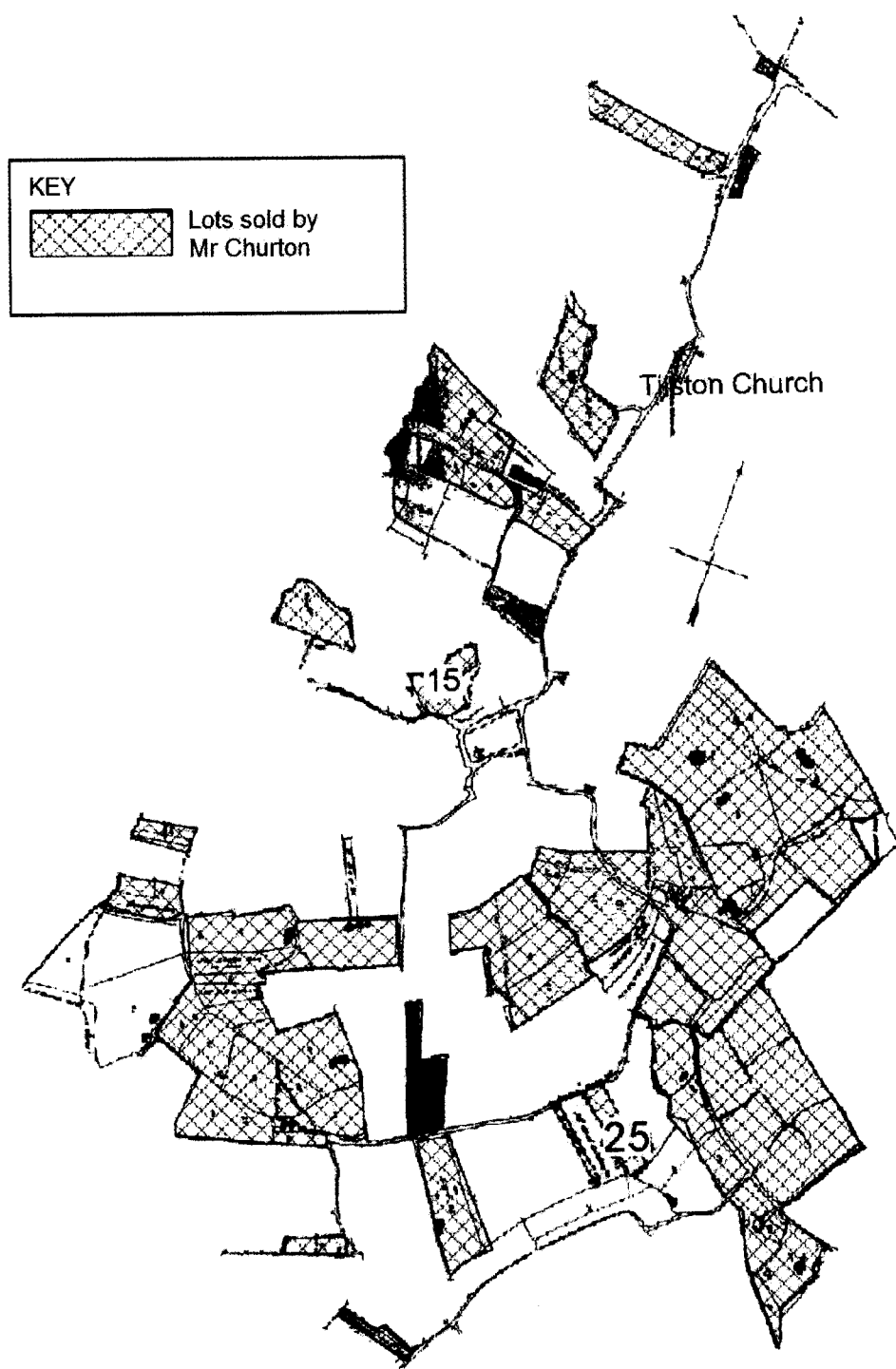
Major land sales nationally had almost ceased by the mid-1920s, but as late as 1927 Mr Churton sold on behalf of a client (probably Leche of Carden) 318 acres in south-west Cheshire consisting of approximately 21 acres in Tilston township (HHI 2828<sub>D</sub>), 223 acres in Horton township HHI 2284<sub>D</sub>) and 59 acres in Overton township (HHI 1968<sub>D</sub>) (and land in Tattenhall).<sup>86</sup> Of the 27 plots sold only seven had houses and the remaining plots were fields. Ordnance survey maps for 1961 and 2000 show that virtually none of these 27 plots was built on. By 1961 plot 15 had a building on it and by 2000 Elm cottage appears to have been moved and built to a larger size on the opposite side of plot 25 (Figure 4:40). Later buildings were built close to the plots but generally not on them, illustrating the importance placed on preserving agricultural land. It also shows that in south-west Cheshire the break up of large estates did not *in itself* lead to house-building, although smaller plots were sold.

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<sup>85</sup> OS Explorer 257.

<sup>86</sup> Howkins, *Death*, p. 55; CCALS, DLB/1144/41.

Figure 4:40: Sale of land in Tilston by Mr Churton in 1927.



Source: CCLAS, DLB 1144/4.

The evidence from the limited number of great estate sales in south-west Cheshire therefore shows that although the great estate owners did sell some land in high HHI townships (Duckington, Larkton) most of the great estate land was sold in low HHI townships (Edge, Malpas, Tilston, Horton, Overton) thus reinforcing the trend for high and low HHI townships to continue as before.

Nationally the land sold at the time was commonly farmland sold to tenant farmers or for use as parkland. However, the gentry suffered a severe loss of land because they tended to have no source of income other than their estates.<sup>87</sup> By the start of World War Two there had been a significant decline in the rural aristocracy, especially among owners of between 3,000 and 10,000 acres. However, many great families survived the sale of estates, albeit with much reduced acreage, by consolidating their remaining land and investing money in non-land-based projects.<sup>88</sup> As Howkins pointed out, even as late as the 1980s about 50 per cent of the great nineteenth-century landowning families still owned their estates, albeit in a much reduced form.<sup>89</sup> About 1,000 acres of the Puleston estate in Shocklach (HHIs 2752<sub>D</sub> and 889<sub>D</sub>) owned by the Howards of Broughton Hall survived until the late 1950s. It was sold then only because the family was financially reduced when it had to pay two sets of death duties.<sup>90</sup> The Drake family still survives today although it is now based solely at its seat in Buckinghamshire.<sup>91</sup> A Vawdrey descendant still lives on the Vawdrey estate in Tushingam (HHI 2494<sub>D</sub>)<sup>92</sup> and a Dod still lives in Edge (HHI 2312<sub>D</sub>). The hope of Marxist historians that the sale of the great estates would prove the downfall of the landed classes was apparently misplaced.

Although much of the land was sold as going concerns in the form of farms, dwellings and farmland, some land was deliberately sold as building land. This, and the fact that some of the plots were less than two acres (for example, approximately 12 per cent of the Cholmondeley estate plots), meant that there was opportunity for building by more individuals. However, as indicated earlier, this opportunity for smaller owners to build does not appear to have been taken up in the case of land sold by the major landowners.

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<sup>87</sup> Wild, *Village*, p. 116.

<sup>88</sup> Howkins, *Death*, pp. 57, 60; Mingay, *Social History*, p. 209; Howkins, *Reshaping*, p. 281.

<sup>89</sup> Howkins, *Death*, p. 146.

<sup>90</sup> Discussion with Ken Bourne, Shocklach farmer, 20 Nov 2001. Mr Bourne's family bought his farm from the Howards.

<sup>91</sup> Private correspondence with Barney Tyrwhitt-Drake, 2002.

<sup>92</sup> Personal visit to the Vawdrey estate in Tushingam, 2003.

The sale of land by large landowners in south-west Cheshire during the 1920s, as in many other parts of the country, therefore tended to preserve settlements broadly as they had been in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In only two townships (Edge, Tushingam) did the area's major landowners keep a large part of their estates beyond the 1950s, even though other substantial landowners reduced theirs. These were townships with low HHI where landowners were sharing the township with other large landowners. As we will see in chapter eight, building did take place while the great estates in the area were being broken up, but on land other than estate land.

### ***Conclusion***

Using the traditional criteria for predicting the effects of landownership control (criteria for 'open' and 'closed') as used by commentators such as Holderness, Banks and Mills, we have seen that HHI is an accurate measure of landownership concentration and therefore of the extent of landowner control. Although it cannot be linked securely to many of the traditional criteria for townships with high or low landowner concentration and therefore control it can be linked reasonably securely with population change and the number of landowners owning fifty per cent or more of a township.

The major commentators on the terms 'open' and 'closed' as used in historical writing – Holderness, Banks and Mills – all suggested means by which the effects of landownership control of townships might be measured. However, although a few of these provided some degree of correlation with the traditional criteria, this chapter has demonstrated that the most useful measure of landownership concentration is achieved by using HHI. The evidence from south-west Cheshire, an area where in 1831 slightly more than half the townships had low landownership concentration as defined by HHI, shows that there are too many exceptions to make the traditional criteria for landownership control reliable. Therefore Holderness was correct in assuming that most villages and townships had an adequate supply of agricultural labour irrespective of whether the township was dominated by few landowners or not and Banks was also correct to conclude that the traditional terms 'open' and 'closed' are not reliably predictive models of nineteenth-century society.



We can say with confidence that a high landownership concentration is likely to indicate more landowner control, more consolidated holdings and greater control over building in a township. The nineteenth-century definitions 'open' and 'closed' relied on the number of landowners and therefore the extent of landownership control as a shorthand for the attributes identified as typical of settlements or townships with different types of landowner control. HHI, although it does not correlate with all these attributes, provides a useful measure of landownership concentration and therefore a guide to the extent to which individual townships fulfil the nineteenth-century definitions in particular cases.

This chapter has shown that population density, housing density, the number of agricultural labourers, the number of farms and the presence of absentee landowners are not reliable indicators of the effects of landowner control. However, by using HHI it has been shown that although landowner concentration tended to increase during the first half of the nineteenth century, this was much less marked during the second half of the century when landownership concentration in many townships remained the same or decreased (Figure 4:12). This decrease in the number of townships with the higher HHI indicative of more intensive landlord control foreshadowed the greater diffusion of land ownership that was typical of the twentieth century and which reached its climax in the break-up of the great estates in the 1920s.

Using HHI with land tax records, we have seen that in townships in south-west Cheshire during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, the smallest landowners decreased in high HHI townships and increased in low HHI townships while medium landowners showed little change. Building tended to occur on the increased number of smaller plots. All the townships tended to decrease their landownership concentration towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. The numbers of small landowners increased while those of medium and large landowners remained the same or decreased. Townships with low landownership concentration and therefore control as measured by HHI tended to have a range of population growth while those in high HHI townships (and therefore with more control by large landowners) had static or declining populations. During the first half of the twentieth century the break up of the great estates led to the sale of estates in the area but later than nationally and with a few large, but not the largest, landowners in the area still retaining their estates into the second half of the



twentieth century. The sale of estates occurred mainly in areas of low landownership concentration (low HHI) indicating that major landowners felt no desire to try to hold onto land in areas where they had no overall control. The sale of estates as farmland rather than building land helped preserve the eighteenth and nineteenth century landownership patterns as measured by HHI. How these patterns were preserved by planning laws, particularly during the second half of the twentieth century, will be analysed in chapter eight.



## Chapter five

### Population trends in south-west Cheshire

This chapter briefly explores basic population data for settlements in south-west Cheshire from 1750 to 2000 and demonstrates how the landownership patterns shown in the previous chapter and as measured by HHI influenced the trajectory of change.<sup>1</sup> Population figures can indicate the growth or decline of settlements as communities and with care can also be used as a general guide to their physical size and development. The population in south-west Cheshire has therefore been examined not only for its own sake but also as a guide to physical change. Consequently there has been no attempt to study other population-related factors such as migration patterns or family construction. First the chapter discusses population as an indicator of physical change in settlements. Next it describes a basic methodology for estimating population trends in south-west Cheshire between 1750 and 1800 and describes overall population trends for the whole area. Rankings are used to show these trends, followed by a detailed examination of population changes in the six sample townships.

#### ***Population and settlement development***

Historians commonly use population as a proxy for urban and rural settlement size, growth or decline, sometimes combining this with other data. Population can, with caution, be used as a substitute for examining changes in settlement development which in turn can be related to landownership. However, although nineteenth-century population figures, occasionally with population density and nucleation data, have been used as equivalent to urban function data, there are problems with equating population with settlement size.<sup>2</sup> These include difficulties in delineating between urban and rural areas, the unsatisfactory application of administration areas to define urban areas and the problem of whether to include isolated dwellings within the

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<sup>1</sup> HHI is used in relationship to the townships (modern civil parishes). In common with many northern ancient parishes, the parishes in south-west Cheshire contained many townships.

<sup>2</sup> C. G. Pooley and J. Turnbull, *Migration and Mobility in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century* (Leicester, 1998), p. 95.

settlement area.<sup>3</sup> Joshi stated that 'housing is clearly and directly associated with population trends'. However, she warned that although increased household size (a group of people living in separate housing space) links population and housing, population growth can lead to the same number of larger houses rather than more houses.<sup>4</sup> In-migration and out-migration also causes of population change, did not necessarily produce a lack or surplus of housing. Nineteenth-century Cheshire, although receiving in-migrants, had a high proportion of uninhabited houses.<sup>5</sup> However, Law considered population change to be a 'clear index' of urban growth and urbanisation while noting that it is difficult to use censuses to study urban and rural differences.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, in spite of these problems, and in line with other historians, this study uses population both as evidence of settlement development in population and physical change and includes density where this seems helpful.

An attempt to calculate township figures for houses pre-1841 was abandoned as unreliable. We can only deduce from the estimated population figures the probable existence of fewer buildings in the townships before 1841 than in the second half of the nineteenth century. Burdett's 1777 map suggests that the distribution of dwellings was much as it is today, that is concentrated into usually no more than one identifiable nucleated settlement in each township.<sup>7</sup> The remaining buildings were dispersed individual farmsteads or dwellings scattered throughout the area. Malpas was the only substantial settlement, that is a settlement of about 1000 or more people, for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

### ***Pre-1801 population figures***

In the absence of official population figures for south-west Cheshire townships for the period 1750 to 1800, these had to be estimated. A recent estimate by Phillips and Phillips relies on a previous attempt by the Cheshire Parish Register Project to produce population figures for the county as a whole which computed figures from curates' parochial returns of the estimated number of families in their parish or chapelry. Of relevance to this research would be the returns of c.1720 and 1778. The

<sup>3</sup> Pooley and Turnbull, *Migration*, p. 95; Hudson, *Geography*, p. 2; Best and Rogers, *Land-Use*, pp. 27-8, 47; C. M. Law, 'The growth of urban population in England and Wales, 1801-1911', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (hereafter *TIBG*), xli (1967), 125-45 (pp. 126-7).

<sup>4</sup> H. Joshi, *The Changing Population of Britain* (Oxford, 1990) p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> G. R. Lucas, 'Uninhabited houses in England in the nineteenth century', in *Live Essays in Geography* (1967), pp. 257-70.

<sup>6</sup> Law, 'Urban population', p. 125.

<sup>7</sup> Harley and Laxton, *Burdett*.

returns were supplemented by township estimates using the 1664 Hearth Tax. However, not all clergy completed the returns and it has been estimated that more than half of those utilised were unsatisfactory.<sup>8</sup> Therefore for this study it was necessary to work from known parish census population via numbers extracted from the relevant parish records that overlap both periods. The figures for christenings, marriages and burials (CMBs) provide the overlapping numbers but there are problems working with these records.

One problem is that many events may have gone unrecorded. The Stamp Act of 1783 put a 3d charge on parish registration which deterred many people from registering any event until its repeal in 1794. Between 1795 and 1820 parish registration collapsed due to increased nonconformist baptisms, delayed baptisms and other causes of non-registration such as a change of incumbent and non-registration by the very poor.<sup>9</sup> There are also regional variations in event records and general inaccuracies.<sup>10</sup> Local studies such as Eversley's suggested that simple counting of CMBs is not enough to provide useful evidence.<sup>11</sup> However, Razzell pointed out that 'in England all new work on the historical demography of the pre-civil registration period has used information provided by parish registers'.<sup>12</sup> He noted that Krause considered parish registers to be accurate in the early eighteenth-century, less so in the 1780s and very bad from 1795 to 1820.<sup>13</sup> Razzell said that, in spite of the problems in using pre-census parish registers, all demographers found a rise in the rate of English population growth during the second half of the eighteenth-century.<sup>14</sup> Woods considered live births to be the weakest part of Victorian civil registration and deaths the most accurately recorded.<sup>15</sup> Garrett discovered that more children from all backgrounds survived in rural areas than urban areas during the nineteenth century,<sup>16</sup> although Woods noted that this did not mean that birth

<sup>8</sup> Phillips and Phillips, *Atlas*, pp. 42, 112.

<sup>9</sup> T. V. H. FitzHugh, *The Dictionary of Genealogy* (Sherborne, 1985), p. 218. D. Hey, *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* (Oxford, 1998) p. 342; E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (London, 1981), p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Wrigley and Schofield, *Population*, pp. 16, 38.

<sup>11</sup> D. E. C. Eversley, 'A survey of population in an area of Worcestershire from 1660-1850', *Population Studies*, 10, no. 3 (1956), 253-279.

<sup>12</sup> P. Razzell, *Essays in English Population* (London, 1994), p. 82.

<sup>13</sup> J. T. Krause, 'The changing adequacy of English registration, 1690-1837', in *Population in History*, eds. D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley (London, 1965).

<sup>14</sup> Razzell, *Population*, pp. 173-4.

<sup>15</sup> R. Woods, *The Demography of Victorian England and Wales* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 34-5.

<sup>16</sup> E. Garrett, *Changing Family Size in England and Wales: Place, Class, and Demography 1891-1911*, eds. J. De Vries, and others (Cambridge, 2006), 36.

recording improved with survival rates.<sup>17</sup> However, of the three types of record, christenings and burials are probably the more reliable while modern researchers tend to use christenings as a basis for population estimation before the censuses:<sup>18</sup> this study will therefore adopt a similar approach with christenings selected as the more accurate source. As the estimates in this research are only intended as a broad guide to population trends, no attempt has been made to adjust figures to allow for non-registration.

The most important method for estimating populations is Wrigley and Schofield's back projection method based on Lee's inverse (back) projection method.<sup>19</sup> Back projection finds the population numbers that produce parish register results. It enables net migration to be estimated for the period studied and moves back from a time when the size and age structure of the population is known to a time when it is unknown.<sup>20</sup> Wrigley and Schofield later tried to compensate for the limitations of parish register data by using family reconstruction, a method linking the vital events of individuals to create families whose 'timescale of existence' could be calculated and thus form the basis of wider population calculations.<sup>21</sup> However, Razzell thought that using marriage data in family reconstruction was unsound.<sup>22</sup> Oeppen, who developed 'generalised inverse projection', also criticised back projection:<sup>23</sup> back projection provides a method for calculating national populations from local data and family reconstruction aims to do so at parish level, as shown by Jones.<sup>24</sup> However, in this study where all that is required is a general indication of the size and trend of population between 1751 and 1800, a simpler method had to be found.

The method used to calculate south-west Cheshire's pre-census population from 1750 owes something to back projection in the limited sense that it works back from known census populations. However, it is a highly simplified method and does

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<sup>17</sup> Woods, *Demography*, p. 34.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. N. Alvey, 'Growth in the population of St Albans from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries', *Local Historian*, 30, no. 3 (2000), 150-159 (pp. 150-159).

<sup>19</sup> R. Lee, 'Estimating series of vital rates and age structures from baptisms and burials: a new technique, with applications to pre-industrial England', *Population Studies*, 28, no. 3 (1974), 495-512.

<sup>20</sup> Wrigley and Schofield, *Population*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>21</sup> E. A. Wrigley, R. S. Davies and J. E. Oeppen, *English Population History from Family Reconstruction 1580-1837* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 193.

<sup>22</sup> Razzell, *Population*, p. 182.

<sup>23</sup> Wrigley, Davies and Oeppen, *Family Reconstruction*, p. 517.

<sup>24</sup> R. E. Jones, 'Population and agrarian change in an eighteenth century parish', *Local Population Studies*, 1 (1968), 6-29.

not pretend to provide anything other than a fairly crude estimate: it is only intended to hint at a broad trend in order to give an overall view of the changes in all the settlements.

To study population trends from 1750 to 1800 in south-west Cheshire's parishes and townships it was necessary to estimate population figures from other data. This was achieved by calculating the ratios of the area's township populations to parish populations and christenings to parish populations during the census years 1801 to 1861 and using the resulting averaged multipliers to extrapolate backwards to provide pre-1800 township population figures. This method cannot be perfect, not least because it does not take any other variables into account. Nonetheless, it can indicate a general trend and it appears to show that between 1741/51 and 1800 the area's population was rising, in line with Razzell's comment. (For further explanation of this methodology see Appendix A).

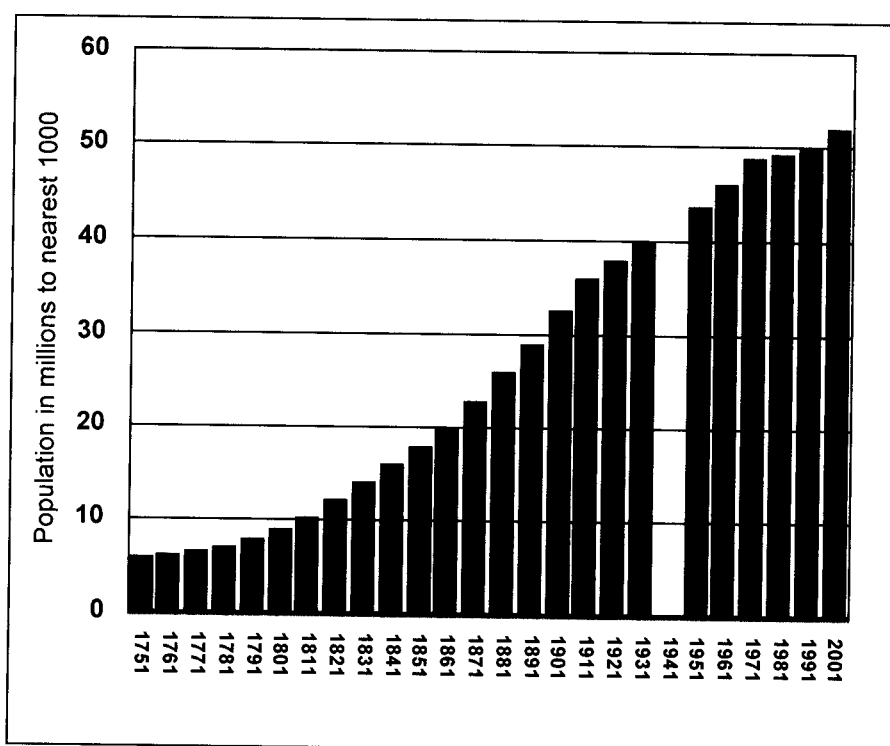
A more detailed examination of the populations of the six sample townships was undertaken to see whether the different landownership patterns as determined by HHI represented in the townships displayed different population characteristics. The townships and ancient parishes used were those that included the whole of the defined study area, that is Tilston, Shocklach, Farndon and Malpas ancient parishes and the extra-parochial areas of Kings Marsh and Threapwood. Population figures for all the townships in the study areas were investigated but a particular emphasis was placed on the six sample townships - Tilston, Edge, Malpas, Tushingham, Church Shocklach and Shocklach Oviatt. Only townships within the study area were investigated which meant that not all the townships in Malpas and Farndon parishes were studied individually.

### ***Population charts***

The populations of the ancient parishes of Malpas, Shocklach, Farndon and Tilston were estimated and compared with each other and the six sample townships and national (England and Wales) and Cheshire county population figures (Figures 5:1, 5:2). To provide comparable population figures from 1801 the total populations of the civil parishes equal to the area of each ancient parish was used. As not all townships in Farndon and Malpas parishes were included, tables were produced using only study townships.

The county population (Figure 5:2) shows a substantial decrease after 1971. This was partly due to boundary changes in 1974 which reallocated part of Cheshire to Merseyside in Greater Manchester in the county of Lancashire.<sup>25</sup> However, the census figures from 1981 to 2001 show a decline of 27 per cent in the county's population, so in spite of boundary changes it is clear that there was a population decline in Cheshire after 1971.

**Figure 5.1: Population of England and Wales, ten-year totals, 1751-2001.**

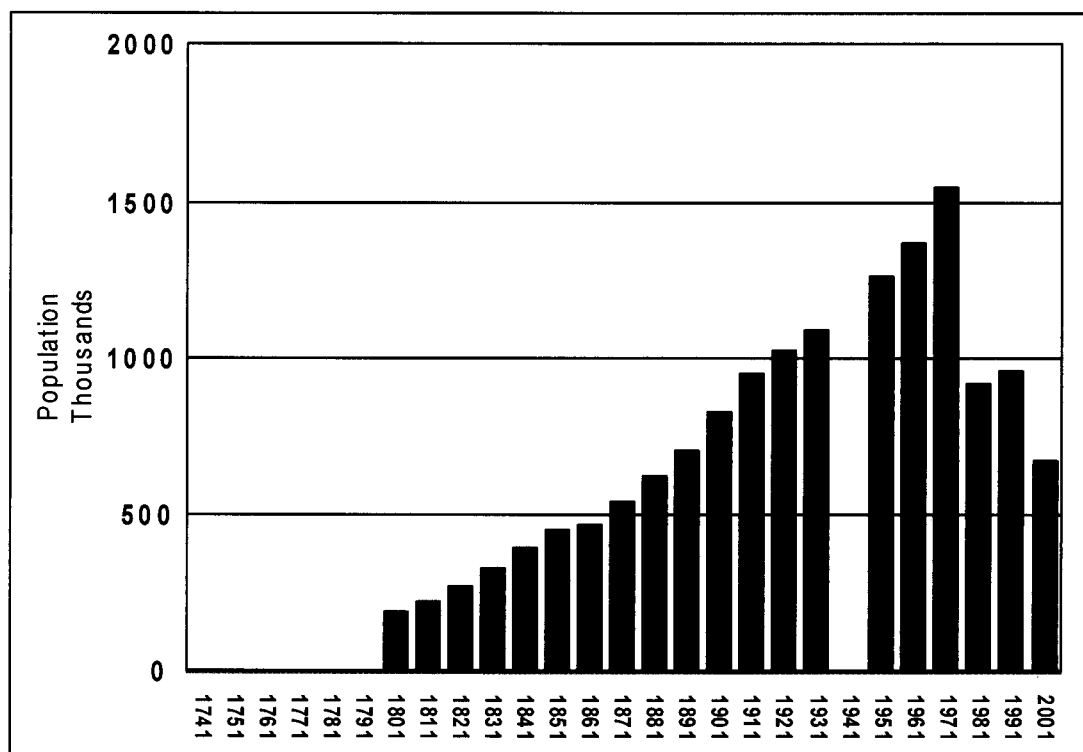


Sources: (1751-1871) Wrigley and Schofield, *Population* pp 533-34, table A3.3; (1881-1991) *The History Today Companion to British History* eds. J. Gardiner and N. Wenborn, (London, 1995); (2001) *National Statistics Online - Census 2001 - Population Pyramids - England and Wales*, <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pyramids/pages/727.asp>> [accessed 20 August 2003].

<sup>25</sup> Great Britain Historical GIS Project, *A Vision of Britain Through Time* <<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk>> [accessed 3 April 2005].



Figure 5.2: Population of Cheshire, ten-year totals, 1741-2001



Source: National Statistics <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>>

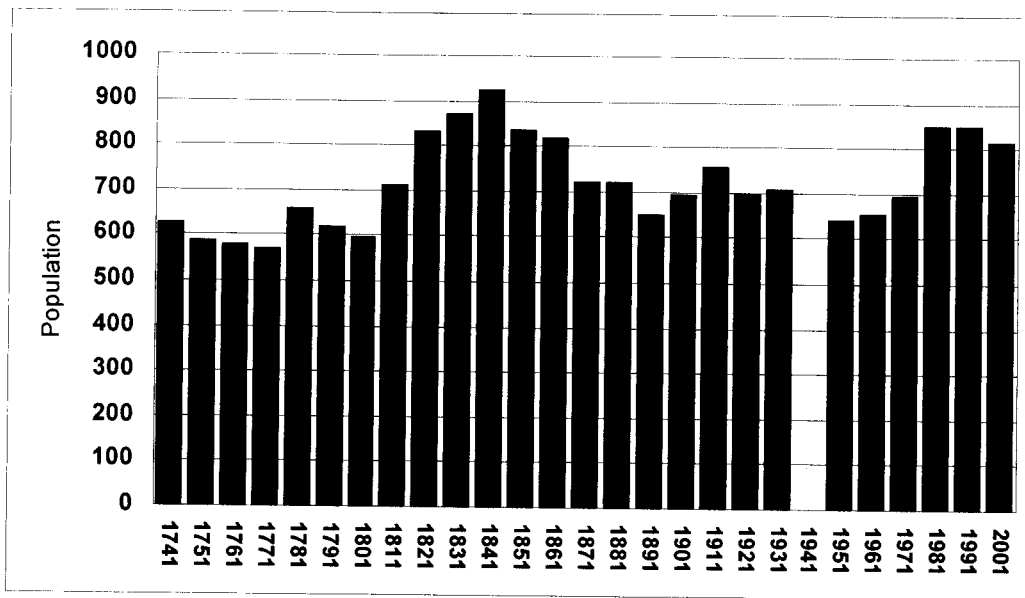
Note: The apparent decrease in population from 1971 was partly due to boundary changes.

### ***Overall population trends in south-west Cheshire***

Phillips and Smith observed that between 1664 and 1778 the population in 15 Cheshire parishes declined and another 15 showed little change.<sup>26</sup> Although this study only examines population from 1741 (or 1751 depending on available data), this decline appears true of Tilston and Farndon parishes. However, Shocklach parish population grew throughout the period between 1741 and 1781 while Malpas parish population declined and then grew from 1761 (Figures 5:3-5:8).

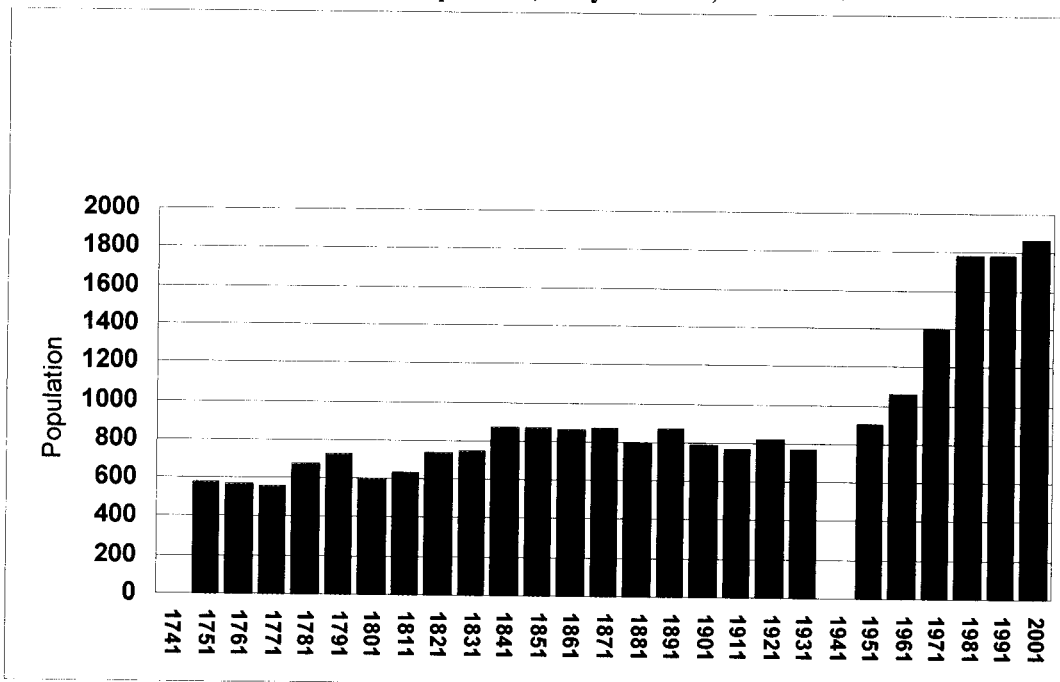
<sup>26</sup> C. B. Phillips and J. H. Smith, *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540, A Regional History of England* (London, 1994), p. 68.

**Figure 5:3: Population of Tilston ancient parish and equivalent civil parishes, ten-year totals, 1741-2001.**



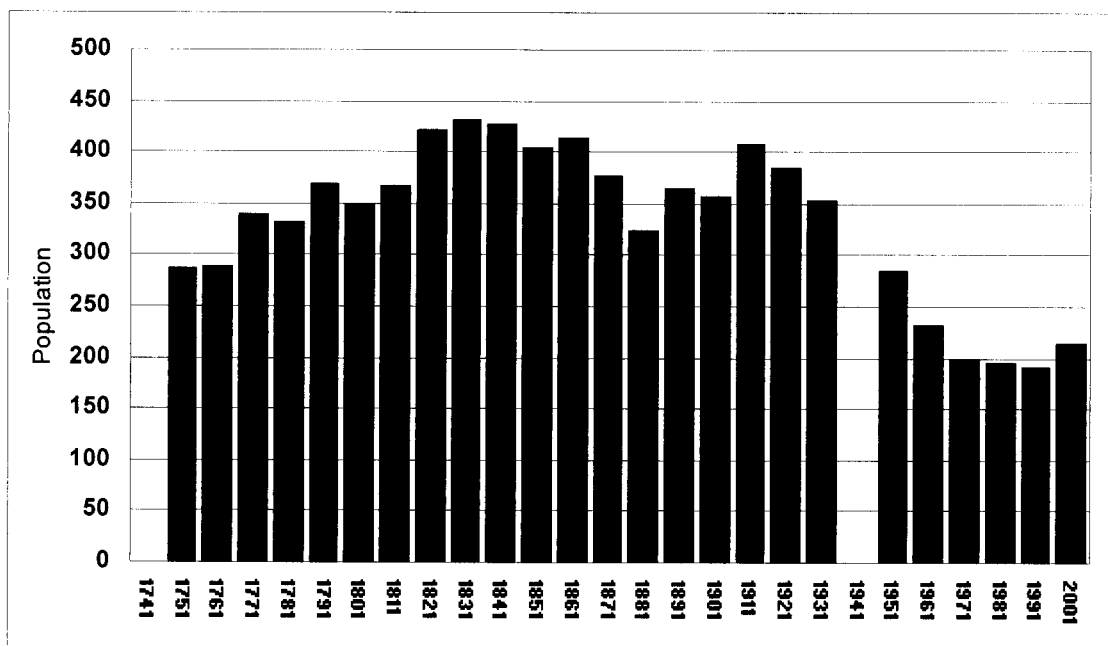
Source: 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-1991 from national census returns.

**Figure 5:4: Population of the part of Farndon ancient parish within the research area and equivalent civil parishes, ten-year totals, 1751-2001.**



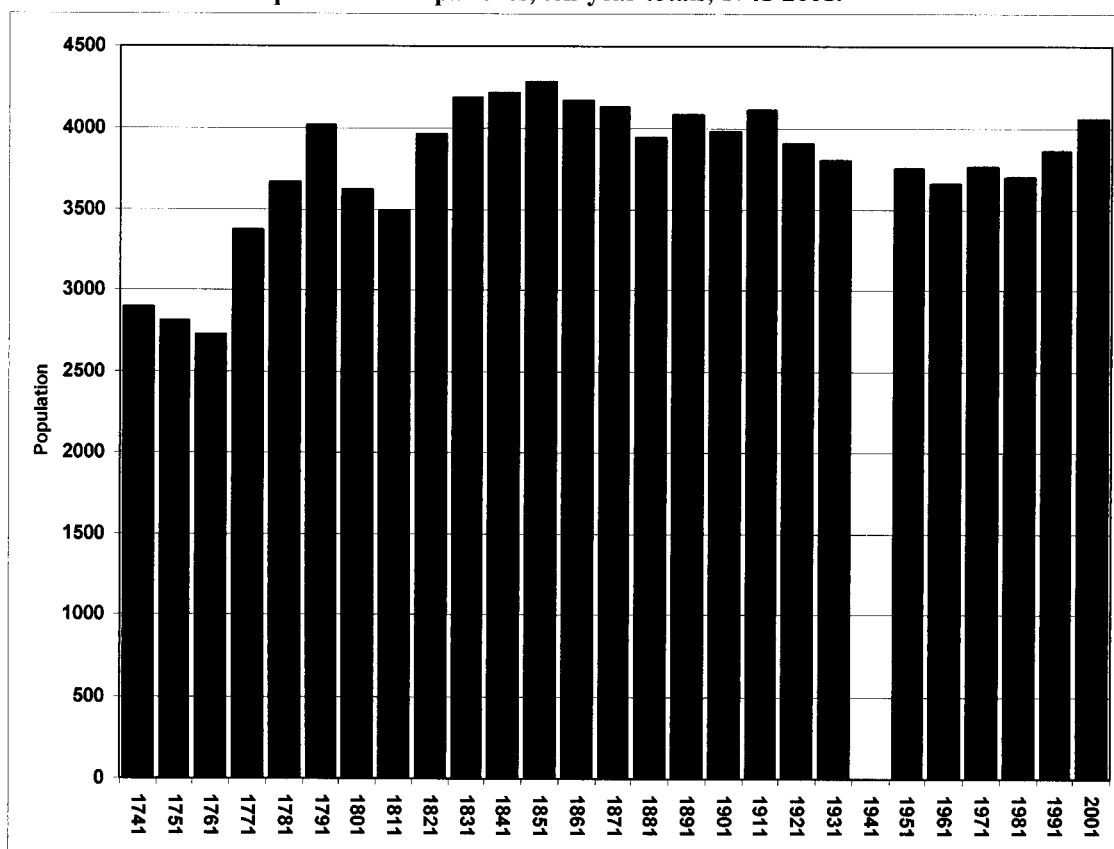
Source: 1751-1791 estimated; 1801-1991 from national census returns.

**Figure 5:5 Population of Shocklach ancient parish and equivalent civil parishes, ten-year totals, 1751-2001.**



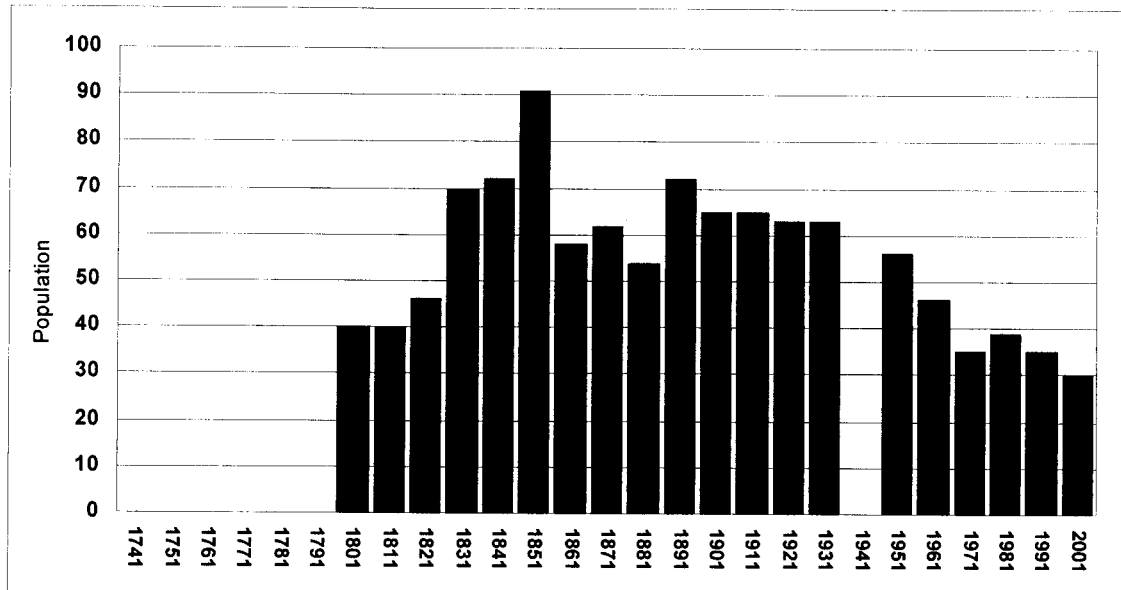
Source: 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-1991 from national census returns.

**Figure 5:6 Population of the part of Malpas ancient parish within the research area and equivalent civil parishes, ten-year totals, 1741-2001.**



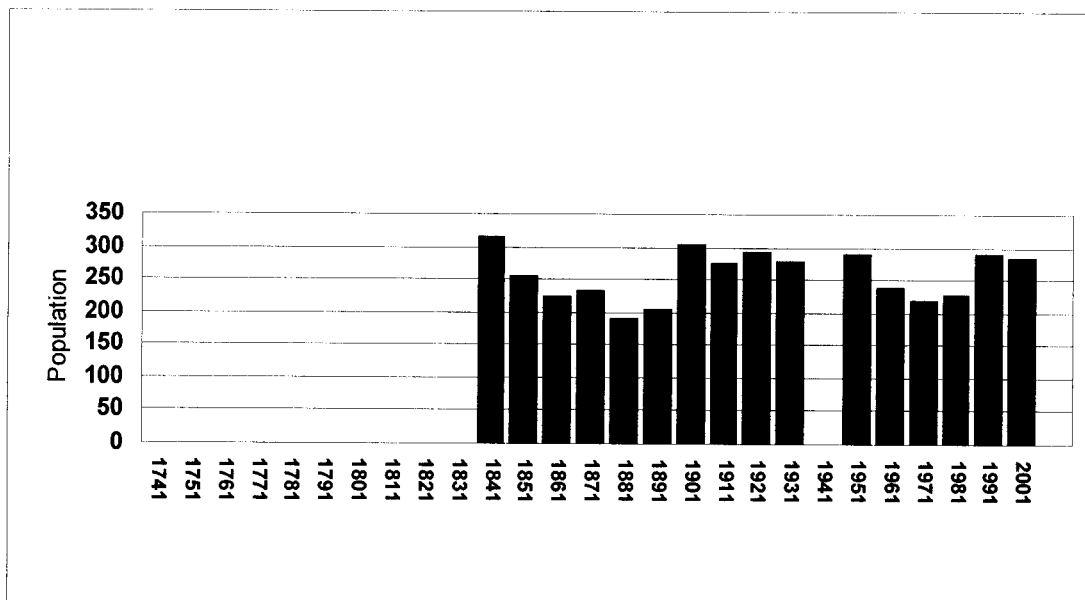
Source: 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-1991 from national census returns.

**Figure 5:7: Population of Kings Marsh extra-parochial area, ten-year totals, 1801-2001.**



Source: 1801-2001 from national census returns. As an extra-parochial area there were no parish records before 1801.

**Figure 5:8: Population of Threapwood extra-parochial area, ten-year totals, 1851-2001.**



Source: 1841-2001 from national census returns. Threapwood did not become wholly part of Cheshire until 1841.

All the parochial parishes and the non-parochial area of Kings Marsh increased their populations from 1801 to 1841 following, but at a much lower rate of increase, the national and Cheshire county trends which reveal a rise in population overall figures (Figures 5:1, 5:2, 5:9). There was a similar increase in urban population because of

increased industrialisation.<sup>27</sup> The study area's comparatively low level of population increase as reflected in the development pattern is explored later.

**Table 5:9: Percentage population changes for England and Wales, Cheshire and south-west Cheshire, 1751-2001.**

	1751-1801	1801-1851	1851-1901	1901-1951	1951-2001
England and Wales	+50	+93	+98	+23	+35
Cheshire		+137	+82	+52	-56
South-west Cheshire	+26	+29	-8	-4	+23

Sources: Gardiner and Wenborn, *British History*, pp. 610-11; Wrigley and Schofield, *Population*, Table A3.3, pp.533-35; National Statistics, <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=6>>; <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/13.asp>>; <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/bicentenary/pdfs/cheshire.pdf>>

Note: The comparative decline of Cheshire population between 1951 and 2001 is partly due to changes in the County boundary.

All of south-west Cheshire's ancient parish populations declined by some degree after 1841, as they did in individual townships. This was probably the result of a declining birth-rate and the out-migration of inhabitants from areas that offered little or no work outside an increasingly mechanised agricultural industry. The trend was less marked in Farndon and Malpas ancient parishes which no doubt benefited from some in-migration of people into the area's largest settlements (Malpas and Farndon, both in low HHI townships) to work in the increasing number of non-agricultural jobs in these places. Malpas, for example, as the area's central place, attracted workers willing to live there but to work elsewhere.

Equally, most parish populations in the study area declined from 1911 onwards. This decline was more marked in 1931, probably due to the inter-war depression caused by the ending of the post-war boom, low wages (particularly for agricultural workers) and mass unemployment.<sup>28</sup> This population decline continued until after World War Two. Subsequently the parish populations rose rapidly. However, Shocklach parish did not follow this trend and continued to decline until 1991. It only began to show an increase in population in the late 1990s.

Population figures for the six sample townships, while generally following the trend of their own ancient parish or modern equivalent area, did not always do so. For example, although the modern equivalent of Tilston ancient parish increased

<sup>27</sup>P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, 3rd edn (Cambridge, 1983), p. 107.

<sup>28</sup>J. Stevenson, *British Society 1914-45*, (London, 1984), pp. 137-8, 266, 270.

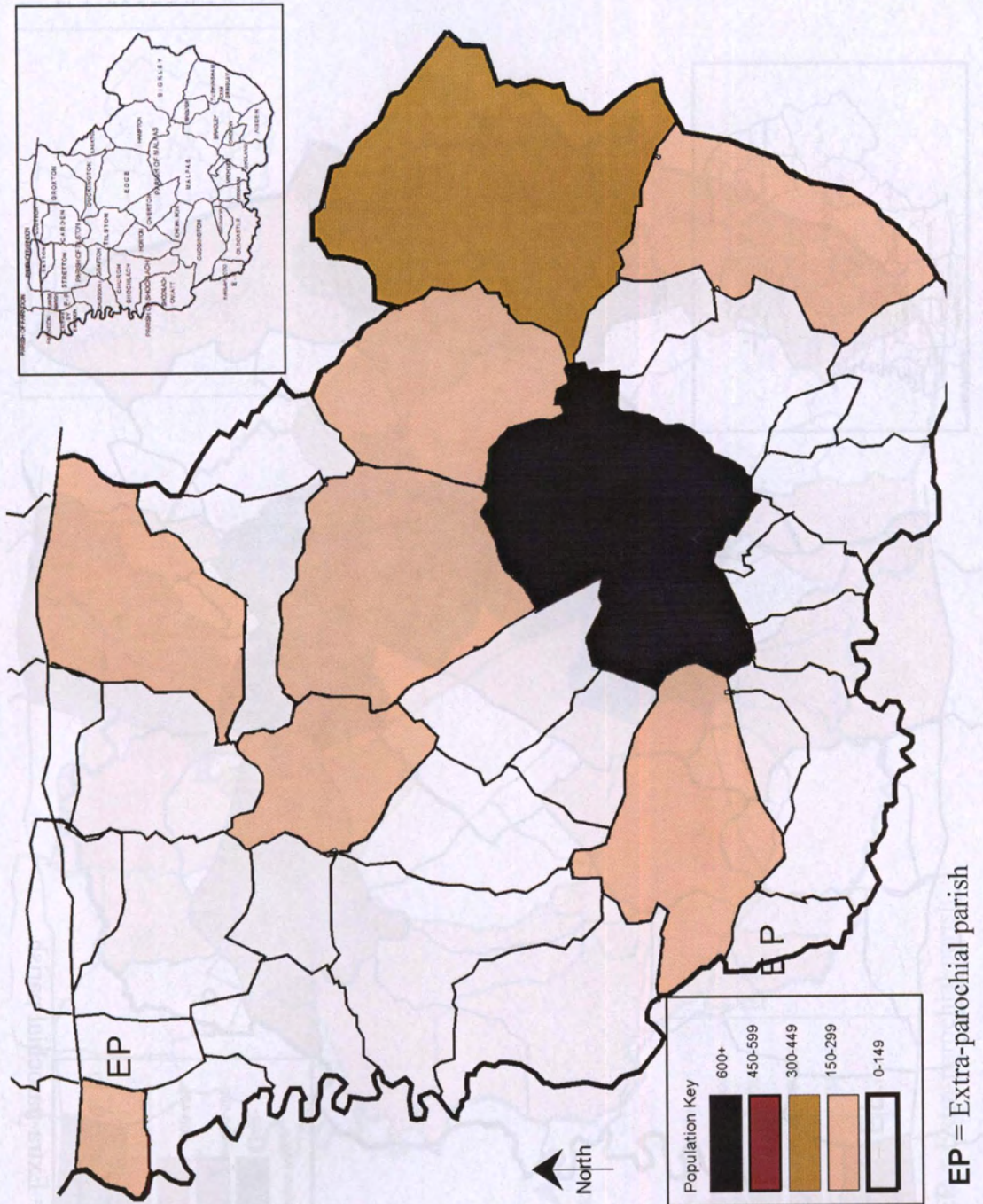
steadily by small amounts between 1951 and 1991, the township's growth was more rapid.

The area's changes in population patterns can best be shown by a series of choropleth maps created for 50 year intervals from 1750 onwards, using population numbers.<sup>29</sup> These show that population increased in the nineteenth-century and became increasingly polarised in townships with substantial settlements and with low HHIs (Tilston, Farndon, Malpas) or whose main settlement had easy access to improved transport routes such as the A41 (Broxton, Hampton, Bickley) two of which had high or rising HHIs (Bickley, Broxton) (Figures 5:10-15). They show the early development of the township containing the area's second largest town, Farndon, from 1801 and the relationship between landownership patterns as shown by HHI and population change. The factors which encouraged population increase in larger settlements and stagnation or decline in smaller settlements, one of which is obviously transport, will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

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<sup>29</sup> 'Choropleths consist of a set of zone boundaries containing colour symbolism to represent numerical values.' Although such maps using population numbers are normally accurate in terms of boundaries and head counts, underlying distribution may not be well represented and that showing a ratio may better show distribution. (P. Rees, D. Martin and P. Williamson, *The Census Data System* (Chichester, 2001), pp. 98-9).

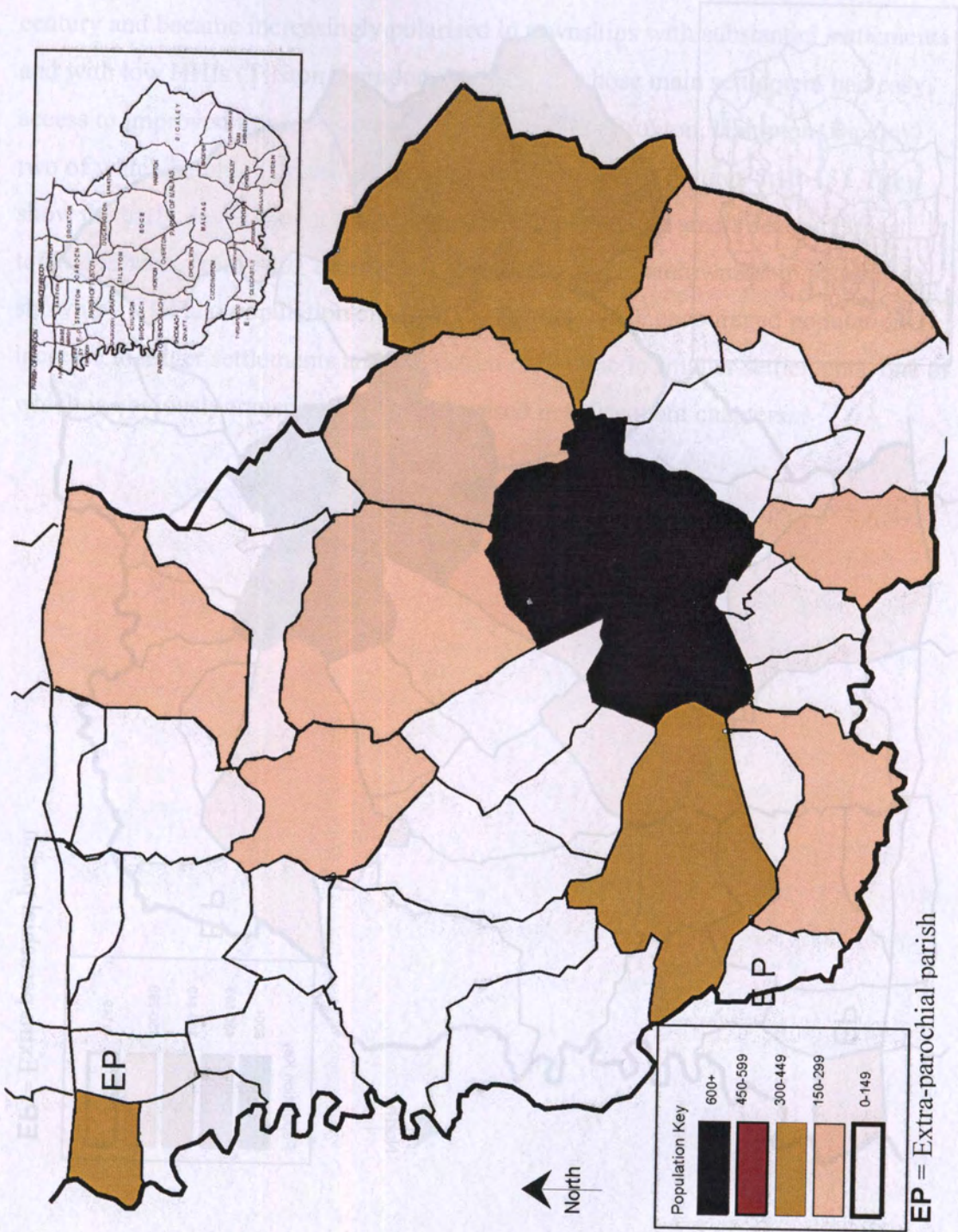
Figure 5:10: Population of south-west Cheshire, 1751.



Source: Estimated population figures.



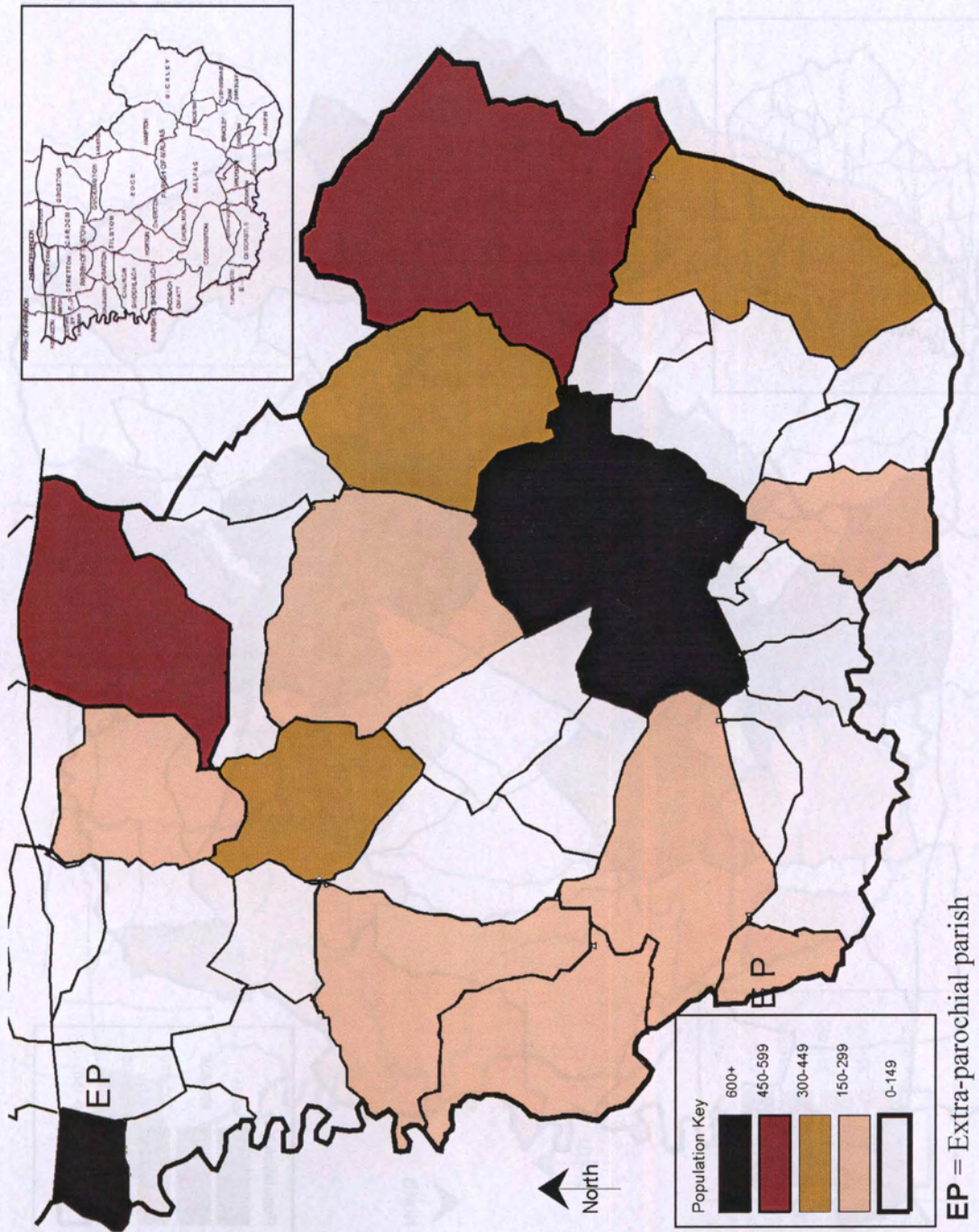
Figure 5:11: Population of southwest Cheshire, 1801.



Source: National census, 1801.



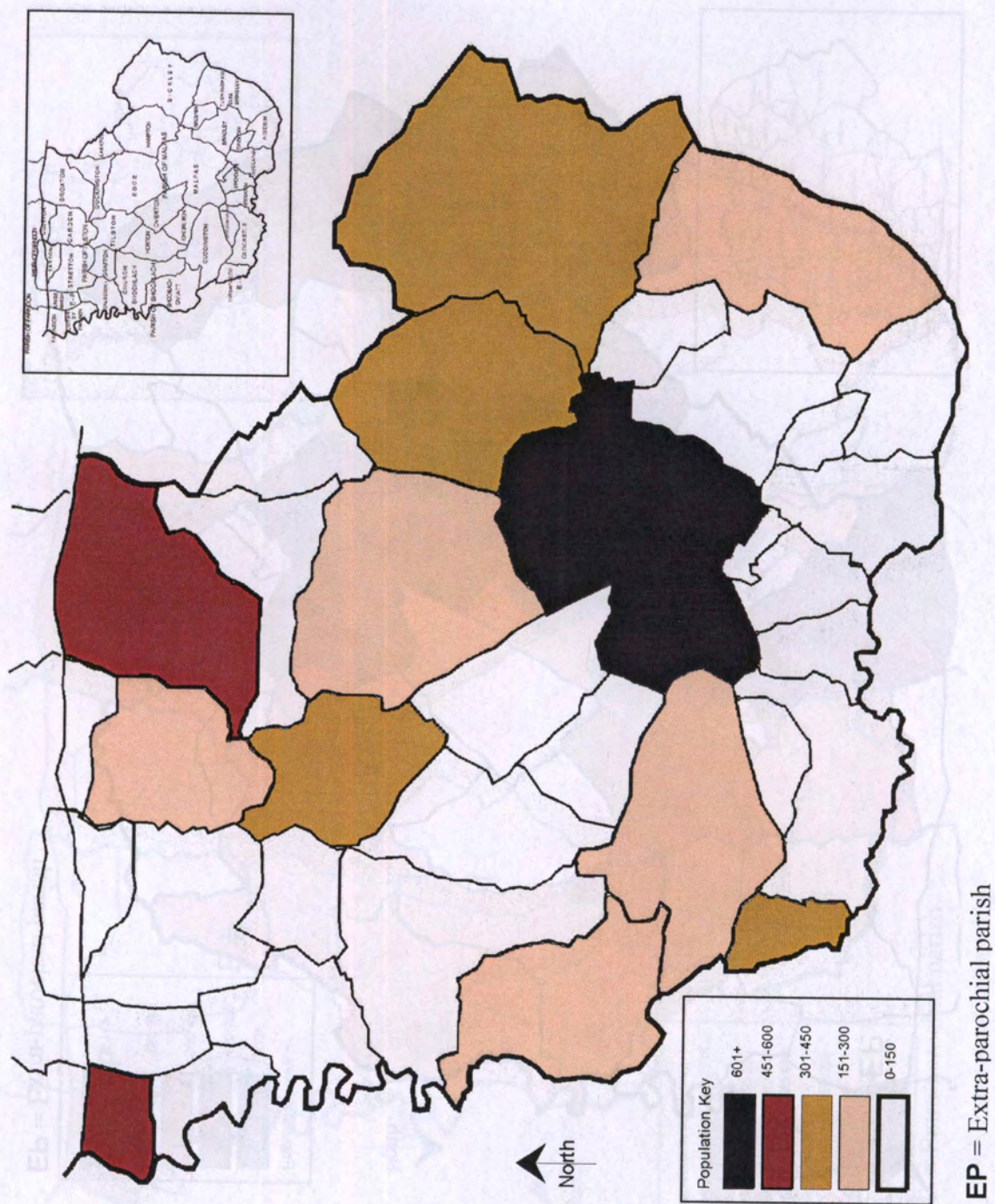
Figure 5:12: Population of south-west Cheshire, 1851.



Source: National census, 1851.



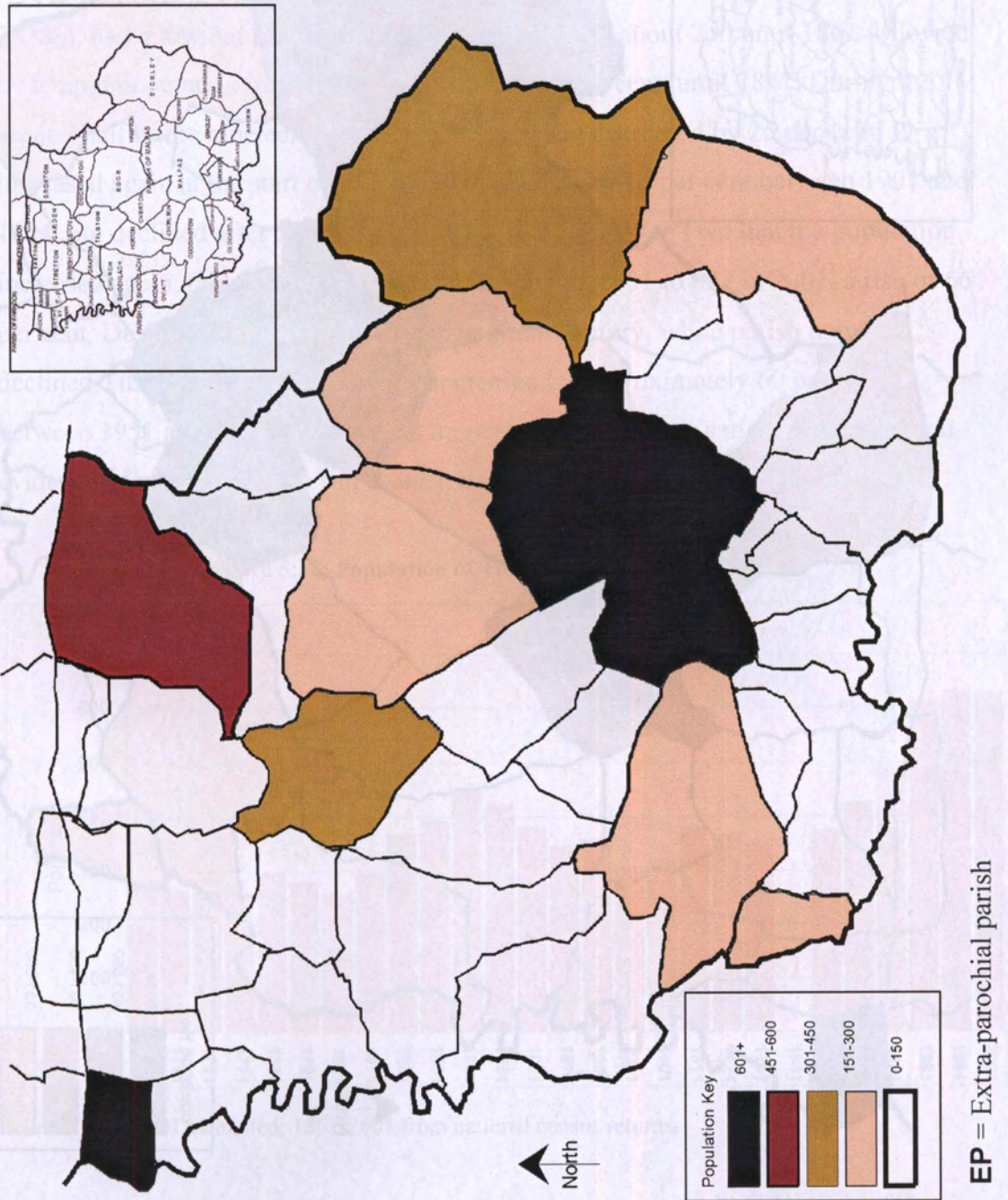
Figure 5: 13: Population of south-west Cheshire, 1901.



Source: National census, 1901.



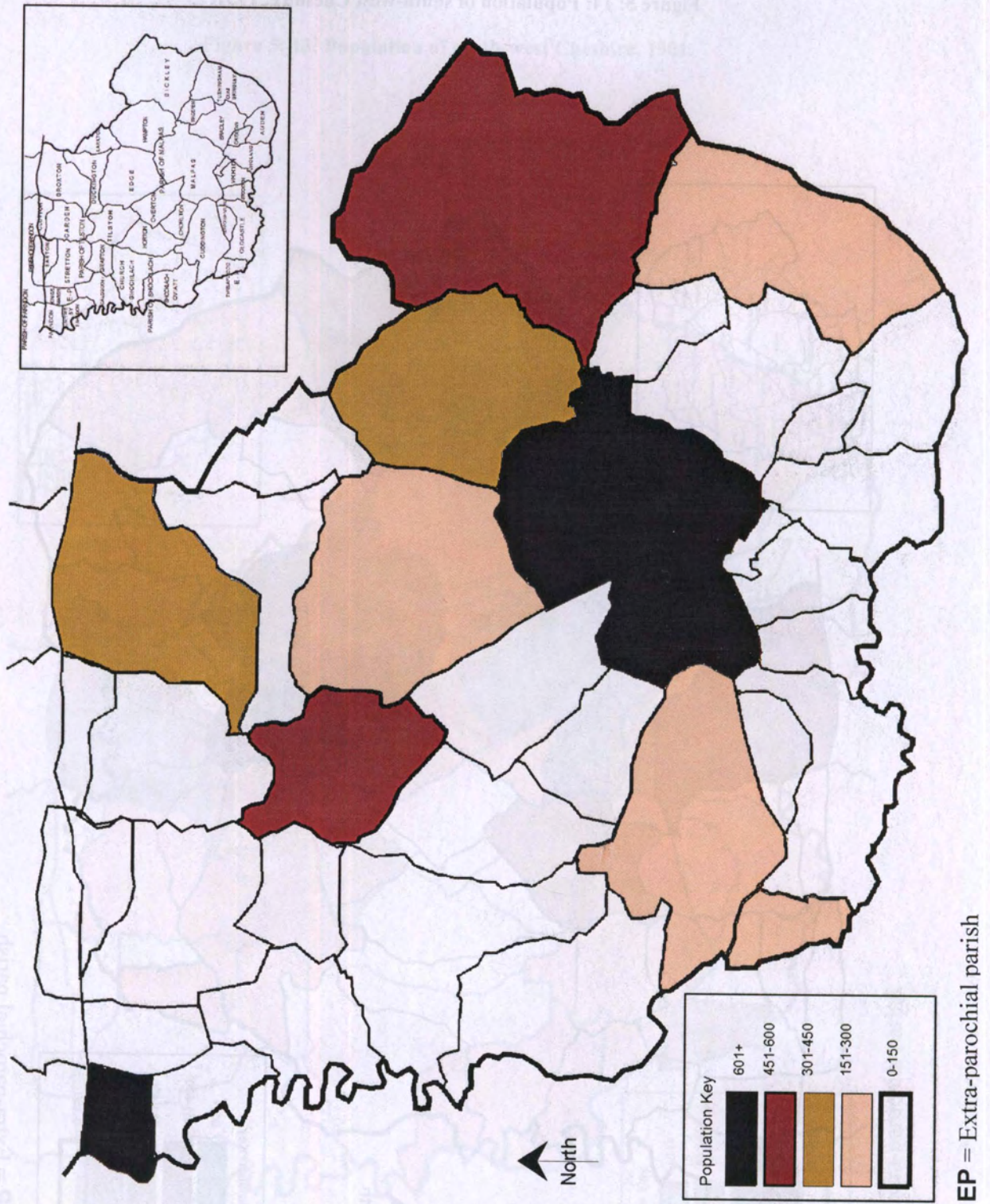
Figure 5: 14: Population of south-west Cheshire, 1951.



Source: National census, 1951.



Figure 5: 15: Population of south-west Cheshire, 2001.



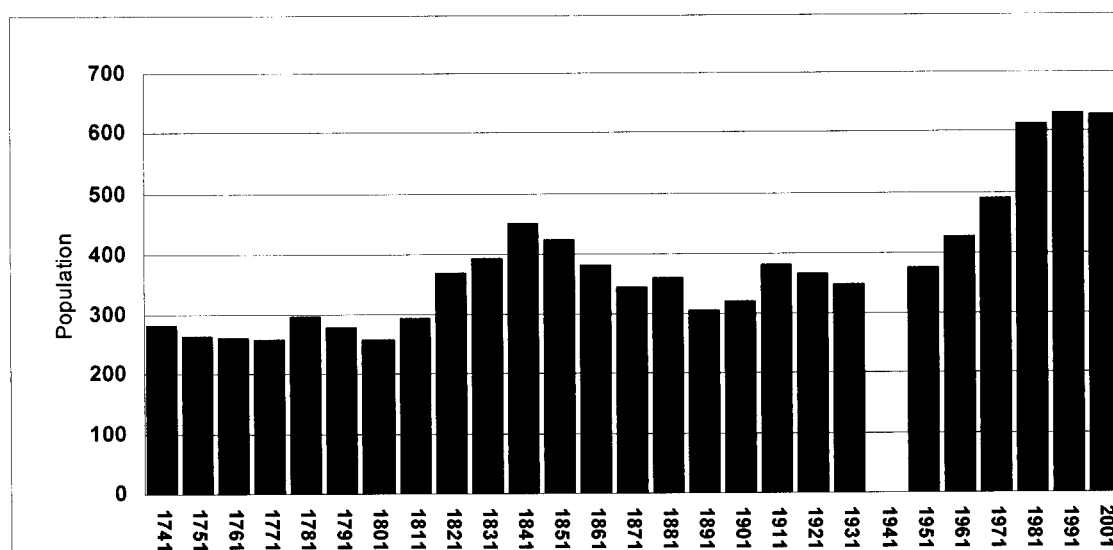
Source: National census, 2001.

## Population in the sample townships

We can now examine the six sample townships for the relationship between landownership patterns as measured by HHI and population changes over the past 250 years, where records are available.

Tilston township, which had a consistently low HHI (HHIs 1779<sub>LT</sub>, 1984<sub>T</sub>, 2828<sub>D</sub>), had a low but reasonably stable population of about 260 until 1801 followed by a rapid population increase to 450, a rise of 75 per cent, until 1841. During the second half of the nineteenth century its population decreased by 25 per cent. It increased again at the start of the twentieth century by 16 per cent between 1901 and 1921, but declined after 1921. It was only after World War Two that the population increased again, this time substantially, from 377 in 1951 to 627 in 2001, a rise of 66 per cent. During the second half of the twentieth century, while parish numbers declined Tilston township population increased by approximately 60 per cent between 1951 and 2001. Most of this increase was in Tilston's main settlement and evidence of modern growth can be seen in the new housing estates (Figure 5:16).

Figure 5:16: Population of Tilston township, 1741-2001.

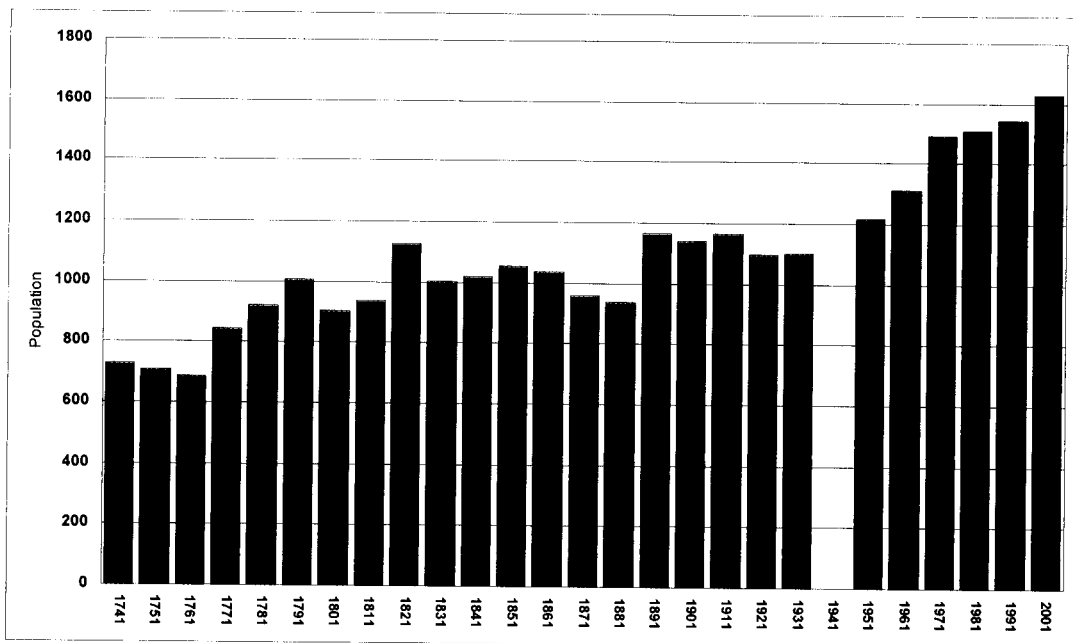


Source: 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-2001 from national census returns.

In 1741 Malpas (low HHIs 2080<sub>LT</sub>, 2664<sub>T</sub>, 2338<sub>D</sub>) had an estimated population of approximately 727 which by 1791 had risen to approximately 1007, an increase of 39 per cent. Subsequently its population remained fairly stable with only slight downturns. By 1851 Malpas township's population had reached 1054, an

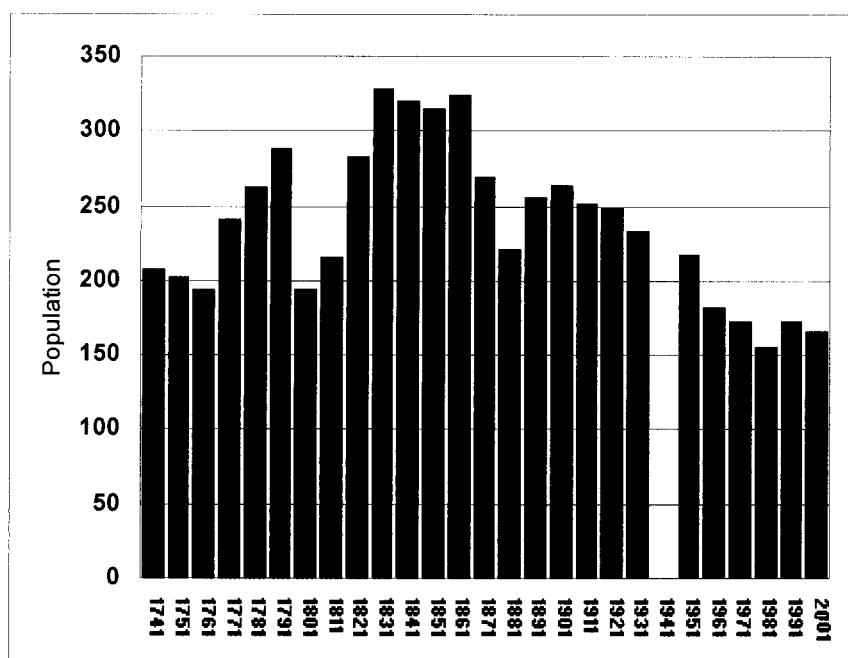
increase since 1801 of 16 per cent. It peaked in 1821 and its population remained fairly steady until 1861, after which it again declined, probably due to the loss of Malpas town's market and the diminishing importance of the town's central role in the area. By 1891 it had risen to 1164, an increase since 1741 of 60 per cent. After a slight decrease in 1921 the population remained stable until it began to increase steadily from 1921 reaching 1493 in 1971 (an increase of 28 per cent since 1891). Today the population appears to be growing, albeit slowly (Figure 5:17).

**Figure 5:17: Population of Malpas township, 1741-2001.**



Source: 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-2001 from national census returns.

Figure 5:18: Population of Tushingham township, 1741-2001.



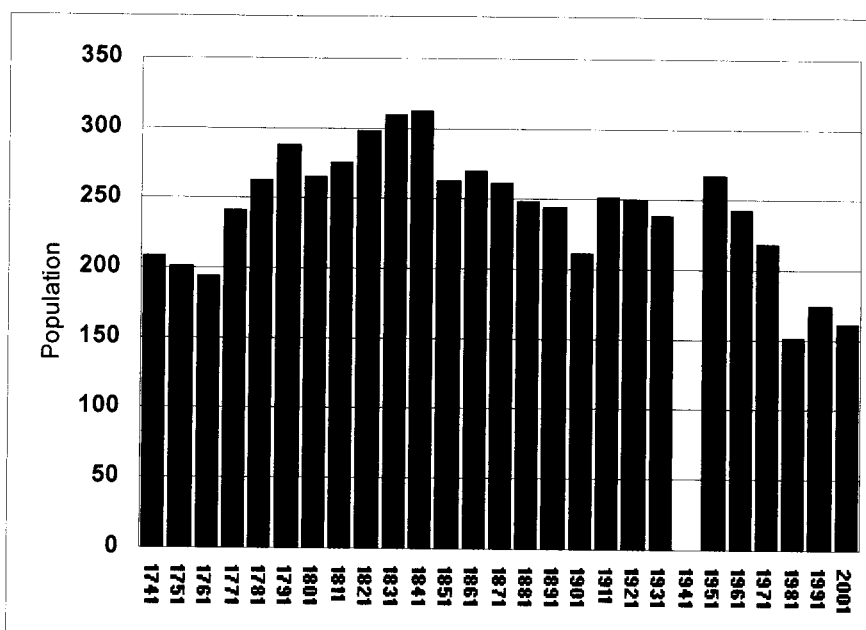
Source: 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-2001 from national census returns.

Figure 5:18 shows the population trend in Tushingham from 1741 (low but rising HHIs 1363<sub>LT</sub>, 1645<sub>T</sub>, 2494<sub>D</sub>). The figures show a decline until 1761 then a rise of 48 per cent to 1791. There was a decline of 33 per cent from 1791 to 1801 and then a steady rise of 70 per cent to its peak of 328 in 1831. Subsequently there has been a steady decline in population with a decline from 1831 to 1971 by 48 per cent down to 173 people (35 people fewer than in 1741) but followed by a slight increase during the late-twentieth century.

Edge, which had a decreasing HHI (HHIs 3110<sub>LT</sub>, 3059<sub>T</sub>, 2312<sub>D</sub>), had a population of between about 200 and 300 between 1751 and 2001. There was little change between 1741 and 1761 but then the population rose, peaking in 1841 with a total of 313, largely as a result of an 18 per cent increase between 1801 and 1841. Edge's population did not rise much above about 250 from 1851 to World War Two, although its post-war population had increased by 1951 to 243: this was followed by a rapid decline so that by 1981 the total population was lower than its mid-eighteenth century estimated figure.<sup>30</sup> A slight growth in the late twentieth-century by eight per cent (1981-2001) reflected increased commuter interest with the arrival of families with young children and some new housing (Figure 5:19).

<sup>30</sup> *VCH Chester* 2, pp. 189-249.

Figure 5:19: Population of Edge township, 1741-2001.



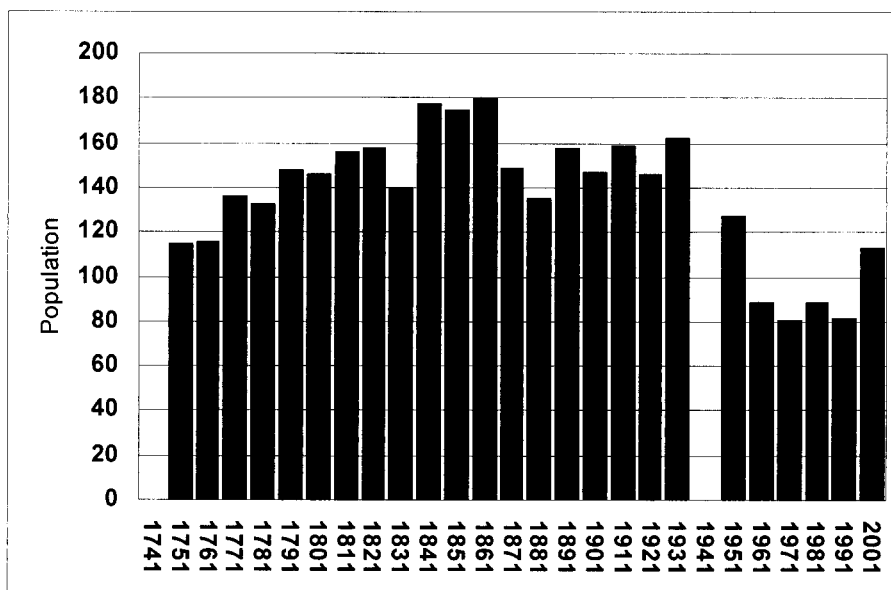
Source: 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-2001 from national census returns.

Church Shocklach's population (low HHIs 1056<sub>LT</sub>, 1104<sub>T</sub>, 889<sub>D</sub>) increased steadily until the mid-nineteenth century peaking at 180 in 1861, but subsequently declined until 1891 then remained fairly steady until after World War Two and then fell again until 1961. Its population has since remained fairly stable. Similarly, Shocklach Oviatt's population (decreasing HHIs 3499<sub>LT</sub>, 2730<sub>T</sub>, 2752<sub>D</sub>) rose from 1750 to a peak of 216 in 1831, but then declined by 25 per cent by 1881. It rose by 43 per cent up until 1911, and then again fell rapidly. Recent christening figures reveal a slight rise since 1991 (from two in 1992 to seven in 1999)<sup>31</sup> which might reflect a younger commuter population in-migration. Both Shocklach townships suffered a decline in population between 1931 and 1951 - (Church Shocklach by 22 per cent; Shocklach Oviatt by 16 per cent). The townships are traditionally treated as one and combined they show a steady rise in population from 1751 to 1841, a decline from then until 1881, and then recovery until 1911. There has since been a steady decline, although the population has now apparently stabilised (Figures 5:20-22).

<sup>31</sup> St Edith's Church, Shocklach, parish register (Christenings) 1874 to present.

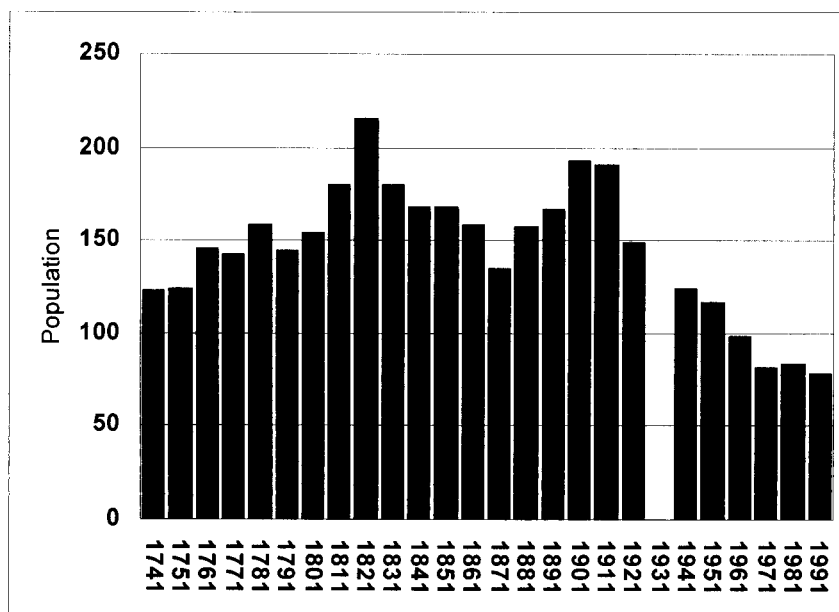


Figure 5:20: Population of Church Shocklach township, 1751-2001.



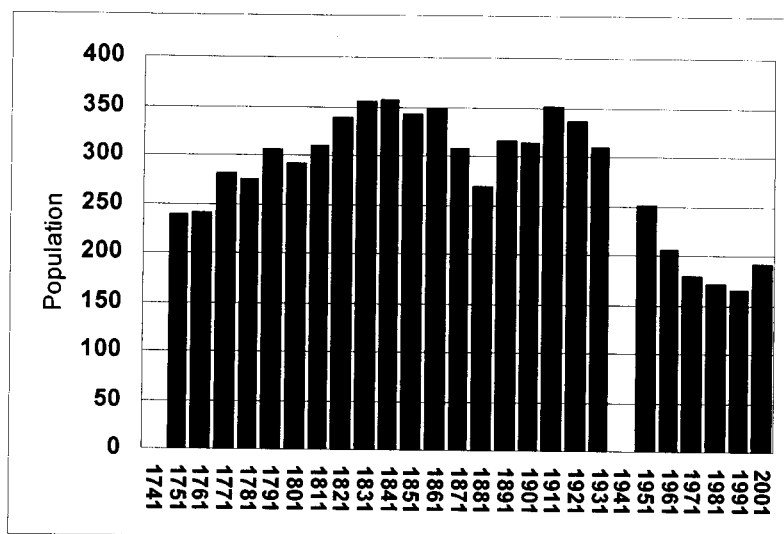
Source: 1751-1791 estimated; 1801-2001 from national census returns.

Figure 5:21: Population of Shocklach Oviatt township, 1741-2001.



Source: 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-2001 from national census returns.

Figure 5:22: Population of the townships of Church Shocklach and Shocklach Oviatt, 1751-2001.



Source: 1751-1791 estimated; 1801-2001 from national census returns.

The six townships, all with low or decreasing HHIs between 1801 and 1901) therefore showed stability or a rise (with some fluctuations) during the second half of the eighteenth century and then a rise until the mid-nineteenth century, although at a much lower rate than county or national trends. Malpas township, with the advantage of containing the town of Malpas, maintained a steady population growth until the end of the twentieth century. The other five townships generally experienced population decline until after World War Two but then slight growth towards the end of the twentieth century reflecting increased commuter mobility.

### ***Nineteenth-century population changes***

It is possible to use population figures to rank the changes in the status of the townships over time. However, Threapwood and Kings Marsh were extra-parochial areas until the nineteenth century. Threapwood was partly in Flintshire until becoming part of Cheshire in 1896. From 1841 it was treated as a civil parish so census figures are available from that date.<sup>32</sup> Kings Marsh became a civil parish in 1801 and its population figures date from then.<sup>33</sup> For each census year townships have been ranked in order of population, the one with the largest population being ranked as number one. Tables have been produced to show the changes in ranking and population at 50 years intervals (Figures 5:23-27). These are followed by two

<sup>32</sup> *VCH Chester 2*, p. 235, note y.

<sup>33</sup> *VCH Chester 2*, p. 219, note c.

charts showing these changes diagrammatically; one shows the ranking changes for each township at 50 year intervals and another shows the ranking changes for all the townships for each census year (Figures 5:28-29).

The first part of the nineteenth century was a period of population growth almost everywhere. Taylor wrote that in spite of extensive emigration of the population to industrial cities and abroad during the first half of the nineteenth century, the rural population also increased and most villages doubled their population between 1800 and 1850.<sup>34</sup> This was partly the case in south-west Cheshire, although not at the national rate. South-west Cheshire's main nineteenth-century population increase was up to 1841 and, as Lawton noted, there was a rapid decrease in population in rural areas and small towns after that date.<sup>35</sup>

Only two townships (Crewe by Farndon, HHI 6189<sub>LT</sub>, 3063<sub>T</sub>; Kings Marsh, HHI 1222<sub>LT</sub>, 1414<sub>T</sub>) in south-west Cheshire doubled in population between 1801 and 1851, although Hampton (HHI 1428<sub>LT</sub>, 1513<sub>T</sub>) almost did so. Nearly half (47 per cent of the townships) increased their population by less than 50 per cent, whereas one, Chidlow (HHI 4570<sub>LT</sub>, 6458<sub>T</sub>), showed no increase. Six townships (18 per cent), five of which had high HHIs, showed a loss of between one and 49 per cent of their population (Table 5:23). The distribution of housing within the townships indicates that most of the population was based in the main settlement. Therefore we can assume that township population changes as a whole reflected changes in settlement sizes. South-west Cheshire's population changes therefore do not support the assertion that most villages doubled in population during this period. However, over two-thirds of the township populations showed some increase, equally shared between low and high HHI townships. So the tendency was towards an increase during the first half of the nineteenth century, but not at the national rate, nor at the rate claimed by Taylor. This increase could not be related to landownership patterns but instances of population decline in this period could be: it was high HHI townships, that is those with high levels of landowner control, which experienced population decline during the first half of the nineteenth century.

<sup>34</sup> CCALS, SL88 1/1, 2; Hoskins and Taylor, *Making*, p. 166.

<sup>35</sup> R. Lawton, 'Rural Depopulation in Nineteenth-century England', in *Liverpool Essays in Geography: A Jubilee Collection*, eds. R. W. Steel and R. Lawton, (Liverpool, 1967), p. 234.

Table 5:23 Population change in south-west Cheshire, 1801 to 1851.

POPULATION CHANGE 1801 to 1851 (in descending order by percentage change)						
TOWNSHIPS	HHI (tithe)	% change in population 1801-1851	Population 1801	Ranking 1801	Population 1851	Ranking 1851
Crewe by Farndon	3063	152	29	28	73	25
Kings Marsh	1414	126	40	27	91	23
Hampton	1513	93	159	11	307	7
Broxton	3655	87	275	5	513	3
Tilston	1984	65	257	7	425	5
Bradley	3933	62	77	21	125	18
Tushingam	1645	62	194	9	315	6
Farndon	1551	56	357	4	558	2
Carden	8514	54	124	15	190	12
Clutton	6733	53	72	22	110	20
Chorlton	2721	40	94	18	132	17
Newton by Malpas	10,000	35	23	29	31	30
Stockton	7738	35	23	29	31	30
Duckington	9802	33	61	23	81	24
Macefen	9802	28	46	26	59	28
Wigland	2762	27	160	10	203	11
Horton	1316	26	111	16	139	16
Overton	1354	26	97	17	122	19
Church Shocklach	1104	20	146	12	175	13
Malpas	2664	16	906	1	1,054	1
Shocklach Oviatt	2730	16	145	13	168	14
Agden	3744	9	90	19	98	22
Bickley	8500	7	435	2	467	4
Larkton	8500	6	50	25	53	29
Caldecott	2547	5	59	24	62	27
Barton	7256	2	143	14	146	15
Threapwood	n/a			34	256	10
Wychough	10,000	0	19	32	19	32
Edge	3059	-1	266	6	263	9
Stretton	7169	-15	84	20	71	26
Chidlow	6458	-29	17	33	12	33
Cuddington	2499	-33	424	3	282	8
Oldcastle	5968	-47	205	8	108	21
Grafton	6922	-49	23	29	12	33
TOTAL			5,211		6,733	

Source: 1801 and 1851 from national census returns.

Note: There are no census figures for Threapwood in 1801. Bold line indicates half the townships.

Table 5:24: Population change in south-west Cheshire, 1851 to 1901.

POPULATION CHANGE 1851 to 1901 (in descending order by percentage change)						
TOWNSHIPS	HHI (tithe)	% increase in population 1851-1901	Population 1851	Ranking 1851	Population 1901	Ranking 1901
Chidlow	6458	58	12	33	19	31
Stretton	7169	30	71	26	92	20
Threapwood	n/a	19	256	10	305	7
Malpas	2664	8	1,054	1	1,139	1
Broxton	3655	6	513	3	543	3
Hampton	1513	6	309	7	326	5
Farndon	1551	1	558	2	564	2
Overton	1354	0	122	19	122	16
Bradley	3933	-1	125	18	124	15
Shocklach Oviatt	2730	-1	168	14	167	11
Cuddington	2499	-10	282	8	255	9
Stockton	7738	-10	31	30	28	30
Oldcastle	5968	-11	108	21	96	19
Carden	8514	-14	190	12	163	12
Horton	1316	-14	139	16	119	17
Church Shocklach	1104	-16	175	13	147	13
Tushingam	1645	-16	315	6	264	8
Wychough	10,000	-16	19	32	16	33
Bickley	8500	-18	467	4	383	4
Edge	3059	-19	263	9	212	10
Chorlton	2721	-21	132	17	104	18
Crewe by Farndon	3063	-23	73	25	56	25
Macefen	9802	-24	59	28	45	27
Tilston	1984	-25	425	5	320	6
Caldecott	2547	-29	62	27	44	28
Clutton	6733	-29	110	20	78	22
Kings Marsh	1414	-29	91	23	65	23
Wigland	2762	-30	203	11	142	14
Larkton	8500	-36	53	29	34	29
Barton	7256	-37	146	15	92	20
Duckington	9802	-37	81	24	51	26
Agden	3744	-39	98	22	60	24
Newton by Malpas	10,000	-39	31	30	19	31
Grafton	6922	-83	12	33	2	34
TOTAL			6,733		6,196	

Source: 1851 and 1901 from national census returns.

Table 5:25: Population change in south-west Cheshire, 1901 to 1951.

POPULATION CHANGE 1901 to 1951 (in descending order by percentage change)						
TOWNSHIPS	HHI 1910	% increase in population 1901-1951	Population 1901	Ranking 1901	Population 1951	Ranking 1951
Grafton	10,000	100	2	34	4	34
Larkton	9409	56	34	29	53	28
Macefen	9025	38	45	27	62	22
Edge	2312	26	212	10	267	8
Farndon	2188	22	564	2	688	2
Tilston	2828	18	320	6	377	4
Duckington	9605	16	51	26	59	25
Crewe by Farndon	4579	9	56	25	61	23
Malpas	2338	7	1,139	1	1,219	1
Agden	4247	0	60	24	60	24
Threapwood	n/a	-5	305	7	290	6
Barton	10,000	-8	92	20	85	18
Hampton	1399	-11	326	5	290	6
Broxton	4051	-13	543	3	471	3
Horton	2284	-13	119	17	104	15
Wychough	5161	-19	16	33	13	30
Church Shocklach	889	-14	147	13	127	11
Clutton	6930	-14	78	22	67	21
Cuddington	2348	-14	255	9	219	9
Kings Marsh	2324	-14	65	23	56	27
Bickley	10,000	-15	383	4	325	5
Bradley	3204	-15	124	15	105	14
Overton	1968	-17	122	16	101	16
Tushingam	2494	-18	264	8	217	10
Chorlton	2375	-21	104	18	82	19
Wigland	5003	-23	142	14	109	13
Shocklach Oviatt	2752	-25	167	11	125	12
Oldcastle	1658	-26	96	19	71	20
Caldecott	2297	-32	44	28	30	29
Stretton	7192	-37	92	20	58	26
Carden	8836	-40	163	12	98	17
Chidlow	6458	-42	19	31	11	32
Newton by Malpas	10,000	-53	19	31	9	33
Stockton	7058	-57	28	30	12	31
TOTAL			6,196		5,925	

Source: 1901 and 1951 from national census returns.

Table 5:26: Population change in south-west Cheshire, 1951 to 2001.

POPULATION CHANGE 1951 to 2001 (in descending order by percentage change)						
TOWNSHIPS	HHI 1910	% increase in population 1951-2001	Population 1951	Ranking 1951	Population 2001	Ranking 2001
Clutton	6930	118	119	11	259	8
Farndon	2188	85	818	2	1,517	2
Stockton	7058	75	12	32	21	29
Bickley	10,000	60	311	5	498	4
Hampton	1399	59	258	6	409	5
Tilston	2828	47	426	4	627	3
Malpas	2338	34	1219	1	1,628	1
Church Shocklach	889	27	89	17	113	12
Threapwood	n/a	19	239	8	285	7
Stretton	7192	19	43	27	51	24
Cuddington	2348	13	159	10	180	9
Wigland	5003	12	93	16	104	13
Macefen	9025	8	75	19	81	14
Barton	10,000	-1	72	21	71	16
Chorlton	2375	-4	71	23	68	18
Caldecott	2297	-8	26	29	24	28
Duckington	9605	-9	65	24	59	22
Tushingham	2494	-9	183	9	166	10
Broxton	4051	-12	444	3	390	6
Horton	2284	-19	77	18	62	20
Chidlow	6458	-20	10	34	8	33
Newton by Malpas	10,000	-27	15	30	11	31
Wychough	5161	-27	15	30	11	31
Oldcastle	1658	-27	74	20	54	23
Carden	8836	-28	96	14	69	17
Edge	2312	-33	243	7	164	11
Shocklach Oviatt	2752	-33	117	12	78	15
Kings Marsh	2324	-35	46	26	30	26
Bradley	3204	-36	95	15	61	21
Overton	1968	-38	109	13	68	18
Larkton	9409	-40	47	25	28	27
Agden	4247	-42	72	21	42	25
Crewe by Farndon	4579	-63	43	27	16	30
Grafton	10,000	-75	12	32	3	34
TOTAL			5,925		7,279	

Source: 1951 and 2001 from national census returns.

The population increase was not sustained through the latter half of the nineteenth century and up to the mid-twentieth century (1851-1951). The number of

townships that increased their populations was reduced by 56 per cent. Of those that did experience an increase most did so by less than 50 per cent. By the second half of the twentieth century more townships were increasing their populations, with Farndon (HHI 2188<sub>D</sub>) more than doubling between 1951 and 2001. However, the actual populations in 46 per cent of the townships in 1901 were initially fewer than 100 inhabitants. The two market towns, Malpas (HHI 2338<sub>D</sub>) and Farndon, maintained an increase, or at least no loss, throughout the period. Tilston (HHI 2828<sub>D</sub>) showed a greater growth rate than Malpas during the second half of the twentieth century and now ranks as one of the main settlements with Farndon (Tables 5:24-29).

The population increase in the south-west Cheshire overall was 40 per cent between 1801 and 2001 and this occurred equally in settlements with low and high HHI. Using the estimated population figures for 1751 we can see that overall more than two thirds of the townships (23) decreased their populations from the 1751 figure by 2001 and only 25 per cent (8) increased it by 50 per cent or more (excluding non-parochial Kings Marsh and Threapwood). Figure 5:27 shows the percentage increase in the townships between 1751 and 2001. However, of seven townships showing greatest population growth between 1751 and 2001, five had low HHIs throughout the period. The five low HHI townships that doubled or more than doubled their populations are Farndon and Malpas, the two main market towns, Tilston, a growing commuter base, Hampton (on the main A41 route) and Overton. Clutton and Macefen, both with high HHIs were also close to the A41. This is a very significant point and will be discussed in detail in chapter six. Here we can note that although slightly more townships with low HHIs and therefore low landowner concentration made the most significant population increases, access to major routes evidently enabled a few areas with high landowner concentration (HHI >3000) to increase their populations and therefore we can assume their settlement size.



Table 5:27: Population change in south-west Cheshire, 1751-2001.

Population change 1751-2001 (in descending order by percentage change)					
TOWNSHIPS	% increase in population 1751-2001	Population 1751 (estimated)	Ranking 1751	Population 2001	Ranking 2001
Farndon	412	296	3	1,517	2
Clutton	354	57	22	259	8
Hampton	143	168	9	409	5
Macefen	138	34	26	81	14
Tilston	138	264	5	627	3
Malpas	131	706	1	1,628	1
Overton	100	34	27	68	17
Bickley	64	303	2	498	4
Broxton	45	269	4	390	6
Church Shocklach	-3	116	13	113	12
Bradley	-9	67	19	61	18
Duckington	-12	67	20	59	20
Newton by Malpas	-15	13	30	11	29
Larkton	-18	34	25	28	24
Tushingam	-18	202	6	166	10
Edge	-19	202	6	164	11
Chidlow	-20	10	32	8	30
Stretton	-22	65	21	51	22
Wigland	-23	135	11	104	13
Barton	-31	103	14	71	15
Chorlton	-33	101	15	68	17
Agden	-37	67	18	42	23
Horton	-38	100	17	62	19
Shocklach Oviatt	-38	125	12	78	17
Stockton	-38	34	28	21	26
Oldcastle	-47	101	16	54	21
Carden	-51	141	10	69	16
Caldecott	-51	49	23	24	25
Crewe by Farndon	-53	34	24	16	27
Wychough	-66	34	29	11	28
Grafton	-75	12	31	3	31
Cuddington	-109	202	6	180	9
Kings Marsh	non-parochial	non-parochial		30	12
Threapwood	non-parochial	non-parochial		285	7
TOTAL		4145		7,279	

Source: 175 and 1791 estimated; 1801 and 2001 from national census returns.

The rankings show that while most townships experienced many population changes between 1801 and 2001, the rankings of the six largest (mainly with HHI

>3000) and six smallest places (HHI <3000) remained remarkably consistent and these townships apparently experienced fewer changes in population and therefore settlement size. Although there were some population changes in the largest settlements between 1801 and 1851 (Cuddington HHI 2499<sub>T</sub>, for example, fell from third to ninth in the ranking), generally from 1851 the largest places remain the same – Malpas, Bickley, Farndon, Tilston, Broxton – although occasionally changing status within their grouping. The smallest settlements in 1801 – Newton by Malpas (HHI 10,000<sub>T</sub>), Stockton (HHI 7738<sub>T</sub>), Grafton (HHI 6922<sub>T</sub>), Wychough (HHI 10,000<sub>T</sub>) and Chidlow (HHI 6458<sub>T</sub>) – all of which had high landownership concentration, were still among the lowest ranking in 2001 (Figure 5:27). From 1851 to 2001 the smallest settlements either experienced no change or a substantial population loss (e.g. Grafton at 83 per cent) which kept them in the bottom rankings. During the same period the largest settlements either experienced no ranking change (e.g. Farndon 1851-1891) or increased their populations.

However, although most of the lowest ranked settlements, all with high HHIs, declined the most, some apparently achieved large population increases. But this can be misleading. Grafton (HHI 10,000<sub>D</sub>) doubled its population between 1901 and 1951, but only from two people in 1901 to four people in 1951. Although it had the highest increase during this period, it retained the lowest settlement ranking in terms of total population. Throughout the period between 1801 and 2001 the largest settlements only needed to maintain their populations or achieve modest increases to maintain their rankings. A large percentage population increase in smaller localities, therefore, did not necessarily increase their overall number of inhabitants sufficiently to improve their ranking more than a few places, if at all. To this extent larger settlements often attracted inhabitants at the expense of the smallest. The following line graphs of all the township population rankings reinforce the point that the top and bottom five or six ranked townships maintained their positions within the same grouping, while most changes occurred in the middle rankings (Figures 5:28-29). The rankings also demonstrate that the larger, and therefore already thriving, settlements of 1751 attracted new residents and therefore grew, while smaller settlements lost popularity and therefore failed to keep pace, a phenomenon characteristic of the entire period to the end of the twentieth century.

Ranking the settlements also reveals general trends in settlement development. Geographers use Zipf's rank-size rule to demonstrate an inverse

relationship between rank and size,<sup>36</sup> but this is normally used to determine the relationship between large cities. On the rare occasions that the rule has been applied to villages or hamlets it has merely shown reversals, or failed to reveal constant rank-size relationship. This procedure has been criticised by Reed, who stated that because there are so many factors affecting size distribution of settlements, the result is one of mathematical probability and therefore random.<sup>37</sup> Others have pointed out that knowing the rank-size relationship does not even show a settlement's physical position.<sup>38</sup> Zipf's rule has therefore not been applied to settlements in south-west Cheshire because it would add no further useful information.

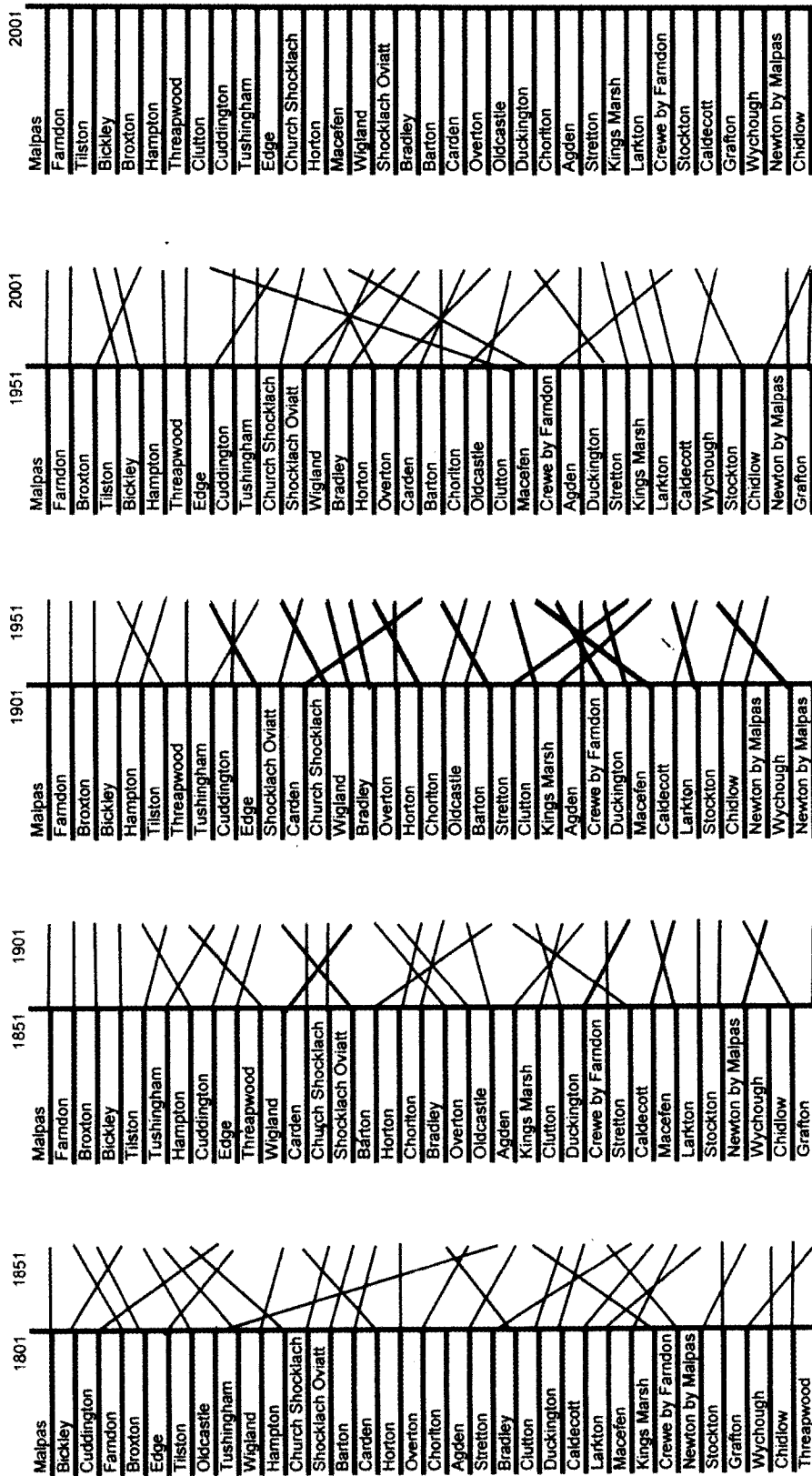
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<sup>36</sup> Zipf's rank size rule uses the formula  $P_r = P_1/r$  (where  $P_r$  is the population of a city,  $P_1$  is the population of the largest city in the ranking, and  $r$  is the rank of the city when the cities are ranked from largest to smallest in descending order with adjustments made depending on the ranking method used). The rule is used to plot the log of population against log of ranking and the usual result for cities is a straight-line continuum downwards to the right at 45 degrees. (R. J. Johnson, *Spatial Structures* (London, 1973), p. 27; H. Carter, *Study*, p. 35; P. Haggett, A. D. Cliff and A. Frey, *Locational Analysis in Human Geography* (London, 1977), pp. 113-4).

<sup>37</sup> W. J. Reed, 'On the rank-size distribution for human settlements', University of Victoria <<http://www.math.uvic.ca/faculty/reed/Rank-size.ps>>, [accessed 15 May 2006], p. 15.

<sup>38</sup> Department of Geography, University of Santa Barbara, *Assignment 3: Urbanization and settlement systems* <[http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/~sweeney/g5/assignments/A3\\_W2004.PDF](http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/~sweeney/g5/assignments/A3_W2004.PDF)> [accessed 2 March 2006].

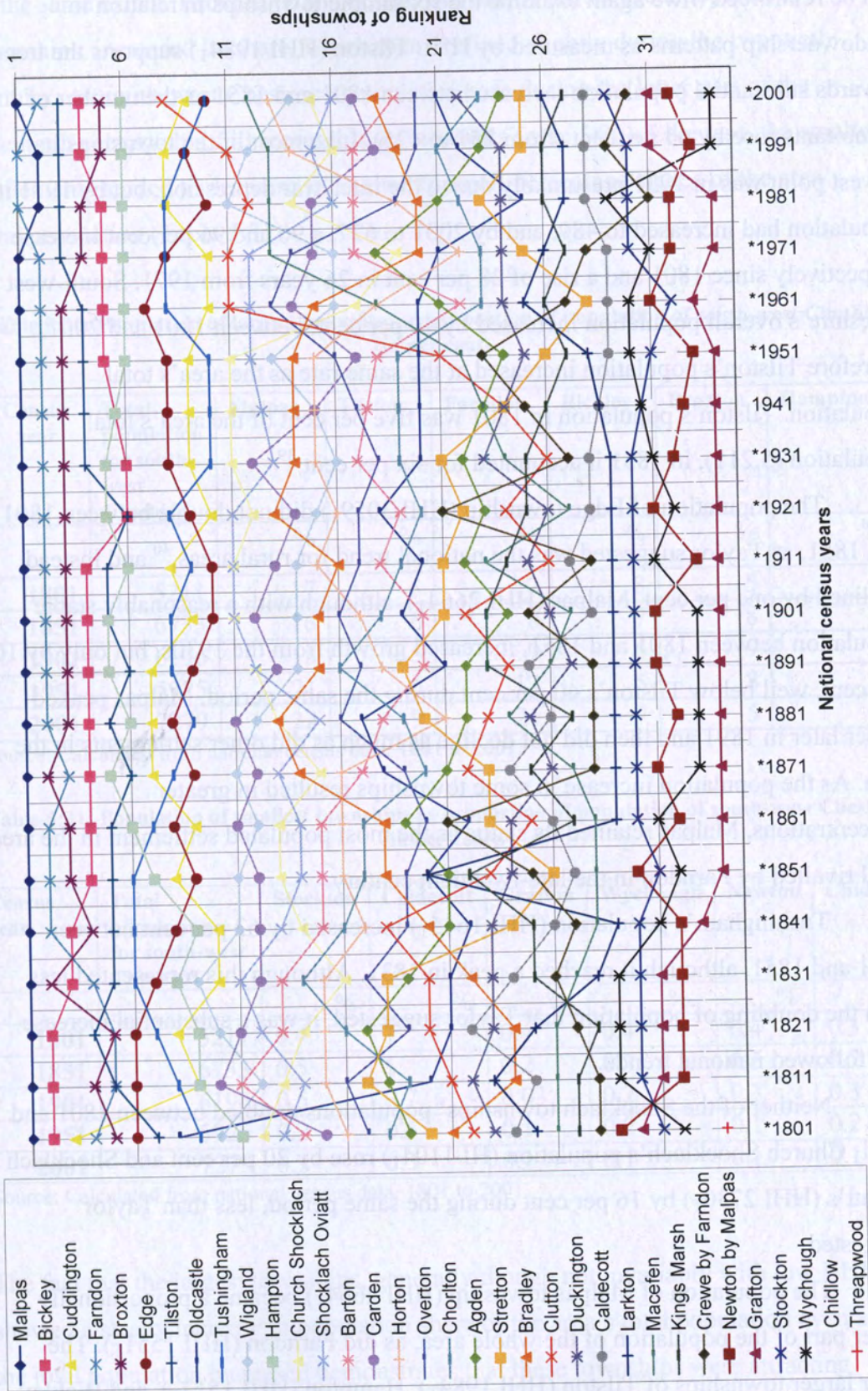
Figure 5:28: Rankings of townships at 50 year intervals, 1801 to 2001.



Source: National census returns, 1801 to 2001.



Figure 5:29: Ranking of townships 1801 to 2001.



Source: National census returns, 1801 to 2001.

The point that the largest settlements increased at the expense of the smallest can be reinforced if we again examine the six sample townships in relation to landownership patterns as measured by HHI. Tilston (HHI 1984<sub>T</sub>) supports the trend towards substantial population increase between 1801 and 1851 as the number of inhabitants rose by 65 per cent (from 257 to 425). Like most of the townships its lowest point was in 1931 presumably due to the inter-war depression, but by 1971 its population had increased to 489, and by 2001 to 627, a 90 and 96 per cent increase respectively since 1801 and a rise of 28 per cent in 26 years from 1971. South-west Cheshire's overall population increased by 40 per cent, between 1801 and 2001, therefore Tilston's population increased at the same rate as the area's total population. Tilston's population in 1801 was five per cent of the area's total population (5,211), in 1851 it accounted for six per cent.<sup>39</sup>

The population of Edge township (HHI 3059<sub>T</sub>) did not double between 1801 and 1851, as Taylor suggested was the national trend for rural areas,<sup>40</sup> and instead declined by one per cent. Malpas (HHI 2664<sub>T</sub>), although with a reasonably stable population between 1801 and 1851, increased growth from the 1930s, but only by 16 per cent, well below Tilston's 40 per cent during the same period. Malpas peaked rather later in 1891 and then did not decline as much as did other settlements in the area. As the population increase in some townships resulted in greater concentrations, Malpas retained its status as the most populated settlement in the area until rivalled by Farndon in the late-twentieth century.

Tushingam's population (HHI 1645<sub>T</sub>) increased by 62 per cent between 1801 and 1851, although it reached a peak in 1831. Although this represented less than the doubling of population that Taylor suggested, it was a substantial increase and followed national trends.

Neither of the Shocklach townships' populations doubled between 1801 and 1851. Church Shocklach's population (HI 1104<sub>T</sub>) rose by 20 per cent and Shocklach Oviatt's (HHI 2730<sub>T</sub>) by 16 per cent during the same period, less than Taylor suggested.

The population of Malpas township (HHI 2664<sub>T</sub>) became a proportionally larger part of the population of the whole area, as did Farndon (HHI 1551<sub>T</sub>). The other larger townships of Tilston (HHI 1984<sub>T</sub>), Hampton (HHI 1513<sub>T</sub>), and Bickley

<sup>39</sup> *VCH Cheshire 2*, pp. 189-249.

<sup>40</sup> Hoskins and Taylor, *Making*, p. 166.



(HHI 8500<sub>T</sub>) also increased or maintained their shares of the population, although not to the same extent. Broxton (HHI 3655<sub>T</sub>), still one of the six most populated townships, increased its share, which then declined slightly during the twentieth century. As south-west Cheshire's population rose during the latter part of the twentieth century this still represents an increase (Table 5:30). Likewise, the smallest settlements tended to decrease their already small percentage shares of the area's total population (Table 5:31).

**Table 5:30: Population of largest townships as proportion of population of south-west Cheshire (in per cent).**

Census year	Total population for south-west Cheshire	Malpas	Tilston	Farndon	Bickley	Broxton	Hampton
		%	%	%	%	%	%
1801	5211	17	5	7	8	5	3
1851	6733	16	6	8	7	8	5
1901	6196	18	5	9	6	9	5
1951	5925	21	6	12	5	8	5
2001	7279	22	9	21	7	5	7

Source: Calculated from national census data, 1801 to 2001.

**Table 5:31: Population of smallest townships as proportion of population of south-west Cheshire (in per cent).**

Census year	Total population for south-west Cheshire	Stockton	Caldecott	Grafton	Wychough	Newton	Chidlow
		%	%	%	%	%	%
1801	5211	0.4	1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3
1851	6733	0.5	1	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.2
1901	6196	0.5	0.7	0.03	0.2	0.3	0.3
1951	5925	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
2001	7279	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: Calculated from national census data, 1801 to 2001.

The fact that the largest townships, generally though not invariably with low HHIs, showed a steady increase in population share of the area's total population even as the total population increased demonstrates that these townships were attracting populations. Conversely, the total population share of the smallest townships (consistently with HHIs >3000) decreased steadily showing that even where some

population increase had occurred it was too small to increase their size relative to the other townships (Table 5:31).

## **Conclusion**

Landownership patterns as measured by HHI clearly demonstrate their effect in townships with the largest and smallest populations. The most important conclusion from a study of south-west Cheshire's population trends between 1791 and 2001 is that generally the largest settlements (most with low HHIs) remained large and the smallest settlements (most with high HHIs) remained small. With a few exceptions, the largest settlements expanded and the smallest settlements stagnated or declined. Rankings clearly illustrate this overall trend. This means that the settlement landscape did not change dramatically during the period although the size of settlements changed. In the largest and smallest settlements landownership concentration and therefore landowner control was clearly a major influence on population size, and therefore settlement growth.

Nationally the population rose rapidly between 1751 and 2001, particularly between 1801 and 1901. Cheshire's major population growth occurred between 1801 and 1851 when its growth exceeded the national rate by 44 per cent. South-west Cheshire's main period of growth was also between 1801 and 1851 and followed both national and county trends, but at much lower rates, 64 per cent below the national level and 108 per cent below the county level. However, from 1851 its population declined against national and county trends and only recovered after 1951 partly as a result of counter-urbanisation which will be discussed in chapter seven.

The data demonstrate a general population rise in most of the area's townships between 1801 and 1851, although few witnessed a doubling of population as postulated by Taylor. Although there was a general exodus from rural to urban areas during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries this was not as devastating to rural areas as might be expected. In spite of a high rate of population increase in urban areas between 1801 and 1851 many rural areas showed substantial population growth during the same period. Rural areas of under 2,000 people grew by 52.9 per cent, but this declined in small towns and rural areas after 1841. The main migration to the towns took place nationally in the 1840s and the main areas to



lose out were rural. This was an almost universal trend.<sup>41</sup> However, the population of south-west Cheshire only grew by 29 per cent during this period, peaking in 1841: it followed the national trend, but at a lower rate of increase.

Using HHI to indicate landownership patterns coupled with evidence from the population changes, if used as an indication of physical settlement development, together suggests that larger settlements, generally with low HHIs, expanded their building and that in smaller settlements, with low HHIs, building stagnated or declined. How far the building in individual settlements was influenced by other factors such as the placing of transport routes, the influence of landowners or the need to accommodate modern planning laws is discussed in subsequent chapters.

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<sup>41</sup>Lawton, 'Depopulation', pp. 227-55, in particular pp. 228, 241, 243, 247-8, 250.



## Chapter six

### Transport – a limited revolution?

‘Good roads, canals, and navigable rivers ... are ...the greatest of all improvements.’<sup>1</sup>

The Cheshire County Plan of 1946 said the ‘means of transport generally have in fact been among the major factors determining the general distribution of the various types of urban and rural settlements.’<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, this chapter will examine how far landownership patterns as measured by HHI influenced transport in south-west Cheshire and the effect of this on the area’s settlement development. It will focus only on its effect on changes in the physical size and distribution of settlements and will not attempt a broader socio-economic investigation of the area. There is evidence that landowners influenced the placing of transport routes and therefore indirectly settlement development, sometimes with adverse results. However, this chapter demonstrates that direct transport-related development was of limited extent in the area.

South-west Cheshire did not have access to a navigable river, but had, at various times, turnpike roads, a railway and a significant major road network with three A-class roads crossing the area. A canal was built just over its southern border. This apparently adequate transport system should have increased access to goods, services and building materials from 1750 and encouraged settlement growth within the area. However, maps from the eighteenth century to the present suggest that many parts of the area were, and still are, poorly served by the prevailing transport system and that the placing of transport routes effectively made travel to and from many settlements difficult at different times (Map 4:1).

This chapter tests the hypothesis that south-west Cheshire’s development was stunted by the inappropriate placing of transport infrastructure and the reluctance of some resident land owners to encourage expansion in their townships.<sup>3</sup> It aims to

<sup>1</sup> A. Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith Institute, <<http://www.adamsmith.org/smith/won-b1-c1-c11-part-1-htm>> [accessed 22 January 2004].

<sup>2</sup> W. D. Chapman, *A Plan for Cheshire* (Chester, 1946), p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> Potentially useful archives belonging to the Dod family that might throw light on some landowners’ attitudes to transport systems in the area exist at Edge Hall. A request to access these was unsuccessful.

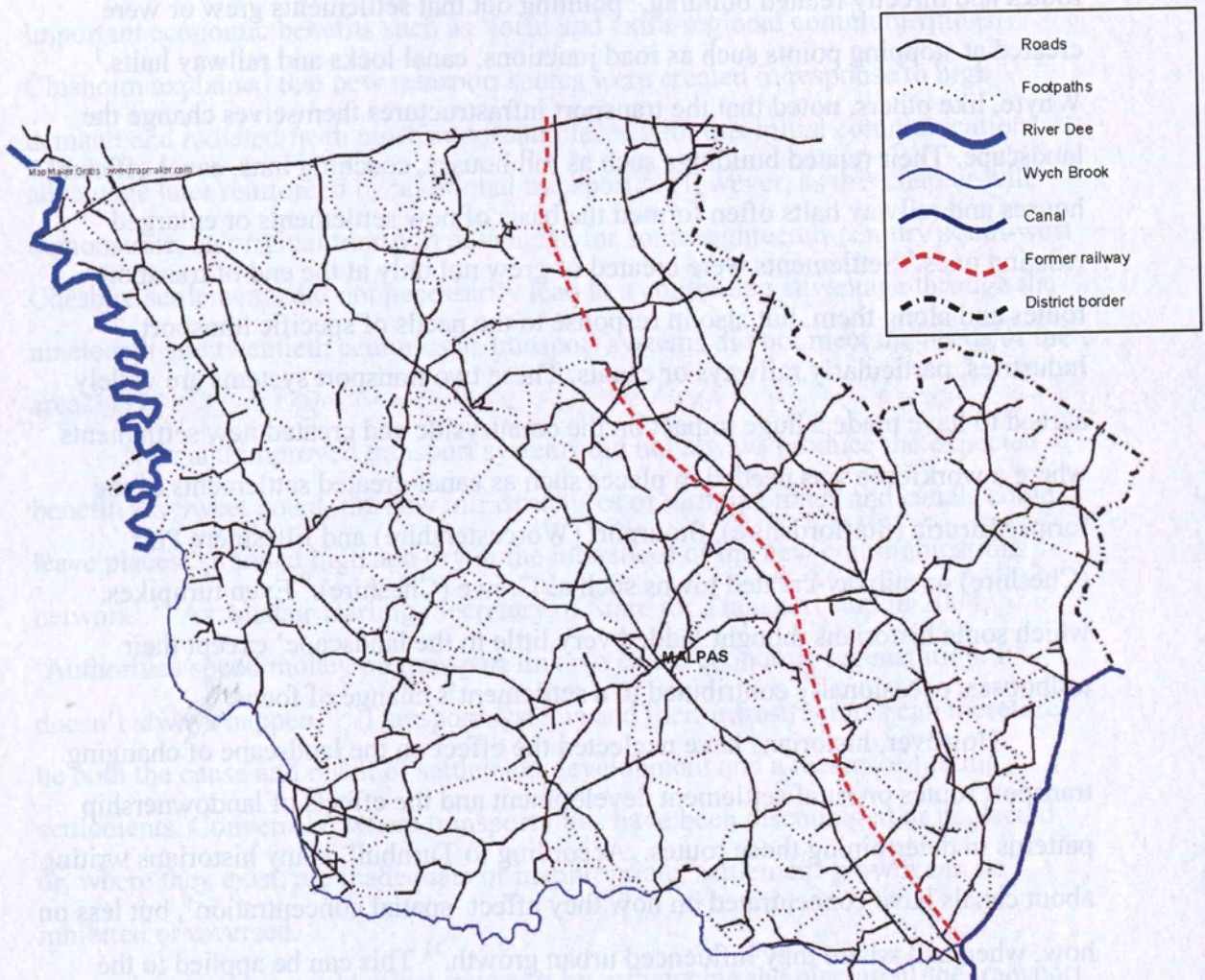
show the impact of the transport system on south-west Cheshire's settlement development from 1750 to 2000 in relation to landownership patterns. An assessment will be made of the transport systems and infrastructure in the area before the advent of turnpike roads and the development of each of the main transport systems will be traced in turn: turnpike roads, the canal, the railway and modern roads, with the impact of the bus services and private cars which used them.<sup>4</sup> The chapter aims to demonstrate that the choice of roads for turnpiking and later main roads, the by-passing of the area by the canal, the small number of railway stations and the increased use of private cars over public transport significantly affected the development of settlements within the area.

This chapter uses maps, contemporary sources such as deposited plans, council records, directories and archival material, alongside observations in the field to demonstrate the impact of the changing transport infrastructure on the area, and provides a sequence of maps to show these changes.

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<sup>4</sup> Enclosure roads, which in this area provided access to fields rather than acting as routes between settlements, are discussed in chapter five.

Figure 6: 1 All transport infrastructures in south-west Cheshire, circa 2000 - roads, canal, footpaths and the route of the former railway.



Sources: OS Explorer 257, 1:25,000.

### **The background**

Transport has long been recognised as important, and usually beneficial, to settlement development. Adam Smith, writing before the railway age, advocated well-maintained transport infrastructures for rural areas, claiming that reducing



transport costs would open up such areas to commercial benefits.<sup>5</sup> However, the effects of landownership on transport development and therefore settlement development have not been a major concern to historians.

Historians have generally concentrated on the development of transport routes and directly related building,<sup>6</sup> pointing out that settlements grew or were created at stopping points such as road junctions, canal locks and railway halts.<sup>7</sup> Whyte, like others, noted that the transport infrastructures themselves change the landscape. Their related buildings such as toll houses, coaching inns, canal officers' houses and railway halts often formed the basis of new settlements or enlarged existing ones.<sup>8</sup> Settlements were created or grew not only at the end of transport routes and along them, but also in response to the needs of specific transport industries, particularly railways or canals. These two transport systems are widely agreed to have made a huge impact on the countryside and created new settlements where a workforce was needed in places such as canal-created settlements of the former Etruria (Staffordshire), Stourport (Worcestershire) and Ellesmere Port (Cheshire) or railway-created towns such as Crewe (Cheshire).<sup>9</sup> Even turnpikes, which some historians thought 'added very little to the landscape' except their tollhouses, occasionally contributed to a settlement's change of focus.<sup>10</sup>

However, historians have neglected the effect on the landscape of changing transport routes on rural settlement development and the effects of landownership patterns in determining those routes. According to Turnbull, many historians writing about canals have concentrated on how they affect 'spatial concentration', but less on how, when and where they influenced urban growth.<sup>11</sup> This can be applied to the

<sup>5</sup> Smith, *Wealth*, pt 1, chap. 11, par. 14.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. P. Hindle, *Roads, Tracks and Their Interpretation* (London, 1993); E. Pawson, *Transport and Economy: The Turnpike Roads of Eighteenth Century Britain* (London, 1977); P. Hindle, 'The rise and fall of the turnpike', *Local History Magazine*, 81 (2000), 10-14; P. Hindle, 'Enclosure roads'; T. Barker and D. Gerhold, *The Rise and Rise of Road Transport, 1700-1990* (London, 1993); I. M. Beech, 'The development of the present-day road pattern of Cheshire' (unpublished Bachelor's dissertation, University of Liverpool, 1949); D. Gerhold, 'Transport before and after turnpiking, 1690-1840', *Ec. HR*, 3 (1996), 491-515; C. Taylor, *Roads and Tracks in Britain* (London, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Rowley, *Villages*, 2nd edn. (London, 1994), pp. 137, 140; Taylor, *Farmstead*, p. 219; Hoskins and Taylor, *Making*, pp. 202; Crosby, *Cheshire*, p. 91; Phillips and Smith, *Cheshire*, p. 161.

<sup>8</sup> Whyte, 'Britain', p. 274.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Rowley, *Villages*, 2nd edn, p. 137; Hoskins, *Making*, p. 249; M. Palmer and P. A. Neaverson, *Industry in the Landscape, 1700-1900* (London, 1994), p. 119.

<sup>10</sup> Hoskins, *Making*, p. 244; Rowley, *Villages*, 2nd, p. 139; Yates, 'Evolution', p. 191; Yates, 'Village', pp. 191-2; Taylor, *Roads*, pp. 159-60.

<sup>11</sup> G. Turnbull, 'Canals, coal and regional growth during the industrial revolution', *Ec. HR*, 40.4 (1987), 537-560 (p. 544).

effect of any transport system on both rural and urban settlement development, and this chapter aims to resolve this lack of study in south-west Cheshire.

Historians generally support the view in the Cheshire County Plan expressed at the beginning of this chapter. Roberts noted that settlement sites were selected for important economic benefits such as 'local and extra-regional communications'.<sup>12</sup> Chisholm explained that new transport routes were created in response to high demand and radiated from more important places with this initial communications advantage later reinforced by additional transport.<sup>13</sup> However, as this chapter will demonstrate, an original transport advantage for some eighteenth-century south-west Cheshire settlements did not necessarily lead to a continuing advantage through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as transport systems did not meet the needs of the area.

New and improved transport systems did not always produce the expected benefit. As Sweet noted, the new infrastructures of turnpike roads and canals could leave places 'stranded high and dry in the interstices of the new communications network'.<sup>14</sup> As Alistair Darling, Secretary of State for Transport said in 2004, 'Authorities spend money on transport links to create economic regeneration. It doesn't always happen.'<sup>15</sup> Transport systems and their infrastructures can therefore be both the cause and result of settlement development and a means of linking settlements. Conversely, where transport links have been discouraged or neglected or, where they exist, are inadequate or inappropriate, settlement growth can be inhibited or reversed.

Landowners could affect transport by influencing the placing of the transport infrastructure either through opposition or support for proposed routes, the amount of preservation for existing routes or by political means. This in turn would affect which settlements grew or declined according to their proximity to transport routes. Therefore landownership patterns should affect the landscape of settlement development through their influence on the transport infrastructure.

<sup>12</sup> Roberts, *Landscapes*, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> M. Chisholm, *Rural Settlement and Land Use: A Study in Location*, 3rd edn (1979), p. 164.

<sup>14</sup> R. Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840* (London, 1999), p. 100.

<sup>15</sup> Personal communication from Dr J. Bird quoting A. Darling, Secretary of State for Transport (Gateshead, North East Business Forum, 29 March 2004).

This chapter explores this theme and the next section briefly examines the original road network in south-west Cheshire and its role as the basis of the area's transport system.

### ***The transport infrastructure before turnpike roads - green lanes, footpaths and minor roads***

Hindle said of roads, '...they have allowed virtually every other feature of the landscape to develop, and have themselves developed because of those features.'<sup>16</sup> South-west Cheshire's settlement development from 1750 depended on the development of the existing road system before other forms of transport. To appreciate the effect of new transport systems and infrastructure on the area we will assess the situation between 1750 and the advent of the turnpike road system and the effect of landownership on this.

In 1750 south-west Cheshire already had a skeleton transport system in the form of a basic road infrastructure of minor roads including several regular routes for horse-based transport. These were linked by footpaths and green lanes.<sup>17</sup> This infrastructure was part of the existing landscape and therefore co-existent with contemporary landownership patterns.

#### **Green lanes and footpaths**

Within the area in 1750 people still depended on access by foot, horseback and local carriers, and therefore the pedestrian and bridle ways connecting settlements acted as communication routes between communities rather than transport routes with potential to encourage settlement growth. These routes were footpaths and green lanes; the latter were grassy paths across or around earlier fields (including open fields). Green lanes often followed parish boundaries.<sup>18</sup>

Some green lanes in south-west Cheshire are still identifiable but most became footpaths that are still visible and used today. Examples exist at Tilston along the edge of the original Town Field (an open field, see chapter seven), and at Bickley Moss encircling the moss area (Figures 6:2-6:3).

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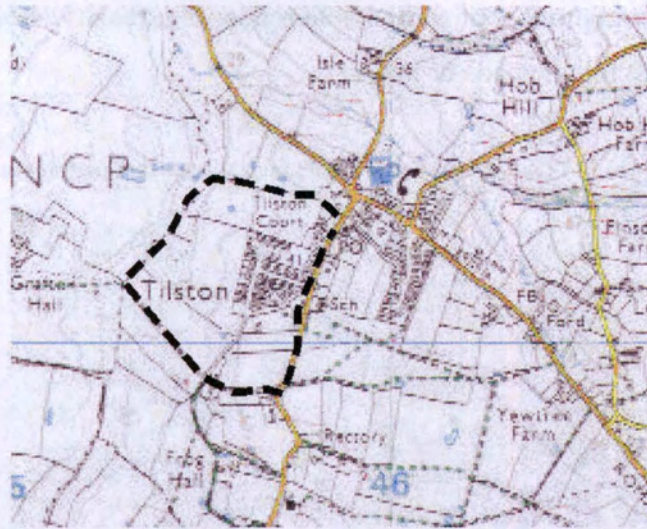
<sup>16</sup> P. Hindle, *Roads*, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> *Ogilby's Road Maps of England and Wales from Ogilby's 'Britannia' 1675*, (Reading, 1971), map 57.

<sup>18</sup> Hoskins and Taylor, *Making*, p. 238.



**Figure 6: 2** The location of the green lane and footpath around former open field in Tilston.



Source: OS Explorer 257, 1:25,000. The dashed line is the green lane and footpath.

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**Figure 6:3** The location of the green lane around Bickley Moss.



Source: OS Explorer 257, 1:25,000. The dashed line is the green lane.

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Other local footpaths and green lanes follow well-worn routes along field boundaries as is evident in examples in Malpas, Edge and both Shocklach townships on early nineteenth-century maps, including for example: Hollowood Road in Malpas township that partially follows the line of an older lane, now a footpath; the route from Shocklach Green to St Edith's Church and north of the church to Castletown<sup>19</sup> (previously the medieval route to Churton via Farndon, Shocklach and Worthenbury) (Figure 4:4); the existing hedge marking a disused lane (green lane)

<sup>19</sup> OS LIX, six inch, 1st edn (London, 1881).



running between Lordsfields to near Farndon and then Churton<sup>20</sup> which Ormerod noted was still 'an important pass' in the nineteenth century;<sup>21</sup> and several green lanes in Edge following routes of earlier field roads (Figures 4:5, 4:6). However, most other roads are minor roads or lanes.

Figure 6:4 Green lane from Shocklach Green to Castletown.



Source: OS Explorer 257, 1:25,000. The dashed line is the green lane.

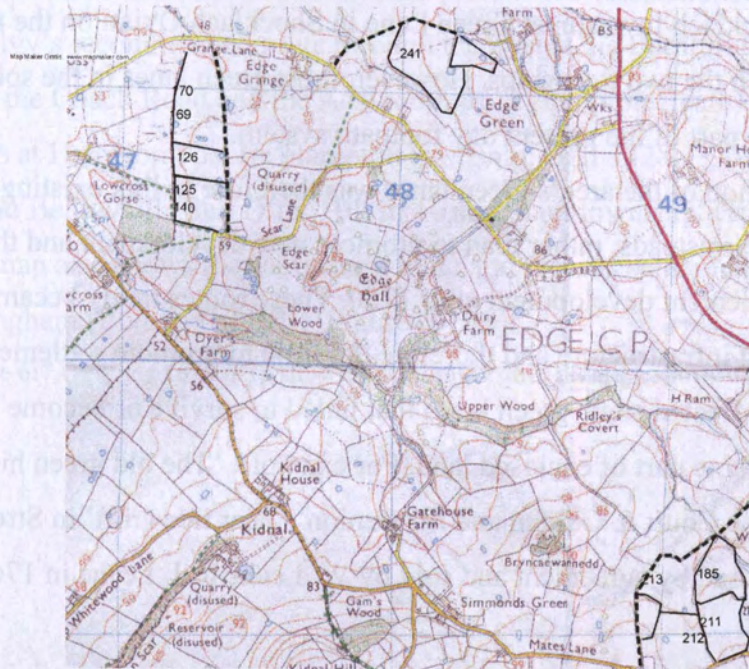
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<sup>20</sup> Rhys Williams, *Air*, p. 42-3.

<sup>21</sup> Ormerod, *History*, p. 689.



Figure 6: 5 Green lanes in Edge showing proximity to tithe map fields.



Source: OS Explorer 257 1:25,000; CCALS, EDT 305/2.

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Figure 6:6 Typical lane in Edge.



Photo: P. Bird, 2002.

Few green lanes in south-west Cheshire became roads usable by cars: they are short, barred to traffic, and used only for housing access. Examples include: Overton Heath Lane in Malpas township; Green Lane in Shocklach on the boundary between the Shocklach townships; Green Lane in Shocklach Oviatt on the northern boundary between the two townships. However, most green lanes in the south-west Cheshire became part of the present day footpath system.

The function of the area's green lanes was therefore to link existing settlements and farmsteads, rather than to promote new development and they did not contribute to settlement development after 1750. These routes rarely became part of the later transport infrastructure and therefore did little to promote settlement growth. Landownership affected some green lanes that failed to survive or become roads because they became part of enclosed land. For example, 'The old green highroad between the house Court & Garden and Mr Benion's pear tree croft' in Stretton township was closed by agreement and sold by W. Leche to J. Leche in 1767.<sup>22</sup>

### **Minor roads and through routes**

Roads linking settlements were already established by 1750 and therefore are part of the existing landownership patterns for this study. Several minor roads were regular routes for horse-based transport and encouraged settlement growth at regular staging posts. They were important to settlement development because they helped promote growth of some settlements and in certain cases became the basis of the area's turnpike road system. This section will show that landownership patterns already played a part in which settlements developed; settlements in mainly low HHI townships were well-established as were a few in high HHI townships but along the main route through the area.

Not all well-established routes in 1750 later became turnpike roads, nor did all thriving settlements subsequently grow under the turnpike system. The relative importance of roads in the area can be assessed by noting which routes are shown on Ogilby's seventeenth-century road map and Burdett's eighteenth-century Cheshire map.<sup>23</sup> However, both maps have limitations. Ogilby's map contains road distortions, although on-road distances are illustrated reasonably accurately. This is not the case

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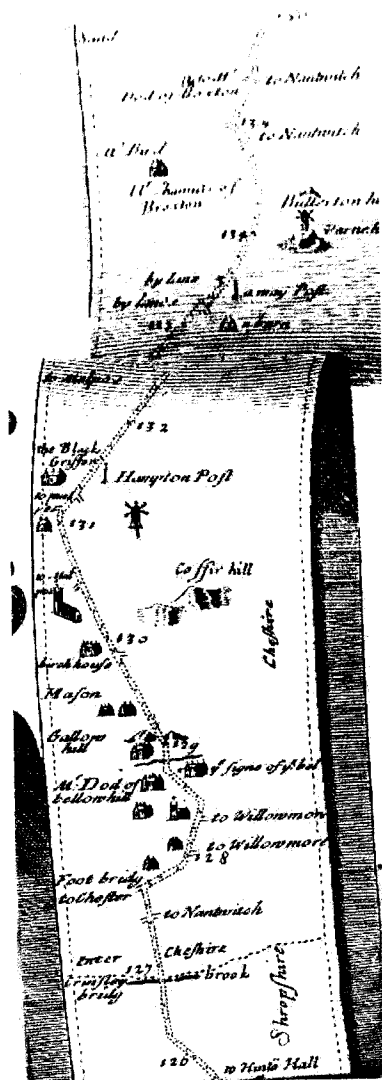
<sup>22</sup> CCALS, DLE 88.

<sup>23</sup> *Ogilby*, map 57; P. P. Burdett, Harley and Laxton, *Burdett*, p. vi.



with off-road distances to other features which are less accurate.<sup>24</sup> Burdett's maps generally depict roads and turnpikes accurately, but many roads are omitted.<sup>25</sup> However, the maps indicate the road system prior to the establishment of turnpike trusts. Ogilvy's recommended route through the area is the Barnhill to Gridley Brook road (now the Coach Road and the A41 south from Hampton Heath) with noteworthy settlements at Hampton Post (in Hampton township, HHI 1428<sub>LT</sub>), Macefen (HHI 5626<sub>LT</sub>) and Bellowhill (Bell O'th' Hill in Tushingham township, HHI 1363<sub>LT</sub>).<sup>26</sup> Burdett's map also shows the same main route and records settlements at Hampton and Tushingham (Bell O'Th' Hill) (Figures 6:7-8).

Figure 6:7 Ogilby's 1675 map showing the main route through south-west Cheshire.



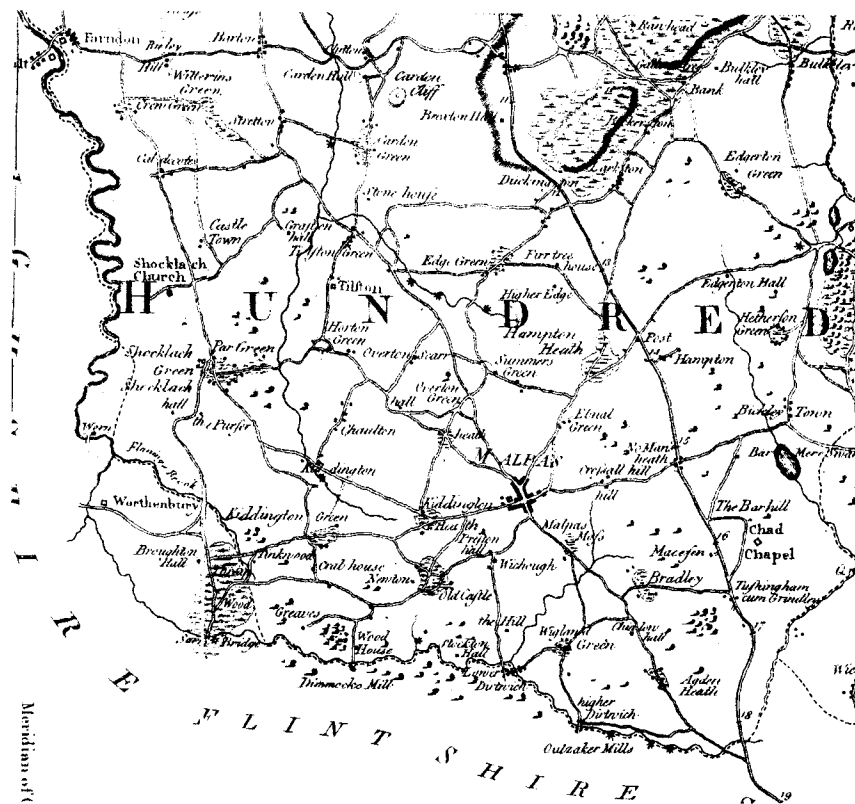
Source: Ogilby, map 57.

<sup>24</sup> G. C. Dickinson, 'Britain's first road maps: the strip-maps of John Ogilby's *Britannia*, 1675', *Landscapes*, 1 (2003), 79-98 (pp. 82, 93).

<sup>25</sup> P. Hindle, *Maps for the Historian* (Chichester, 1998), p. 24.

<sup>26</sup> Ogilby, map 57.

Figure 6:8 Burdett's 1777 map of Cheshire showing south-west Cheshire.



Source: Harley and Laxton, *Burdett*, p. vi.

To evaluate the relative importance of south-west Cheshire's eighteenth-century settlements in relation to landownership patterns a stabling list from 1688 was consulted to ascertain which settlements were staging posts with stabling and lodging.<sup>27</sup> Although earlier than the period covered by this study, the list is still useful for our purposes, as an assessment of provision for royal billeting requirements compiled approximately ten years after Ogilby's map by William Blathwayt, secretary-at-war.<sup>28</sup> It shows substantial stabling and settlements at Farndon (20 stabling places, 11 beds, HHI 978<sub>LT</sub>), Malpas (8 stabling places, 13 beds, HHI 2080<sub>LT</sub>), Hampton Court in Hampton township (10 stabling places, 5 beds, HHI 1428<sub>LT</sub>), Overton (8 stabling places, 3 beds, HHI 975<sub>LT</sub>); Cuddington Green (in Cuddington township (4 stabling places, 3 beds, HHI 1770<sub>LT</sub>), Bell O' Th' Hill (4 stabling places, 2 beds, HHI 1363<sub>LT</sub>) and Bickley (4 stabling places, 2 beds, HHI 9802<sub>LT</sub>) were also well-established and important settlements. Caldecott (2

<sup>27</sup> TNA, WO 30/48.

<sup>28</sup> J. Childs, *The Army, James II, and the Glorious Revolution* (Manchester, 1980), p. 9.

stabling places, 1 bed, HHI 2373<sub>LT</sub>) and Higher and Lower Wych ('Dirtwich' in Wigland township, 2 stabling places, 1 bed, HHI 1900<sub>LT</sub>), had smaller settlements (Figure 6:9). These settlements had enough buildings to provide guest beds and stabling for horses and were therefore the foci of the main routes. A few smaller places provided one or two guest beds only – Barnhill in Broxton township (HHI 2763<sub>LT</sub>), Duckington (HHI 6885<sub>LT</sub>), Heatherton Heath in Bickley township (HHI 9802<sub>LT</sub>) and Stretton (HHI 6246<sub>LT</sub>).

Table 6.9 Stabling in late-seventeenth century south-west Cheshire.

Places with inns and alehouses	Modern place name	Township	Stabling for horses	Guest beds
Farne	Farndon	Farndon	20	11
Malpas	Malpas	Malpas	18	13
Hampton Court	Hampton Court	Hampton	10	5
Castle Green		Farndon?	8	3
Overton	Overton	Overton	6	3
Cunny Green	Cuddington? Green	Cuddington?	4	3
Belly Hill	Bell O'Th' Hill	Tushingham	4	2
Brickly Town	Bickley	Bickley	4	2
Caldicot	Caldecott	Caldecott	2	1
Dirtwich	Higher and Lower Wych	Higher and Lower Wych	2	1
Old Castle	Oldcastle	Oldcastle	1	1
Lower Wych	Lower Wych	Wigland	0	2
Tilston	Tilston	Tilston	0	2
Barnhill	Barnhill	Broxton	0	1
Dickinton	Duckington	Duckington	0	1
Haddarton hearth	Hatherton Heath	Bickley	0	1
			0	
Stratton	Stretton	Stretton	0	1
Breckley Moss	Bickley Moss	Bickley	0	0
Castleton	Castletown	Shocklach	0	0
Clutton	Clutton	Clutton by Farndon	0	0
Ehrosellnest	Throstle's Nest	Tushingham	0	0
Heatherton Green	Heatherton Green	Bickley	0	0
High Coiden	High Carden	Carden	0	0
Shocklidge	Shocklach	Shocklach	0	0

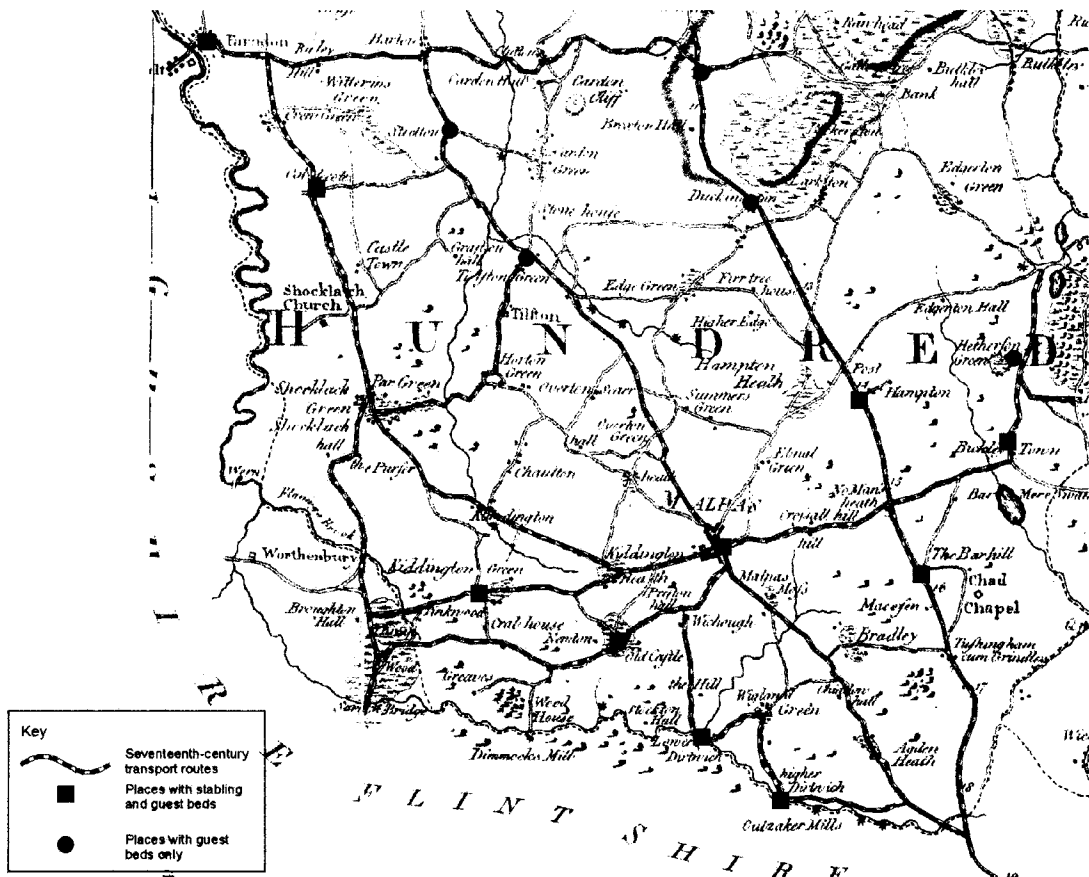
Source: Created from TNA, WO 30/48.

Note: The nil returns record some settlements that had inns and alehouses but neither beds nor stabling.

The main routes through the area were therefore the old Coach Road through Barnhill to Grindley Brook (later superseded by the A41), the Roman Road from Farndon through Tilston to Malpas, and from Farndon through Shocklach (B5130) and thence via Cuddington Green to Malpas or out of the area west or south. The road system before the advent of turnpike roads therefore seemed to provide adequate access through the area and was focussed on Malpas. (Figure 6:10)

Therefore, the well-established stabling places were those on the main routes with mainly low HHIs and therefore more freedom from landowner control to cater for visitors and expand; these places remained important until at least the early-nineteenth century.

Figure 6:10 Transport routes in seventeenth-century south-west Cheshire from a 1686 stabling list and Burdett's map 1777.



Sources: Harley and Laxton, *Burdett*, p. vi; TNA, WO 30/48.

Some settlements that grew later, such as Broxton (with a population increase of 87 per cent 1801-1851, HHI 2986<sub>LT</sub>), were not important seventeenth-century



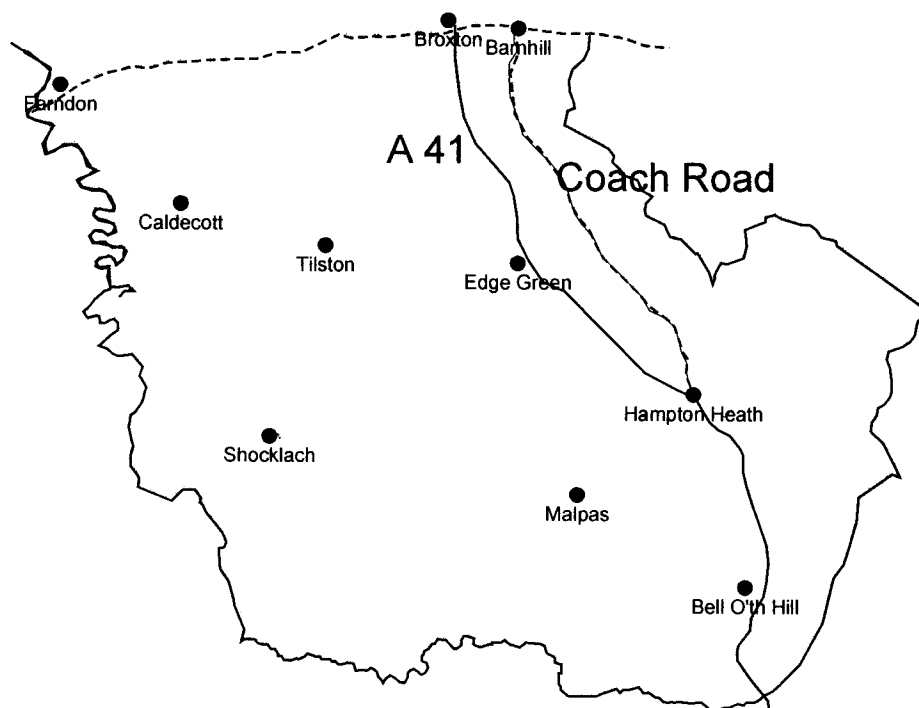
staging posts; others on these routes, such as Caldecott (HHI 2373<sub>LT</sub>), which grew initially (Figure 3:27), did not develop later as might have been expected (with only a five per cent population increase, 1801-1851). Shocklach settlement (in both Shocklach townships, HHIs 3499<sub>LT</sub>, 1056<sub>LT</sub>) grew later, although it was never a main seventeenth-century staging post (Figure 6:9): it had at least one inn in 1686 but did not provide stabling or guest beds. As chapter five demonstrated, most townships increased their populations during 1801 and 1851 but most townships containing settlements with staging posts, most of which had low HHIs, declined or showed only moderate increases of up to 30 per cent compared with a national population rise of 50 per cent during the same period. The fact that a settlement was a seventeenth-century staging post therefore did not guarantee continued growth; nor did comparative freedom from landowner control (as indicated by a low HHI) necessarily result in settlement growth. However, the relatively large number of stabling places and beds in Malpas and Farndon (both with low HHIs) shows that they were already well established and important seventeenth-century staging posts, and later population growth therefore built on a bigger base than was the case with other settlements in the area.

As Ogilby's and Burdett's maps show, the area's main pre-turnpike route was the Chester to Whitchurch Coach Road (now mainly the present A41 although running east of the A41 between Barnhill and Hampton Post (Figures 6:11-6:12) which passed through main settlements of Bell O'Th' Hill and Hampton.<sup>29</sup> This route was supplemented and superseded by the later turnpike roads.

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<sup>29</sup> *Ogilby*, map 57.

Figure 6:11 The Coach Road and the later turnpike route, subsequently the A41.



Source: OS Explorer 257, 1:25,000.

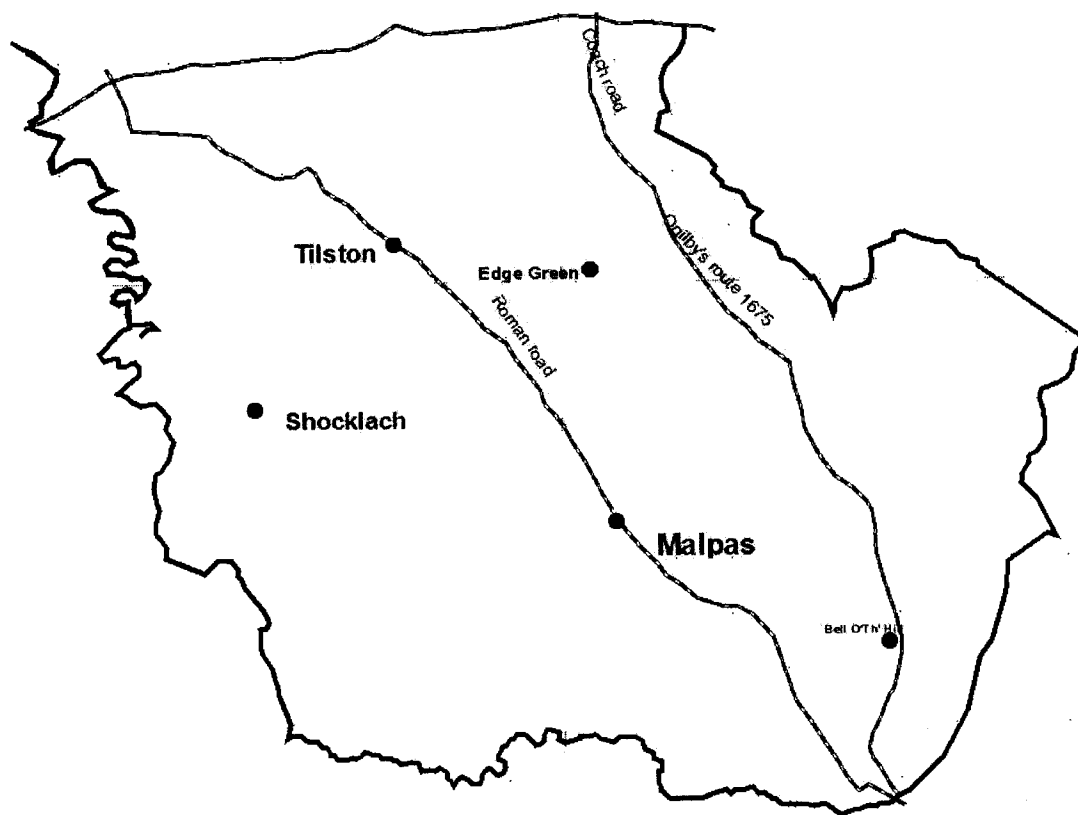
By 1750 the importance of the original Roman Road, never turnpiked, had diminished. It was possibly in poor repair and therefore the seventeenth-century connecting route to Chester from Tilston might have gone via Milton Green to what is now the A41.<sup>30</sup> However, evidence from connecting settlements such as Tilston shows that the Roman Road was an accepted main route as late as 1789.<sup>31</sup> Probably the gradient of the direct route from Tilston through Malpas town deterred the larger wagons and faster, well-sprung coaches of the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>32</sup> The more level route along the Broxton to Whitchurch road was easier for transport.

<sup>30</sup> Personal communication from D. Hayns (a local historian), 23 November 2001.

<sup>31</sup> CCALS, Mf 44/2/48, Bishops Visitation for Malpas 11 May 1789 which describes Tilston as a 'staging village'.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. 'fly' coaches, see Barker and Gerhold, *Road Transport*, pp. 40, 54.

Figure 6:12 Main route according to Ogilby's seventeenth-century road map.



† Source: *Ogilby*, map 57; Harley and Laxton, *Burdett*, p.vi; OS Explorer 257, 1:25,000.

Settlements that seemed set to thrive in the seventeenth century were not necessarily those that developed most rapidly in the second half of the eighteenth century. Burdett's map shows that Malpas, Farndon, Shocklach, Tilston Green (Tilston) and Cuddington Green (all with low HHIs) were reasonably sized settlements, with Cuddington Green, Higher and Lower Wych (low HHIs), and Oldcastle (high HHI) on the seventeenth-century routes doing well. As will be shown, not all of these thrived into the nineteenth century or later as faster routes and transport methods by-passed the centre of the area and those that did so were mainly in townships with low HHIs.

Well-used routes sometimes affected a settlement's development by encouraging a 'drift' of its nucleus towards an improved road. For example, in south-west Cheshire Tilston had by the eighteenth century apparently 'drifted' towards its nearest well-used transport route, the Roman Road, thus creating a different settlement focus. House mounds in fields near the church are evidence of a settlement formerly focussed on the church while Burdett's 1777 map shows that by

that date the settlement's focus was at Tilston Green (Figure 6:13).<sup>33</sup> The new settlement was better placed to service traffic along this route through Tilston village, which remained an alternative to the A41 from Farndon and Chester. Burdett's 1777 map shows a building on the east of the road at the crossroads in Tilston's settlement, probably Bank Farm rather than a coaching inn. However, E. Evans, the Tilston Parish curate, referred to a 'staging village' a little way from the church.<sup>34</sup> This can only mean Tilston Green (now Tilston) and one of the buildings marked on Burdett's map is therefore presumably a coaching inn (Figures 6:13-16).

**Figure 6:13** Burdett's 1777 map showing the focus of the village had moved from the church to the crossroads at the main transport route.



Source: Harley and Laxton, *Burdett*, p. vi.

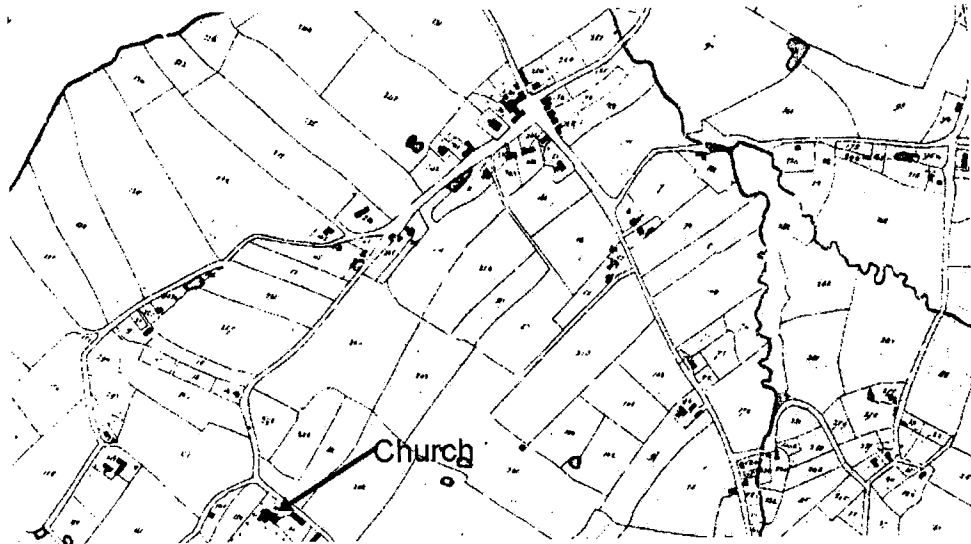
By the mid-nineteenth century there was an inn adjacent to the west side of the road<sup>35</sup> where the Carden Arms stands and the two buildings therefore flank the main route through the village and therefore the township. The presence of one or more inns, a traditional marker of low landownership control, is supported by Tilston's low HHI (1948<sub>T</sub>).

<sup>33</sup> Burdett, 1777; field walking.

<sup>34</sup> CCALS, Mf 44/2/48, 11 May 1789: 'There is a staging village a little way from the church containing about a dozen houses.'

<sup>35</sup> CCALS, EDT 395/1.

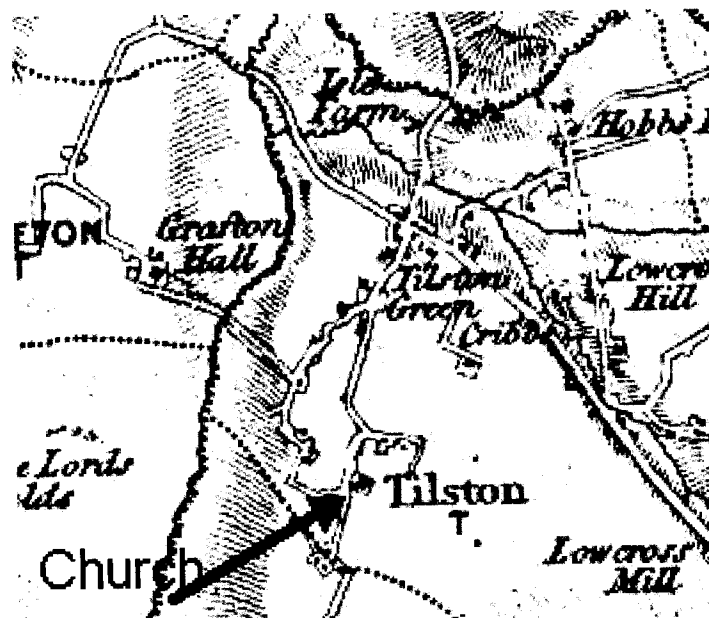
Figure 6:14 Tilston 1840 tithe map showing the concentration of the village around the crossroads and away from the church.



Sour

ce: CCALS, EDT 395/2.

Figure 6:15 OS one inch map of Cheshire circa 1844 showing the concentration at the crossroads away from the church.



Source: OS one inch old series circa 1844.

Figure 6:16 The settlement at Tilston concentrated around the crossroads on the main route through the village (the Roman Road)



Source: OS, six inch 1st series, 1881.

Other inns established at an early date to cater for the staging coach and post trade included the Wyvern Hotel (early eighteenth century) and the Griffin Inn (from 1803) (both in Malpas with its low HHI) and the Nag's Head which was operating in Farndon (low HHI) in 1816.<sup>36</sup> Settlements in other townships near but not on well-used roads did not always develop the physical attributes of a staging post and therefore showed little physical evidence of expansion. For example, there were no inns at Edge Green (high HHI) although situated approximately one mile from the old Coach Road. Edge was clearly unimportant as a staging point with other, larger settlements such as Malpas or Tilston providing a better welcome. It is also alleged that opposition by Edge landowners to new building might have been a factor<sup>37</sup> (a factor supported by its high HHI until 1910) and the comparative isolation of the area did not encourage settlement growth. However, Tilston, still on a used, but minor

<sup>36</sup> CCALS, DTD 29/45; Cheshire County Council Planning, *Conservation Area 10 Malpas: Tarvin and Rural District, Civic Amenities Act* (Chester, 1968); Latham, *Farndon*, p. 41.

<sup>37</sup> Several Edge residents volunteered this opinion. What limited evidence there is for this is discussed later in this chapter.

route, continued to expand and the next nearest settlement to Edge at Hampton Heath on the old Coach Road might also have attracted more traffic. Hampton Heath later benefited from the route's upgrading to a turnpike and subsequently to an A road. Its population grew by 93 per cent between 1801 and 1851 (Table 5:23). Its position on a continuously well-used route since the seventeenth century has helped long term growth.

Malpas market town (low HHIs) had already established itself as the area's largest settlement and was already an important stopping place for seventeenth-century travellers. The high number of guest beds and stabling places shows that Malpas was a well-used staging post within Cheshire, particularly south-west Cheshire where only Farndon (with an even lower HHI than Malpas) approached the same amount of provision<sup>38</sup> (Figure 6:9). Population estimates provide additional evidence that Malpas was already the area's largest settlement by the mid-eighteenth century with about 700 inhabitants in the township compared to the next largest settlement of Bickley with about 300 (Table 5:27). The first Bishops Visitation for Malpas (1778) estimated 660 houses for the whole parish, or approximately 2,970 inhabitants in a parish of 25 townships.<sup>39</sup> The houses spread from the main crossroads along the roads towards Bickley, Whitchurch, Cuddington (and therefore Threapwood and Flintshire), Hampton and the road to Tilston and Cheshire<sup>40</sup> Although buildings existed at other smaller settlements, such as Oldcastle, Cuddington, Crewe Green and Tushingam, these did not develop subsequently as much as the other settlements in later years.

This section has shown that a network of green lanes, footpaths and minor roads was already established by 1750. Landownership had no demonstrable effect on their placement. However, patterns of landownership as measured by HHI showed that settlement proximity to the main routes, particularly in low HHI townships, encouraged settlement development. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, before turnpike roads, of the four main routes through the area, the two most important were the Roman Road and the Coach Road. The Coach Road became the basis of the present main road through the area. The road through Tilston

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<sup>38</sup> TNA, WO 30/48.

<sup>39</sup> CCALS, Mf. 44/1/50; multiplier of 4.5 used.

<sup>40</sup> Harley and Laxton, *Burdett*, p. vi.

gradually lost its status as a main route but influenced settlement development in Tilston. Settlements at staging posts in the late-seventeenth century (mainly with low HHIs) appeared to be ready for development but not all of them thrived in later years and these settlements that grew were often already well established, usually for reasons only indirectly associated with transport links, as later chapters will show.

### **Turnpike roads**

The creation of south-west Cheshire's turnpike roads opened the area to increased trade, potentially encouraging settlement growth. The reaction of landowners to the new roads was ambiguous and the routes' positions appear to have disadvantaged part of the area, and this was partly due to the influence of landowners on the choice of turnpike routes. Where roads passed through or near settlements there was opportunity for landscape change through the expansion of established settlements leading to the provision of inns and stabling, retail and service provision and new settlement growth along the improved routes.

Nationally, the creation of turnpike roads greatly improved the transport infrastructure. In theory, such roads were better maintained and provided faster travelling for a fee. Defoe, writing in the 1720s, praised 'the Benefit of a good road abundantly making amends for that Little Charge the Travellers are put to at the Turn-pikes'.<sup>41</sup> He pointed out advantages to carriers: 'they can bring more Weight with the same Number of Horses' and 'they perform their Work with more Ease and the Masters are at less expense.'<sup>42</sup> It was the introduction of these roads, particularly on major routes in the 1740s and 50s, to cater for improved carriers that enabled more and varied building materials to be imported into new areas and, as increased trade passed through them, encouraged settlement growth.<sup>43</sup> This additional road use stemmed from an increasing population arising from higher agricultural productivity and the onset of the industrial revolution.<sup>44</sup> Generally, the demand for improved transport and therefore roads came from better-off local residents. However, improved roads were not always popular: they led to increased traffic, a higher burden of repairs for the parish, and payment of the tolls was sometimes resented

<sup>41</sup> D. Defoe, 'A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain, 2 (1724-1727), Appendix pp. 79-180, 194-199, in *English Historical Documents*, ed. D. C. Douglas, 15, 1714-1783 (London, 1724-27), p. 541.

<sup>42</sup> Defoe, 'Tour', p. 542.

<sup>43</sup> A. W. Albert, *The Turnpike Road System in England 1663-1840* (Cambridge, 1972), Appendix B, pp. 202-23; Barker and Gerhold, *Road Transport*, p. 40.

<sup>44</sup> Hindle, 'Turnpike', pp. 10-11; Barker and Gerhold, *Road Transport*, p. 491; Albert, *Turnpike*, p. 43.



when local people did not benefit from improved road surfaces.<sup>45</sup> As will be shown, south-west Cheshire's landowners and residents had mixed views about the value of turnpike roads.

England's first turnpike road was a stretch of the Old Great North Road in the south Midlands created in 1663.<sup>46</sup> Cheshire's first turnpike road, started in 1705, nearly 60 years before any turnpike roads in south-west Cheshire, was the Hatton Heath to Barnhill section of the Chester to Whitchurch road (now superseded by the A41).<sup>47</sup> South-west Cheshire's first turnpike road was the continuation of this road through Barnhill to Grindley Brook in 1759.<sup>48</sup> This was followed by Malpas to Bangor, now the B5069 (1767); Broxton to Farndon, now the A534 (1782); Tarporley to Whitchurch, now the A49 (1829); and Chester via Farndon to Worthenbury (1854)<sup>49</sup> (Figures 6:17-19). These maps show that there were few turnpike roads in the area. This was not unusual; as the Webbs noted, by 1820 only one sixth of public roads in Britain were under a Turnpike Trust.<sup>50</sup> Even so, south-west Cheshire had fewer turnpike roads than the Chester area where eventually six turnpike roads radiated from the city, or compared to the eastern part of the county.<sup>51</sup>

Turnpike roads did not always follow well-used routes and therefore did not necessarily influence the physical development of well-established larger settlements, which generally had low HHIs. During the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries there was no guarantee that local administrators would choose obvious routes for turnpiking and local politics sometimes influenced the Trustees' choice of turnpike routes.<sup>52</sup> The absence of turnpiking along the Roman Road through Tilston shows that obvious routes were not always chosen for south-west Cheshire's turnpiking. The area's five turnpike Acts all included major local landowners in the list of Trustees. However, there is no evidence that Trustees in south-west Cheshire were influenced by local politics, but (as the history of the Tarporley to Whitchurch turnpike will show) local landowners were keen to benefit from a financial opportunity.

<sup>45</sup> Albert, *Turnpike*, pp. 8, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Albert, *Turnpike*, pp. 14-20, 203.

<sup>47</sup> Crosby, *Cheshire*, p. 91.

<sup>48</sup> Albert, *Turnpike*, p. 203.

<sup>49</sup> K. W. L. Starkie, 'The evolution and development of the turnpike road in Cheshire', *Cheshire History*, 39 (2000), 28-39 (p. 35).

<sup>50</sup> S. Webb and B. Webb, *The Story of the King's Highway* (London, 1963), p. 193.

<sup>51</sup> Starkie, 'Turnpike road', p. 35.

<sup>52</sup> Webb, *Highway*, p. 126.

Pawson said that in rural areas settlements often grew along the turnpike roads.<sup>53</sup> However, Sweet, although referring to towns, observed that turnpike roads could not only increase trade to settlements, but also isolate them as the new routes interconnected around them.<sup>54</sup> This occurred in south-west Cheshire where the placing of turnpike roads catered for travellers' needs between larger centres such as Chester, Whitchurch and Bangor, rather than those of local residents. Even Malpas, the area's market town, had only one turnpike route (leading from Malpas to Bangor). Failure to respond to the area's immediate needs created a 'box' around its northern section. By 1801 three turnpiked routes had been created around the north, east and south-west of the area (Figure 6:17) but the west and central parts of the area were now disadvantaged. The physical isolation by turnpike roads can be seen in south-west Cheshire, particularly in the case of Tilston's settlement: the township's population was virtually static from 1751 to 1801 when three roads were turnpiked, but grew by 65 per cent between 1801 and 1851 – an increase which evidently had nothing to do with turnpiking. (Figure 5:23). This apparent recovery might have been because the road through the township was maintained in good condition and was therefore still well-used, possibly to avoid the tollgate at Hampton Heath on the Broxton to Whitchurch road. Tilston's crossroads settlement, which apparently remained important, was therefore well-placed to cater for this traffic. The township was therefore only disadvantaged during the second half of the eighteenth century by the lack of a turnpike route through it, but ironically grew in the nineteenth century possibly because travellers avoided the alternative turnpike road.

Even townships with the advantage of easy access to a main turnpike route did not always benefit. The Chester to Whitchurch turnpike ran through the eastern half of Edge township (HHI 3110<sub>LT</sub>) which should have benefited Edge Hall and the small community of Edge Green. However, Edge Green's main settlement was only accessible by very minor roads and there was also no migration of Edge Green's settlement towards the main road, possibly the result of the landowner's rumoured antipathy to settlement and transport development. That was enough to act as a disincentive for travellers to stop and its population declined between 1801 and 1851 by one per cent (Table 5:23).

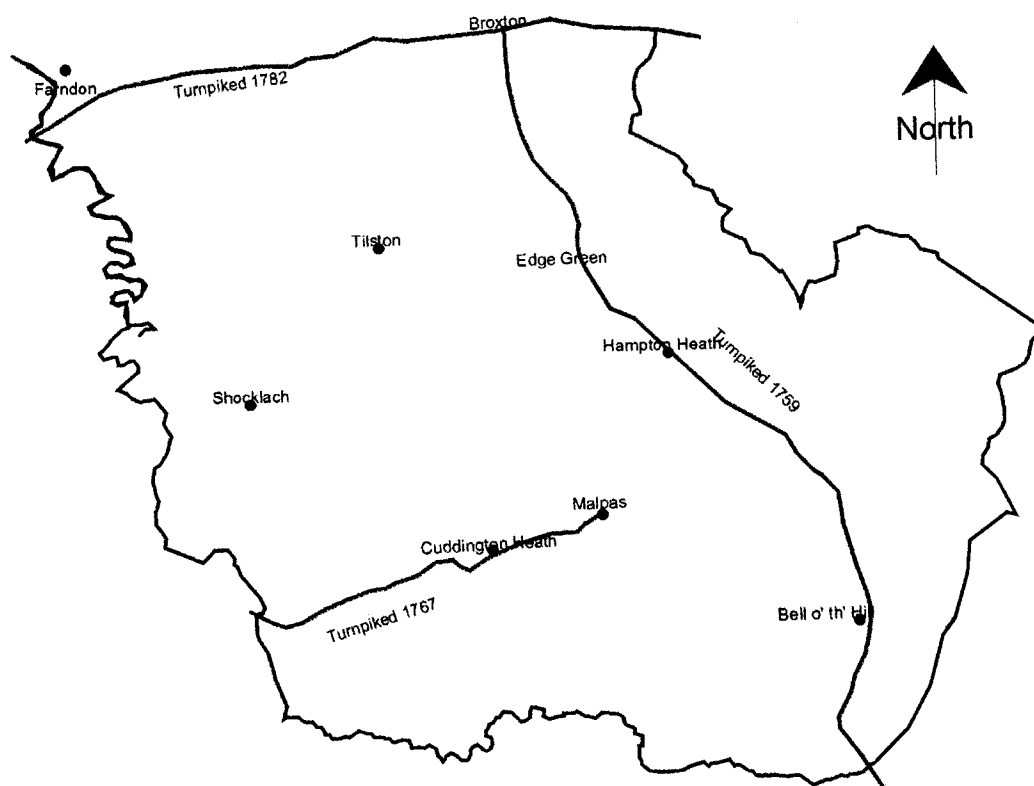
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<sup>53</sup> Pawson, *Turnpike*, p. 329.

<sup>54</sup> Sweet, *Town*, p. 100.

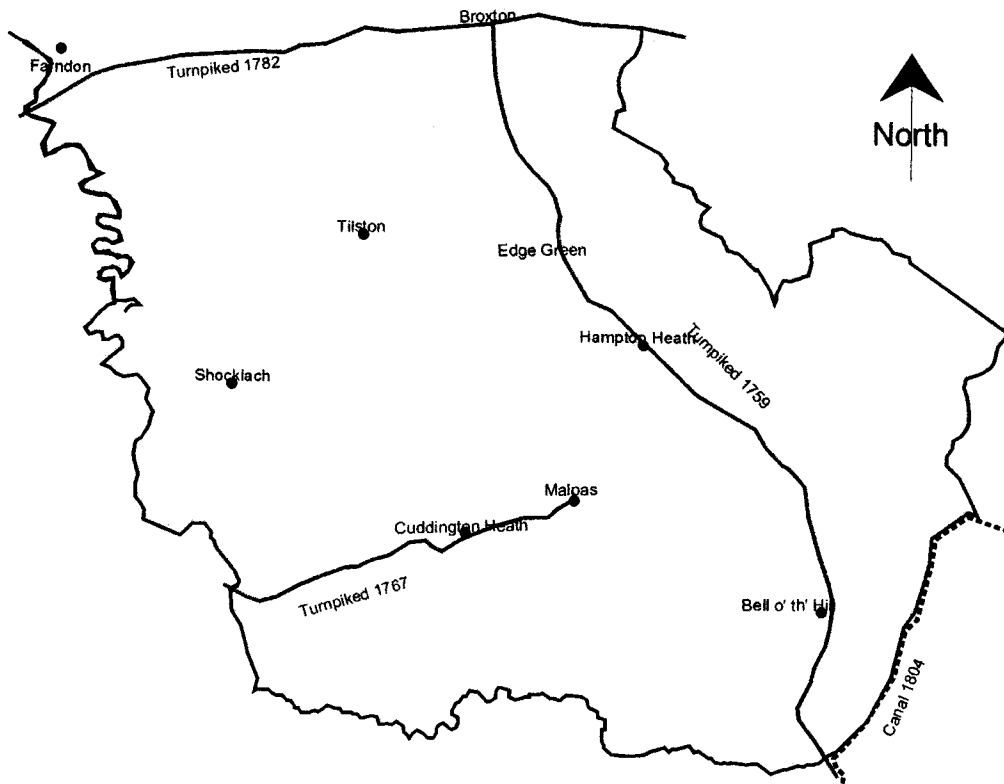
The physical isolation of the north of the area is borne out by the estimated population changes. Most of the area's southern townships benefited from population growth between 1751 and 1801, some significantly (Overton +185 per cent, Hampton +179 per cent, Cuddington +110 per cent, Oldcastle +103 per cent). The northern townships, by contrast, registered smaller increases or a fall in population during this period (e.g. Tilston -3 per cent, Duckington -12 per cent, Wychough -44 per cent). There were exceptions (e.g. Newton by Malpas in the south -77 per cent and Stretton in the north +29 per cent) but the general trend is clear.

Figure 6:17 Turnpike routes circa 1801.



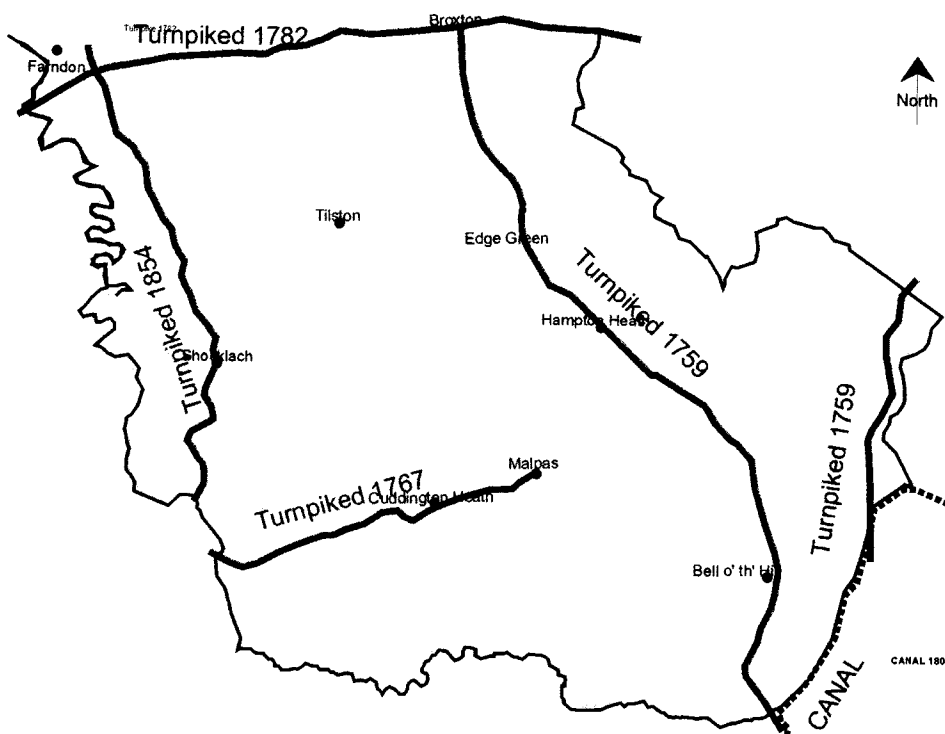
Source: HLRO, 22 Geo III c.105, 33 Geo. II c.51, 7 Geo. III c.104; OS Explorer 257, 1:100,000.

Figure 6:18 Turnpike routes and canal circa 1804.



Source: HLRO, 22 Geo III c.105, 33 Geo. II c.51, 7 Geo. III c.104; 33 Geo. III c.91; OS Explorer 257, 1:100,000.

Figure 6:19 Turnpike routes and canal circa 1860.



Source: HLRO, 22 Geo III c.105, 10 Geo IV c.77, 33 Geo. II c.51, 7 Geo. III c.104, 17 & 18 Vic c.81; 33 Geo. III c.91; OS Explorer 257, 1:100,000.

In south-west Cheshire there is no evidence of new settlements developing in response to the improved roads, but existing settlements on turnpike routes such as Farndon (HHI 978<sub>LT</sub>), Hampton (HHI 1428<sub>LT</sub>), Cuddington Green and Cuddington Heath (HHI 1770<sub>LT</sub>), notably all with low HHIs, appear to have benefited from increased trade and accessibility and began to expand moderately between 1751 and 1801 (estimated township population increases: Hampton 179 per cent, Farndon 21 per cent, Cuddington 110 per cent), and more so in the first half of the nineteenth century (Farndon 56 per cent, Hampton 93 per cent) (Table 5:23). The comparatively low landownership control as evidenced by these townships presumably encouraged expansion. However, as demonstrated below, the late turnpiking of the Farndon to Worthenbury road through Shocklach settlement meant that its full development was delayed. Cuddington township's population, on the only direct turnpike route out of Malpas, grew by an estimated 110 per cent between 1751 and 1801 but its population fell by 33 per cent between 1801 and 1851 (Table 5:23). Possibly, as the turnpike section between Malpas and the Welsh border was comparatively short, there was no need to stop in Cuddington.

The area's settlement development would have depended on the amount of road use and the financial success of the turnpike routes. The creation of turnpike roads both facilitated and stimulated agriculture, trade, urban growth and leisure travel<sup>55</sup> and turnpikes allowed farmers to deliver produce over much wider areas than before.<sup>56</sup> South-west Cheshire's turnpike roads enabled local farms to supply Chester, Whitchurch and the surrounding areas, and vehicles could move faster on the improved road surfaces. Their easier gradients also enabled lighter carriers to be used. Therefore nationally costs were reduced for all vehicles and productivity increased over two and a half times in long-distance carrying between 1690 and 1840.<sup>57</sup> However, Hindle suggested that thereafter such roads tended to lose their medium- and long-distance traffic and trade when the advent of the railways forced turnpike trusts deeper into debt. Turnpike Trusts in debt were hard to dissolve because they depended heavily on borrowed money and creditors stood to lose from their closure. In 1837 Cheshire Trusts received an average income from loans of

<sup>55</sup> Hindle, 'Turnpike', p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> Pawson, *Turnpike Roads*, p. 217.

<sup>57</sup> Gerhold, 'Transport', pp. 499, 450, 511.

about £105 per mile and the interest repayment was about 25 per cent of income. There was also about £35 of unpaid interest per mile.<sup>58</sup>

By 1867 Lord Henley, MP, noted that 848 of the 985 Turnpike Trusts were still in debt with creditors of expired Trusts 'at the mercy' of the Secretary of State.<sup>59</sup> One of the still operating Trusts administered the Tarporley to Whitchurch turnpike. As railways replaced turnpikes and the Trusts partially cleared their debts, most Trusts were dissolved in the 1870s and 1880s. An 1888 Act [51 & 52 Vic c.41] passed the onus of repairing roads to the newly created County Councils.<sup>60</sup> Many turnpikes eventually became feeder roads for the railways;<sup>61</sup> Broxton station, for example, was on the new turnpike diversion of the Chester to Whitchurch road. (This diversion is discussed over the page).

Pawson suggested that improved access to areas created by turnpike roads led to a number of commons enclosures, possibly affecting settlement development.<sup>62</sup> However, a direct link between the two events seems unlikely in south-west Cheshire. Most of the nine commons enclosures in the area took place in the nineteenth century (Acts between 1812 and 1858, awards between 1798 and 1861).<sup>63</sup> The exceptions were enclosures in Tushingham township in 1793 and Crewe by Farndon township in 1798.<sup>64</sup> The Crewe enclosure took place 46 years before the road through the area was turnpiked. Most later enclosures were not close to turnpike roads. However, the turnpiking of the Chester to Whitchurch road in 1759,<sup>65</sup> cutting through the townships of Hampton (enclosed in 1827) and Tushingham no doubt made enclosure more desirable, especially at No Man's Heath settlement in Hampton township through which the road passed. The late enclosure at Cuddington Green in 1860, adjoining the route of the 1767 turnpiked road, was also probably made easier by access to the turnpike route, albeit taking place some decades after the turnpiking had been initiated.

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<sup>58</sup> Albert, *Turnpike*, pp. 238, 241.

<sup>59</sup> Lord Henley, 'Turnpike Trusts. A letter to the Rt. Hon. Gathorne Hardy, M.P. & &', (London, 1867).

<sup>60</sup> Hindle, 'Turnpike', p. 13; Webb, *Highway*, p. 223.

<sup>61</sup> Hindle, 'Turnpike', p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> Pawson, *Turnpike*, p. 321.

<sup>63</sup> CCALS, DBA/91, 100, DTD 38/6/1, QDE 1/29, 36, 41, 42.

<sup>64</sup> CCALS, DBA/22, QDE 1/102.

<sup>65</sup> HLRO, 17& 18 Vic. I no.86.

Overall, however, there is no obvious correlation between turnpiking and enclosure, so in south-west Cheshire Pawson's suggestion is not supported by the evidence. (Enclosure will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven).

Changes to a turnpike's route could also affect settlement development. The area's section of the Chester to Whitchurch road under the Chester and Whitchurch Trust (turnpiked 1759) originally followed the Coach Road through Barnhill. This was the area's main route, a fact recognised by its inclusion in *Magna Britannia* which describes the road entering Cheshire at Grindley Brook and passing through Tushingham (HHI 1363<sub>LT</sub>), Hampton (HHI 1428<sub>LT</sub>), Duckington (HHI 6885<sub>LT</sub>), Broxton (HHI 2968<sub>LT</sub>) and Chowley township by Barnhill (outside the study area). The *Britannia* also noted the absence of a turnpike road to Malpas from the Chester to Whitchurch road, demonstrating that turnpike roads were normally expected to connect to a market town.<sup>66</sup> However, during the 1820s, a peak period for creating new stretches of road,<sup>67</sup> the route was altered to pass through Broxton (HHI 2988<sub>LT</sub>) and shorten the section to No Man's Heath. It passed along the north-west border of Tushingham township (HHI 1363<sub>LT</sub>), through Bell O'Th' Hill, before turning south at the south-west border to pass over Grindley Brook towards Whitchurch.<sup>68</sup> The new section of road from Broxton to No Man's Heath (about seven and a half miles, 12 kilometres) meant that small settlements that had enjoyed easy access to the Coach Road, such as Barnhill, Brown Knowl, Ashtons Cross, Hampton Post and Hampton Green, became more isolated and so lacked impetus to grow. There are no population figures for very small settlements such as these, but Ogilby only shows Hampton Post (with no houses) and Burdett records eight houses at Barnhill.<sup>69</sup> These are hardly reliable building estimates but in 2001 Barnhill had a similar number of houses and a hotel, scarcely more buildings than in the eighteenth century, and Hampton Post had only three. Although small settlements remain along the original route (Barnhill, Ashtons Cross, Hampton Post), few have established themselves along the new one. There are no new settlements between Broxton and No Man's Heath.<sup>70</sup> However, Hampton Heath, with four houses on Burdett's map, now has a settlement close to the roundabout where it intersects with the road to Malpas. The

<sup>66</sup> Lysons and Lysons, *Magna Britannia*, p. 426.

<sup>67</sup> Hindle, 'Turnpike', p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> Starkie, 'Turnpike road', p. 33.

<sup>69</sup> Harley and Laxton, *Burdett*, p. vi.

<sup>70</sup> OS, Explorer 257, 1:25,000, 2000.

new section of road was not only straighter but, as it passed the foothills of the Bickerton Hills rather than follow the higher route of the Coach Road, was more level which encouraged faster stagecoach travel.<sup>71</sup>

There are few settlements apart from Bell O'Th' Hill close to the southern section of the road between No Man's Heath and Grindley Brook. However, turnpiking this section might have contributed to settlement growth in Tushingham township as the generally rising population figures until 1831 show. The small communities of Tushingham were well placed for travel and for receiving goods from the major centres of Chester and Whitchurch. Tushingham's low HHI and therefore freedom to expand was coupled with a desire from one of the area's larger landowners to encourage new transport as this chapter will show later.

Between 1822 and 1871 the Chester to Whitchurch turnpike earned an average of £222 per annum for the trustees.<sup>72</sup> The Chester and Whitchurch Trust (CWT) amalgamated with the Chester, Farndon and Worthenbury Trust (CFWT) in 1871 to become the United Trust of Chester, Whitchurch, Farndon and Worthenbury. At that point the CWT owed creditors £1496 and the CFWT owed just over £5600.<sup>73</sup> Therefore the CWT was comparatively successful by the time it closed and was disturnpiked on 31 December 1879 prior to being redesignated a main road.<sup>74</sup> Generally turnpike trusts were reasonably well run and maintained in terms of resurfacing, drainage and widening. The Chester to Whitchurch route would certainly have seen increased traffic between the two growing urban centres.

Malpas town had only one road turnpiked out of it, the Malpas to Bangor road in 1767. Its trustees included major local landowners such as the Dod, Drake, Egerton, Kenyon, Leche, Pulseston and Vaughan families. It was repaired and widened again in 1830.<sup>75</sup> Settlements along this route grew. Burdett's 1777 map shows only two small settlements of three houses each – Cuddington Green and Cuddington Heath. Cuddington township (HHI 1770<sub>LT</sub>) increased its population by an estimated 74 per cent between 1761 and 1781 and 110 per cent between 1751 and 1801. Malpas township grew by 28 per cent and 35 per cent during the same periods. So although growing, apparently Malpas did not benefit from the turnpike road as

<sup>71</sup> It is recognisable today by its uniform width and the fact that it cuts through pre-existing field boundaries as well as lanes which creates many minor crossroads.

<sup>72</sup> CCALS, QDT 3/8/1-18.

<sup>73</sup> CCALS, QDT 4/6.

<sup>74</sup> CCALS, QAM 9.

<sup>75</sup> HLRO, 7 Geo III c.1045, HCJ v.86 1830-31, I WILL IV pp. 59-60, 12 November.



much as the smaller settlements along it, although its growth was always from a much higher baseline. Significantly, both Malpas and Cuddington had low HHIs and could therefore take advantage of the freedom from landowner control for expansion.

One turnpike in south-west Cheshire which could only have benefited settlements outside the area is the 1829 Tarporley to Whitchurch turnpike [10 Geo IV c.77]<sup>76</sup> now the A49. It only marginally affected the area (Map 2:5) as only a small section passed through the far north-east corner of Tushingham township west of Quoisley Bridge.<sup>77</sup> The new road required only half a statute acre of Tushingham land and the new section of road would be only six miles long.<sup>78</sup> Like other turnpike roads, it was, in theory, designed to cause minimum disruption to property while providing faster and better maintained routes on existing roads wherever possible.

Interesting evidence relating to this turnpike reveals the attitudes of local landowners. Mr. Egerton of Oulton, sought Mr. Benjamin Vawdrey of Tushingham's support for the project and pointedly mentioned that the Marquis of Cholmondeley, through whose property five miles of the road would pass 'is decidedly friendly to the undertaking'. Vawdrey expressed doubts rather bitterly about the project's viability based on previous experience, pointing out that in 20 years of subscribing to a turnpike road he 'to this day have not recd. Sixpence' and was disinclined to subscribe.<sup>79</sup> However, he agreed to let the value of the land required from him remain on security with the Trust. While allowing the road to proceed, he had no interest in trying to profit from it. In anticipation of the turnpiking, two tollgates on the road were put up for auction, at Boughton Gate and Grindley Brook Gate just south of the township's border.<sup>80</sup> Tushingham was not named in the turnpike Act, probably because such a small section was to pass through it, but nearly 100 names, including Vawdrey's and those of many local major landowners, were appended as trustees.<sup>81</sup> The Trust provided a moderate return on investment. The Tarporley to Whitchurch

<sup>76</sup> HLRO, 10 Geo IV c.77; Albert, *Turnpike*, p.223; Starkie, 'Turnpike road', p. 35.

<sup>77</sup> OS, Pathfinder 807.

<sup>78</sup> CCALS, DMD/B/15.

<sup>79</sup> CCALS, DMD/B/15.

<sup>80</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 4 July 1828, p.1.

<sup>81</sup> HLRO, 10 Geo IV c.77; E.g. Lord William H. H. Cholmondeley, Rev. Sir Philip E. Grey, John W. Dod, Broughton Dod, Richard Egerton, Philip de M. Egerton, John Egerton clerk, Philip Humberston, John H. Leche, James Large, Richard Massie clerk, Richard Massie the Younger, Admiral Jervis Tollemache, John Jervis Tollemache, Daniel Vawdrey, Rowland E. Warburton clerk.

turnpike was still operating in 1869 and that year Vawdrey received £33 for his remaining security on road tolls for the land given.<sup>82</sup>

South-west Cheshire's last turnpiking occurred in 1854. This road (subsequently the B5130) was well-used from Chester via Farndon to Worthenbury passing through Farndon (HHI 1551<sub>T</sub>), Crewe (HHI 3063<sub>T</sub>), Church Shocklach (HHI 1104<sub>T</sub>) and Shocklach Oviatt (HHI 2730<sub>T</sub>) townships. Its turnpiking was very late in comparison to other local or national turnpike routes<sup>83</sup> but there is no obvious explanation for this. However, looking at the national picture, Hindle pointed out that some sections of road were turnpiked late because they were already in reasonable condition.<sup>84</sup> However, in that case there was no obvious need to turnpike them. Probably local landowners, seeing financial advantages in turnpikes, wanted some return for their investment in the local roads. Therefore landowners' desire for an investment opportunity from already well-maintained roads seems the most likely theory. Landowners in the townships, whether townships with low or high HHIs, saw the relevance of keeping roads and bridges in good repair, especially where access to their own buildings and farms were concerned. Earlier efforts to maintain the roads included the old Shocklach parish's gravelling of Church Lane in 1813 and completion of a gravel road through the parish.<sup>85</sup> In 1825, Sir Richard Puleston paid for a road bridge on (probably) the road from Shocklach to Horton Green to be prepared for carriages.<sup>86</sup> Therefore roads and bridges were being reconditioned for heavier transport and to improve road access to townships. Whatever the reason for the late turnpiking of this route, the eventual turnpiking could not halt the population decline of settlements along it in line with the general population decline in the area between 1851 and 1901 (Church Shocklach -1 per cent; Shocklach Oviatt -16 per cent; Crewe -23 per cent; Farndon a rise of only 1 per cent) (see table 5:4). Turnpiking a route was therefore no guarantee of a settlement's development growth.

### Reactions to turnpike roads

The attitude of landowners to the turnpikes could affect whether, when and where they were built and therefore settlement development. Although some local landowners, like Mr. Vawdrey, clearly doubted the financial viability of turnpike

<sup>82</sup> CCALS, DMD/B/15.

<sup>83</sup> HLRO, 17 & 18 Victoria I no. 86.

<sup>84</sup> Hindle, 'Turnpike', p. 11.

<sup>85</sup> CCALS, P308/4772/2 Mf. 116, 1813.

<sup>86</sup> CCALS, P308/4772/2 Mf. 116, 1825.

roads, most appeared to appreciate the financial and practical benefits that turnpike roads represented, as landowners' inclusion in the lists of Trustees demonstrates. Landowners' support of turnpikes was shown in 1868 when the clerk of the Tarporley-Whitchurch Trust asked Trustees to petition both houses of Parliament to oppose Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen's Bill For the Abolition of Turnpike Trusts. The Bill proposed charging local rates from owners or tenants of land that the Turnpike Roads crossed which the Trustees considered 'inconvenient and unjust to landowners and tenant farmers'.<sup>87</sup>

Some local residents disapproved of turnpike roads and in 1764 a Mr T. Townson evidently thought that a turnpiked road through Malpas would cause problems. Writing to Mr. Drake, a major landowner in the Parish of Malpas, he expressed approval of opposition to a turnpike scheme, explaining that a turnpike would raise the price of coal which would affect the poor of Malpas.<sup>88</sup> This implies that some local landowners such as Drake opposed a turnpike through the parish. However, subsequently in nearby townships access to a turnpike road was considered a selling point. For example, an Edge farm in 1856 was advertised with the advantage of 'considerable frontages' to the Chester to Whitchurch turnpike<sup>89</sup>. Therefore, although most local landowners approved of turnpiked roads for trade and investment, others were disappointed with investment returns or voiced social concerns.

## Conclusion

During the 50 years over which most turnpikes were introduced into south-west Cheshire before the canal or railway era the area's population increased by an estimated 26 per cent (1751- 1801) compared with 50 per cent for the county as a whole (Figure 5:9). The creation of the area's turnpike roads apparently had a limited effect generally on settlement growth, although some settlements grew more than others.

Notably some settlements such as Tilston, with a low HHI and on well-used but non-turnpike routes, increased their populations and housing from the eighteenth century; others such as Broxton, with only just under a high HHI (2986<sub>LT</sub>) and

<sup>87</sup> CCALS, DMD/B/15.

<sup>88</sup> CCALS, DTD 10/33.

<sup>89</sup> CCALS, D 4337/1.

clearly a high HHI if you use later figures, on turnpike routes failed to grow until the nineteenth century. Broxton, on the Barnhill to Farndon turnpike, had an estimated population growth of only two per cent between 1751 and 1801 but grew by 87 per cent between 1801 and 1851 (Table 5:23). As Broxton is on a prime position at the intersection of two turnpikes (Barnhill to Wrexham, Chester to Whitchurch) its failure to grow between 1751 and 1801 is surprising, although it was already one of the larger settlements in the area. However, Broxton township had a high HHI of 3655 by the 1840s at that point and Tilston's settlement was in a low HHI township. Settlements in high HHI townships such as Edge and Broxton were subject to more landowner control and were apparently allowed less leeway to take advantage of transport routes. This contrasted with low HHI settlements such as Tilston where building was less subject to landowner control and where there were fewer restrictions about building near a good access route. A high HHI (indicating more landowner concentration and control) could therefore inhibit settlements' growth even if they had the advantage of being on a major route.

This section has shown that turnpike roads provided the opportunity for improved access in and out of the area but although most landowners welcomed them and proximity to turnpike roads sold property, some had mixed feelings about their usefulness and viability. The placing of the roads appeared physically to isolate the north and centre of the area. Although some settlements failed to increase their populations during the second half of the eighteenth century, most did so in the first half of the nineteenth century. Low HHI settlements on the main routes appear to benefit the most. The impact on the landscape therefore was visible in the improved roads and altered routes together with the building of toll houses and toll gates, for example at Hampton Heath and on the northern road from the A534 into Farndon, rather than a significant redistribution of settlements.<sup>90</sup>

### ***The canal - a missed opportunity***

This section examines why, although south-west Cheshire lacked a navigable river, a canal was not built through the main part of the area, how landownership patterns affected the placing of the canal and what effect landownership had on the placement of the eventual short southern section of canal and therefore on settlement development.

<sup>90</sup> OS six inch, 1st edn LX, LIII.

Economists and historians agree that canals were important to Britain's industrialisation because they enabled the exploitation of bulky resources, particularly coal, by facilitating transport of such goods across country. Turnbull called water transport in general 'crucial' for encouraging urban growth, pointing out that canals overcame geographical problems so they could be placed where they were most useful economically.<sup>91</sup> Porter emphasised the importance of the canal infrastructure as 'one of the key means' through which private enterprise enabled industrialisation to take place.<sup>92</sup> Canal-related buildings, both commercial and domestic, were built at junctions and elsewhere close to the waterside where they created or expanded settlements.<sup>93</sup> However, as Turnbull explained, a canal's economic advantage probably only operated within a few miles of its banks because road transportation costs to the canal from more distant locations made it uneconomic.<sup>94</sup> This section will show that any advantage a canal might have brought to south-west Cheshire was strictly limited by its location on the eastern edge of the area.

South-west Cheshire's settlements did not reap the advantages that a canal throughout the area would have provided. Plans to open up the area by driving a canal from north to south came to nothing. The canal was built close to, but not through, the area, although not close enough to stimulate much settlement growth. Canal-related growth was therefore limited to a few cottages and a pub in Bickley (HHI 9802<sub>LT</sub>). The main canal settlement was established outside the area at Grindley Brook.

There were no canal proposals for south-west Cheshire until the second half of the eighteenth century during the peak canal age before the advent of railways. It was not considered until nearly 40 years after England's first canal (1757) and Cheshire's first canal, the Bridgewater canal from Manchester to Runcorn (1761).<sup>95</sup> The canal completed in 1804 that passed south of south-west Cheshire through

<sup>91</sup> Turnbull, 'Canals', pp. 537-538; N. Crowe, *Canals* (London, 1994), p. 16.

<sup>92</sup> R. Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, rev. edn (London, 1990), p. 208.

<sup>93</sup> Crowe, *Canals*, p. 88.

<sup>94</sup> Turnbull, 'Canals', p. 544.

<sup>95</sup> Crowe, *Canals*, p. 17; *Hadfield's British Canals*, ed. J. Baughey, (Stroud, 1998), p. 17; *The Cheshire Magazine* <<http://www.cheshiremagazine.com/issue18/cans.html>> [accessed 18 March 2004].

Grindley Brook was a branch of the Ellesmere Canal built between 1796 and 1801 from Netherpool (later Ellesmere Port) to Shrewsbury.<sup>96</sup>

Investors originally planned a canal passing either west or east of Malpas, either of which would have stimulated settlement growth along its route. One scheme's proposed route was from Fenns Old Hall, St Mary, Shrewsbury to the west of Malpas to Newton, Tattenhall (the Eastern Great Trunk);<sup>97</sup> the other from Tattenhall to Whitchurch through Grindley Brook via Bradley, Hampton Heath and Duckington to the east of Malpas.<sup>98</sup> However, neither canal was built because of financial and physical difficulties with the routes and, Wilson maintained, objections from landowners.<sup>99</sup> Elsewhere other canals had faced opposition, often from landowners concerned about the effect on low-lying agricultural land, local inhabitants worried about losing trade, mill owners concerned about loss of streams, turnpike Trustees who might lose income and road carriers who might lose their jobs.<sup>100</sup> However, Porteous, after a detailed study of the original canal company records, concluded that Cheshire landowners welcomed the proposals and that the smaller branches of the Ellesmere canal were planned to please the local landowners.<sup>101</sup> This seems likely as canal investment was usually by 'interested local parties',<sup>102</sup> and local landowners were potential investors. Bagwell and Lyth explain that canals built before the railway age generally had 'specific local objectives.'<sup>103</sup> Canals were local projects so finance had to be raised from local people although this was augmented by regional funds.<sup>104</sup>

A canal close to landowners' property would have facilitated movement of goods such as tile and stone out of the area and imports of building materials and other necessities and would have stimulated settlement growth. Indeed, the Ellesmere Canal itself was intended to open up the landlocked area of south-west Cheshire and north Shropshire and to ease the transportation of coal, slate, lime and general goods

<sup>96</sup> Baughey, *Hadfield's*, p. 90; P. Hardcastle, *Ellesmere Canal* (2003)

<<http://www.canals.btinternet.co.uk/canals/ellesmerecanalroot.htm>> [accessed 18 March 2004].

<sup>97</sup> CCALS, QDP 2.

<sup>98</sup> CCALS, QDP 10.

<sup>99</sup> E. Wilson, *The Ellesmere and Llangollen Canal* (London, 1975), pp. i, 4, 22.

<sup>100</sup> Baughey, *Hadfield's*, p. 22.

<sup>101</sup> J. D. Porteous, *Canal Ports: The Urban Achievement of the Canal Age* (London, 1977), p. 109.

<sup>102</sup> Porter, *English Society*, p. 192.

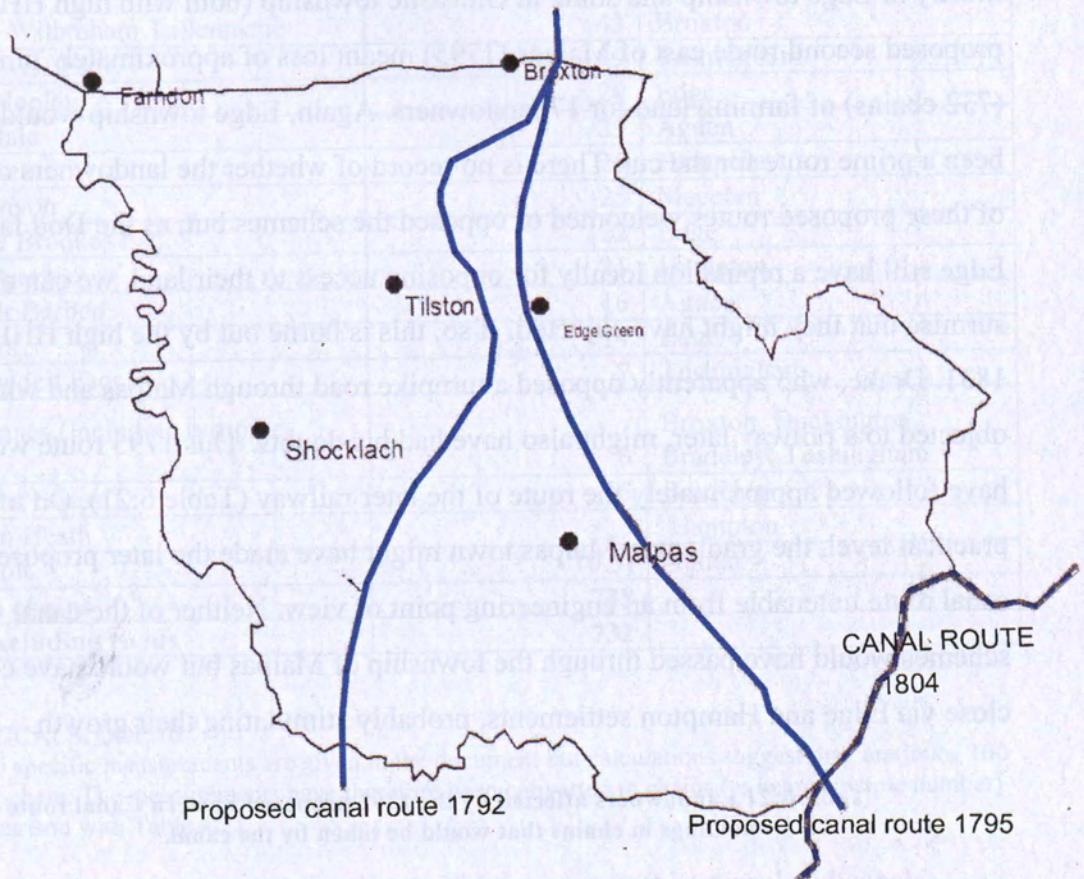
<sup>103</sup> P. Bagwell and P. Lyth, *Transport in Britain: From Canal Lock to Gridlock* (London, 2002), p. 9.

<sup>104</sup> Baughey, *Hadfield's*, p. 19.



into a largely agricultural area. The area's roads were considered unsatisfactory for the amount of traffic needed<sup>105</sup> (Figure 6:20).

**Figure 6:20** The approximate proposed canal routes and actual canal route through south-west Cheshire.



Sources: CCALS, QDP2; QDP10.

<sup>105</sup> Porteous, *Canal*, p. 110.

A lot of land would have been sacrificed to a canal. The Eastern Great Trunk canal route through the area (west of Malpas town, 1792) would have affected twelve landowners and taken 553 chains of land thus passing through approximately seven miles of farming land. The landowners who would have lost most land were Egerton of Oulton with 130 chains in Broxton township and Dod of Edge with 102 chains, mostly in Edge township and some in Oldcastle township (both with high HHIs). The proposed second route east of Malpas (1795) meant loss of approximately nine miles (732 chains) of farming land for 17 landowners. Again, Edge township would have been a prime route for the cut. There is no record of whether the landowners of either of these proposed routes welcomed or opposed the schemes but, as the Dod family of Edge still have a reputation locally for opposing access to their land, we can only surmise that they might have objected. If so, this is borne out by the high HHI by 1831. Drake, who apparently opposed a turnpike road through Malpas and who objected to a railway later, might also have had his doubts. This 1795 route would have followed approximately the route of the later railway (Table 6:21). On a practical level, the gradient in Malpas town might have made the later proposed canal route untenable from an engineering point of view. Neither of the canal schemes would have passed through the township of Malpas but would have come close via Edge and Hampton settlements, probably stimulating their growth.

**Table 6:21 Landowners affected by the 1792 proposed Eastern Canal route and holdings in chains that would be taken by the canal.**

	<b>Holdings in Chains</b>	<b>Townships</b>
J Egerton Esq. of Oulton	130	Broxton
W Dod Esqr. Edge	102	Edge, Oldcastle
Drake	82	Edge, Malpas, Cuddington, Oldcastle
Sir J Hanley Bart	66	Broxton, Tilston, Edge
J Leche Esq	57	Edge
Griffith	48	Cuddington
Rowe	19	Cuddington
Sandland	17	Cuddington
Tollemache Esq.	12	Broxton
Waring Esqr.	11	Edge
Lord Kenyon	5	Edge
J Phillips	4	Edge
Roads	No distances given	Tilston, Edge, Cuddington
<b>Total in chains</b>	<b>553</b>	

Source: CCALS, QDP 2.



Table 6:22 Landowners affected by the 1795 alternative canal route.

Landowners	Holdings in chains*	Township
Willm. Drake Esqr.	199	Duckington, Bradeley, Ebnal, Hampton, Malpas
John Egerton Esqr.	194	Broxton, Bradeley
Thos. Crewe Dod Esq.	70	Edge
The Hon Wilbraham Tollemache	43	Broxton
Richd. Twiss Esqr.	29	Tushingham
Widow Hopley	29	Edge
Elizth. Hale	29	Agden
Lord Curzon	25	Hampton
Lord Kenyon	25	Macefen
Ambrose Brookes Esq.	22	Edge
Joseph Pearson	21	Hampton
Revd. Mr Barber	16	Agden
Jos. Peers	14	Edge
Josia Boydell Esqr.	7	Tushingham
Roads, lanes (including turnpike roads)	6	Broxton, Duckington, Bradeley, Tushingham
Revd. Mr. Evans	6	Bradeley
Hampton Heath	3	Hampton
Thos. Holt	(0.3)	Agden
<b>Total in chains</b>	<b>738</b>	
<b>Total excluding roads</b>	<b>732</b>	

Source: CCALS, QDP 10.

Note: No specific measurements are given in the document but calculations suggest they are links. 100 links = 1 chain. The measurements have therefore been converted to chains (to nearest whole number) for comparison with Table 4:21.

Either of the proposed canals would have presumably stimulated canal-related growth. As the 1793 Act for the Ellesmere Canal and its branches stated, the canals were meant to 'open a communication for the cheap and easy transportation of goods and wares provisions and merchandise and all heavy commodities', would 'promote and facilitate the intercourse of trade and commerce' and would 'engage and increase manufacturers and will materially assist the agriculture of the county'. The canal and its collateral cuts would 'reduce the price of coals' and be a 'great public service'.<sup>106</sup> Transporting freight by canal could be nearly four times cheaper than by road.<sup>107</sup> However, without the canals no related settlement occurred in the area.

<sup>106</sup> HLRO, 33 Geo. III c. 91 [30th April 1793].

<sup>107</sup> Porter, *English Society*, p. 208.

The area's reliance on roads lasted until the Eastern Branch of the Ellesmere Canal (now the Shropshire Union Canal, Llangollen Branch) started its cut in 1793.<sup>108</sup> This canal ran from Whitchurch up the eastern edge of Tushingham township and then turned east to cross the corner of the Malpas area at Quoisley Canal Bridge. In 1804 the canal reached Grindley Brook and the level ended there. Wharves and warehouses were built as well as a canal house designed by the canal's engineer Thomas Telford, two miles from the outskirts of Whitchurch.<sup>109</sup> This was the extent of major development on this branch of the canal but it lay just outside south-west Cheshire's southern border.

In 1813 the canal was amalgamated with the Chester Canal and became the Ellesmere and Chester Canal but it did not remain a commercial proposition, and like other canals, was financially ruined by investment in railways.<sup>110</sup> In 1963 it was taken over by the British Waterways Board and became the Llangollen Canal: it is now a leisure amenity<sup>111</sup> but it also retains a key role in supplying water to parts of Shropshire and Cheshire.<sup>112</sup> Although it was possible to reach the canal by road, few of the townships in the area, apart from Tushingham, were close enough, by Turnbull's criterion, to benefit economically from it. This can be seen by examining the relationship of the selected townships to the canal. Townships through which the two unbuilt routes might have passed lost the opportunities for trade and growth that closer access to a canal would have provided. However, settlements near to the area's border with the canal or with good road access to it probably benefited more than those further away. For example, the settlements at Malpas, Tilston and Hampton Heath, on direct routes to Grindley Brook, all with low HHIs by 1831, had greater access and opportunities to benefit from the canal. Population changes in the townships between 1801, a few years before the canal was built, and 1871, shortly before the railway was built, show that townships with settlements on the direct routes, had different growth rates – Tilston (+34 per cent) (HHI 1984<sub>T</sub>), Malpas (+6 per cent) (HHI 2664<sub>T</sub>) and Tushingham (+40 per cent) (HHI 1645<sub>T</sub>), Edge (-2 per cent) (HHI 3059<sub>T</sub>), the combined Shocklach settlement (-3 per cent) (HHIs 889<sub>T</sub>, 2730<sub>T</sub>). Settlements further from the canal such as Shocklach might have been

<sup>108</sup> Wilson, *Canal*, p. i.

<sup>109</sup> Wilson, *Canal*, p. 20.

<sup>110</sup> Bagwell and Lyth, *Transport*, p. 16.

<sup>111</sup> Bagwell and Lyth, *Transport*, pp. 30, ii.

<sup>112</sup> Waterscape.com <<http://www.waterscape.com>>

adversely affected by their distance from the canal but the figures are not conclusive. The effect of the canal on townships in the area is therefore difficult to determine. The central town of Malpas (HHI 2080<sub>LT</sub>) would have been an obvious choice for a main stopping point for the canal, but the position of the settlement on a rise meant that no canal was ever likely to have been built close to the town. Malpas's inhabitants therefore had to rely on road transport to reach the canal's nearest point at Grindley Brook. The direct route was the continuation of the Roman Road that was never turnpiked. The town therefore had no opportunity for direct canal-related growth.

By contrast, Tushingham (HHI 1363<sub>LT</sub>), which bordered the canal, registered a rise in population of nearly a third between 1801 and 1871 and its settlement clearly benefited from proximity to it. It was the one township for which the canal was a real advantage because of its proximity not only to the section of the canal that skirted its eastern boundary, but also to the canal settlement at Grindley Brook just over its border. There are two locks in Tushingham – Willey Moor Lock and Povey's Lock – and easy access to Grindley Brook Lock. Three bridges cross the canal in the township – Quoitsley Bridge, Quoitsley Canal Bridge and Jackson's Bridge. There was a lot of opportunity for canal-related settlements to grow at these crossing points. However, apart from the public house at Willey Moor Lock and a few small houses on Bickley's adjacent moss lands, the main canal settlement in the area was in Shropshire at Grindley Brook and Grindley Brook Locks. Tushingham township therefore, although able to use the canal, did not have a substantial canal settlement of its own.

Settlement development was affected by the attitude of local landowners to the canal. Benjamin Vawdrey, a major nineteenth-century Tushingham landowner, was interested in the movement of trade upon the canal. A letter to Vawdrey mentions the movement of guano by canal from Chester and the Tushingham Tile yard near Grindley Brook.<sup>113</sup> This indicates that there was a tile yard just within the southern border of the township which used the canal to transport its products to both Chester and Whitchurch as well as further afield.<sup>114</sup> The canal's proximity to the Chester to Whitchurch Road (at Grindley Brook) and the Tarporley Road (at

<sup>113</sup> CCALS, DMD/L/1.

<sup>114</sup> The remains of a tile yard still exist on Vawdrey's, now Moore-Dutton's, estate and were pointed out by the proprietor Mr. Peter Moore-Dutton during a visit by P. Bird, 29 April 2005.

Quoisley Lock) meant that goods were easily transferable from the canal to the road system and thence to all parts of Chester, Shropshire and beyond. So, although the canal had not been built along the two proposed east and west routes through south-west Cheshire, Tushingham was well placed to benefit from the branch finally built. Limited expansion of the little settlement of Bell O'Th' Hill probably occurred as a result of the canal. By 1878 Tushingham was the only township mentioned in a directory as 'near the Ellesmere and Chester Canal'.<sup>115</sup> The failure of the earlier canal schemes through south-west Cheshire, however, represented a missed opportunity to open up the area. The final placing of the canal was of some benefit to the nearest township of Tushingham, although even with very low landownership control (HHI 1363<sub>LT</sub>) its expansion was not large. Townships with high HHIs tended to have lower growth rates whether or not they were on direct routes to the canal. Again it was settlements in townships with already low HHIs that continued to maintain a momentum unrelated to the canal. However, the area as a whole did not show any significant settlement changes specifically linked to the canal.

### ***The railway - an underused resource***

Landownership influenced the placing of the railway through south-west Cheshire and therefore settlement development. The introduction of a railway crossing from north to south through the centre of the area should have improved access throughout the area and promoted settlement growth in several places, regardless of landownership patterns, particularly at the two stations at Broxton and Malpas (Hampton Heath). As Lord Palmerston said 'the railways create station-houses and station-houses beget villages and little towns are springing up everywhere upon the lines of the railway'.<sup>116</sup> Simmons, however, noted that building railways also caused 'a good deal of damage' to the landscape including towns and villages.<sup>117</sup> Harrison, referring to railway construction about 30 years prior to south-west Cheshire's line, said 'probably the most upsetting thing that could happen in an agricultural village ... was the arrival of the railway.'<sup>118</sup> Railways not only produced social and economic changes, but also the construction process changed communities.<sup>119</sup> They also

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<sup>115</sup> *Post Office Directory of Cheshire* (London, 1878), p. 370.

<sup>116</sup> Quoted in Rowley, *Villages*, p. 140.

<sup>117</sup> J. Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London, 1991), pp. 10, 155.

<sup>118</sup> J.F.C. Harrison, *Early Victorian Britain, 1832-51*, revised edn (London, 1988), p. 49.

<sup>119</sup> Harrison, *Railway*, p. 40.

created new types of building and settlement: according to Morriss the station was ‘an entirely new invention of the railways...’.<sup>120</sup> Although they generally fitted into the rural scene better than they did in urban areas, Dyos and Aldcroft argued that their means of construction both destroyed and ‘imposed a new scale’ on the rural landscape. Railway promoters had to pay extensive compensation to landowners for the loss of agricultural land, particularly if it belonged to a picturesque estate.<sup>121</sup> This chapter argues that, landowners influenced the placing of the railway, and that in consequence although the railway was partially successful in supplying commuter transport for Malpas residents and enabling trade distribution from Broxton, the amount of settlement directly connected to the area’s railway was limited and it did not have an impact on settlement patterns. This is in line with national experience, for as Gourvish said, ‘railways could do little more than cement existing patterns of settlement and industrial location’<sup>122</sup> except where settlements had a direct role to play, for example, as company wagonworks headquarters as at Crewe, Earlestown, Swindon and elsewhere.

### **South-west Cheshire’s railway**

The Tattenhall to Whitchurch railway was proposed in 1865 and opened in 1872.<sup>123</sup> It ran from a point on the Shrewsbury and Crewe branch of the company’s railway 19 chains north of the Whitchurch Station booking office to just over one and a half kilometres (one mile) south-east of Waverton Station to meet the Chester and Crewe branch. In south-west Cheshire it passed through Tushingam HHI (1645<sub>T</sub>), Bradley (HHI 3933<sub>T</sub>), Hampton (HHI 1513<sub>T</sub>), Malpas (HHI 2664<sub>T</sub>), Edge (HHI 3059<sub>T</sub>), Duckington (HHI 9802<sub>T</sub>), Broxton (HHI 3655<sub>T</sub>) and Clutton (HHI 6733<sub>T</sub>) townships,<sup>124</sup> with stations at Malpas (Hampton Heath) and Broxton. It should therefore have benefited townships with both low and high landowner concentrations.

The line potentially benefited local farmers because Broxton station became a starting point for the transport of livestock, and fruit and stored cheese from local

<sup>120</sup> R. Morriss, *The Archaeology of Railways* (Stroud, 1999), p. 110.

<sup>121</sup> H. J. Dyos and D. H. Aldcroft, *British Transport* (Leicester, 1971), pp. 178-9.

<sup>122</sup> T. R. Gourvish, *Railways and the British Economy 1830-1914* (London, 1980), p. 31.

<sup>123</sup> CCALS, QDP/505.

<sup>124</sup> CCALS, QDP 447.

dairy farms in warehouses next to the lines.<sup>125</sup> Tilston's dairy farmers probably sent their produce to market from the Broxton station. The railways also enabled milk to be delivered for 30 miles around.<sup>126</sup> It should therefore have benefited equally settlements in townships with both low and high HHIs.

The line's construction included railway-related buildings such as the two stations but its cutting scarred the landscape and destroyed agricultural land and buildings. The line passed mainly through fields, but 18 pieces of land contained cottages and two pieces of land were part of farmsteads. Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake owned most of the land through which the line was to pass, closely followed by Sir Philip Egerton.<sup>127</sup> The railway did not pass through Malpas town itself but cut across the far eastern edge of the township and its station was built about one and a half miles away at Hampton Heath. There are several possible reasons for this. First, the town's elevated position could have made it difficult to build a railway track into the town itself or to site the station nearer to the town. Second, it is reasonable to suppose that farmers might have been reluctant to sell farmland between Malpas town and the station for building; land was often cheaper just outside the town. Third, modern unsubstantiated local rumour implies that the Dod family, the largest landowners in Edge township (with a high HHI 3059<sub>T</sub>), were unhappy about the railway's potential route through their land to Malpas town and blocked proposals for a railway. The railway plan shows that the Dod family might have had good reason to object to the route as finally built, because the railway line passed through the centre of Edge township.<sup>128</sup> The line cuts close to the heart of Edge Green (Figure 6:23).

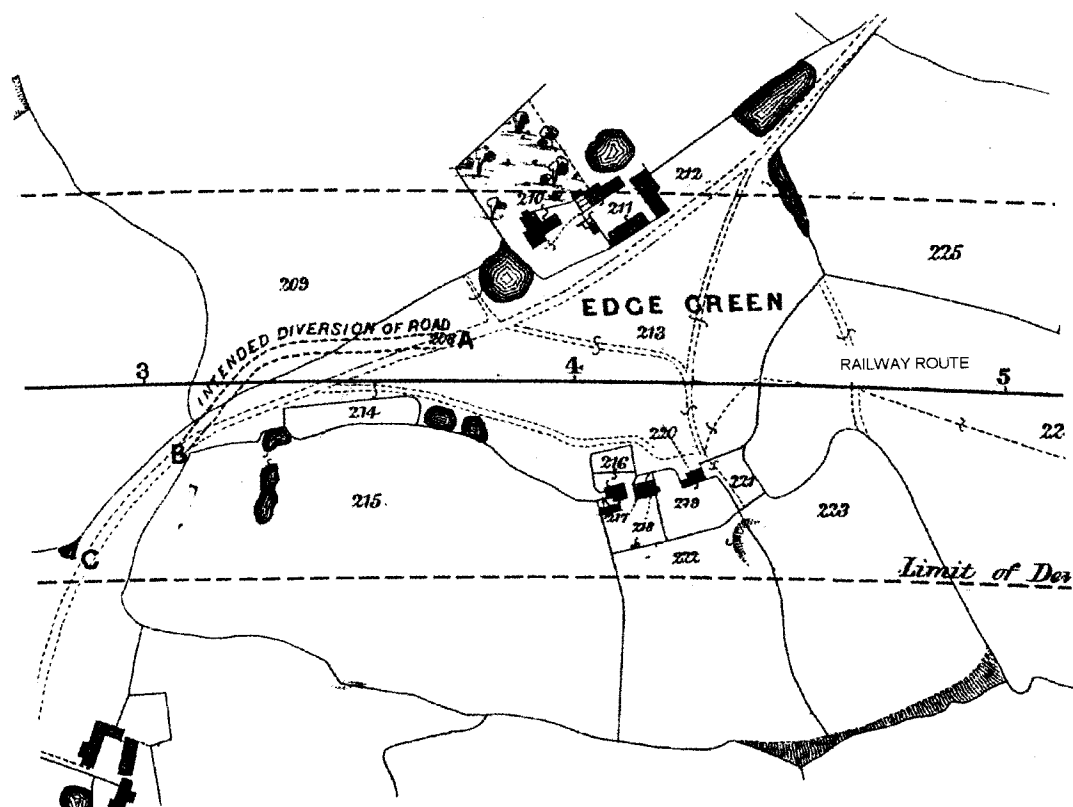
<sup>125</sup> L. Oppitz, *Cheshire Railways Remembered* (Newbury, 1997), p. 148.

<sup>126</sup> H. J. Hewitt, *Building of Railways in Cheshire* (Manchester, 1972), p. 59.

<sup>127</sup> CCALS, QDP 447. The Reference book contains a list of the owners of land that the rail track will cross and the type of holdings but does not give any measurements for the size of holdings.

<sup>128</sup> CCALS, QDP 447.

Figure 6:23 The path of the railway as built through Edge Green, the main settlement in Edge township.



Source: CCALS, QDP 447.

Note: The solid black line is the railway route.

As a result Malpas, in spite of its low HHI, did not grow as a railway town and any limited growth was linear along the road towards Hampton, mainly large detached houses with farm land between them abutting the road. Close to the station building itself a few houses were built by 1911 as well as a corn mill and post office. However, most of the growth took place at the already well-established Hampton Heath settlement, also in a township with a low HHI, where there was a cattle market by 1911, presumably to cater for the local livestock trade.<sup>129</sup>

The railway line's proximity to both the home of a major landowner and Edge Green settlement ought to have resulted in at least a halt which would have encouraged expansion. However, the plans did not include a station at Edge, with its high HHI of 3059<sub>r</sub>. Land lost to the railway in Edge included fields, nine farms or dwelling places, three stables and outbuildings, two houses and gardens and three

<sup>129</sup> OS, 25 inch LX7, 1911.

cottages. In a comparatively underdeveloped area such as Edge the loss of land and even a few buildings might have led to a reduction of livelihood and housing, but the partial loss of agricultural land, subject to financial compensation, also meant that the remaining land could still be productive. Part of the railway construction involved an intended diversion of the road from Mates Farm to Edge Green to a new route west of the railway<sup>130</sup> (Figure 6:23), but this was not built. The stone railway bridge over the (now disused) cutting to the west of Edge Green still exists. Modern maps do not show any obvious development close to the railway. The lack of a station in Edge township meant that there was no focal point for building. The nearest station to Edge at Hampton Heath was close enough for passenger use but was sufficiently distant to limit railway-related growth along the connecting road or in the settlement itself. The effect on the landscape is still visible in a deep overgrown cut which is used by some modern farmers for temporary storage huts. No new settlements were created as a result of the railway's construction and any increase in settlement occurred in the existing locations at the railway's stopping points. Edge is an example of a relatively high HHI township where domination by one landowner apparently prevented opportunities for expansion which might have taken place.

The railway should have benefited local inhabitants. Trade directories consulted to establish which places the two stations served showed that between them they served the whole area. Malpas station covered the centre and south (for example, Hampton (HHI 1513<sub>T</sub>), Larkton (HHI 8500<sub>T</sub>), Horton (HHI 1316<sub>T</sub>), Threapwood) and Broxton the north (Farndon (HHI 1551<sub>T</sub>), Stretton (HHI 7169<sub>T</sub>), Grafton (HHI 6922<sub>T</sub>)).<sup>131</sup> However, according to a 1941 MAF survey, local farmers, although having used Broxton and Malpas stations for dispatching goods for nearly 70 years, had mixed feelings about the line. Farmers in townships closer to the line (Malpas, Edge, Tushingam) were reasonably satisfied; those further away (both Shocklachs, Tilston) were not.<sup>132</sup> Table 6:24 shows that in townships with good access to the railway the percentage of farmers pleased with the situation was high – Malpas (38 per cent), Edge (26 per cent) and Tushingam (30 per cent) – while the

<sup>130</sup> CCALS, QDP 447.

<sup>131</sup> *Directory of Cheshire* (Chester, 1872); *PO Directory 1878*; *Morris and Co's Directory and Gazetteer of Cheshire Towns with Wrexham* (Nottingham, 1880); *Kelly's Directory of Cheshire* (London, 1896, 1906).

<sup>132</sup> TNA, 4 June 1941, MAF 32/492/57, 32/515/78, 32/488/46, 32/511/74, 32/515/32, 32/502/29.



farthest townships were less satisfied – both Shocklachs (0 per cent) and Tilston (7 per cent).

**Table 6:24 Results of MAF survey 4 June 1941 showing satisfaction levels for access to the railway for the sample townships.**

Representative townships	MAF FARM SURVEY 1941		
	Good	Fair	Bad
Malpas	22	6	1
Tushingham	17	9	1
Edge	15	3	1
Tilston	4	3	11
Church Shocklach	0	1	13
Shocklach Oviatt	0	2	8
Totals	58	24	35
Percentage	49	20	30

Source: TNA, 4 June 1941, MAF 32/492/57, 32/515/78, 32/488/46, 32/511/74, 32/515/32, 32/502/29.

However, in 1941 Edge farmers were satisfied with their position in relation to both the roads and railway in spite of having no station in the township. Nearly 80 per cent of the 19 farmers who completed that section of the questionnaire claimed that their access to both the road and railway was good. Perhaps they considered access to the Chester to Whitchurch road, and therefore to Broxton station, adequate. Access to the station would have been particularly important to the success of Edge Hall's large dairy farm and all Edge's farmers needed access to the station for exporting milk and cattle. Three of the other four farms in Edge thought that access was fair and one of the four thought it bad.<sup>133</sup> Even in Threapwood, as far from the railway as Shocklach, the 16 farmers who responded thought that access was good or fair.

**Table 6:25 MAF Farm Survey.**

	MAF FARM SURVEY 1941					
	Access to road			Access to railway		
	Good	Fair	Bad	Good	Fair	Bad
Threapwood	15	1	0	3	9	4
Percentage	89	11	0	22	56	22

Source: TNA, MAF 32/515/77.

<sup>133</sup> TNA, MAF 32/515/32, 32/515/78, 32/511/74, 32/488/46, 32/492/57.

## Local opposition

The impact of a railway on settlement development was influenced by local landowners. They should have welcomed a railway as a boon to local farmers whose nearest railway station, before the Tattenhall to Whitchurch branch was built, was nine miles away at Tattenhall.<sup>134</sup> However, some landowners apparently objected to a line through south-west Cheshire before 1872 thus limiting opportunities for railway-related growth. Simmons, referring to earlier railways, remarked that 'The only powerful group of people who protested at all frequently against the building of the early railways were landowners anxious to preserve their estates from damage'.<sup>135</sup> This was evidently a continuing concern of landowners and in south-west Cheshire their reactions might be deduced from an earlier proposal for a railway line through the area. The Wrexham, Mold and Connah's Quay Railway Company (WMCQR) in 1863 proposed an extension to Whitchurch through the Malpas area.<sup>136</sup> Additionally, the London and North Western Railway Company (LNWR) proposed a line to Whitchurch. Both plans were intended to provide a more direct link to Whitchurch and thence to Shrewsbury from Chester, rather than via Crewe. The WMCQR proposed to make a station at Tilston.<sup>137</sup> However, its proposal was unacceptable to local landowners and others.

Thirty-three landowners mainly from Wrexham and Denbighshire petitioned against the WMCQR scheme, including the Malpas landowner Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake through whose estate 'of valuable pasture and arable' the railway would be built. Drake objected to the WMCQR taking his lands for the proposed railway, describing the proposed extension as 'unnecessary and uncalled for' and objected that 'several public roads will be seriously interfered with' causing 'great inconvenience' to everyone. This supports the argument that some south-west Cheshire landowners opposed the new transport systems<sup>138</sup> and Simmons's assertion that landowners generally were concerned about the effect of railways across their land.

The editors of the *Chester Chronicle*, no doubt reflecting local opinion, supported the shorter LNWR line because it would avoid a station at Tilston and a

<sup>134</sup> *Slater's Directory of Cheshire*, (Manchester, 1855; Chilmark (CD), 2000).

<sup>135</sup> Simmons, *Railway*, p. 155.

<sup>136</sup> TNA, RAIL 767/69.

<sup>137</sup> 'Local railway projects', *Chester Chronicle*, 25 November 1865, p. 8.

<sup>138</sup> TNA, RAIL 767/69.

carriage change for passengers.<sup>139</sup> The popular choice of route thus deprived Tilston of any direct railway-related growth.

Rival railway companies, including LNWR who proposed and built the railway through Malpas township just two years later (1872) also objected to the WMCQR scheme,<sup>140</sup> for taking their land and potentially competing for customers from a small population and added that the line would not be financially viable.<sup>141</sup>

This was a reasonable view; until the mid-1840s railways generally had been successful financially.<sup>142</sup> Capital was raised through shares or loans, initially to fund construction and land purchase and later for ongoing costs. Although there was considerable investment, railway companies often underestimated capital expenditure, which meant return on investment was low, thus jeopardising railway investment.<sup>143</sup> Railway companies' profits started to fall after 1846 because of inexperience in running railways and the high costs of the original railway development.<sup>144</sup>

The Chester and West Cheshire Lines (CWCL) also proposed a railway link via Malpas from the Dee to Stafford line to meet the Midland Railway. However, although the project was agreed, the CWCL directors withdrew from the joint venture, pleading 'local interest':<sup>145</sup> having secured their preferred route through the area they backed off from the necessary financial commitment.

Objections to the WMCQR route prevailed and it was never built, although the Bill was passed on most parts in 1864,<sup>146</sup> leaving only the 1872 LNWR route for south-west Cheshire (Figure 6:26). However, the warnings about under use of a route to Whitchurch through the area were eventually to prove well founded.

<sup>139</sup> 'Projects', *Chester Chronicle*, 25 November 1865, p. 8.

<sup>140</sup> Other company petitioners included The Vale of Llangollen Railway Company, Buckley Railway Company, River Dee Company and the Trustees of the Ruabon to Whitchurch Turnpike.

<sup>141</sup> TNA, RAIL 767/69.

<sup>142</sup> M.C. Reed, *Investment in Railways in Britain 1820-1844* (Oxford, 1975), p. 11.

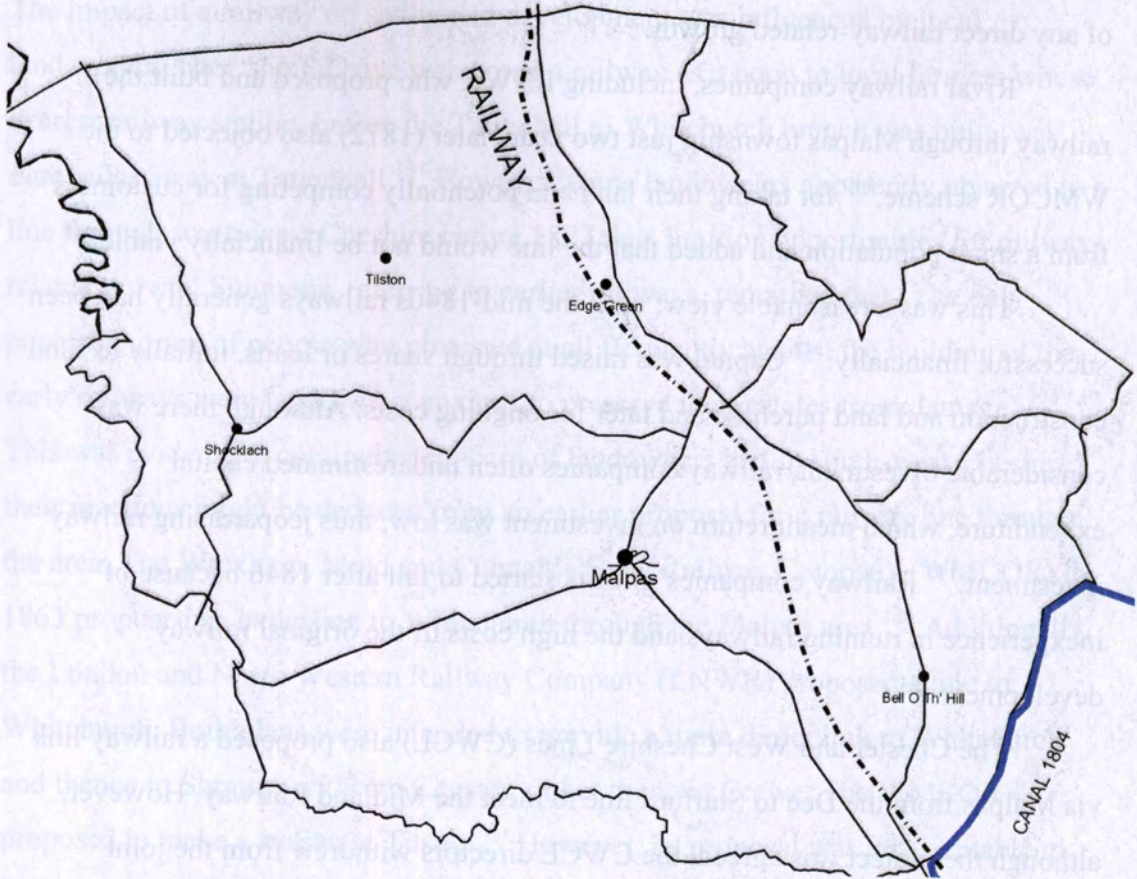
<sup>143</sup> Reed, *Railways*, pp. 75, 40, 61, 261, 263, 270, 271,.

<sup>144</sup> Gourvish, *Railways*, p. 16.

<sup>145</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 16 December 1865, p. 6.

<sup>146</sup> 25 & 26 Vict. no. 221 and 27 & 28 Vict. no. 234 in *Chronological Tables of Local Acts 1797-1999*, Part 52 (1862b) and Part 55 (1864b), OPSI <<http://www.hmso.opsi.gov.uk/chron-tables/local>> [accessed 14 April 2004].

Figure 6:26 Main roads, canal and railway circa 1901.



Source: CCALS, QAM1, 33 Geo. II c.51, 7 Geo. III c.104, 10 Geo. IV c.77, 33 Geo. III c.91, QDP447, CH1/1/3; OS Explorer 257, 1:25,000.

Although there is no direct evidence that south-west Cheshire landowners also objected to the later LNWR railway, Drake's evidence in 1863 suggests landowners had similar feelings about the later route. However, as landowners observed that profits had been made from investment in railways nationally, this would have eventually overcome their objections.

### Local acceptance

Some local landowners, such as Vawdrey of Tushingam, welcomed any improved transport links through their area. Possibly, like the Marquis of Exeter, as the *Chester Chronicle* reported, they changed their minds about the usefulness of railways. In 1865 the Marquis blocked a railway route across his land which would have run close to Stafford town. It was eventually built further away and effectively isolated the town. The Marquis later conceded that a railway link would be useful and



allowed a branch line.<sup>147</sup> There is no reason to suppose that south-west Cheshire's landowners were less capable of reassessing the situation, especially in the face of compulsory purchase.

Although only two stations were built on the line, Mr. Vawdrey, recognising the benefits of good transport links to settlement growth, approached LNWR before the line's completion about the possibility of building a station at Grindley Brook, just over the township's border, which had already benefited from canal-related growth. LNWR replied that, except in populous districts, stations should be about six to seven miles apart. As Grindley Brook was only about two miles from both Whitchurch and Malpas, it clearly did not qualify for the expense of its own station.<sup>148</sup> There was therefore no opportunity for railway settlement development in Tushingham. However, building the railway was a source of employment and in 1871 there were seven railway labourers living in Tushingham, six from local counties, although only one railway plate layer by 1881 and 1891.<sup>149</sup>

### **The twentieth-century railway**

There were no additional railway-related focal points for south-west Cheshire's settlement during the twentieth-century. In 1949 Cheshire's report on the county's future planning suggested that ideally rural inhabitants should live within two miles of a passenger station but reported that 'quite appreciable areas of the county in rural districts are more than two miles away from a railway passenger station' and that some local lines' services were so infrequent that it seemed barely worthwhile to run them. Therefore, from an official viewpoint, most of south-west Cheshire was inadequately served by railway for both access and services. However, in spite of recognising the deficiency in rural railway services, the main proposal for improved railway transport was an east-west line in the north of the county. The rest of the county had to rely on improvements in services suggested to the relevant railway companies, which were only forthcoming if the companies thought the suggestions 'not uneconomic'.<sup>150</sup> Rural railway transport therefore did not appear to have been a priority for either the Council or the railway companies even though they recognised the problems.

<sup>147</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 21 January 1865, p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> CCALS, DMD/D/1/4, 2 November 1871.

<sup>149</sup> CCALS, Mf. 24/1/2798; Mf. 146/1/2672; Mf. 265/43.

<sup>150</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. 38-9, 103-4.

The limited railway-related settlement near the two stations was encouraged by the link to Chester which made commuting possible. Throughout the railway's life there were six trains every weekday including Saturdays with journey times in the 1950s of seven minutes from Chester to Broxton and 21 minutes to Malpas.<sup>151</sup> However, the line's existence was threatened by under-use following a national trend of railway losses from the 1940s. Cheaper cars from the 1920s onwards helped to establish them as the main form of transport and the inadequate investment in railway companies after World War One, which were complacent in the face of this growing competition, injured them financially.<sup>152</sup>

Locally attempts were made to defer closure. In the 1950s Malpas Parish Council (Malpas PC) expressed concern about the proposed closure of Malpas Railway Station<sup>153</sup> which would follow British Railways' intended closure of the Whitchurch/Chester passenger service. Malpas PC considered the proposed increased bus service an inadequate replacement for the 'essential lifeline' of the railway because buses were prone to delay which would 'discourage travel' and 'generally isolate the community.'<sup>154</sup> However, their suggestions were not enough to save the station and it closed to passengers in September 1957.<sup>155</sup>

The final closure of Malpas station to goods trains in November 1963 was part of the Beeching cuts of the early 1960s,<sup>156</sup> the result of efforts to close unprofitable lines, particularly in rural areas. As Beeching concluded, both trains and buses 'are fighting a losing battle against private transport'.<sup>157</sup> The action had a profound and deleterious effect on Britain's rural railway system. However, some people such as Hardy, admittedly biased as a former railwayman, regarded Beeching's cuts as financially necessary. This was justified by the fact that in 1961 nationally only 34 stations out of about 7,000 generated 26 per cent of the total

<sup>151</sup> G. Bradshaw, *Bradshaw's General Railway and Steam Navigation Guide for Great Britain and Ireland*, Bradshaw's Guides (London, 1888), p. 158, (London, 1893), p. 162.

<sup>152</sup> Bagwell and Lyth, *Transport*, pp. 80, 67, 78.

<sup>153</sup> 'BR Closure of Whitchurch-Chester Passenger Service "Under Consideration"', *Whitchurch Herald*, July 6 1956, p. 7; CCALS, RP/10/1/6, p. 17.

<sup>154</sup> CCALS, RP/10/1/6, pp. 134-6.

<sup>155</sup> Oppitz, *Railways*, p. 47.

<sup>156</sup> J. Whitchurch, British Railway's complete passenger network in 1961 (map), Joyce's World of Transport Eclectica <<http://www.joyce.whitchurch.btinternet.co.uk/maps/BR1961c.jpg>> [accessed 21 May 2004]; J. Whitchurch, Beeching's proposed withdrawal of passenger train services, (map), Joyce's World of Transport Eclectica

<<http://www.joyce.whitchurch.btinternet.co.uk/maps/beechemap.jpg>> [accessed 21 May 2004].

<sup>157</sup> Dr. R. Beeching, *The Reshaping of British Railways* (London, 1963)

<<http://www.beechingreport.info>> [accessed 21 May 2004] [no pp. nos.]; Bagwell and Lyth, *Transport*, p. 203, referring to Beeching, *Reshaping*.

receipts, while 50 per cent of the stations produced less than two per cent.<sup>158</sup> Closure of the Tattenhall to Whitchurch line was therefore logical from a purely financial point of view. The reaction of the County's district line committee was that any withdrawal of freight facilities this would increase haulage costs and therefore the cost of coal.<sup>159</sup> Nonetheless, the closure went ahead. The station buildings and land were bought by Arvin Council from the British Railway Board in 1971<sup>160</sup> and are now used as offices for Miles Macadam.<sup>161</sup> Broxton station building has disappeared and has become a picnic area and the railway line has been removed, so little remains of any railway infrastructure and residents must rely on buses or cars.

From the mid-1950s to mid-1970s the rise of private car ownership in rural areas created a corresponding decline in public transport. The number of railway journeys remained constant in absolute terms and bus and coach use declined while car usage increased.<sup>162</sup> The closure of south-west Cheshire's railway to passengers in 1957, and the loss of railway-stimulated growth from that point, were probably the result of financial loss associated with falling passenger numbers as well as the national increase in car ownership, as will be shown in the next section.

## Conclusion

The railway provided trade and transport links in the area until the mid-twentieth century. However, landownership opposition altered the intended route and so limited potential settlement growth including station-related building at Broxton (high HHI), Malpas and Hampton Heath (both with low HHIs). This section has shown that expected railway-related growth was limited to some railway-related building near the two stations, while the railway's cutting was its main impact on the landscape. Between 1851, just before the railway was built, and 1901, nearly 30 years after it was completed, the population in the two townships with stations at Hampton Heath (Malpas) and Broxton grew very little – both by only six per cent. Malpas township containing the town of Malpas increased its population by only eight per cent during the same period, in spite of its low HHI, while most of the area's townships had declining populations, at a time when Cheshire as a whole

<sup>158</sup> R.H.N. Hardy, *Beeching, Champion of the Railway?* (Runnymede, 1989), pp. 33. 71.

<sup>159</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, Friday, 11 July 1963, p. 12.

<sup>160</sup> CCALS, RRT/20, 17 April 1971, p. 109.

<sup>161</sup> Oppitz, *Railways*, p. 148, and personal observation.

<sup>162</sup> Moseley, *Accessibility*, pp. 17-18.

increased its population by 82 per cent. Generally there was a slowing down in population growth or an actual decline in most townships in the area until the mid-twentieth century, while Broxton, one of the station settlements, with a high HHI, only registered a modest increase during the same period. The railway therefore did not appear to have had a major impact on the physical development of settlements, whether with high or low HHIs, as suggested by contemporary population trends.

### **Modern roads – 1878 to 2000**

By contrast, the creation of modern roads, either by building new routes or improving existing ones, had a profound impact on settlements. Taylor said that ‘Villages, farmsteads, hamlets and towns have all been changed by the availability of good roads’. He noted that decisions about which roads to improve had ‘enormous consequences’ for rural settlements. In some cases where roads were not tarmaced, as at Flaxton in Northamptonshire, settlements were actually abandoned.<sup>163</sup> Modern rural roads, whether ‘disturnpiked’ from original turnpike routes as well as newly built roads, influenced settlement development by facilitating increased private car use and ownership. Cars are now the main transport for most rural inhabitants and, generally, the smallest rural communities use cars the most.<sup>164</sup> First, increased car ownership affected access to facilities and the location of rural populations. Second, modern roads with improved and better maintained surfaces<sup>165</sup> facilitated both private and public transport communication between rural communities. However, even today one-sixth of rural households do not own a car,<sup>166</sup> and in such cases modern roads are only as good as the public transport that uses them.<sup>167</sup>

Modern roads both link the main towns of Chester and Whitchurch and by-pass them. They cut through south-west Cheshire, by-passing its smaller settlements. This encouraged development in already established larger settlements, generally those with low HHIs, but tended to reduce growth in smaller by-passed settlements. However, settlement growth in some settlements occurred because the greater car use

<sup>163</sup> Taylor, *Roads*, pp. 180-1.

<sup>164</sup> Dr. D. Gray, *Rural Transport: An Overview of Key Issues*, April 2001, The Centre for Transport Policy, The Robert Gordon University for The Commission For Integrated Transport <<http://www.cfit.gov.uk/docs/2001/rural/rural/key/0.9.htm>> [accessed 19 August 2004].

<sup>165</sup> M. J. Moseley, *Rural Development: Principles and Practice* (London, 2003), pp. 17-18.

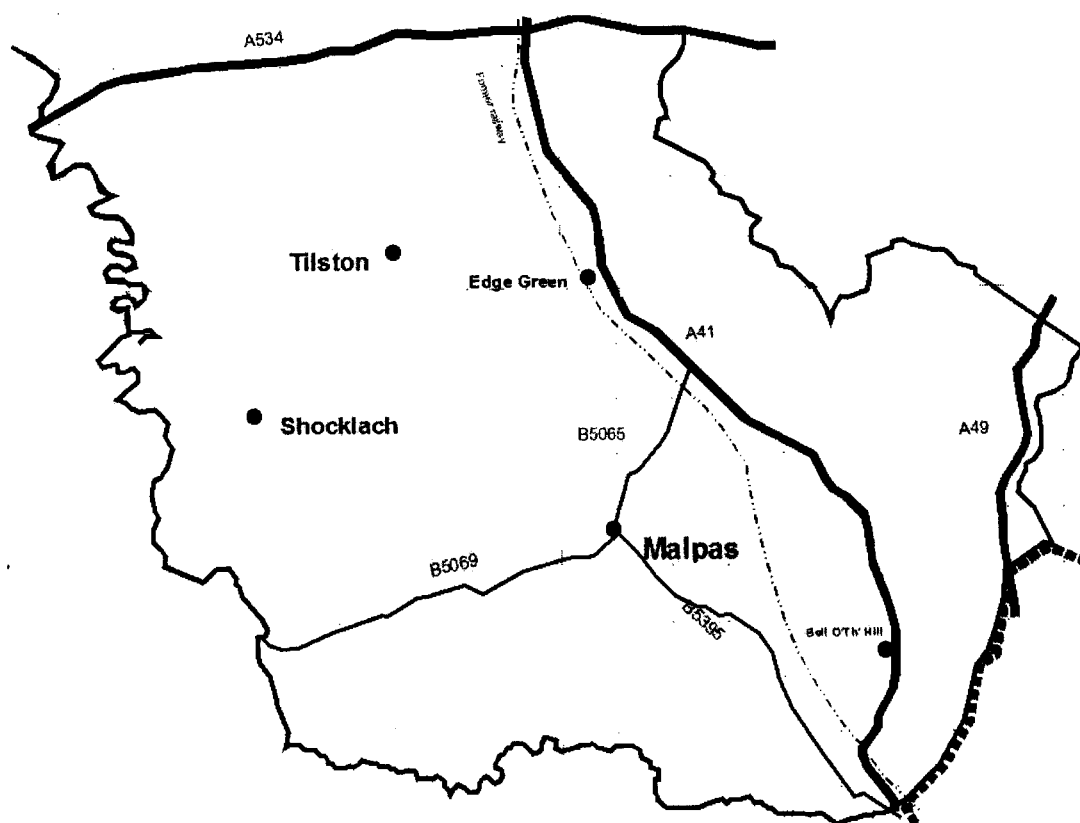
<sup>166</sup> Transport and the Regions Department of the Environment, *Our Countryside: The Future* (London, 2000), p. 55.

<sup>167</sup> In discussions with residents of south-west Cheshire it was clear that an inadequate local bus service and the lack of a railway made journeys out of the area very difficult for those without a car.



made access to the main routes easier. In fact, settlement development depended on the state of the roads. Designating some roads as main roads influenced which settlements developed. The Disturnpiked Roads Committee approved certain roads as main roads in 1878-9<sup>168</sup> for grant-aid from JPs, but these were the roads around rather than through Tilston: Malpas to Hampton Heath, Malpas to Grindley Brook, Chester to Whitchurch (later A41), Chester to Farndon/Worthenbury, Broxhill to Bickerton. By 1891 eleven main roads to south-west Cheshire were approved for county council support but none passed through Tilston and indeed formed a box around it<sup>169</sup> (Figure 6:27).

Figure 6:27 : Roads classified as A or B in the 1920s.



Sources: CCALS, QAM1; 33 Geo. II c.51; 7 Geo. III c.104; 10 Geo. IV c.77; 33 Geo. III c.91; QDP447; CH1/1/3; OS Explorer 257, 1:25,000.

By 1897 there were approximately 119,523 miles of public roads in England and Wales but only 21,536 miles were designated main roads, paid for by the county. By 1913, however, there was no nationwide agreement about which roads should

<sup>168</sup> CCALS, QAM1.

<sup>169</sup> CCALS, CH 1/1/3 (Map).

become main roads and no consensus among local authorities about which roads to prioritise. Some made nearly all their roads main roads, while others only a few,<sup>170</sup> and Cheshire was evidently one of the more selective local authorities, at least as far as the south-west of the county was concerned.

Settlement development depended on how well roads were maintained. Roads that were not designated as main roads were maintained by Rural District Councils. During the days of the Turnpike Trusts responsibility for roads lay with Highway Districts under the Highways Act of 1862 [25 & 26 Vic c.61]. Disturnpiked 'main' roads were maintained by county councils under the Local Government Act of 1888 [51&52 Vic c.41]. The Local Government Act of 1894 [56 & 57 Vic c.73] transferred Highway Districts to local Rural Sanitary Districts which, as later Rural District Councils (RDCs), maintained the non-main roads.<sup>171</sup> For example, from the 1890s Tarvin RDC ensured Tilston's roads were repaired and that new routes and bridges were built when necessary.<sup>172</sup> Once constructed, the new main roads relied for maintenance on grants from the Highway Districts, and were not always of adequate standard in the late-nineteenth century. At a meeting of the East Broxton Highway Board in 1887 the county surveyor advised withholding grants for certain main roads 'not quite up to the mark'. Occasionally the poor state of some new main roads stemmed from bad maintenance of former turnpike roads. For example, the Wrexham to Barnhill Road through Farndon and Broxton (A534) was gravelled when a turnpike road and when wet it 'worked up' and needed resurfacing. The Wetreins Road between Stretton and Crewe by Farndon was in a very bad state, and the Board decided to surface it with old bricks.<sup>173</sup> This concern with the state of the newly disturnpiked roads indicates that they were unsatisfactory routes to use before the early twentieth century in spite of their popularity. This possibly hampered settlement growth if the state of the roads made importing building materials and other goods into the area more expensive.

There is some evidence that the new main roads affected settlement development. Among the new disturnpiked roads of 1878/9 were Farndon through Shocklach (later the B5130) and Shocklach to Ebnal/Hollow Road,<sup>174</sup> recognising

<sup>170</sup> Webb, *Highway*, pp. 225, 245.

<sup>171</sup> Hey, *History*, pp. 208, 214, 223, 402.

<sup>172</sup> CCALS, RRT/1, p. 257.

<sup>173</sup> 'East Broxton Highway Board meeting', *Chester Chronicle*, 15 April 1882, p. 5.

<sup>174</sup> CCALS, CH 1/1/3 9 (map).

the importance to the area of the routes through Shocklach. Subsequently population grew in Shocklach Oviatt until 1911 so the road probably maintained settlement viability until that point. It at least provided the two townships with access to the area's main settlements and contact with Farndon, Chester and Wales.

The roads approved as main roads in 1878/9 have since changed in importance. Not all of them were classified as A or B roads; for example the Farndon to Worthenbury road through Shocklach was not classified.<sup>175</sup> The road through Tilston remains a minor road while the roads through Malpas have become B roads (B5069, B5395). The A41 and A49 have become the major by-pass routes through south-west Cheshire, the A49 being the more recent, and provide access to Whitchurch and Tarporley.<sup>176</sup> Not only is Tilston, on a well-used route in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not on a main road but the area's largest town, Malpas, has also been sidelined by A roads, a result of the earlier turnpiking decisions.

Landownership patterns had a decreasing effect on the location of transport routes during the twentieth century. The introduction of modern roads and the increased use of car travel in the area since 1920, and rapidly increasing car ownership from the 1950s, made travel easier<sup>177</sup> so some settlements that might have become isolated by the lack of fast roads or access to suitable public transport could develop as commuter villages. Although private car ownership had become more popular since 1904, ownership numbers did not increase dramatically until the inter-war years. This was helped by road surfaces improved by asphaltting since the late-nineteenth century.<sup>178</sup> Car registration was two million in 1939, and rose to four

<sup>175</sup> The Farndon to Worthenbury route is still convenient for those who know the way, but it is narrow and winding. Although useful for travelling to Shocklach, the main routes of the A534 and A41 take traffic through to Wales and Whitchurch much faster. There are also alternative and probably faster routes to Tilston and Malpas from the A534.

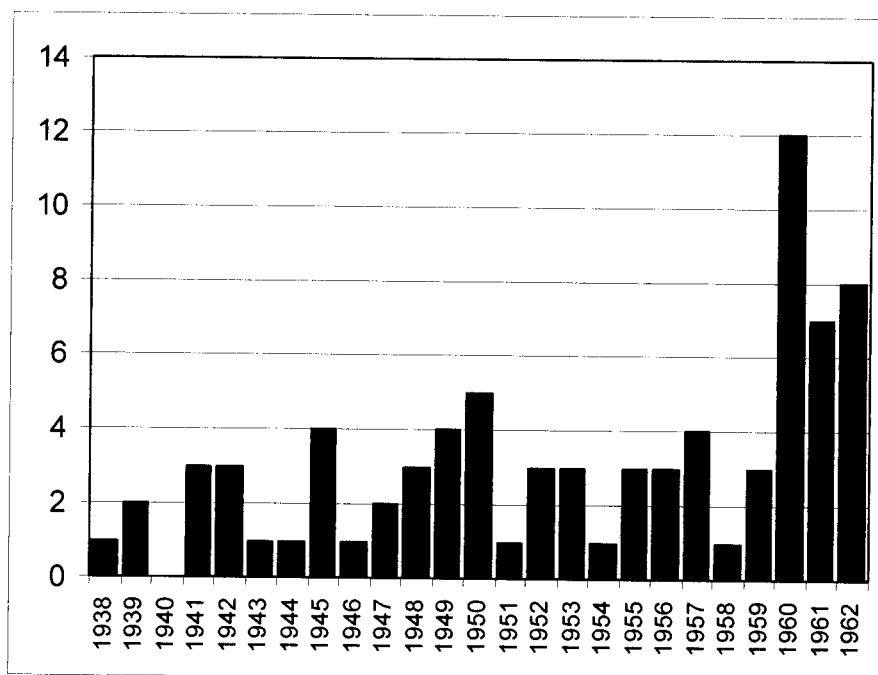
<sup>176</sup> Roads were classified between 1919 and 1926 by the new Ministry of Transport under W. Rees-Jeffries in order to allocate government money according to their use and to help travellers. In 1920 central government began to contribute to road maintenance. The Local Government Act of 1929 transferred all roads in rural districts and the highway powers of Rural District Councils to County Councils. In 1936 the Trunk Roads Act created a national system of through traffic routes. The system was interrupted by World War Two but afterwards the government created 5950 km (c.3,700 miles) of roads. (C. Mitchell, *Chris's British Road Directory: British Road FAQ* <<http://cbrd.co.uk/roadsfaq/#25>> [accessed 24 January 2004]; Hindle, *Roads*, pp. 139-40.

<sup>177</sup> B.R. Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1962); Phillips and Smith, *Lancashire and Cheshire*, p. 302.

<sup>178</sup> P. Waller, *The English Urban Landscape* (Oxford, 2000), p. 219.

million by 1950, and 20 million by 1990.<sup>179</sup> In south-west Cheshire this trend can be seen by examining the number of garages approved since 1950; from 1960 onwards significantly more people obtained permission to erect garages (Figure 6:28). This gave further encouragement to already well-established settlements to expand, mainly, but not entirely, those with low HHIs and therefore with less landownership concentration and therefore less control by large landowners. For example, Tilston township (low HHI) increased its population between 1921 and 1971 by 82 per cent (see chapter three).

**Figure 6:28** Number of garage applications in south-west Cheshire.



Sources: CCALS, RRT/392, RRT/391.

## Twentieth-century transport plans

Many of Cheshire's transport plans from the mid-twentieth century helped maintain south-west Cheshire's rural character. For example, in 1949 the county's pioneering *A Plan for Cheshire* stated that 'the clean-cut lines of the modern arterial road' would be 'far too mechanical in open countryside', and the area avoided this type of road. However, the *Plan* also set a precedent for later Cheshire county plans by

<sup>179</sup> Barker and Gerhold, *Transport*, p. 95

acknowledging the importance of transport systems in the distribution of settlements.<sup>180</sup>

Cheshire County Council acknowledged that roads were paramount in determining the way in which settlements in rural Cheshire developed: 'The roads of the county are the framework which will largely govern the future pattern of urban and rural development, ...'<sup>181</sup> It was therefore keen to divert heavy vehicles away from rural settlements. This was a particular problem in Farndon, Broxton, Hampton Heath and Bell O'Th' Hill and the road plan was eventually altered to achieve this either by a by-pass or other improvement schemes.<sup>182</sup> The intended Holt-Farndon by-pass, although 'not considered to be a route of high strategic importance', would divert traffic away from the route through the town and over the bridge to Holt and improve the environment.<sup>183</sup> The alteration in the route from Grindley Brook into Tushingham can be dated to just before the publication of the *Plan* where it states that the A41 enters the County 'by means of a new route passing by Tushingham'.<sup>184</sup> The small settlements in No Man's Heath and Macefen were by-passed by the A41 in 1999.<sup>185</sup> The new roads therefore followed the older routes, the placement of which was influenced by whether townships had low or high landownership concentration (low or high HHI) a trend which still appeared to operate in Edge.

Modern roads provide fast access through the area but can have the effect of isolating some settlements. For example, most roads in Edge are minor or are virtually tracks to which the A41 Whitchurch road, one of the major by-passing routes in the area, is a significant exception. However, during the late-nineteenth century, the Edge inhabitants seemed curiously reluctant to allow improvement of roads in their township. This was apparently part of a trend for the inhabitants or landowners of the township to reject or oppose proposed new transport routes. Notably, Edge still has one dominant landowner and only in the late-twentieth century did any significant development take place in the township, in spite of the township's low HHI by 1910 (HHI 2312<sub>D</sub>). Local traffic passes through Edge

<sup>180</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 136.

<sup>181</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 98.

<sup>182</sup> Chester City Council, *Chester Rural Area District Plan: Consultation Report on Key Issues* (Chester, 1979)

<sup>183</sup> Chester, *RAD Plan*, p. 5.

<sup>184</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 100.

<sup>185</sup> Statutory Instrument 1999 no. 2122 <<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1999/19992122.htm>> [accessed 24 February 2004].

because drivers familiar with the area can take a minor road from the A41 to the Roman road through Tilston. However, the township's centre around the Hall and the Green is largely undisturbed by cars except for access by residents or farm traffic. Today's speeding traffic can easily miss the turning to Edge Green and, with no inns, there is no incentive to stop.

By-passing settlements by main roads might now be considered an advantage because some modern commuters seek rural tranquillity and this will be discussed in the chapter seven along with the twentieth-century trend towards counter-urbanisation. However, many residents relied on the limited public transport.

### **Buses**

Landownership patterns could affect the position of transport infrastructure to some extent but had no influence over twentieth century public transport. Rural inhabitants lacking cars rely heavily on public transport and a lack of buses deterred settlement development off the main routes until the advent of motor cars. This section argues that a major growth of settlements in south-west Cheshire has been hampered by lack of easily accessible and frequent public transport. Today, without a railway station in the area, anyone without a car must rely on inadequate bus services. It has been pointed out that 'lack of car access, especially in rural areas where car ownership is usually high, is a good indicator of deprivation';<sup>186</sup> while accessibility is vital to sustainable communities and therefore settlement growth.

Many south-west Cheshire townships have never been well served by public transport. For example, directories from 1864 make no mention of any carrier services and even by the 1930s there were none from Shocklach. Letters during this period were delivered by foot post from Farndon.<sup>187</sup> However, Malpas town, as the low HHI central place for the area, was an obvious hub for public transport and has been served by buses since the mid-nineteenth century. In 1860 an omnibus served Malpas by leaving for Chester once a day three days a week and for Whitchurch once a day one day a week. It left from the Crown Inn in Malpas.<sup>188</sup> In 1864 the same proprietor's omnibus left on three days a week from the Red Lion Hotel in Malpas to

<sup>186</sup> M. Baxter, 'Measuring the accessibility of key services', *In focus*, (2005), 15-18 (p. 15).

<sup>187</sup> *Kelly's Directory of Cheshire and North Wales* (Chester, 1864); *Morris's Directory of Cheshire* (Nottingham, 1874, 1880); *PO Directory 1878*; *Kelly's 1896, 1906*.

<sup>188</sup> *White's Directory of Cheshire* (Sheffield, 1860), p. 185.

the Nags Head in Chester with one return journey the same day.<sup>189</sup> By 1872 the railway had reached Hampton and the omnibus met all trains and returned to the Crown Hotel.<sup>190</sup> This was apparently the main trade for the omnibus as by 1878 a separate carrier had taken the Whitchurch run on one day a week.<sup>191</sup> Both were operating in 1896, by then under the same proprietor, Philip Dodd.<sup>192</sup> These regular round trips to meet the trains made it much easier for Malpas town's inhabitants to travel to work in either Chester or Whitchurch. It coincided with a late-nineteenth-century population increase showing that Malpas was expanding to meet commuter demand. Tilston and Farndon (both low HHI townships) also had a carrier service to Chester during the same period<sup>193</sup> and Tilston and Threapwood had carriers to Wrexham in 1869 and 1874 respectively.<sup>194</sup>

By 1906, however, the carrier from Malpas to Whitchurch had ceased,<sup>195</sup> probably because the train made its journey unnecessary. In the same year Crosville Motor Services Ltd. was formed and provided a much broader range of routes than the existing omnibus to the railway station. Crosville had taken over the original trips to Chester on three days a week, adding a second day's trip to Whitchurch and trips on three days to Wrexham.<sup>196</sup> This was the beginning of the area's modern bus services.

Without adequate public transport there was less incentive for settlement growth, even in low HHI townships such as Malpas. Inhabitants like those in Edge, (by 1910 a low HHI township, and possibly by now paying less attention to the whims of landowners) were aware of the lack of public transport and in 1942 requested an improved bus service between Chester and Whitchurch similar to the one provided for neighbouring Hampton.<sup>197</sup> South-west Cheshire was singled out for the paucity of its bus services in 1946 when *A Plan for Cheshire* expressed concern

<sup>189</sup> *Kelly's 1864*, p. 58.

<sup>190</sup> *Directory of Cheshire 1874*, p. 283.

<sup>191</sup> *PO Directory 1878*, p. 245.

<sup>192</sup> *Kelly's 1896*, p. 72.

<sup>193</sup> *White's 1860*, pp. 172, 215; *Kelly's 1864*, p. 71; *Slater's 1869*, pp. 156, 1874, pp. 283, 260; *PO Directory 1878*, p. 243; *Kelly's 1896*, pp. 186, 245.

<sup>194</sup> *Directory of Cheshire 1748*, p. 283; *Slater's 1869*, p. 71.

<sup>195</sup> *Kelly's 1906*, p. 437.

<sup>196</sup> *Kelly's 1939*, p. 270.

<sup>197</sup> CCALS, RP/6/1, [n. p. n.] Wednesday 18 March 1942.

about 'large areas, especially in the South West of the County, which are more than a mile from a bus route offering a service of four or more buses per day.'<sup>198</sup>

In the mid-1950s the Council was aware of the need for improved bus services into Malpas, services still provided by Crosville Motor Services. This company's buses covered the whole of Cheshire, a large part of Wales and part of Lancashire.<sup>199</sup> However, Crosville, which had experienced a post-war boom, was by now in difficulties. Increasing fares to cover rising prices only led to fewer passengers. The company, affected by the Suez crisis, reduced mileage by ten per cent and many routes were never subsequently restored. This, coupled with staff shortages, led to a contraction in Crosville's services from the 1960s, particularly in rural services which proved unprofitable. In taking this action the Company followed a national trend by other bus services.<sup>200</sup> Chester City Council's Transport Committee promised to review the problems that rural residents of Chester Rural District had in using Corporation bus operators<sup>201</sup> and it was agreed that a new bus service would operate from 15 September 1957; the railway's closure the same year made the need for the service more urgent. The Clerk suggested that Crosville provide a bus service to replace the 4.33pm train to Chester<sup>202</sup> and in 1967 the Council supported a request for a Sunday bus service to coincide with hospital visiting hours.<sup>203</sup>

South-west Cheshire was included in the council's list of 'under-populated areas' with a clear need for good transport links to stimulate settlement development. In 1979 a Chester City Council report noted that some services in under-populated areas had been withdrawn and that others had been diverted. At this time in south-west Cheshire buses ran through only Malpas and Shocklach. By 1979 Crosville Services provided only two Monday journeys from Wrexham via Malpas to Whitchurch, and one Saturday service to Wrexham from Shocklach. It also ran a four hourly service from Chester to Whitchurch, presumably accessible to people in Malpas. Salopia Motor Services also provided a limited service to Whitchurch.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>198</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 38

<sup>199</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 3 November 1956, p. 7.

<sup>200</sup> P. Gould, 'Crosville Motor Services Ltd. 1911-1990', <<http://www.lancstransport.co.uk/fleethistories/crosville.htm>> [accessed 18 Aug 2004].

<sup>201</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 27 October 1956, p. 74

<sup>202</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 6 August 1957, p. 146.

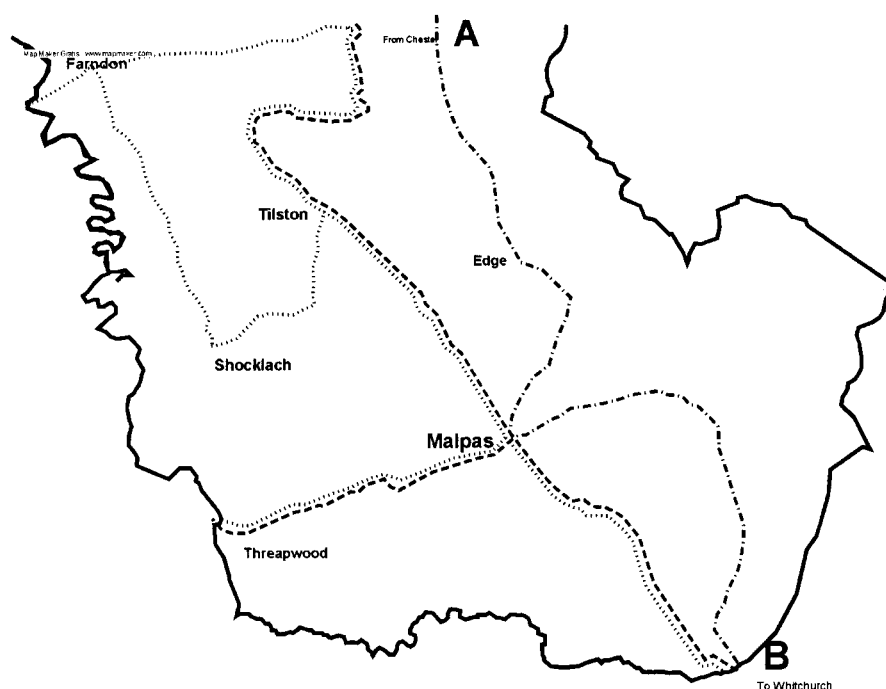
<sup>203</sup> CCALS, RP/10/1/7, p. 87.

<sup>204</sup> Chester, *RAD Plan*, pp. 34-5.



This shows that, apart from Malpas and Shocklach, most of the area was too far from bus services for them to be useful.

**Figure 6:29: Bus routes in south-west Cheshire, 1977.**



Source: Based on CCALS, CHX 1/4, Drawing No. TP/98043/001.

By 1985 Cheshire county planners were still concerned about bus services. They deplored the long distances that rural inhabitants had to travel for work, shopping and leisure purposes but explained that public transport was expensive to provide. They pointed out that bus companies raised fares to service rural areas which drove people to use private cars more and buses less and led to further price rises that discouraged travellers.<sup>205</sup> However, they claimed that Tilston had benefited from improved bus services and that they intended these should also be provided to other small villages.<sup>206</sup>

Today most south-west Cheshire settlements are still poorly served by buses and most of the five bus networks in the area concentrate on the route from Chester to Whitchurch down the A41 calling at Malpas (Figure 6:29 route A to B). In 1988 Crosville Motor Services was divided into two companies to assist deregulation and

<sup>205</sup> Chester City Council Planning Office, *Chester Rural Area Local Plan. Written Statement* (Chester, 1985), p. 61.

<sup>206</sup> Chester Planning, *RAL Plan*, pp. 64, 95.

was then sold off in sections. The west Cheshire section of Crosville Services, owned by PMT (Potteries Motor Traction) since 1990, now operates in south-west Cheshire.<sup>207</sup> By 2001 nine parishes along the Chester to Whitchurch route still remained without a bus service despite the intention of transport co-ordinators to improve services for the twenty-first century.<sup>208</sup> However, there were services, although infrequent, from Malpas to Threapwood, Malpas to Grindley Brook, Farndon to Shocklach Oviatt to Tilston to Carden, and Malpas to Tilston.<sup>209</sup> Although the inadequate bus services and lack of a railway are inconvenient, Malpas town provides basic services. Increased personal car use since the 1950s has meant that the lack of public transport has not halted the town's growth, although since 1971 the rate of growth has slowed considerably (Chapter three, Figure 3:8).

In general, the available evidence suggests that the area is still poorly served by public transport, and that settlement growth can only take place in areas where there is good road access. But private car ownership means that certain places such as Tilston can grow while Malpas with its low HHI and traditionally low landownership concentration continues to benefit from its central place status.

## **Conclusion**

The impact of landownership patterns on changes in transport infrastructure and therefore on settlements in south-west Cheshire has been varied. *Phillips and Smith* noted that transport development generally led to significant changes throughout Cheshire, but that there was little positive effect on some villages in agricultural areas.<sup>210</sup> The effect of some major landowners, albeit limited, on the placing of the transport infrastructure resulted in the continuation of original settlement development patterns. In some townships transport routes had a direct effect on settlement growth as, for example, in Tushingam after the canal was built, or in some townships with easy access to what is now the A41, such as Malpas and Hampton. However, many smaller settlements, generally with high HHIs (and therefore controlled by large landowners), have failed to grow while larger ones such

<sup>207</sup> Lancashire Transport History <<http://www.lancstransport.co.uk/indexc.htm>> [accessed 18 August 2004].

<sup>208</sup> 'Government decision on bus plan imminent', *Chester Chronicle*, 19 January 2001, p. 12.

<sup>209</sup> CCALS, CHX 1/4, drawings TP/98043/001, TP/98043/003-007.

<sup>210</sup> Phillips and Smith, *Cheshire*, p. 189.

as Malpas, Broxton, Farndon, and Tilston, mainly with low HHIs (and therefore without dominant landowners) or on main transport routes, have expanded. The provision of a good transport route did not, however, guarantee growth as the slower growth of Broxton, seemingly ideally placed, has shown. The power of landownership as shown by a township's HHI was still the main determinant of a township's successful development. Public transport is poor throughout the area which makes travel difficult for residents without cars. However, for some settlements such as Tilston and Shocklach, isolation from public transport has been an asset in recent decades because they have become attractive to commuters.

From the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, in contrast to Cheshire and national populations, the population of south-west Cheshire fell although some settlements grew while others declined. This suggests that the relative lack of transport routes throughout the period limited population growth compared with the rest of the county (Figure 6:30).

**Table 6:30 Population in fifty year periods as percentage change.**

	1751-1801	1801-1851	1851-1901	1901-1951	1951-2001
National population	+50	+93	+98	+23	+12
Rural population		+52			+35
Cheshire population		+137	+82	-52	-56
South-west Cheshire population	+26 (estimated)	+29	-8	-4	+23

Sources: National census data, 1801-1991; Gardiner and Wenborn, *British History*, pp. 610-11; Wrigley and Schofield, *Population*, pp. 533-35; Lawton, 'Depopulation'; National Statistics <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=6>>; <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/13.asp>>; <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/bicentenary/pdfs/cheshire.pdf>>; Rowley, *Villages*, p. 46.

In the seventeenth and early-eighteenth century the area appeared to have the basis of a comprehensive transport infrastructure, but the objections by some landowners and the subsequent location of new routes meant that transport facilities were not really well suited to the needs of the local population and only the larger of the settlements were able to sustain any growth, generally those that were well-

established and usually with low HHIs. These points are reinforced by close examination of the six sample townships which shows that isolation from adequate transport routes had a limiting effect on settlement development, reflected by changing population levels. Malpas grew because it had a low HHI and was the area's central place in spite of frustrating transport links; Tushingam, also with low HHIs, developed because it had access to the canal; and Tilston (low HHIs) grew in spite of lacking a turnpike road because it was on a well-used through route. The late turnpiking of the road through the Shocklach settlement (straddling low and high HHI townships) helped it survive and Edge's settlement (high HHIs until 1910) remained viable only because it was close to the A41, no doubt helped by the gradual decrease of landownership concentration and therefore control as measured by its HHIs. The larger settlements of Malpas and Tilston grew and smaller settlements like Edge stagnated. The advent of the railway engendered some growth but it was increased car use from the 1950s which enabled commuters to live in isolated settlements that helped all the settlements, but especially the smaller ones of Tushingam, Shocklach and Edge, to survive.

As late as the 1990s modern planners were aware that rural Cheshire needed improved transport services as well as facilities close to their communities so that long distance travel might become less necessary. In 1997 the Local District Plan stated its aim 'to minimise the car'<sup>211</sup> and to provide more village by-passes to take traffic out of rural settlements. It was hoped that rural inhabitants would travel less, work from home, and use public transport more.<sup>212</sup> By 2000 the government was expressing an even more specific and worthy aim for rural communities: that most inhabitants would live within ten minutes of at least an hourly bus service. However, it also admitted that 84 per cent of rural inhabitants owned a car compared to 69 per cent of urban dwellers. While recognising the importance of the private car to rural communities it hoped for more rural bus services and more local facilities.<sup>213</sup> It is clear that south-west Cheshire, without any improvement in bus services, will not comply with County Council and government aims.

The hypothesis set out at the start of this chapter is partly proven. Settlements on turnpike roads grew although a few on well-used but non-turnpike routes also

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<sup>211</sup> Chester City Council, *Chester District Local Plan* (Chester, 1997) p. 116.

<sup>212</sup> Council, *District*, p. 126.

<sup>213</sup> Department of the Environment, *Countryside*, p. 19.

developed, in spite of physical isolation from the routes. The canal had a physical impact only on Tushingham township, the township closest to the canal. The railway had little impact on settlement growth and only limited physical impact on the station settlements. Modern roads have improved access to more isolated settlements with a corresponding increase in commuter use. The attitude of some landowners was apparently instrumental in stopping or amending transport routes through the area which laid the foundations for any transport-related development or decline. This is supported by the fact that it was settlements in townships with a low HHI or on the main transport routes that expanded while those with high HHIs tended to be distant from the main routes and stagnated or declined. The question of how landownership affected settlement development more directly is discussed further in chapters seven and eight.

## Chapter seven

### Farming, consolidation and enclosure

The accumulation or dispersal of land through consolidation or enclosure altered landownership patterns throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This in turn affected the ability of landowners to control settlement development. These changes took place against a background of agricultural change which, combined with the local response to enclosure and the area's specific local needs, meant that, unlike in the Midlands, the settlement patterns that existed in 1750 tended to change gradually rather than dramatically.

This chapter first describes the progress of agricultural change in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Against this background it examines how landownership patterns as measured by HHI affected and were affected by the process of consolidation and enclosure.

#### ***Agricultural change 1750 to 2000***

##### **Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century agriculture**

Nationally, the period from the mid-eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century witnessed major changes in agriculture coupled with alterations to landownership patterns. These two changes interacted with and affected each other, although the precise relationship between the two is still debated.<sup>1</sup> One consequence was an increase in the size of the great estates, sometimes at the expense of smaller landowners, together with larger and more productive farms and a growth in agricultural building. New types of land drainage opened areas to farming. Additionally, during this period, the enclosure of open-field arable, commons and waste enabled landowners to experiment with improved methods of agricultural management.

The power of landowners over the land in south-west Cheshire was firmly embedded in their ownership and use of agricultural land. The area had little non-

<sup>1</sup> E.g. see R. J. P. Kain, J. Chapman and R. R. Oliver, *The Enclosure Movement in England and Wales* (Cambridge, 2005); J. V. Beckett, *The Agricultural Revolution* (London, 1990); P. J. Perry, *British Agriculture 1875-1914* (London, 1973); J. D. Chambers and G. E. Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution, 1750-1880* (London, 1966); M. Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy* (Cambridge, 1996).

agricultural industry to counteract the dominance of dairying. Such industry that existed tended to be small scale and catered for local needs. Examples include an iron works, stone works and brickworks at Duckington (1751),<sup>2</sup> stone supplied from Leche's quarry at Carden and Tilston (1831, 1897) and a tile yard at Tushingham near Grindley Brook (1847).<sup>3</sup> The Bickerton Copper mines were close to the area, but not in it, and until 1849/50 there were salt works at Upper and Lower Wych (Wychough and Wigland townships).<sup>4</sup> However, the small settlements of Higher and Lower Wych that had grown up around the salt works in Wigland and Agden townships had stagnated by the mid-nineteenth century following the closure of the salt works.<sup>5</sup> What industrial activity there was outside farming itself was generally related to supporting agriculture, such as transporting lime for the fields. This section therefore concentrates on agriculture as the area's primary industry.

South-west Cheshire has been primarily a dairying area since the seventeenth century, although the county as a whole retained substantial arable areas until the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> From 1750 to 1850 between two thirds and three quarters of Cheshire was under grass, with cattle occupying most of the best grazing land.<sup>7</sup> Kain and Harriet's extensive work on Cheshire tithe files show that in the mid-nineteenth century approximately 80 per cent of south-west Cheshire was under grass and only 20 per cent was arable.<sup>8</sup> By 1900 the area was 90 per cent grassland.<sup>9</sup>

Although agricultural improvements were introduced from the eighteenth century onwards, nineteenth-century Cheshire farming was generally in a poor state. Caird in 1852 noted that while the infrastructure for selling produce was in place and the climate good, the land 'in counties like Cheshire' was 'pretty nearly in a state of nature, underdrained, badly fenced, and wretchedly farmed.'<sup>10</sup>

<sup>2</sup> CCALS, DTD 15/9.

<sup>3</sup> CCALS, DBA/91, RRT/1, DMD/L/1.

<sup>4</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> CCALS, EDT/427/2; <<http://www.old-maps.co.uk/oldmaps>>

<sup>6</sup> A. Young, *The Farmer's Calendar*, 8th edn (London, 1809), pp.292-5; Marshall, *Agriculture*, p. 24; Caird, *Agriculture*, p. 252; G. E. Fussell, 'Four centuries of Cheshire farming systems', *THSLC*, 106 (1954), 57-77, p. 57; Defoe, 'Tour', Appendix pp. 338-9; D. Taylor, 'Growth and structural change in the English dairy industry', *AgHR*, 35 (1987), 47-64 (p. 49); Kain and Harriet, 'Farming', *TLCAS*, p. 27; Phillips and Phillips, *Atlas*, p.56.

<sup>7</sup> *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1750-1850*, ed. G. E. Mingay, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, 6, ed. J. Thirsk, (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 34, 44.

<sup>8</sup> Kain and Harriet, 'Farming', pp. 29, 32-3, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Phillips and Phillips, *Atlas*, p. 57d.

<sup>10</sup> Caird, *Agriculture*, p. viii.

The period of intense agricultural change nationally during the second half of the eighteenth century and most of the nineteenth century is commonly known as the 'Agricultural Revolution', although most recent authors maintain that it had its roots in earlier centuries.<sup>11</sup> Traditionally the period has been divided into two different eras, an initial period of change and a subsequent period of increased innovation. Ernle called the earlier period, which he dated from 1780 to 1813, 'one of exceptional activity in agricultural progress.'<sup>12</sup> The 'High Farming' period dating from about 1837 to 1880<sup>13</sup> was dominated by innovations by the great landowning farmers including increased agricultural building, 'model' farms to demonstrate the effectiveness of new agricultural processes, and improved drainage methods that revolutionised productivity.<sup>14</sup> It seems logical to date the two periods to 1780 to 1836 and 1837 to 1880.

The 'High Farming' period overlapped with a period from 1860 until 1930 when there were important changes to British agriculture and to the dairy industry in particular. Population growth, particularly in the expanding urban areas, increased domestic demand for butter, cheese and meat. Foreign competition intensified and milk overtook cheese and butter as the most important commodity produced on English farms.<sup>15</sup> The dairying county of Cheshire was well placed to provide such food. By 1800 the national population was already rising, although at a lower rate in

<sup>11</sup> J. Lake, *Historic Farm Buildings: An Introduction and Guide in Association with the National Trust* (London, 1989), p. 17; Beckett, *Revolution*, p. ix; Chambers and Mingay, *Revolution*, pp. 4,5; S. Wade Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes: Rural Britain, 1720 to 1870* (Macclesfield, 2004), p. 6; G. E. Mingay, *Enclosure and the Small Farmer in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1968), p. 17; J. Addy, *The Agrarian Revolution* (London, 1972), p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Lord Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present*, 5th edn (London, 1912)  
<<http://www.soilandhealth.org/01aglibrary/010136ernle/010136toc.htm>> [accessed 31 March 2005], chap. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Historians have used various dates, for example see: Chambers and Mingay, *Revolution*, p.ix; Beckett, *Revolution*, pp. 4, 5, 72; *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1850-1914*, ed. J. Thirsk, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, 7, ed. J. Thirsk (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Ernle, *Farming*, chap. 17; Perry, *Agriculture*; D. B. Grigg, *English Agriculture: An Historical Perspective* (Oxford, 1989); S. Wade Martins, *The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914* (Macclesfield, 2002), p. 1; A.D.M. Phillips, *The Underdraining of England during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1989).

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, 'Growth', pp. 63-4; G. M. Robinson, *Agricultural Change* (Edinburgh, 1988), p. 90; Mingay, *Agrarian History*; R. T. Dalton, 'The railway milk trade and farming in the north Midlands: C1860-1914', *Midland History*, 28 (2003), 100-119 (p. 110); Grigg, *Agriculture* p. 8; Overton, *Revolution* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 194. Approximately 90 per cent of food consumed in England was home produced by 1850, reducing to 75 per cent by 1875. So for most of the nineteenth century, although there was a reduction in food self-sufficiency, the maintenance of food supplies from farms was important.



south-west Cheshire, but this was coupled with improved food output until the depression of the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>16</sup>

The extent and effect of the so-called 'Agricultural Revolution' has been much debated by historians. Chambers and Mingay, for example, agreed that, although technological change was comparatively late, soil preparation was revolutionised from the mid-eighteenth century when farm output improved, and modern historians have generally accepted that this so-called 'revolution' was the culmination of a period of agricultural change that had been occurring for centuries.<sup>17</sup> Some later writers, such as Overton for example, dated the origins of the new technology back to the seventeenth century.<sup>18</sup>

Between 1750 and 1914 England suffered not only economic and agricultural depressions, including collapsing prices caused by the Napoleonic War of 1803 to 1815, but also bad seasons and livestock plagues. It is generally agreed that there was a Great Depression in English agriculture from the mid-1870s to the end of the nineteenth century which, while mainly affecting the arable areas of the south and east, became more severe in the north and west from 1885 onwards.<sup>19</sup> Perry pointed out that whether or not there was a widespread economic depression as is generally believed, the last quarter of the nineteenth century was a period of falling agricultural prices, an increase in bankruptcies among farmers, lower rents and untenanted farms. It was during this period that agriculture ceased to be Britain's primary industry. The changes brought in by the period of 'High Farming' were not always economical during periods of depression.<sup>20</sup>

The result of the Great Depression was that some farms were abandoned or farmers moved to smaller holdings because failure to provide a living made farms impossible to let. This left land free for newcomers or for a takeover by more

<sup>16</sup> J.V. Beckett, 30 October 2004, The Agricultural Revolution in Cheshire. Lecture presented for Cheshire Local History Association at Northwich Memorial Hall, Northwich, Cheshire.

<sup>17</sup> Chambers and Mingay, *Revolution*, pp. 4-5, T. Williamson, 'Understanding Enclosure', *Landscapes*, 1, no. 1 (2000), 56-79 (p. 64).

<sup>18</sup> Overton, *Agricultural Revolution*, p. 4; e.g. Addy, *Revolution* p. 3; Chambers and Mingay, *Revolution*, p. ix. Overton suggested that, in spite of disagreements about dates and innovations, most historians agree that technological change and increased output were the main features of the Revolution (p.1). Beckett argued for an Agricultural Revolution that produced its own changes independent of its role in 'feeding' an Industrial Revolution. He recognised that the Agricultural Revolution resulted in reorganised land through enclosure, an increase in farm sizes and improved drainage. (Beckett, *Revolution*, Lecture).

<sup>19</sup> T. W. Fletcher, 'The Great Depression of English Agriculture', in *British Agriculture 1875-1914*, ed. P. J. Perry (London, 1973), pp.30-31; G. M Robinson, *Agricultural Change* (Edinburgh, 1988), p. 31; Thirsk, *Agrarian History* 7, p. 138.

<sup>20</sup> Perry, *Agriculture*, p. xii.

successful farmers.<sup>21</sup> Mingay suggests that it was this failure of the land to provide a financial return that led to the eventual decrease in the power of landowners.<sup>22</sup> Recovery from the Great Depression did not take place until the period between 1897 and 1914.<sup>23</sup>

Cheshire's problems had started before the Great Depression as a result of recurring cattle plagues and foot and mouth disease which caused concern throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (especially 1745-56, 1855-1866 and 1867-71). How well tenants fared and whether they felt the need to abandon their farms depended largely on the attitude of the landowners. In 1751 John Eaton advised his fellow landowner William Drake to lay farms to tillage until the distemper had abated. William Drake's agent Amb[rose] Nickson informed Drake in 1757 that some landowners were lowering rates and restocking their tenants' farms. However, 'Some ten[an]ts go and I saw farms without Ten[an]ts and cannot be lett by reason of distemper.' After naming the bereft tenants he says 'The ten[an]ts are dull and heavy and do not go on as usuall and are afraid every day of losses.' Drake himself lost 286 cattle from his estate in 1751 and his agent paid out £245-10-0 in compensation to tenants. In the plague of the 1860s, when 57,712 cattle in Cheshire were affected, landowners were again asked for a subscription to help tenants survive.<sup>24</sup> However, dairying survived many agricultural problems that arable and sheep farmers found overwhelming because milk sales provided sufficient financial stability.<sup>25</sup>

Nationally, but especially in the Midlands, the agricultural changes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were accompanied and made possible by the enclosure of large areas of open-field arable and later commons and waste both piecemeal and by general (often parliamentary) enclosure. Enclosure of the landscape allowed changes in farming practices. As Slater said, writing within a few generations of the main era of parliamentary enclosure, the new Act (13 Geo. III c.81 1773 for the better regulation of common fields) allowed enclosure and improvement

<sup>21</sup> Perry, *Agriculture*, pp. xxviii-ix.

<sup>22</sup> G. E. Mingay, *Land and Society in England 1750-1980* (Harlow, 1994), p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Thirsk, *Agrarian History* 7, p. 208. Perry suggested that agricultural depression was 'as much of change as of decay'. He pointed out that although farming lost its status as Britain's primary industry, losing much of its agricultural workforce and capital investment, depression led to greater technical farming skill and it expanded in areas such as dairying and horticulture.

<sup>24</sup> CCALS, DTD 9/26,, DTD 9/27, DTD 9/28, DEO 210/12, DEO 210/13.

<sup>25</sup> Dalton, 'Milk trade', p. 109.

of open fields with the agreement of three quarters<sup>26</sup> of the proprietors, and enabled the 'common field system to be adjusted to the new agriculture of the eighteenth century'. He concluded that large landowners gained from enclosure, but small landowners did not.<sup>27</sup> Parliamentary enclosure benefited larger landowners because they could afford the costs associated with the process of enclosure and, having created larger holdings, could afford to implement the agricultural changes that would make the land profitable.<sup>28</sup> However, we should bear in mind that by 1750 most of the country had already been enclosed by informal means and in areas of early enclosure such as Cheshire piecemeal enclosure was still continuing.<sup>29</sup>

The fortunes of landowners dependent on an agricultural landscape fluctuated according to changes in outside circumstances. Adverse circumstances led to lower incomes for owners and tenants and therefore less building took place. On the other hand, the money generated by improved farming methods, benign economic circumstances and government aid encouraged and enabled farmers and landlords to invest in buildings, both domestic and commercial, including farmhouses and labourers' cottages.

The so-called 'Agricultural Revolution' was therefore a culmination of developing agricultural techniques coupled with the opportunity created by enclosure to put them into action. Control over the land was therefore vital to maintain viable farms and, in better times, effect improvements. This would have provided an incentive for consolidating landholdings into larger estates which in turn put control over the land into the hands of fewer landowners.

## Twentieth century agriculture

Twentieth-century rural settlement development took place against a background of agricultural change and an ongoing agricultural depression that lasted intermittently until the end of World War Two. There was also an ongoing decline of the farming workforce which had been relocating to towns since the 1880s.<sup>30</sup> Increased mechanisation and new methods of improving land, crops and livestock led to larger farm sizes, improved productivity and fewer labourers which resulted in more out-migration and a decrease in rural populations as those with no local employment

<sup>26</sup> The proportion of proprietors needed to agree enclosure varied at different periods.

<sup>27</sup> G. Slater, *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields* (London, 1907), pp. 88, 96.

<sup>28</sup> Scard, *Squire*, p. 20; R. Muir and N. Muir, *Fields* (London, 1989), p. 112.

<sup>29</sup> Williamson, 'Understanding', p. 70.

<sup>30</sup> *The Land. The Report of the Land Enquiry Committee* (London, 1913), p. 31.

moved to towns.<sup>31</sup> This was offset by a trend for urban dwellers to relocate to rural areas from about 1910 onwards which ultimately changed the face of rural settlements.<sup>32</sup> Even in the remaining strong agricultural areas, the link between the land and the population was greatly weakened. This 'counter-urbanisation' will be discussed in the next chapter. However, we should note that this decline in the agricultural workforce led to a decrease in the number of agricultural cottages built – a trend offset by the residential requirements of the newly relocated urban incomers.

Farmers in some areas of Britain benefited from the two World Wars, in spite of national campaigns during both wars to plough up pasture for arable production. This process was only partially reversed in Cheshire during the inter-war years.<sup>33</sup> Large tenant farmers were best placed to survive World War One and many bought their farms during the inter-war land sales. However, those who bought in 1919 suffered when agricultural prices fell by 1921: the special treatment given to farmers during World War One ended with the repeal of the Agricultural Act 1921 and this was followed by foot and mouth disease from 1923 to 1924. Immediately after World War One dairying still dominated agriculture although farm sizes varied. Land sales rose again between 1924 and 1925 and there was a growing inter-war demand for a fairer distribution of land through the creation of smallholdings. Whether and how this occurred depended on individual councils.<sup>34</sup>

Land use in Cheshire remained substantially the same between 1901 and 1946, although urban development had decreased slightly the amount of agricultural land from approximately 82 per cent in 1901 to 80 per cent in 1946. Pre-World War Two figures showed pasture acreage remained virtually constant and varying between 52 and 55 per cent between 1901 and 1938 and rough grazing land increased from 0.2 per cent in 1901 to only 0.3 per cent in 1938. Less than half the land in the county in 1946 was consolidated into estates of a thousand or more acres and about a quarter of the farms were owner-occupied. Dairy farming in Cheshire in 1946 was about twice as important as it was nationally and in south-west Cheshire there were about 400 dairy cattle per thousand acres compared to about 200 to 250

<sup>31</sup> Whitby, and others, *Development*, pp. 123, 127.

<sup>32</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping*, pp. 230-1.

<sup>33</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping* pp. 45, 55, 88, 276, 282.

elsewhere in the county.<sup>35</sup> This emphasises the area's importance as dairying country.

During World War Two, which Martin argues 'had greater significance in the development of British agriculture than any other comparable period since the Norman Conquest', ten per cent of Cheshire's permanent pasture was ploughed up to aid the war food production effort.<sup>36</sup> Approximately 120,000 acres of Cheshire's pasture were put under the plough. Cheshire farmers, particularly in the dairy area of south-west Cheshire, had problems feeding their livestock and coping with a labour shortage.<sup>37</sup> Farmers had to rely on imported feed while maintaining milking stock for the county. However, heavily stocked dairy pasture as in the south-west was unsuitable for arable farming because farm layouts were difficult to change and many fields were inaccessible. But by 1943 about one third of the permanent grass had been ploughed and the number of cows had fallen by three per cent since 1939. Milk production declined, but war-time trends showed that heavy soils were ploughable and improved drainage could bring wet lands into use. In 1946 Cheshire County Council did not know whether the land would revert to mainly dairy farming. Farming practice had increased farm and field sizes, but in Cheshire farmers of the dairy and mixed farms were satisfied with the size of their holdings.<sup>38</sup>

Demand for dairy produce remained high during the war years so most of Cheshire, and in particular south-west Cheshire with its established dairy herds, survived World War Two well. Between the wars cheap grain had lowered feed costs and made meat and dairy production more profitable compared to arable production. Mechanised milk production and the government 'milk contract' with milk suppliers provided a guaranteed income. A more health-aware population meant that milk demand increased which led to an expansion of dairy production.<sup>39</sup> At the end of World War Two agriculture was at its most prosperous since the 1870s, particularly in the arable or ploughed up areas.<sup>40</sup> Landlords were no longer the dominant force in

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<sup>35</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. 21-2 and plate 6.

<sup>36</sup> J. Martin, 'British agricultural archives in the Second World War: lying fallow', *Archives*, 25 no. 103 (Oct 2000), 123-35 (pp. 123-4), R. E. Tigwell, *Cheshire in the Twentieth Century*, 12, p. 34.

<sup>37</sup> Tigwell, *Cheshire*, p. 35.

<sup>38</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 26.

<sup>39</sup> Howkins, *Rural England*, pp. 41, 45-7, 55, 69, 72.

<sup>40</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping*, pp. 36-7.

the agricultural community and some farmers began to diversify, for example, into fruit growing, and poultry production and pig breeding increased.<sup>41</sup>

After World War Two, especially from 1953 with the acceptance of farm subsidies, farming fortunes improved and by the 1970s agriculture in England and Wales was 'stable, prosperous and successful'.<sup>42</sup> This was partly due to Britain's entry into the EEC and its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), instigating a move from farm subsidies to import levies which changed the source of farmers' income from taxation to consumer spending.<sup>43</sup> During the 1990s the declining agricultural workforce was largely replaced by agricultural contractors and agricultural labourers had almost vanished. However, in 1995-6 rural areas suffered huge setbacks because of the onset of BSE and the European ban on British meat imports.<sup>44</sup> This, coupled with regional flooding in the late 1990s, meant that many livestock farmers in particular were struggling by the end of the twentieth century. Farms that had the market advantage of economy of scale would survive (if they did not do so by selling land to developers or diversification), another incentive to consolidate land holdings.

In Cheshire a balance had to be struck between farming and new industries. Although the numbers employed in agriculture had declined since the start of the twentieth century, agriculture itself remained viable because of increased efficiency.<sup>45</sup> South-west Cheshire had virtually no alternative industry and little economic activity other than agriculture was mentioned in late twentieth-century planning reports.<sup>46</sup> However, a certain amount of light industry was subsequently permitted in larger settlements such as Malpas under planning legislation.<sup>47</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that profound changes took place in agricultural practice and the fortunes of farmers. These changes would, in turn, lead to changing landownership patterns, through consolidation and enclosure both informal and formal. These new landownership patterns in turn helped to influence how

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<sup>41</sup> Tigwell, *Cheshire*, pp. 30-1, 34, 35, 39-40,

<sup>42</sup> Howkins, *Rural England*, p. 156.

<sup>43</sup> J. K. Bowers and P. C. Cheshire, *Agriculture, the Countryside and Land Use: An Economic Critique* (London, 1983), p. 89; Howkins, *Rural England*, p. 157.

<sup>44</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping*, pp. 3, 164, 209, 224.

<sup>45</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 88.

<sup>46</sup> One industry mentioned was the prospect of coal extraction in an area called the Dee Valley Prospect (including the area from Ellesmere Port to the south border) which was deemed unlikely. Cheshire's main extraction minerals are sand, salt, coal, clay, peat and sandstone and gritstone. (Cheshire Planning, *Cheshire Minerals Local Plan* (Chester, 1987) pp. 2, 4-6.)

<sup>47</sup> Chester Planning, *RAL Plan*, p. 35.

settlements developed. The effect of planning on the agricultural landscape and landownership patterns and landowner control will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Consolidation and control**

Landownership patterns and the amount of control landowners had over the land changed as agricultural land was acquired or disposed of. We know that from at least the mid-seventeenth century landowners increased the size of their estates in south-west Cheshire through consolidation.<sup>48</sup> Although enclosure was closely associated with consolidation, it was only one part of the consolidation process. Consolidation helped to alter the landscape by changing the elements within it and the amalgamation of separated plots of land into one holding occurred among all classes of landownership. This occurred early by piecemeal exchange or purchase. Consolidation also encompassed engrossment, the amalgamation of adjoining holdings into one. Yelling suggested that farmers might have deliberately acquired land around their farmsteads (whether centrally placed within their fields or not) in order to consolidate their holdings and create larger fields.<sup>49</sup> Settlements were affected by engrossment as landowners expanded their estates by amalgamating farmsteads into one, either leaving only one farmhouse or destroying them all in order to build one new one.<sup>50</sup>

Another aspect of consolidation was emparkment (the creation of hunting parks by the gentry)<sup>51</sup> which sometimes resulted in villages being moved. Emparkment was not usually connected with enclosure and displaced villages were generally rebuilt.<sup>52</sup> However, in south-west Cheshire William Leche's late-eighteenth- or early-nineteenth-century creation of parkland on Carden Hall's estate land did not require village displacement and only resulted in the building of two lodges.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> E.g. John Leche consolidated his estate from 1646 (CCALS, DLE 88).

<sup>49</sup> Yelling, *Common Field*, p. 126.

<sup>50</sup> TNA, *Enclosure Awards. Records Information Leaflet No. 40*

<<http://www.thenationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/RdLeaflet.asp?sLeaflet=252>> [accessed 21 May 1998].

<sup>51</sup> Hollowell, *Enclosure Records*, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> G. E. Mingay, *Parliamentary Enclosure in England: An Introduction to its Causes and Impact* (London, 1997), p. 125.

<sup>53</sup> K. Matthews, 'The development of a park landscape'

<<http://users.breathe.com/kmatthews/carden10.html>> [accessed 16 June 2005]. (Matthews is a former archaeologist with Chester City Council).

Consolidation was facilitated by the enclosure of land by informal means or by formal parliamentary agreement, whether by individuals or groups of people with a common cause. Early informal enclosures were often piecemeal and one variation on this was encroachment which included the illegal annexing of pieces of common by farmers or squatters. In the latter case, landowners often made the best of such situations and affirmed their ownership rights by charging squatters a nominal rent. Old enclosures were often piecemeal enclosures. Informal enclosure can often be seen in private closes near boundaries or in the centre of a village near farm houses.<sup>54</sup>

Traditionally, historians have associated the process of consolidation with the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rise of the great estates and with a decrease in the number of small landowners, usually described as farmers.<sup>55</sup> This was not the case in south-west Cheshire, as chapter four has shown. Also, historians have tended to attribute to enclosure, particularly parliamentary enclosure, all the effects of consolidation, however achieved, but these assumptions are now regarded as too simplistic and as having been applied too generally.

Early writers considered the increase in the size of land holdings by individuals to be a positive development. Some early nineteenth-century commentators considered that large farms were preferable to smaller ones. Young, for example, writing on the north of England in the early nineteenth century, pitied 'the little farmers' who, he averred, are 'reckoned more wretched than even day-labourers'.<sup>56</sup> Ernle, nearly a century later, saw large farms as an inevitable result of new and improved agricultural methods as typified by Coke of Norfolk, albeit at the expense of smaller occupiers.<sup>57</sup> However, he noted that in some areas, such as Cheshire, small landowners were not as disadvantaged and had benefited from the piecemeal sale of large estates.<sup>58</sup> As Winstanley pointed out of the late nineteenth century, 'it is clear that small family farms in England were neither numerically insignificant nor economically marginal'.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Mingay, *Parliamentary Enclosure*, p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> Beckett, 'Decline', p. 99; J. Chapman, 'The extent and nature of parliamentary enclosure', *AgHR*, 35, 25-35 (p. 25).

<sup>56</sup> A. Young, *A Six Month Tour Through the North of England*, 3, 4 vols (London, 1770, repr. 1977), p. 298.

<sup>57</sup> Ernle, *Farming*, chap. 10.

<sup>58</sup> Ernle, *Farming*, chap. 14.

<sup>59</sup> Winstanley, 'Industrialisation', p. 192.



However, later and until the 1990s, a Marxist outlook prevailed concerning the effects of enclosure.<sup>60</sup> Marx, writing during the second half of the nineteenth century, regarded the enclosure of common land as legal 'robbery' by landowners of the 'people's land'. Thus, he asserted, did capitalist farmers, including the owners of great estates, increase the size of their farms while creating a landless 'proletariat' freed to serve the needs of industry.<sup>61</sup> The Marxist viewpoint was reinforced by subsequent historians such as the Hammonds and remained influential even among those who did not profess to be Marxists.<sup>62</sup> For example, the Muirs, writing in the 1980s, compared enclosure to the Thatcherite privatisation policies of that decade.<sup>63</sup>

However, not all historians have regarded enclosure as the main cause of small landowner decline. For Slater, writing in 1907, the decline of rural industries was of equal importance. Overton attributed the steady decline of small landowners from the seventeenth century to commercial pressures,<sup>64</sup> while Grigg blamed the strict settlement laws of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the lack of male heirs, the reduction of family estates because of debt and the fall in rent and sale price of land from the 1880s. Grigg pointed out that although many larger farms might have been the result of parliamentary enclosure, in fact, due to amalgamation, they were already a feature of early enclosed areas.<sup>65</sup> In south-west Cheshire farm size was established before parliamentary enclosure and the latter had little impact on the consolidation process.

Marxist determinism has given way to a more balanced view of the effects of consolidation and enclosure. Historians now agree that the rise of the great estates was a long-term process from the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>66</sup> Yelling, Mingay, Grigg and Beckett among others also argued that small farmers, whether owner-occupiers or not, survived enclosure and the growth of large estates in greater numbers than previously supposed. Yelling has demonstrated that the number of small farmers did not decrease as much or as rapidly as was usually assumed and that that there were

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<sup>60</sup> E.g. B. Hammond and J. L. Hammond, *The Village Labourer 1760-1832* (London, 1911).

<sup>61</sup> Marx, *Capital*, pp. 885-7. Although Marx himself disapproved of enclosure he recorded other people's views of its benefits which included the removal of small farmers to create an available labour force. (E.g. Marx, *Capital*, p. 888); *The Land: The Report of the Land Enquiry Committee* (London, 1913), p. xxviii.

<sup>62</sup> Hammond and Hammond, *Labourer*.

<sup>63</sup> Muir, *Fields*, p. 111.

<sup>64</sup> Overton, *Revolution*, pp. 174, 178, 192.

<sup>65</sup> Grigg, 'Farm size', p. 179.

<sup>66</sup> E.g. G. E. Mingay, 'Farms'; Chambers and Mingay, *Revolution*, p. 95; Beckett, *Revolution*, p. 3.

regional variations in the effect of enclosure.<sup>67</sup> Mingay concluded that although small farmers generally declined they did not disappear.<sup>68</sup> Beckett regarded the effects of strict settlement as exaggerated and suggested that interest by great landowners increased consolidation in specific areas, that new buyers divided the land elsewhere and that in some places small landowners survived.<sup>69</sup> Later commentators tend to agree with Beckett's assessment, arguing that it was the agricultural improvements of the seventeenth century, the introduction of the land tax in 1692 and the lowering of agricultural prices in the early-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century that led to debt which caused some small farmers to sell their land.<sup>70</sup>

Hollowell concluded that landownership changes took place at different rates throughout the country and between 1660 and 1850 nearly all the increase in the acreage of estates was created by a reduction in the number of small landowners.<sup>71</sup> However, Mills argued that, although earlier enclosure led to depopulation, parliamentary enclosure did not lead to rapid depopulation or the decline of small landowners as it took place when population was increasing.<sup>72</sup> As we shall see, the evidence from south-west Cheshire points to an increase of small landowners throughout the nineteenth century.

The rate of decline in the number of small farmers varied throughout England and Wales. In 1851 more than 50 per cent of farmed land in England and Wales was in holdings of more than 200 acres. The largest nineteenth-century farms were in the parliamentary enclosure areas of the Midlands, but there were plenty of smaller

<sup>67</sup> Yelling, *Common Field*, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> Mingay, *Small Farmer*, pp. 14-16. Small owners often sold their enclosure allotments if these were too small to be viable or they could not borrow money to work them. Hollowell agreed that if small landowners could not raise their share of the enclosure rate and afford new hedging they might have sold to larger owners and the landless moved to towns for employment. Mingay attributed the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century growth of large estates at the expense of small ones to their economic and physical efficiency. By bringing former commons and waste into production, smaller farmers could cater for the increase in markets created by industrialisation and urbanisation. Hollowell argued that Marx's influence meant that this exodus from the land is widely accepted but might be too simplistic. (Hollowell, *Enclosure records*, pp. 122).

<sup>69</sup> J. V. Beckett, 'The pattern of landownership in England and Wales, 1660-1880', *Ec. HR*, 37 (1984), 97-111 (p. 21). Land inherited at a distance from the main estate was often sold to first time buyers, often the new urban rich who created a demand for land satisfied by the sale of smaller plots. Beckett attributed the rise of large estates and decline of small landowners specifically to parliamentary enclosure in the Midlands. He suggested that the decline of small landowners in other parts of the country were not so clear cut and that the process took longer. He thought that consolidation was more common in areas where there was already a concentration of principal gentry seats and where a few families dominated because consolidated estates were easier to manage.

<sup>70</sup> Williamson and Bellamy, *Property*, p. 100.

<sup>71</sup> Hollowell, *Enclosure records* p. 19.

<sup>72</sup> A. D. Mills, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 2nd edn (London, 1998), pp. 99-100.

farms of under 50 acres in mid-nineteenth-century England. Their presence was widespread across the country, often in the same areas as large farms.<sup>73</sup>

**Table 7.1: Size of farms in England and Wales, 1851.**

1851		
Size (in acres)	Number of holdings	Percentage
5-20	42,315	19.8
20-50	47,829	21.9
50-100	44,558	20.7
100-150	29,020	13.5
150-300	35,133	16.3
300-500	11,646	5.4
500-700	3,076	1.4
700-1,000	1,267	0.6
1,000 and over	771	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>215,615</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Grigg, 'Farm Size', p. 186, from 1851 Census.

Williamson called enclosure 'an easy, visible scapegoat for the many ills caused by emergent rural capitalism' and pointed out the continued existence of farms of less than 50 acres in 1851: indeed 71 per cent of agricultural holdings in 1880 were less than 50 acres. Winstanley recorded that by 1895 Cheshire was the sixth ranked county for agricultural holdings of between five and 20 acres in England.<sup>74</sup> However, Grigg put this percentage at only 42 per cent (Table 7.1). Williamson noted that farm sizes grew steadily in England during the post-mediaeval period, before and after enclosure, and in ancient enclosed areas. Enclosure therefore did not affect the process much. However, he observed that not all small owners were farmers by the eighteenth century and their sale of land after parliamentary enclosure reflected a desire to capitalise on the higher value of enclosed land.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Beckett, *Revolution*, pp. 49-52.

<sup>74</sup> Winstanley, 'Industrialisation', p. 166. London was ranked first followed by Yorkshire: West Riding, Lancashire, Derbyshire and Middlesex.

<sup>75</sup> Williamson, 'Understanding', pp. 75-76.

South-west Cheshire did not always conform to national trends. As table 4:2 showed, the area already had a high concentration of large estates by the mid-eighteenth century compared to the rest of England, although apart from peers and public bodies the holdings of landowners, as defined by Bateman, were close to the national norm. The incidence of absentee owners in the area appears to have been less than the national norm, especially among small owners. Consolidation of estates had been taking place in south-west Cheshire since at least the mid-seventeenth century, but this was the result of an ongoing process of piecemeal enclosure rather than of parliamentary enclosure as typified by the enclosure of the Midlands. It is necessary to see how far these regional variations affected landownership changes in south-west Cheshire.

The following sections will analyse the factors underlying the reported changes in landownership and holding size, first piecemeal enclosure (which occurred mainly through purchase) showing the processes of consolidation and dispersal, and then general enclosure including the limited parliamentary enclosure and proposed enclosures by agreement. The six sample townships will be used to demonstrate these processes in south-west Cheshire.

### ***Piecemeal enclosure***

Analysis of the land tax records in chapter four has shown how landownership patterns changed to include an increase in the number of small landowners. At the same time large landowners increased their holdings as part of an ongoing process of consolidation. This section demonstrates the process of consolidation and alteration in landownership patterns, focusing in particular on the sample townships of Tilston and Malpas (both with low HHIs) as examples of land consolidation and dispersal and the process of piecemeal enclosure.

In an early enclosed area such as south-west Cheshire consolidation did not necessarily involve enclosure since purchase and exchange of already enclosed land could take place. However, the piecemeal enclosure of land, which Williamson defines as the privately agreed dismantling of open fields and the amalgamation of strips through purchase and exchange, continued in the area until the time of the tithe awards.<sup>76</sup> Sylvester noted that such piecemeal enclosure in some Cheshire townships was indicated by evidence of surviving strips in the form of land named as

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<sup>76</sup> Williamson, 'Understanding', pp. 59-60.

'quilllets'.<sup>77</sup> In south-west Cheshire, for example, both Tilston and Horton have 'quilllets' marked on their tithe maps.<sup>78</sup>

Mills suggested that where farm settlements were dispersed, farmers had fewer common interests, so piecemeal enclosure took place earlier and faster than elsewhere. This was the case in south-west Cheshire's landscape: as pasture remained widely available many more small farms could exist than in champion areas (areas of open fields).<sup>79</sup>

The gradual process of piecemeal enclosure often preserved the old landscape in its boundaries of hedges or walls, whereas general enclosure produced a more rectilinear landscape owing to the activities of surveyors.<sup>80</sup> South-west Cheshire, with its winding hedged lanes, is typical of an early enclosed landscape that preserved the irregular edges of the enclosed former open fields or of enclosed strips within them. Signs of previous enclosure of land occur in the tithe awards with the mention of 'inclosed' or 'old inclosed' land,<sup>81</sup> as in the case of Horton, Larkton, and Broxton (HHIs 1316<sub>T</sub>, 8500<sub>T</sub>, 3655<sub>T</sub>),<sup>82</sup> while illegal enclosure, or encroachment, continued until the late-nineteenth century. The Shocklach tithe awards of 1839 for both townships show evidence of earlier encroachment as seven fields simply called 'encroachment', apparently recording the successful annexation of land by farmers over the years. The encroachments vary in size from just 21 perches to an audacious nearly two acres. In total the encroachments in both townships totalled 5-3-05 acres. In Edge there is evidence of encroachment taking place as late as 1872. In 1896 a parishioner informed on a neighbour at Grange Farm in Edge Green who had taken advantage of the building of the railway in 1872 to move a fence, thus adding half an acre of the green to his holdings. The official advice was that enforcement against the encroachment was unlikely to succeed after so long a time and the case was abandoned. Encroachment, therefore, often succeeded because it was ignored by neighbours, unless and until they wanted to cause a problem to the miscreant. As we have seen they occurred in both high and low HHI townships showing that such encroachments were opportunistic and had no relation to the amount of landownership control.

<sup>77</sup> Sylvester, 'Open fields', *THSLC*, p. 15.

<sup>78</sup> CCALS, EDT 208/1&2; EDT 395/1&2.

<sup>79</sup> A. D. Mills, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>80</sup> Williamson, 'Understanding', p. 59.

<sup>81</sup> Baugh, *Shropshire*, p. 171.

<sup>82</sup> CCALS, EDT 208/1, EDT 40/1, EDT 100/5.

In some land tax records we can trace in detail not only ownership change but also the timing and extent of building in the townships. However, unlike the tithe awards, the land tax records and the 1910 'Domesday' usually merely indicate the existence of houses and land but do not supply field names for those plots. Where field names are not provided it is not always possible to locate plots on maps.

Where Glebe terriers exist prior to 1750 they can be used to analyse particular changes in landholding and provide evidence of continuity up to the start of the land tax records. However, Malpas ancient parish has no surviving Glebe terriers before the modern parish (township) terrier of 1961 and therefore none of the townships in the old parish have Glebe terrier evidence prior to the start of the land tax records in 1784. Glebe terriers prior to 1750 exist for the ancient parishes of Shocklach and Tilston. The Shocklach terriers show an increase in Church Croft of one acre of land and 30 yards in 1663 to one and a quarter acres adjacent to the church in 1738, which remained the same until 1757, but the Glebe terriers of Tilston provide a more detailed picture of consolidation.

Tilston's Glebe terriers show the process of consolidation and enclosure at work well before 1750, particularly with the Nunbrooks, a group of fields near the south-west boundary of the township. The first surviving Glebe terrier for Tilston in 1698 mentions large areas of fields such as Nunbrooks and New Field but indicates that open-field farming was still active because the Glebe also consisted of scattered strips such as 'Fowre butts in the Long Croft' and 'Some certaine butts in ye Crosse field'.<sup>83</sup> The 1709 terrier still shows strips as in 'Two Buts in a close or closure of land called by the name of parsonage crofte...' And 'certain butts in a close or closure of land called by the name of pole field,...'<sup>84</sup>

In both of these terriers the Nunbrooks is only partially Glebe land as both refer to 'Half the further Nunbrooks' and 'The nether Nunbrooks all of it.' The 1709 terrier specifically mentions that the Glebe land is 'intermixed' with other property. The Nunbrooks is mixed with Mr Fritton of Carden's pasture, half of the nearer Long Crofte is intermixed with John Leche's land, the Parsonage Croft lies between land belonging to the Revd. William Dod of Edge and John Craven of Carwarden, one 'loond' of arable in the Crosse Field lies 'betwixt the land of the Right Worpfl Sir

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<sup>83</sup> CCALS, EDV 8/88/1.

<sup>84</sup> CCALS, EDV 8/88/5.

Thomas Stanley of Alderley Bart. And the land of Mr Fitton' and Poole Field 'lying betwixt two loons of ground being the inheritance of John Leche of Carden'.<sup>85</sup>

The 1746 terrier states that the Glebe now owned 'All the Nunbrooks'.<sup>86</sup> Although it is impossible to obtain an accurate picture of Glebe holdings around 1750 some idea of the original extent can be gained from the Glebe terrier of 1709 which gives acreage. These total 28 ½ acres plus some loons and butts.<sup>87</sup> By 1789 the Glebe was still a little over 28 acres. Although there are some detached sections such as three quarters of an acre in the pole field, there is no mention of strips or butts.<sup>88</sup> By the time of the 1840 tithe map the estimated Glebe holding was 37-3-11 acres.<sup>89</sup> The elimination of strips shows the process of piecemeal enclosure as well as consolidation at work.

We can also see the process of consolidation taking place in John Leche's account of all his estates and from whom and how they were acquired. The buying of small pieces of land not only increased the Leche holdings in Tilston but also eliminated strips. Again this process began well before the parliamentary enclosure Acts. So in 1646/7 the Leches bought a cottage on Tilston Green with a close behind, 9 butts in two fields and a cottage with two pieces of land. In 1717 they bought Warburton's Tenement and Parsonage Croft. In 1744 John Leche concentrated on buying land in Lowcross in Tilston township consisting of two tenements, five crofts, seven fields or meadows including the Townfield and two Nunbrooks, two yards and two Tilston Woods amounting to 63 acres, all from the Devises of Richard Alport Esq.<sup>90</sup> Until 1788 Lord Cholmondeley had owned Tilston but then sold it to John Leche whose father, William Leche of Carden, had owned land in the township in the 1760s tenanted by eight people. By 1789 the most noted families in Tilston township and parish were the various branches of the Leche family.<sup>91</sup>

Consolidation by exchange also continued and William Weaver, who held five butts in Lowcross Townfield from Lord Cholmondeley for three lives, exchanged them all for Hughes Croft on the hill in Lowcross. Further examples of

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<sup>85</sup> CCALS, EDV 8/88/5.

<sup>86</sup> CCALS, EDV 8/88/8

<sup>87</sup> CCALS, EDV 8/88/5.

<sup>88</sup> CCALS, EDV 8/88/9.

<sup>89</sup> CCALS, EDT 395/1.

<sup>90</sup> CCALS, DLE 88.

<sup>91</sup> Hanshall, *Cheshire*, p. 354; CCALS, DLE 78.

exchange between various landowners can be seen in the account referring to Stretton, Hampton and Overton.<sup>92</sup>

The total annual land tax assessed for Tilston was £32-9-7.<sup>93</sup> The first land tax document for Tilston township only lists occupiers but from 1787 both landowners (proprietors) and occupiers were recorded. The land assessed is only recorded in broad terms for example house and land, farm and lands. Occasionally land is referred to by its past relationship to the occupier for example Late Johnson's, Late Axon's, or by field or croft names, for example, Bells Crofts, Cravens Croft, pinfold house, Crib Meadow, Cravens Croft.<sup>94</sup> Similar naming of holdings in early land tax records occurs in other townships, for example in Edge: Cappers, Johnsons, Cookhead Croft, The Beaches, Houghlands and the Millground.<sup>95</sup>

Tilston township records show an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century increase in the number of landowners (Figure 5:8). The 1787 document records 17 owners and the major landowner was Hignet with land assessed at £5-8-4½, closely followed by William Leche (£3-0-6) and Major John Leche (£3-0-6). This confirms the whole Leche family as the major landowners in the township. Six other owners were assessed at sums between one and two (or just over two) pounds - Sparrow, Johnson, Alling, Stevenson, Drake and the Rector. The other eight owners were assessed sums

<sup>92</sup> CCALS, DLE 88. Other examples of land exchanges in south-west Cheshire are: Farndon (HHI 978<sub>LT</sub>) where three messuages were exchanged for two pieces of land in Gorsty Marsh Wood (1753); in Thrapwood an exchange of land between two major landowners Drake and Leche was suggested by Drake but declined by Leche (1786); two and a half acres already fenced in Tushingham (HHI 1363<sub>LT</sub>) for a croft on Willey Moor (1815); an exchange between Cholmondeley and Leche for land in Tilston upon which buildings were 'nearly down'; an exchange between John Large and Daniel Vawdrey for which Large had to pay Vawdrey a sum for the new hedge set to separate the new holdings and Vawdrey paid a sum to compensate Large for the difference in the land's timber price (1818); a Mr John Large paid Daniel Vawdrey to make a new hedge to separate their lands in Tushingham according to an agreement to exchange Vawdrey's Grindley Brook field with Large's two Shirkam's crofts and part of Morgan's Hay meadow. Daniel Vawdrey paid £200 8s for the difference in value of the timber (1818); the Marquis of Cholmondeley exchanged a few perches with Rev. Wigfield in Malpas (HHI 2664<sub>T</sub>) (1854); the Marquis of Cholmondeley exchanged 0a 2r 37p for 0a 3r 11p belonging to the Trustees for the parish school of Malpas. The Trustees gained a larger plot for the school and Cholmondeley consolidated his land (1860); about one and a half acres in Cuddington (HHI 2499<sub>T</sub>) between T.T. Drake and J. Woodward esquire (1863); between Baron Stanley and Rev. Wolley-Dod in Horton (HHI 1316<sub>T</sub>) of about four acres (1885); between Rev. Wolley-Dod and Miss A. Momic of about two acres (1885). A late example is that of Mr R. Reeves of The Moss, Malpas, who in 1925 asked through his solicitors to buy the Moss Land adjoining his farm, about ¾ acre next to the Malpas to Whitchurch main road. Although the Council apparently did not finalise the sale, it shows that the desire to consolidate land continued well into the twentieth century. Although the recorded exchanges in the area occurred in low HHI townships, possibly reflecting greater freedom to change landholdings, exchanges no doubt occurred unrecorded in other townships. (CCALS, DMW 6/29, DTD 10/40, DMD/K/21, DND/4/2, DCH/1/188, DMD/Q/25, RP 10/1/4, p. 76; TNA, MAF 11/20, docs. 1598, 2370, 5901, 5902).

<sup>93</sup> The total land tax payments are as recorded in the records; sometimes actual totals differ slightly.

<sup>94</sup> CCALS, QDV 2 Mf. 208/81/424.

<sup>95</sup> CCALS, Mf. 208/25/158, QDV 2.



of less than £1.<sup>96</sup> The land was divided into 35 portions and 22 occupiers. There were only two owner-occupiers - Mr Brooke, whose land was assessed at £0-10-9, and John Speed, with land assessed at £0-1-1 ½.

By 1790 there were 21 owners. The land in Tilston township was therefore being sold off and owners of smaller portions were emerging. For example, Hignet's holdings had decreased and his land tax was now about £2 less than in 1787. However, William Leche increased his payment by an amount representing slightly less than the amount Hignet had sold. John Leche also increased his land tax payments by slightly more than the balance of Hignet's land tax, which suggests that the Leche family bought Hignet's land. Both William and John Leche were therefore accumulating land and the Leche family were still the largest landowners in the area. The Guardians of the Poor of Bunbury then became landowners and until 1832 owned land assessed at £0-4-2. Other landowners slightly increased or decreased their holdings but their proportion of the whole remained roughly the same. As a result of this, the number of smaller land owners increased slightly and four new proprietors with land assessed at less than one pound were recorded.<sup>97</sup>

Meanwhile, large single plots were still being sold in one piece and continued to be sold as such throughout the period of the land tax. A plot of land assessed at £4-10-8 in 1790 and owned by Robert Sparrow, was owned by a Colonel Maxwell in 1832.<sup>98</sup>

The proportion of small to large landowners did not change significantly throughout the rest of the period represented by the land tax, although it is clear that some property had passed to relatives, as for example, the Dutton and Weaver families which both held land in 1821 through two different family members.<sup>99</sup> Significantly, by 1817 William Leche had increased his share with land assessed at £10-01-02 compared to £3-0-6 in 1787, but John Leche no longer held land.

It is important to note that this steady growth of the small owner and, separately, the small owner occupier went hand in hand with the conveyance and consolidation of large amounts of land by a few major landowners. By 1832 Leche

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<sup>96</sup> CCALS, QDV 2, Mf. 208/81/424.

<sup>97</sup> CCALS, QDV 2, Mf. 208/81/424.

<sup>98</sup> CCALS, QDV 2, Mf. 208/81/424.

<sup>99</sup> CCALS, QDV 2, Mf. 208/81/424.

owned approximately one third of the assessed land in value but the growth of small independent owners continued.<sup>100</sup>

The example of Tilston (a low HHI township) shows how landowners consolidated their holdings by purchase and exchange while the numbers of small landowners were still increasing. Conversely, the process of dispersal of property to smaller owners can be illustrated by Malpas (also a low HHI township) where, although consolidation occurred, dispersal was the dominant trend. Although we cannot follow changes in Glebe holdings before 1784, they can be analysed after this date from the land tax returns. The value of Glebe land (£4-13-9 in 1784) fell gradually: by 1806 it had disappeared altogether, having been sold off mainly to the sitting tenants.<sup>101</sup> There were still traces of open fields in Malpas in 1839. There were five quilllets remaining and five other landowners had parts of Town Field, Little Town Field and Big Town Field.<sup>102</sup> Drake, a major landowner, split his land valued at £0-1-10½ and sold half each to Bellies and Barlow in 1794, two parts of the Glebe land were split between six tenants and in 1795 Drake split his land valued at £3-6-3 into three parts and land valued at £0-15-0 into two parts. At the same time Drake was consolidating other land holdings and in 1794 had amalgamated four pieces into two, while splitting another piece into three pieces. Again, the gradual sale of open field strips shows the existence of piecemeal enclosure in south-west Cheshire into the nineteenth century.

Until the 1920s two major land-owning families dominated Malpas - Cholmondeley and Drake. In 1784 Cholmondeley's share of the £81-1-4 land tax for Malpas township was 25 per cent, while Drake's was 31 per cent. There were, however, at various times between 22 and 44 land owners in Malpas during the same period.<sup>103</sup> The land tax figures show a fairly steady increase in numbers of owners from 24 in 1784 to a peak of 44 in 1821 with little change until 1832, while the number of owner-occupiers varied between just under a half to about two thirds of the number of land owners in Malpas. Land was being sold and owners of smaller

<sup>100</sup> CCALS, QDV 2, Mf. 208/81/424.

<sup>101</sup> CCALS, QDV 2, f ol. 208/48.

<sup>102</sup> CCALS, EDT 257/2.

<sup>103</sup> The relative importance of Drake and Cholmondeley to other gentry throughout the whole of the ancient parish of Malpas can be judged by the allocation of pews in Malpas church in about 1800. There were 107 pews plus the Poor's Pew. Of these Lord Cholmondeley was allocated 22 and Drake 20. Few other people had more than one pew including Egerton 4, Oldport 9 and Dod of Edge . This gives an indication of the power of these two landowners in Malpas at the beginning of the nineteenth century. (CCALS, DEO 211/4).

portions emerged, in fact nearly doubling. This was reflected in the increase in pieces of land from 98 to an average of 130.<sup>104</sup>

**Table 7:2 Landownership in the six sample townships from the land tax records.**

		LAND TAX RECORDS FOR THE SIX SAMPLE TOWNSHIPS SHOWING LANDOWNERSHIP CHANGES											
		1784	1787	1790	1795	1800	1805	1810	1815	1820	1825	1830	1832
TILSTON	Owners		17	21	20	19	25	26	26	28	27	26	26
(Low HHI <sub>LT</sub> )	Occupiers		29	23	23	23	23	33	35	38	37	39	39
	Owner-occupiers		1	1	1	1	4	7	11	11	10	9	6
MALPAS	Owners	24	26	24	29	30	37	40		41	41	40	41
(Low HHI <sub>LT</sub> )	Occupiers	78	62	62	75	73	74	91		105	113	112	116
	Owner-occupiers	13	9	10	12	12	18	22		17	15	14	17
EDGE	Owners		5	4	1	9	9	8		8	9	10	10
(High HHI <sub>LT</sub> )	Occupiers	24	25	25	20	19	20	22		23	24	27	27
	Owner-occupiers		1		1	2	3	2		3	5	8	9
CHURCH SHOCKLACH	Owners	10	10	10	8	9	10	10	16	15	16	16	16
(Low HHI <sub>LT</sub> )	Occupiers	22	21	19	18	19	20	21	23	23	21	19	22
	Owner-occupiers	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	3	5	5	2	3
SHOCKLACH OVIATT	Owners	14	14	13	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
(High HHI <sub>LT</sub> )	Occupiers	18	17	21	23	21	21	21	20	20	20	20	18
	Owner-occupiers	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	5	3	3	2	1
TUSHINGHAM	Owners	16	17		17	17	15	16	14	13	14	13	13
(Low HHI <sub>LT</sub> )	Occupiers	19	17		18	19	18	20	19	19	19	28	29
	Owner-occupiers	2	3		6	6	4	5	4	6	6	5	5

Note: Entire years left blank are missing and partial omissions indicate information unrecorded in the document.

Sources: CCALS, Mf. 208/25/158, Mf. 208/48/275, Mf. 208/68/381, Mf. 208/82/433, Mf.208/17/113.

Table 7:2 shows that landowner numbers in the sample townships increased steadily, except in Tushingham and Shocklach Oviatt (a high HHI township), where there was virtually no change. However, apart from Shocklach Oviatt, there was also a steady increase in occupiers, testifying to the increase in the portions of land available for rent. It was this increase in available non-owner-occupied land that enabled smaller landowners eventually to buy their land, the effect of which has been demonstrated in chapter four. The sample townships show that the increase in landowners occurred in both high and low HHI townships but the increase was more

<sup>104</sup> CCALS, Mf. 208/28.

in the low HHI townships. Certainly the number of occupiers increased much more in low HHI townships. For example, between 1787 and 1832 in the low HHI townships of Tilston, Malpas and Tushingham the number of occupiers increased by 34 per cent, 87 per cent and 71 per cent respectively, while in the high HHI townships of Shocklach Oviatt and Edge the increases were only 6 per cent and 8 per cent. (Church Shocklach, low HHI, was the exception by increasing only 5 per cent).

The sample townships therefore demonstrate that in south-west Cheshire piecemeal consolidation and piecemeal enclosure continued during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, while this occurred, the number of smaller landowners increased in both high and low HHI townships, albeit more slowly in high HHI townships.

### **General enclosure**

The effect of enclosure on landownership patterns was further to increase the power of landowners over what could and could not be built on their land. Piecemeal enclosure, one part of the consolidation process, was supplemented by general enclosure which Williamson defines as the reordering of the landscape by a group of landowners. General enclosure could include one person gaining all the land for enclosure or the allocation of the land by agreement, either informally (see page 302) or through a legally-binding Award. Such enclosure awards could be initiated by the landowners and confirmed by Chancery, to avoid the expense of an Act of Parliament (see fn. 122), but more usually followed an Enclosure Act (parliamentary enclosure).<sup>105</sup> However, whereas in south-west Cheshire piecemeal consolidation by purchase and exchange between individual landowners was more often found among low HHI townships among landowners both large and small, enclosure by agreement of a group of landowners was more prevalent in high HHI townships among larger landowners.

### **Parliamentary enclosure and other enclosure by Award**

The gradual increase of enclosures formalised by law eventually led to the introduction of the general enclosure Acts of the nineteenth century.<sup>106</sup> However,

<sup>105</sup> Williamson, 'Understanding', pp. 59-60; Yelling, *Common Field* p. 12; et al.

<sup>106</sup> During the late eighteenth century a system of dividing waste and commons was agreed to hasten bringing land into cultivation to provide more food and improve the land. The *Bill for Facilitating the Division and Inclosure of Waste Lands and Commons* enabled enclosure by agreement by removing

piecemeal and general informal enclosure continued at the same time as parliamentary enclosure. This facilitated land consolidation and helped to increase the size of large estates.<sup>107</sup> Outside of the Midlands, and especially in the North, most parliamentary enclosure and other enclosure by Award was of waste.<sup>108</sup> This section provides a brief overview of parliamentary enclosure nationally; analyses the effects of limited parliamentary enclosure in south-west Cheshire; and shows that it had little impact on either the landscape or settlement development compared to earlier piecemeal enclosure.

Increased productivity was an important advantage of enclosure.<sup>109</sup> Enclosure gave landowners the opportunity to try new agricultural ideas, reduce wood and timber shortage, improve drainage and provide new hedged boundaries to reduce trespass. It also led to landscape changes such as large isolated houses, the re-routing of footpaths and roads, the moving of villages and creation of parks.<sup>110</sup> Not all these changes happened everywhere and parliamentary enclosure was usually only used when landowners failed to enclose land by the much cheaper alternative methods. Enclosed land was more cost effective and easier to farm than the dispersed strips of the open-field system. At the same time the greater landowners who had been increasing the size of their estates during this period were able to consolidate and expand them through the redistribution of land during parliamentary enclosure.

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legal barriers and which would make drainage easier. Enclosure by private Act of parliament became more common nationally during the second half of the eighteenth century and reached its peak during the nineteenth century. This led to first enclosure Act of 1801 followed by the general enclosure Acts of 1836, 1840 and 1845, which aimed to make enclosure and tithe commutation easier. There were three types of enclosure Act – the enclosure of open fields and commons by private Act, enclosure of commons and waste by private Act and enclosure of commons and waste and a few open fields by general enclosure Acts from 1836 onwards. The peak periods for enclosure nationally were the 1760s and 1770s and during the Napoleonic war. (Yelling, *Common Field*, pp. 8-9; Mingay, *Enclosure*, pp. 16, 21, 29).

<sup>107</sup> Yelling, *Common Field*, p. 126.

<sup>108</sup> Mingay, *Parliamentary Enclosure*, p. 151; Chapman, 'Parliamentary enclosure', p. 30; A. D. M. Phillips, 'Agriculture and rural society: enclosure and reclamation', in Phillips and Phillips, *Atlas*, pp. 54-55 (p. 154). According to A.D.M Phillips wood and waste continued to be enclosed without formal parliamentary intervention until the late-nineteenth century.

<sup>109</sup> Williamson, 'Understanding', p. 65. Beckett, *Revolution*. Lecture. Reasons identified for the enclosure of open fields include a wish to make townships tithe free, a desire among landowners to become freeholders, the limited scope for improvement of unenclosed land, having ill-drained clays unsuitable for turnips, potential economic advantages, easier working of combined holdings, the need for pasture as the main force for enclosure in the Midlands, improved transport and access to markets, to deal with encroachments and reorganise old enclosures, and expansion of towns when enclosed land was sold for building (see Hollowell, *Enclosure Records*, pp. 228-9; Mingay, *Parliamentary Enclosure*, pp. 24-25, 32-33).

<sup>110</sup> Williamson and Bellamy, *Property*, pp. 102, 136.

Nationally, parliamentary enclosure had a huge impact, especially in the Midlands. The amount of land enclosed in England by parliamentary means has been estimated at between 7.25 and 7.35 million acres,<sup>111</sup> and it is generally regarded as the most important recorded man-made landscape change because it 'fundamentally altered the landscape'.<sup>112</sup> The newly enclosed fields of parliamentary enclosure were straight-sided and bounded by hedges; sometimes straight enclosure roads, either new or amended, were constructed past and through them.<sup>113</sup> Whyte, referring to north-west England, considered that parliamentary enclosure 'profoundly transformed' the landscape, creating a difference between old enclosed land and Parliamentary enclosed land.<sup>114</sup> Nationally these changes were dramatic and changed settlements in many areas as they adapted to the restrictions caused by changed landownership. However, parliamentary enclosure was a comparatively small part of the consolidation process as a whole.

The combination of major agricultural changes, enclosure and an increase in the size of the great estates had varied effects on settlement development nationally. Often, new farmhouses were built in the middle of these new fields and the old farmhouses in the villages that had been more suitably situated for the farming of the open field system were sometimes abandoned and left to decay. The traditional Marxist view was that cottagers who had rights over the commons but no land of their own had to abandon their cottages in the villages when their means of livelihood was removed by enclosing the commons, their dwellings were abandoned as they left a declining settlement, driven out by the costs of parliamentary enclosure.<sup>115</sup> However, although many isolated farms date from just after parliamentary enclosure,<sup>116</sup> enclosure did not necessarily lead to declining settlements if cottagers could remain as labourers.<sup>117</sup> Commissioners seem to have laid out the new holdings to consolidate existing farms. Yelling suggested that the

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<sup>111</sup> Chapman, 'Parliamentary enclosure', p. 28. Chapman's reassessment of the amount of parliamentary enclosure of open field and common land is more than 18 per cent above previous estimates by e.g. Tate, Chambers and Mingay, McCloskey. However, this figure was disputed by Walton who argued that Chapman did not disclose the standard error associated with his estimate of parliamentary enclosure (see J. Walton, 'Parliamentary enclosure, the bootstrap, and a red herring or two', *AgHR*, 39 (1991), 52-54).

<sup>112</sup> Hey, *History*, p. 151; Porter, *English Society*, p. 211; Turner, *Enclosures*, p. 33; Mingay, *Parliamentary Enclosure*, pp 12-13 (and see Hammond and Hammond, *Labourer*).

<sup>113</sup> Hindle, 'Enclosure Roads', pp. 15-16.

<sup>114</sup> Whyte, *Transforming*, p. 281.

<sup>115</sup> T. Wright in Marx, *Capital*, pp. 886-7.

<sup>116</sup> Hoskins, *Making*, pp. 204-6.

<sup>117</sup> Williamson, *Transformation*, p. 49; Mingay, *Enclosure*, pp. 137-8.

dispersal of farmsteads, as in Middleton, Yorkshire, 'encouraged' by large holdings, meant that they were more likely to be scattered than in pre-enclosure villages; dispersal therefore led to scattering.<sup>118</sup>

### **Parliamentary enclosure and other enclosure by Award in south-west Cheshire**

Cheshire's first parliamentary enclosure award was in 1767, although it is important to set this in context. Approximately 144,000 of Cheshire's acres are estimated to have been enclosed between the mid-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries: by the end of the nineteenth century 65 parliamentary awards had enclosed 29,139 acres, four per cent of Cheshire's land.<sup>119</sup> Approximately 498 acres of south-west Cheshire's 26,307 acres were subject to enclosure awards, a mere two per cent of the area. In 14 English counties the enclosure of open field and commons by private Act accounted for the enclosure of 69 per cent of all such land in England; Cheshire was one of 11 counties with the least of this type of enclosure. In south-west Cheshire there were only nine recorded enclosure awards: three by private Acts, three under the General Enclosure Acts, as well as three enclosures awarded by unspecified means (presumably confirmed by Chancery). However, there are still today some common lands in south-west Cheshire at Overton Heath, Edge Green and Bradley Green.<sup>120</sup> An examination of these enclosure awards and existing maps for south-west Cheshire will demonstrate their limited effect on settlement development.

<sup>118</sup> Yelling, *Common Field*, pp. 126, 131, 143-4.

<sup>119</sup> Turner, *Enclosures*, p. 178; Phillips and Phillips, *Atlas*, p. 54. The acreage of Cheshire has been taken from Phillips and Phillips, *Atlas*, p. 109. The acreage of south-west Cheshire in the nineteenth-century has been calculated from the tithe awards by P. Bird.

<sup>120</sup> CCALS, QDE 1/102, DBA/22, DTD 38/6/1, QDE 1/29, DBA/91, QDE 1/36, QDE 1/41, QDE 1/42. Mingay, *Parliamentary Enclosure*, p. 17. The countryside and rights of way. Provisional map of registered common land and open country. Mapping Area 2. Lower north-west England. Sheet no. SJ44 (London, 2001).

Table 7:3: Enclosure awards in south-west Cheshire, 1794 to 1861.

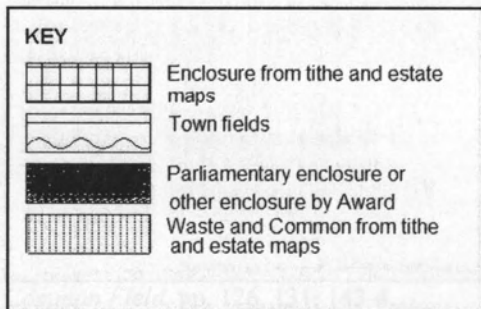
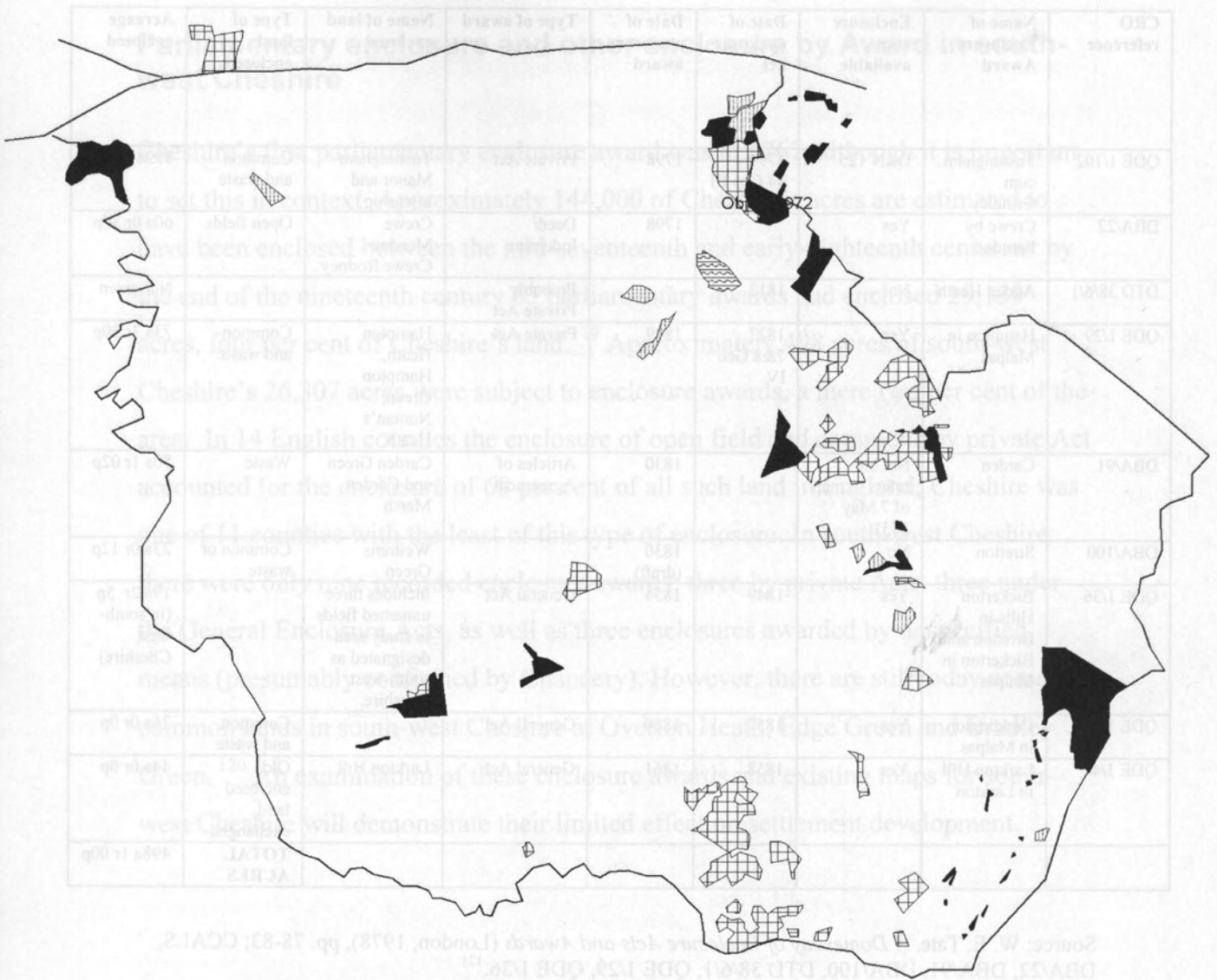
CRO reference	Name of Enclosure Award	Enclosure map available	Date of enclosure act	Date of enclosure award	Type of award	Name of land enclosed	Type of land enclosed	Acreage enclosed
QDE 1/102	Tushingham cum Grindley	DKN 125	1794 34 Geo III 1794	1798	Private Act	Tushingham Manor and township	Common and waste	199a 0r 0p
DBA/22	Crewe by Farndon	Yes		1798	Deed/ Indenture	Crewe Meadow, Crewe Rodney	Open fields	60a 0r 30p
DTD 38/6/1	Agden Heath	No	1812		Probably Private Act			Not given
QDE 1/29	Hampton in Malpas	Yes	1827 7&8 Geo IV	1829	Private Act	Hampton Heath, Hampton Green, Noman's Heath	Common and waste	73a 3r 39p
DBA/91	Carden	No, but refers to map of 7 May 1831.		1830	Articles of Agreement	Carden Green and Carden Marsh	Waste	50a 1r 02p
DBA/100	Stretton	No		1830 (draft)		Weitrens Green	Common or waste	23a 0r 12p
QDE 1/36	Bickerton Hills in Broxton and Bickerton in Malpas	Yes	1849	1854	General Act	Includes three unnamed fields in study area designated as south-west Cheshire.		19a 2r 5p (in south-west Cheshire)
QDE 1/41	Cuddington in Malpas	Yes	1857	1860	General Act		Common and waste	26a 0r 0p
QDE 1/42	Larkton Hill in Larkton	Yes	1858	1861	General Act	Larkton Hill	Old enclosed land exchanged	44a 0r 0p
							<b>TOTAL ACRES</b>	498a 1r 00p

Source: W. E. Tate, *A Domesday of Enclosure Acts and Awards* (London, 1978), pp. 78-83; CCALS, DBA/22, DBA/91, DBA/100, DTD 38/6/1, QDE 1/29, QDE 1/36.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Tate's survey of enclosure acts omits enclosure under common law, and enclosure that is illegal, extra-legal or the result of specific statutory authorisation.<sup>121</sup> Of south-west Cheshire's nine awards, as defined in this study, Tate does not record three – Crewe by Farndon, Carden and Stretton. Stretton's award appears in draft and therefore might not have been finalised. The dates of these three awards suggest, however, that these were by private award confirmed by Chancery. (Tate, *Enclosure Acts*, p. 45).



**Figure 7.4: Recorded piecemeal and parliamentary enclosed areas and commons and waste.**



Source: CCALS, EDT, QDE 1/29, 31, 41, 42, DBA 22, 91, 100, 102, DTD 38/6/1, estate documents; OS Explorer 257, 1:25,000.

The land enclosed by Award in south-west Cheshire (as shown in figure 7:4) varied topographically. For example, the land in Tushingham cum Grindley was the flat moss land; in Broxton and Bickerton the enclosure included Broxton Hill and Bickerton Hills; Crewe by Farndon enclosure was on riverside meadow; and the other enclosures were of the common and waste. There was therefore no parliamentary enclosure landscape in the area which can be regarded as typical of national norms.

Most parliamentary enclosure nationally took place during the Napoleonic Wars (1794-1814) to satisfy the high demand for land. During this period about 11,762 acres were enclosed by parliamentary means, including 40 per cent of Cheshire's common and waste. After 1815 an Act of Parliament was the most common method of enclosure for common and waste and about 14,043 acres in the county were affected.<sup>122</sup> A.D.M. Phillips suggests that this shows that the peak period for enclosure of waste in Cheshire was the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He uses Burdett's map of 1777 to show that what little waste existed in the county by then, although widespread, was in small pieces.<sup>123</sup> The enclosure of the 1760s was because poor land was costly to maintain and was turned into pasture, and common and waste was needed to expand arable production.<sup>124</sup> Of south-west Cheshire's enclosure by Award only two cases occurred during the Napoleonic Wars (1798). In this respect south-west Cheshire did not follow the trend for the county as a whole.

### **South-west Cheshire's enclosure awards**

Only the first of south-west Cheshire's parliamentary enclosure awards (Tushingham cum Grindley, 1798, HHI 1363<sub>LT</sub>) created a substantial section of landscape which to an observer is similar to the enclosed landscape of the Midlands<sup>125</sup> and only the last (Cuddington, 1861, HHI 1770<sub>LT</sub>) showed signs of any significant settlement development. The rest remained as agricultural land, including the three townships subject to probable Chancery awards (Crewe, Carden, Stretton). In common with most of the county's parliamentary enclosure, the area enclosed was commons and waste. It is significant that both these areas of parliamentary enclosure were in low

<sup>122</sup> Phillips and Phillips, *Atlas*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>123</sup> Phillips, 'Enclosure', p. 54.

<sup>124</sup> Turner, *Enclosures*, pp. 86, 94.

<sup>125</sup> CCALS, QDE 1/10.

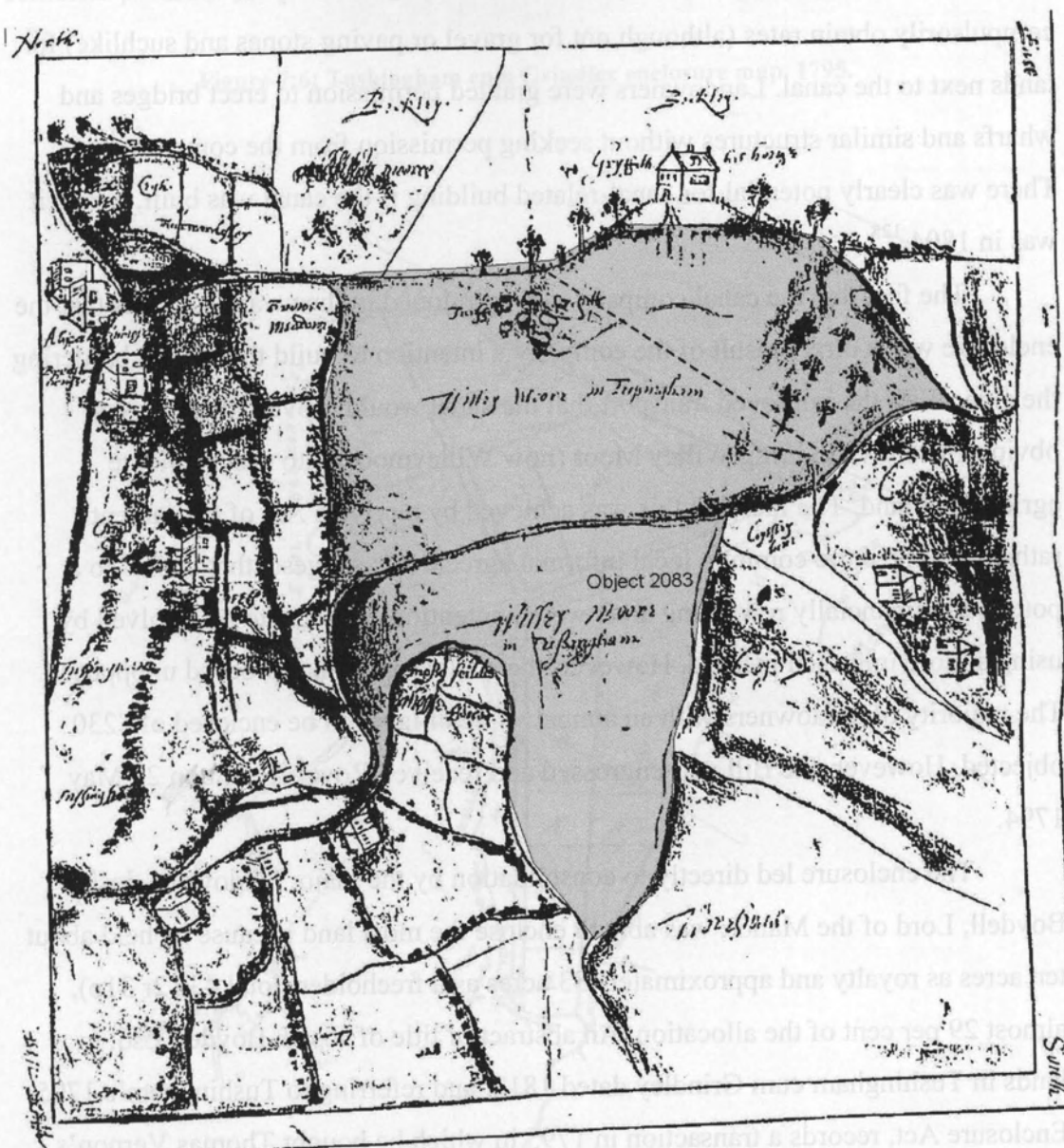
HHI townships where the enclosure awards were to a large number of people and, in the case of Cuddington, allowed opportunity for change through building. Virtually all the other townships with parliamentary enclosures in the area had high HHIs at the time of their award and it was in these townships under the control of large landowners that the land remained agricultural.

Tushingam's pre-enclosure landscape is captured in a plan of Willey Moor, possibly dating from the sixteenth century (Figure 7:5).<sup>126</sup> The area later enclosed had no buildings on it and the moor itself had one building at its edge, namely 'Gryffith his house' in the neighbouring township of Bickley to the north. The surrounding area has already been divided into smaller fields and at the edge of the road there are single houses. The area to be later enclosed, therefore, had not been encroached upon.

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<sup>126</sup> British Library, Harley 2002, Cheshire Deeds, fols.116v & 117r. [n. d. possibly C16].

Figure 7:5: Plan of Willey Moor in Tushingham and Bickley townships. The dotted line shows the approximate boundary between the area of moor enclosed for Tushingham and the moor belonging to Bickley.



Source of base illustration: M. D. Leah and others, *The Wetlands of Cheshire* (Lancaster, 1997), p.142.

Note: The shaded area represents the approximate area enclosed by the 1798 award.

Tushingham's 1798 enclosure award allocated between 18 people about 150 acres of waste and common land 'incapable of improvement' on Willey Moor in the north east area of the township in plots ranging from just over half an acre to more than 30 acres, as well as small pieces of common and waste next to the roads in the west of the area. The canal company could buy land with the proviso that if the canal

was not completed within seven years its powers were to cease and if the canal was abandoned by the company the land was to revert to the original owner. The onus was on the canal company to provide watercourses, if necessary. It could compulsorily obtain rates (although not for gravel or paving stones and suchlike) for lands next to the canal. Landowners were granted permission to erect bridges and wharfs and similar structures without seeking permission from the company.<sup>127</sup> There was clearly potential for canal-related building if the canal was built, which it was in 1804.<sup>128</sup>

The fact that the canal company was mentioned in the award suggests that the enclosure was a direct result of the company's intention to build their canal bordering the area. With the improved transport that the canal would provide there was an obvious incentive to bring Willey Moor (now Willey Moor) into use as private agricultural land. The fact that this was achieved by a private Act of parliament rather than the more common local informal agreements suggests that claims to a potentially financially rewarding area were contentious and had to be resolved by using a more impartial method. However, the enclosure did not proceed unopposed. The majority of landowners with an annual value of lands to be enclosed of £230 objected. However, the Bill was engrossed and received Royal Assent on 23 May 1794.

The enclosure led directly to consolidation by the major landowner. Josiah Boydell, Lord of the Manor, was able to enclose the most land because he held about ten acres as royalty and approximately 33 acres as a freeholder (total 43a 2r 31p), almost 29 per cent of the allocation. An abstract of title of Josiah Boydell Esq. to lands in Tushingham cum Grindley dated 1812, and referring to Tushingham's 1795 Enclosure Act, records a transaction in 1795 in which he bought Thomas Vernon's four enclosure plots measuring 11a 1r 0p for £80. Shortly afterwards in the same year Boydell paid £50 to John Vernon of Chester and his brother Thomas Vernon of Tushingham plots of land totalling 9a 1r 4p. Boydell also acquired enclosure land from Hughes measuring 8a 1r 35p, from John Large of 4a 2r 38p and from Mrs Elizabeth Hale of two plots of enclosure land of 12a 0r 12p. The evidence is clear that Boydell used the enclosure to consolidate his land holdings.

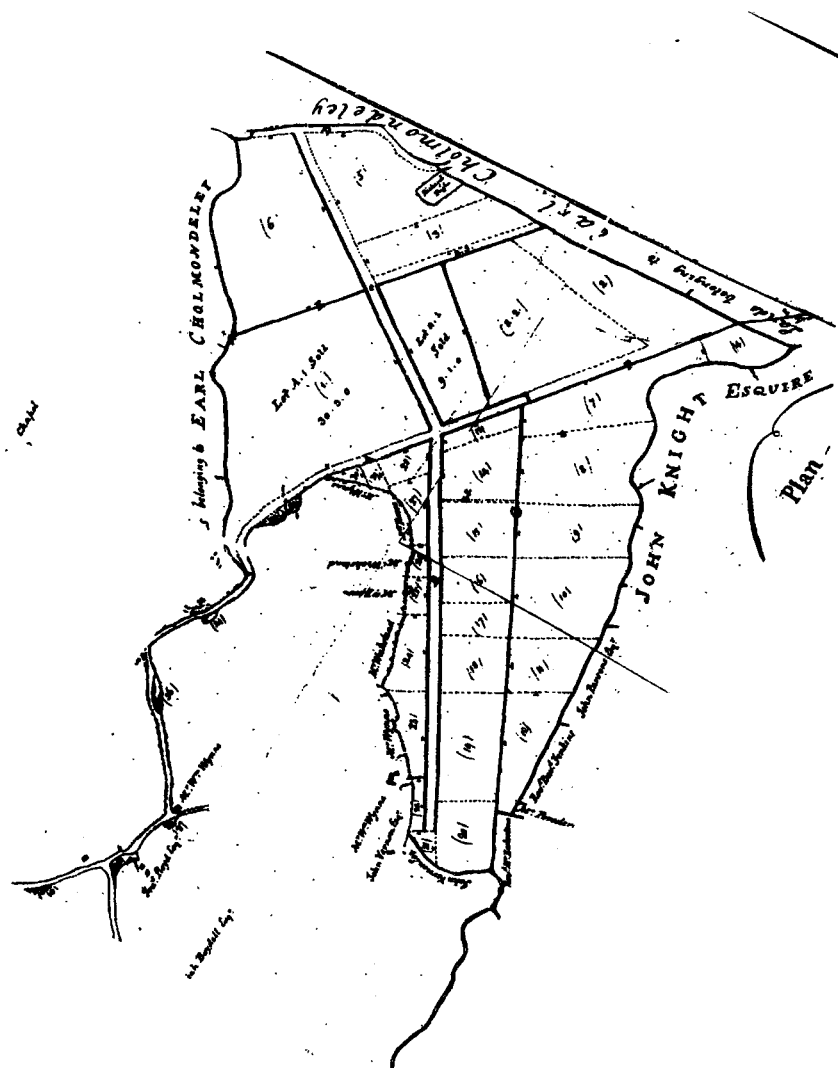
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<sup>127</sup> CCALS, DMD/B/21, pp. 2, 6-7, QDE 1/10.

<sup>128</sup> Wilson, *Canal*, p. i.

There are no buildings shown within the enclosure area of the enclosure map. The houses just outside the enclosure area are virtually the same ones of two centuries previously and are single dwellings bordering the roads (Figure 7:6).

Figure 7:6: Tushingham cum Grindley enclosure map, 1795.



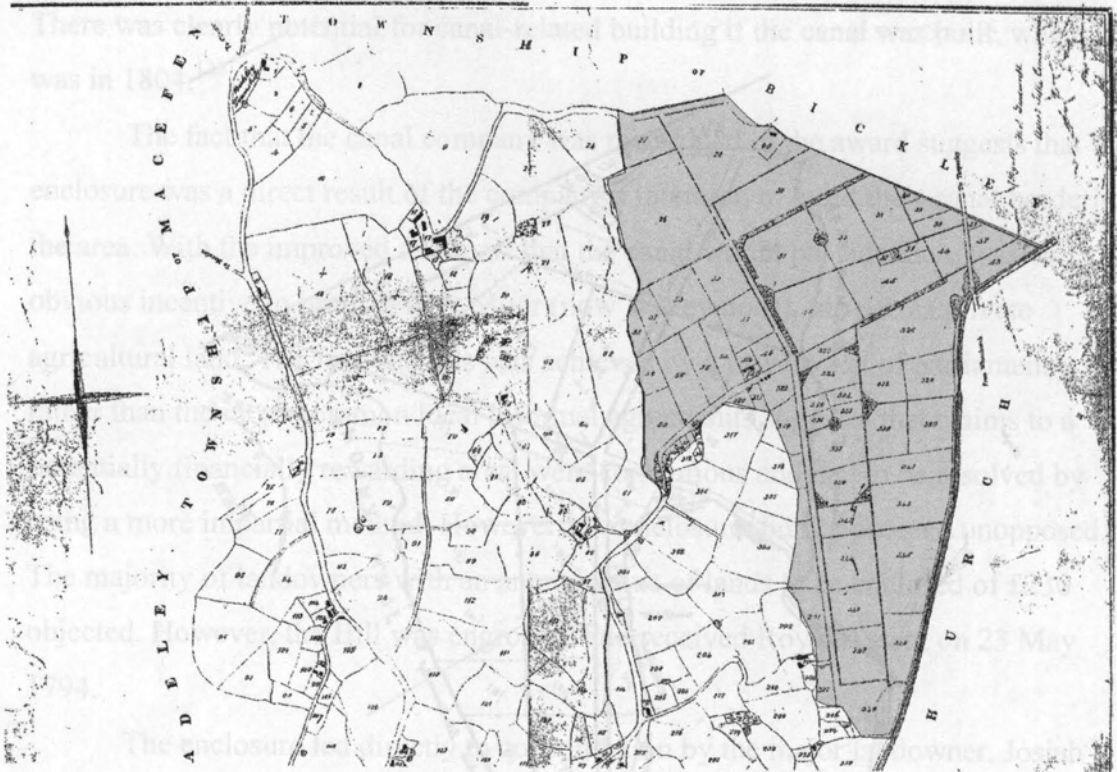
Source: CCALS, QDE 1/10.

A north to south carriageway was created with a minor east to west crossroad, both clearly indicated on the tithe map. The carriageway remains as the bridle path from Moorhead Farm to the north border of the township and footpaths and ditches show where the enclosure roads can be clearly seen leading into the new fields.



Today the longer stretches of the road remain as bridleways and have not been expanded to become modern roads (Figures 7:7, 7:8).

**Figure 7:7** Section of Tushingham tithe map 1838 showing area of enclosure.



Source: CCALS, EDT 405/2.

Boydell Lord of the Manor of Tushingham enclosed the most land because he held about ten acres as royalty and approximately 33 acres as a freeholder (DMD 43a 2f 31p), almost 29 per cent of the allocation. An abstract of title of Josiah Boydell to lands in Tushingham own Grindley dated 1812, and referring to Tushingham's 1795 Enclosure Act, records a transaction in 1795 in which he bought Thomas Vernon's four enclosure plots measuring 11a 1r 0p for £60. Shortly afterwards in the same year Boydell paid £50 to John Vernon of Chester and his brother Thomas Vernon of Tushingham for plots of land totalling 9a 1r 4p. Boydell also acquired enclosure land north to south carriage way was created with a minor causeway west of the road. Evidently indicated on the map. The carriage way remains as the path leading from Moorhead Farm to the north border of the township and footpaths and bridleways show where the enclosure roads can be clearly seen leading into the new fields.

<sup>107</sup> CCALS, DMD 43a 2f 31p, pp. 2, 6-7, QDE 110.

<sup>108</sup> Wilson, Canal, p. 6.



**Figure 7:8: Enclosure road in Tushingham township leading south to Moorhead Farm.**



Photo: P. Bird, 2002.

The 1838 tithe map shows the enclosed area bordered on the east by the canal built 34 years previously (Figure 7:7). The canal cut across only a small part of the enclosures in Tushingham. Within the enclosed area to the west of the enclosure road crossroads, a farm was built to the north of the road, with houses on the southern side. Slightly further west houses were built on the southern bend of the road where the land was divided into smaller plots for building. At the far north of the area, an isolated irregularly bounded plot belonging to Richard Pugh after enclosure had a building on it just over 100 years later. Enclosure, therefore, appears to have encouraged building and the start of new settlements, but farms were not built within the centre of fields. The new farm (Moorside Farm)<sup>129</sup> was built at the roadside close to the new roads into the fields and therefore emulated the placing of farmhouses at

<sup>129</sup> OS Explorer 257, SJ534455,



the edges of holdings typical of pre-enclosure. Buildings close to the southern end of the enclosure area might be the site of Moorhead Farm.

There are no enclosure maps for Bickley, the township north of Tushingham, but the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1880 (figure 7:9) shows that drains were laid in the area between the enclosure of Tushingham and the part of the moor that lay in Bickley. The modern map shows that the area remained agricultural and that the only new development since 1750 has been the building of two farms as part of Vawdrey's estate – Moorside Farm and Moorhead Farm – and that Gryffith's sixteenth-century house on the north border of the area is now The Willey Farm. Moorside Farm was apparently built as a direct result of enclosure. The effect of parliamentary enclosure on Tushingham township has therefore been limited to developing its potential as an agricultural area.

**Figure 7:9: OS 1880 showing area of 1798 Tushingham enclosure award.**

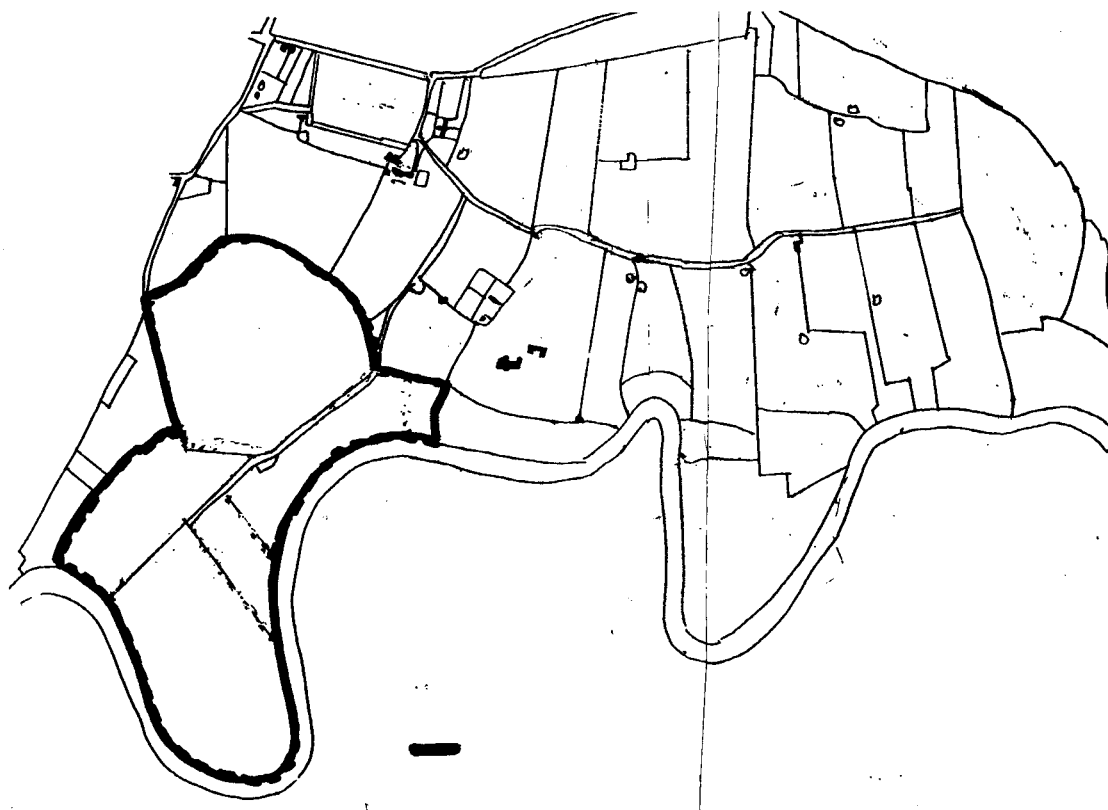


Source: OS 1880, Sheet LX.

For most townships the enclosure awards in the area made little difference to the land, except for ownership. The only open-field enclosure in the area, that of

Crewe by Farndon's Deeside 'cowgrasses', Crewe Rodney and Crewe Meadow, was divided between six people (Figure 7:10).<sup>130</sup>

**Figure 7:10: Crewe enclosure of 1798 showing the open field meadows enclosed.**



Source: CCALS, DBA/22.

The remaining parliamentary enclosure in south-west Cheshire occurred during the nineteenth century, but only the Cuddington township enclosure (township HHI 2499<sub>T</sub>) awarded in 1861 affected settlement development in the enclosed area. The other enclosures remained as individual fields.

Burdett's map of 1777 clearly shows Cuddington (Kiddington) Heath as an area of waste with no buildings on it. The only two buildings shown are just outside the triangular area enclosed (Figure 7:11). The 1860 enclosure map shows that the roads surrounding the area had been straightened and buildings had been erected on smaller plots of land within the enclosed area (Figure 7:12). The 1880 OS map shows that buildings had been erected in the north and east corners of the enclosed section (Figure 7:13). The 2000 map and fieldwork indicated that further development has taken place since the initial nineteenth-century building.

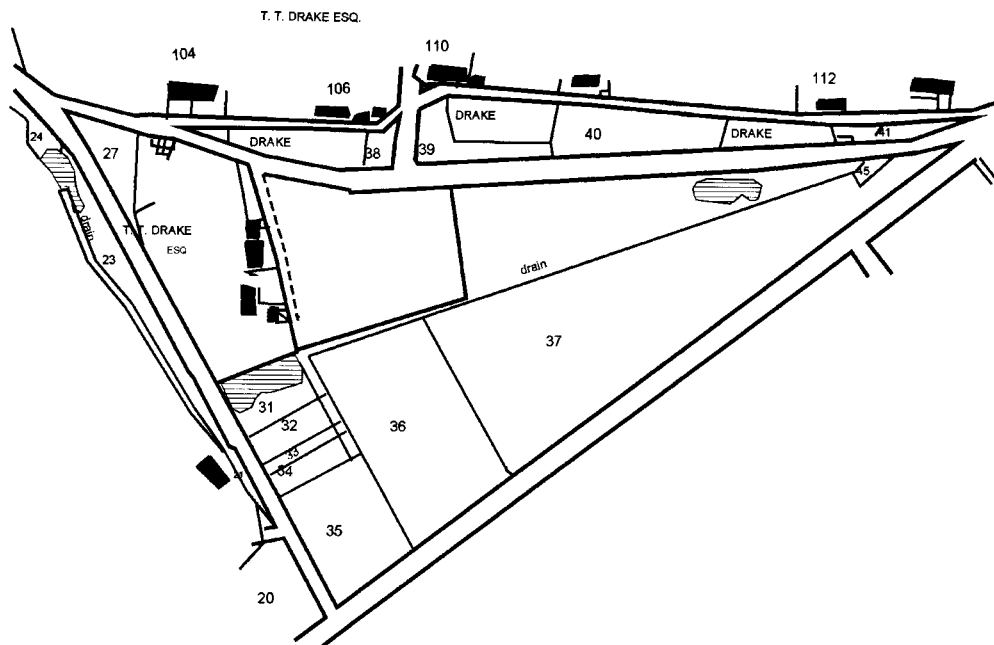
<sup>130</sup> CCALS, DBA/22.

Figure 7:11 Cuddington Heath, 1777.



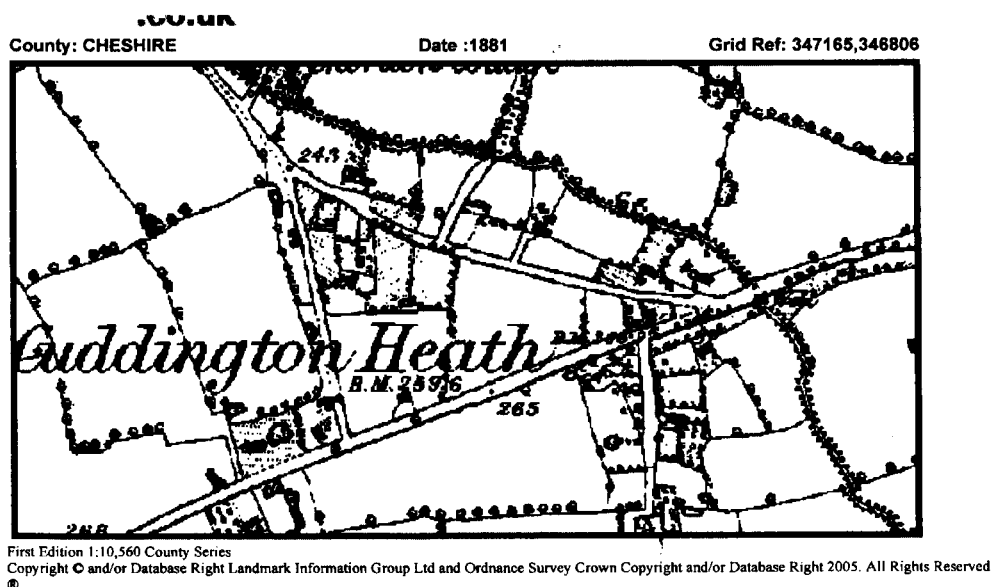
Source: Harley and Laxton, *Burdett*.

Figure 7:12 Part of Cuddington parliamentary enclosure award, 1860.



Source: Redrawn from CCALS, QDE 1/41.

Figure 7:13 Cuddington on the 1880 OS map.



Source: Old-maps.co.uk [http://www.old-maps.co.uk/oldmaps/index\\_external.jsp?easting=347165&northing=346806&countyCode=5](http://www.old-maps.co.uk/oldmaps/index_external.jsp?easting=347165&northing=346806&countyCode=5)

The majority of the few parliamentary enclosure awards in south-west Cheshire apparently proceeded without undue opposition, although the prospect of acquiring financially rewarding acres might have caused enough concern amongst landowners to prefer the stamp of government approval. Where parliamentary enclosure occurred in the area the land remained agricultural until the late nineteenth century, apart from limited development on the two pieces of waste and common that had close access to potentially lucrative transport routes. Tushingam benefited from its proximity to the canal and Cuddington was on the Malpas to Wrexham Road. However, even in these two cases the amount of building was so small as to make little difference to the population in those areas.

Old enclosure affected landownership patterns in the area because it created the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century countryside in which settlement development took place. The continued piecemeal enclosure by agreement, consolidation and exchange also affected landownership patterns and therefore settlement development. Unlike some other areas of the country, especially the Midlands, parliamentary enclosure in south-west Cheshire had little effect on settlement development, neither impeding nor encouraging it. Such limited building that occurred in townships with significant parliamentary enclosure, Cuddington Green and Tushingam, was largely the result of the improved transport links and later infill development.

## Proposed enclosures

Alongside parliamentary enclosure, documents for the area contain glimpses of proposed enclosures, mainly instigated by large landowners from high HHI townships and probably intended to take place by informal agreement. In 1767 at an 'inquisition' in Stretton township (HHI 6246<sub>LT</sub>) 12 landowners agreed that John Leche could enclose a horse and carriage way and footpath in Tilston leading from Stretton Village to Wetreins Green if he provided another carriage way between the two places.<sup>131</sup> In a letter of 1786 from Thomas Roylance to George Boughey Esq. of London, Roylance writes 'since I last walkd the Bounderis [sic] of Threapwood, there is at least ten acres more Enclosd. Mr Davis of Broughton this year has enclosd. full three acres on the welch [Welsh] side the said Common, if an Act of Parliament could be got to Enclose this Common it would be of service to Mr Drake.' In 1807 documents relating to farms in Broxton (HHI 2986<sub>LT</sub>) record that the writer 'believes the bearer Saml. Dod owns the enclosure in Broxton for his life at small quit rent'.<sup>132</sup> Enclosure appears to have been agreed at informal meetings, as was a proposed 'enclosure of the common at Baddiley [Bradley]' (HHI 3933<sub>T</sub>) which was 'moved at meeting at Wiffin inn, Malpas. Unanimous.'<sup>133</sup> A note of 1815 in an estate account mentions 'inclosure land' belonging to Drake.<sup>134</sup> An 1815 estate account refers to an enclosure at Shocklach (HHIs 3499<sub>LT</sub>, 1056<sub>LT</sub>) where £2-15-8 was paid to R Harrison for 'quick and labour inclosing wasteland at Shocklach'.<sup>135</sup> Enclosure of Edge (HHI 3110<sub>LT</sub>) was being considered in 1829 when Mr Pearce (presumably Drake's agent) wrote to Mr Drake referring to Miss Dod's letter forgoing a claim on part of Drake's estate in Edge: he stated that on his next visit in Edge he hoped 'to put matters into a state such that the Common and Waste lands of Edge can be enclosed'.<sup>136</sup> Although there was no parliamentary enclosure in Tilston (HHI 1984<sub>T</sub>), enclosure was clearly considered by local landowners. In 1829 Drake paid for 'Advertising in the Chester Papers for a meeting of Land Owners to enclose the Commons & Waste Lands by which 1 ½ acres was gained at Tilston'.<sup>137</sup> The fact that

<sup>131</sup> CCALS, DLE 82.

<sup>132</sup> CCALS, DEO 138.

<sup>133</sup> *Whitchurch Herald*, 26 November 1870, [p. 8].

<sup>134</sup> CCALS, DTD/40/6.

<sup>135</sup> CCALS, DTD/40/1.

<sup>136</sup> CCALS, DTD/54, packet f/2, 1829.

<sup>137</sup> CCALS, DTD 55/5.

no enclosure Act for Tilston resulted from this might have been, as Whyte suggests for the Fells, because there was opposition to the plans.<sup>138</sup>

In these surviving examples of enclosure proposals in south-west Cheshire the bulk of enclosed land in informal agreed enclosures was instigated by large landowners such as Drake. Informal enclosure, either actual or considered, took place in both low and high HHI townships, but was apparently more prevalent in high HHI townships where a major landowner could exert influence, with the low HHI townships exceptions to the norm.

As we have seen here and in chapter four, the land tax records, supported by other documents, demonstrate that consolidation was a major part of landownership changes in south-west Cheshire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was largely achieved piecemeal by exchange, purchase and informal enclosure, rather than by general enclosure. Although purchase was the main method of piecemeal consolidation, other examples from south-west Cheshire demonstrate that exchange and informal enclosure also occurred. As these latter methods probably still continued without formal record of the transaction, it is impossible to estimate how much these methods were used from 1750. The fact that they continued alongside purchase strengthens the evidence for piecemeal consolidation in the area.

South-west Cheshire therefore shows not only an increase in large landowners following the national trend, but a rise in the number of small landowners and small land holdings, generally in low HHI townships. Consolidation, mainly by purchase and exchange, as well as informal or illegal enclosures, and in townships with both high and low HHIs, were therefore the main methods of accumulating land.

## **Conclusion**

Landownership changes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in south-west Cheshire did not follow a Marxist deterministic course. Enclosure did not result in the decrease of small farmers, an exodus of labourers or a loss of settlements that the traditional Marxist approach predicts. The dominance of this view, coupled with an emphasis on parliamentary enclosure, has meant that, until recently, piecemeal

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<sup>138</sup> Whyte, 'Fells', p. 50.

enclosure (and other non-parliamentary enclosure) has tended to be undervalued.<sup>139</sup> In fact, consolidation, of which piecemeal enclosure was a part - as was the case in south-west Cheshire - was the main form of landownership change for much of the country during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As the evidence from Tilston and Malpas shows, piecemeal enclosure continued in south-west Cheshire into the nineteenth century. At national levels, consolidation and enclosure led to the creation of large estates, although outside the Midlands the pace was slower. However, in south-west Cheshire this was accompanied by an increase in the number of smaller landowners. This bears out the work of Yelling, Mingay, Beckett and Grigg.

The evidence from south-west Cheshire points to different types of consolidation among large and small landowners and in high and low HHI townships. In low HHI townships both large and small landowners consolidated their holdings by piecemeal methods of which enclosure was a part. Where we have examples of informal general agreement to enclose - or at least proposals for such enclosure - these appear to have been among large landowners, generally, but not always in high HHI townships. Although consolidation of estates and the increase in small landowners occurred through the informal methods of purchase, exchange and piecemeal enclosure in both high and low HHI townships, the increase in small landowners certainly was slower in high HHI townships. Piecemeal enclosure and consolidation was more prevalent in low HHI townships, following the trend of the already largely enclosed area; general enclosure by agreement occurred or was proposed mainly in the high HHI townships in south-west Cheshire.

The area's parliamentary enclosure or other enclosure by Award occurred mainly in high HHI townships (therefore with more dominating landowners with greater control) and in these areas mainly the land remained agricultural. However, in two significant areas, one of typical enclosure landscape (Tushingham) and the other of increased building (Cuddington), parliamentary enclosure took place in two low HHI townships with a greater number of enclosure landowners and therefore less inclination to maintain the status quo. The previous agricultural land was therefore more likely to become building plots in low HHI townships affected by parliamentary enclosure such as Cuddington (given that parliamentary enclosure in low HHI townships was unusual).

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<sup>139</sup> Williamson, *Transformation*, p. 13.

Although exceptions do exist to the division of types of enclosure used by large and small landowners with, for example, some parliamentary-enclosed land in low HHI townships and some land enclosed by general agreement going to smaller landowners, generally the larger landowners appeared to favour general enclosure both informal and parliamentary while smaller landowners used informal piecemeal methods. However, consolidation of land was carried out by both large and small landowners in low and high HHI townships.

The area's declining population during the second half of the nineteenth century in relation to national and county trends cannot be linked solely with enclosure. As Chapman and Mingay pointed out, enclosure increased rural employment so not all out-migration was of agricultural labourers.<sup>140</sup> Although dairying areas generally held up well compared to other types of agriculture in times of depression, a loss of livelihood and subsequent out-migration still occurred. The eight per cent population decline in south-west Cheshire during the second half of the nineteenth century indicates that although even small landowners survived, landless labourers were still inclined to seek work outside the area.

Although the effects of the Agricultural Revolution were felt throughout the country, their impact varied regionally. In the Midlands straight-sided fields, straight roads and new farmhouses centred within their fields made a huge impact, while in areas of early enclosure such as Cheshire such changes were much less marked, although some new building did take place. The trend in south-west Cheshire was to build on the increasing number of small plots. These variations from the national picture reinforce Yelling's emphasis on the importance of regional studies.

This chapter has demonstrated that the landownership changes in south-west Cheshire from the mid-eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century differed in important respects from most other parts of the country; it has also reinforced the danger of applying a national model of enclosure. Twentieth century farming changes became the background to modern planning laws and the effect of these will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>140</sup> Chambers and Mingay, *Revolution*, p. 187.





## Chapter eight

### Planning and legislation

This chapter will show that the settlement patterns of twentieth-century south-west Cheshire are the result of both of landownership patterns as measured by HHI and of planning decisions. During the second half of the twentieth century the introduction of more effective planning laws, with specific restrictions on developing agricultural land, vastly diminished landowners' control over their land and meant that once again it was mainly owners of smaller non-agricultural plots who sold land for development. Where agricultural land was sold, it was within the strict limits of planning legislation. Although the power of landowners greatly diminished during the twentieth century, the pressure to preserve south-west Cheshire's agricultural land therefore meant that the major landowners still indirectly influenced the development of settlements in the area, as their land tended to be sold as farming land, and not land for building development.

This chapter examines the effect of legislation, in particular planning legislation, on landownership and how landownership patterns of previous centuries as measured by HHI affected twentieth-century settlement development. As we have already seen, HHI links landownership patterns of the nineteenth century with those of the twentieth century through the 1910 'Domesday'. This allows us to follow landownership patterns in townships through to the advent of modern planning legislation.

The break up of the great estates, which started prior to World War One, peaked in the inter-war years and continued to a greater or lesser extent throughout the twentieth century. This was accompanied by the introduction of planning laws and the combination of the two gradually reduced the power which the major estate owners held over land and settlements. These trends were complemented by the gradual introduction of conservation and environmental restrictions and development plans which added new dimensions to what development was permissible. The introduction of inter-war state housing (council housing) put decisions about the placing, number and type of housing into the hands of local authorities with guidance from central government. Additionally, the phase of post-war reconstruction after World War Two, combined with generally applied and increasingly prescriptive

planning laws, restricted development to that approved by local authorities. This went in parallel with an increased trend for counter-urbanisation from the late 1950s onwards, which put pressure on rural settlements to accommodate in-migrants with higher expectations of what settlements should provide in the way of facilities.<sup>1</sup> Although planning laws, largely ineffective, had been introduced since the beginning of the twentieth century, it was the post-World War Two planning regulations that changed the balance of power between landowners and central and local government.

As discussed in chapter four, although the sale of the great estates nationally resulted in an increase in smaller landowners and therefore more building, this was not the case in south-west Cheshire. However, some building did take place before and after the sales and this is discussed in the next section. This chapter first discusses the extent of building in south-west Cheshire in the twentieth century. It then examines the effect of the planning laws on settlement development and the relationship between landownership and the new controls over the land.

### ***Building before 1918***

Although, as the previous chapter showed, little of the land sold by the major landowners in the area was built upon, it does not mean that no building occurred on land outside the major estates. The special case of inter-war housing will be discussed in the following section, but here we discuss land developed prior to and during World War One.

A longstanding Act, the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act, empowered local authorities to activate slum clearance and build more houses to a publicly acceptable standard of sanitation. Although largely used by urban authorities, smaller places did use the Act after Rural Districts adopted part III.<sup>2</sup> In addition, philanthropists took the lead where some local authorities hesitated. In York, for example, in 1901 Joseph Rowntree bought 123 acres at Huntington, later

<sup>1</sup> Green, *Planning*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Houses of the Working Classes Acts Amendment Bill (Abstract)* 1906, British Official Publications Collaborative Reader Information Service <<http://www.bopcris.ac.uk/bopall/ref7526.html>> [accessed 27 Jan 2006]. Rural District Councils could adopt part III of the 1890 Act with the consent of their County Council. This allowed rural areas to acquire building land by compulsory purchase. The 1890 Act was still employed after World War One in tandem with the 1919 Housing Act. (R.B. Lawson, 'The conservation and conversion of traditional farm buildings: an evaluation based on the Pennine uplands', (unpublished Doctoral thesis, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1992), Financial aid was available from the government under the 1919 Housing Act between 1919 and 1923.

named New Earswick, and built 30 new houses within three years.<sup>3</sup> Local authorities soon followed and in south-west Cheshire Malpas Parish Council agreed a building scheme in 1902 under the 1900 extension<sup>4</sup> of the 1890 Act for 12 three-bedroom semi-detached houses, each with an allotment for the Moss Land nearest the town on the east side of the Malpas to Whitchurch Road.<sup>5</sup> A year later Malpas Rural District Council (RDC) approved a further 12 cottages on the Wrexham Road and five cottages in Well Street in Malpas town.<sup>6</sup> The Parish Council agreed to lease the Moss Land to the RDC on condition that it was used for the purposes of the Act.<sup>7</sup> Another 12 houses were built in Malpas in 1907 and six in Hampton in 1908. Following the Housing and Town Planning Act 1909, RDCs began to sell or lease land for building and Malpas RDC did so in 1910.<sup>8</sup> Notably, it was the larger, already expanding settlements, generally in townships with low HHIs such as Malpas, that were the obvious choices for expansion.

At about this time the counter-urbanisation movement began, a product initially of the idealistic middle classes searching for a better life. However, although counter-urbanisation was a growing trend from about 1910 onwards, Pooley and Turnbull remind us to be cautious about its effect during the early part of the twentieth century because until about the 1920s the most common form of migration was movement within settlements and movement between small places had been very common during all periods.<sup>9</sup>

General agricultural changes affected the number and type of dwellings built for agricultural workers. From the start of the twentieth century rural workers could not be persuaded to remain in substandard tied cottages to work the land – a modern labourer ‘was only to be persuaded to a country life by a decent, habitable, and healthy cottage, with sufficient land attached.’<sup>10</sup> However, rural labourers preferred the use of a large garden over the quality of their housing. The provision of

<sup>3</sup> 'Modern York: Economy and the Corporation, 1900-39', in *A History of the County of Yorkshire: the City of York*, ed. P. M. Tillot, (London, 1961), pp. 293-300 (p. 5) < <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=36365> > [accessed 20 June 2005].

<sup>4</sup> *Housing of the Working Classes Act (63 & 64 Vict. c.59)* 1900 < <http://www.chronology.ndo.co.uk/1900-1924.htm> > [accessed 27 January 2006].

<sup>5</sup> CCALS, RP10/1/2, p. insert facing p. 163, between pp. 164-165, 7 January 1902.

<sup>6</sup> CCALS, RRM/3, p. 34, 9 September 1903; p. 72, 9 March 1904.

<sup>7</sup> CCALS, RP10/1/2, p. 219, 18 August 1905.

<sup>8</sup> CCALS, RRM/3, p. 388, 13 February 1907; p. 282, 11 September 1908; RRM/4, pp. 44-45, 8 June 1910.

<sup>9</sup> Pooley and Turnbull, *Migration*, pp. 13, 130, 141-3.

<sup>10</sup> *Report of the Select Committee on the Housing of the Working Classes Acts Amendment Bill 1906*, HoC 376, pp. 26-27 quoted in *The Land*, p. 145.

allotments therefore became a dominant theme of rural land use leading to one recommendation that all new cottages should have some land attached and that there should be no more than four houses to an acre.<sup>11</sup> The onset of World War One and the loss of labour to the forces made the provision of adequate housing an important issue.

During World War One Malpas RDC was contacted by the Local Government Board about the provision of houses for the working classes after the war. The RDC resolved 'That the district being fully supplied with houses no scheme was necessary;'<sup>12</sup> revealing that any development of settlements due to the needs of World War One servicemen was not a local priority. Both before and during World War One (1911 to 1919) the Sanitary Inspector, reporting on a survey of all the houses in south-west Cheshire, stated that no houses had been built in any (civil) parish except Malpas since 1911 (although two cottages were in fact approved at Hampton)<sup>13</sup> (Table 8:1).

**Table 8:1: Houses built in south-west Cheshire, 1911 to 1919**

Parish (township)	Houses built 1911-1919	Number of houses	Whether any overcrowding**	Number of houses unfit for habitation	Changes needed
Malpas	4	282	No	2	None
Edge	0	52	No	0	
Hampton	0*	84	3 houses	1	18 need sanitary improvements
Larkton	0	6	No		Not to be closed
Tushingham	0	54	No	0	11 houses with two families can't get own place
Macefen	0		No	0	

Source: CCALS, RRM/5, p.131, 12 November 1919.

\* Note: The Sanitary inspector's report excluded two houses built at Hampton during this period and recorded elsewhere in the Minutes. \*\*Overcrowding was defined in the 1901 Census Report as more than two people per room (a child under 10 years equalled half a person). (TNA, *Living in 1901: Housing for the Poor* <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/census/living/live/poor.htm>> [accessed 7 May 2006])

<sup>11</sup> *The Land*, pp. 171, 173, 175-185.

<sup>12</sup> CCALS, RRM/5, p. 38, 10 October 1917.

<sup>13</sup> CCALS, RRM/4, pp. 44-5, 11, November 1914, RRM/5, p. 131, 12 November 1919.

However, the very limited building that took place on previous estate land meant that physically there was very little to show in the way of development until the end of World War One and apparently little need for new housing during that period. Where limited development did take place it was in the low HHI townships (now parishes) of Malpas and Hampton.

### ***Inter-war housing***

Cannadine has commented on the 'unprecedented' changes that occurred to the British landscape during the inter-war period, with urban expansion 'gobbling up' 60,000 acres in rural areas annually resulting in 'a new world of council house estates and white-collar suburbs, of seaside bungalows and holiday homes as the working and lower middle classes leapfrogged their way out into the country' accompanied by what he implied were all the landscape horrors of urban life.<sup>14</sup> This echoed Hoskins's prejudice against the urban changes of the first half of the twentieth century. Although rural England suffered a population decrease, some villages showed signs of regeneration. These were usually the larger settlements in the traditionally-termed open townships (or, as shown in south-west Cheshire, low HHI townships) with good access to transport and within commuting distance of a larger urban area with better employment prospects.<sup>15</sup> While major landowners were under pressure to sell their land, local authorities were buying land to provide housing for returning soldiers and, in large towns and cities, to rehouse people moved in slum clearance projects. This increased the amount of land and buildings under local authority rather than individual landowner control and was yet another pressure on major landowners. The government was also tightening its planning laws. These laws moved ownership of some land from individuals to local authorities and simultaneously strengthening the regulations concerning what, how and whether land could be developed.

The new type of housing had a huge impact on settlements of all sizes. As Lees said, 'the volume of local authority housing was one of the most striking and

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<sup>14</sup> D. Cannadine, 'The historical background', in *Remaking the Landscape: The Changing Face of Britain*, ed. J. Jenkins, (London, 2002), pp. 25-48 (p. 34).

<sup>15</sup> Wild, *Village*, p. 114.

peculiar features of British towns.’<sup>16</sup> Cost constraints curtailed the number of houses produced but between 1919 and 1939 four million houses were built, one and a half million by local authorities.<sup>17</sup> Local authority housing schemes, spurred on by the provision of housing for returning soldiers from World War One, although limited in scope, had a major effect on settlement development as some discharged soldiers looked forward to the dream of a rural home.<sup>18</sup> Following Lloyd George’s election campaign promise in 1918 of ‘A land fit for heroes’,<sup>19</sup> the 1919 Housing Act ordered local authorities to provide viable schemes for ‘homes fit for heroes’, specifically in working class areas. This was important as high post-war land prices made obtaining a holding impossible for most returning soldiers.<sup>20</sup> Government money was made available to local authorities for this purpose between 1919 and 1923.<sup>21</sup>

In 1919 the Reverend L. Armistead raised with the Malpas RDC the need for extra cottages to be funded with government financial aid under the 1919 Act. The RDC investigated both the need for the housing and the availability of housing land and were informed that the District was entitled to 31 houses. By 1920 the RDC had received tenders to erect 28 houses at (probably) Larkton subject to approval from the Regional Housing Committee.<sup>22</sup>

Other Acts, brought into force just as major landowners were releasing their hold on their estates, encouraged planning and development and meant that more land was made available to smaller, often speculative builders.<sup>23</sup> This led to a

<sup>16</sup> L. H. Lees, ‘Urban Networks’, in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. M. Daunton, III 1840-1950 (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 59-94 (p. 36).

<sup>17</sup> Clapson, *Invisible*, pp. 28, 32-3.

<sup>18</sup> Howkins, *Death*, p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> Hall, *Planning*, p. 38; L. Katz, ‘Women and the Welsh Wizard’, *Guardian*, 4 Apr 2005, p. 1-6 (p. 3).

<sup>20</sup> R. Forrest, A. Murie and P. Williams, *Home Ownership* (London, 1990); Howkins, *Reshaping*, p. 278.

<sup>21</sup> <<http://www.chanel4.com/hwastory/microsites/H/hwastory/guide19/timeline101.html>>, under the 1919 Housing Act.

<sup>22</sup> CCALS, RRM/5, p. 99, 16 April 1919; p. 152, 21 April 1920. The continuing use of the Housing of the Working Classes Act was not confined to south-west Cheshire. Other RDCs attempted to use the Act but had their plans halted after the axing of government expenditure under the ‘Geddes’ Act of 1923. The Geddes Report of 1922 was one of three from committees chaired by Geddes recommending a decrease in national expenditure. (J. Black, ‘Factory accounts and the First World War: J.M. Fells and the War Office Cost Accounts Committee’, Third Accounting History International Conference, Siena, 17-19 December 2003

<<http://www.muprivate.edu.au/fileadmin/SOE/acchist/conf3/Black.pdf>> [accessed 27 January 2006]). E.g. Evans, ‘Landownership’, p. 97.

<sup>23</sup> The most relevant of these inter-war Acts were Housing Act (Chamberlain Act) 1923

<<http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/so/youthchron/Housing/pre45housing.htm>>; Town and Country

Planning Act 1925 ‘Geddes’; Rural Workers Housing Act 1926; ‘Wheatley’ Act 1927; Town and

'private house building boom' in the 1930s, but unfortunately the legislation was only minimally enforced.<sup>24</sup> An indication of the type and number of properties approved by the RDC is shown in Table 8:2, but not all buildings gaining planning permission were built. The table shows that Egerton, whose family owned five per cent of the area in 1910, was still building in 1927. Therefore, although the RDCs were becoming more powerful, some of the area's traditional elite were still developing land.

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Country Planning Act 1932; Housing (Financial Provisions) 1933; Housing Act 1935; Agricultural Act 1937; Agricultural Development Act 1939 (Creed, *Planning*, p. 100; Evans, 'Landownership', pp. 87, 116).

<sup>24</sup> S. Merrett and F. Gray, *Owner Occupation in Britain* (London, 1982), pp. 5, 23; Greed, *Planning*, p. 100.



Table 8:2: Dwellings approved in south-west Cheshire, 1922 to 1939

DATE	BUILDING	PLACE	BUILDER/BUYER
16 Oct 1922	Bungalow	Mr Lowe's Field Crewe by Farndon	
16 Oct 1922	Houses (2 pairs of semis)	Farndon	Sir H. Barnston
22 Sep 1923	Bungalow (1 bed)	Farndon	Mr R. Stones
22 Sep 1923	Bungalow	Farndon	Mr G. Thomas
18 Mar 1926	Bungalow (2 beds)	Farndon	N.S. Parker
18 Mar 1926	House	Broxton	F.W. Stant
18 Mar 1926	Bungalow	Farndon, near Dee	McKee, esq.
Oct 1926	Bungalow (2 bed semi)	Farndon	J.B. Jones
5 Mar 1927	House (2 beds det.)	Farndon	Sir Harry Barnston, MP
2 Apr 1927	Pair cottages (3 beds)	Barnhill, Broxton On Broxton to Bickerton Road	Sir P.H.B. Grey Egerton
25 Jun 1927	Bungalow	Broxton, Brown Knowl	Mr Walter Stant
7 Jan 1928	House (to replace existing)	Broxton, Brown Knowl	Mr Lloyd
4 Feb 1928	Bungalow (replacing 2 cott.)	Shocklach (Vicar's Cottages)	Thomas Pugh
3 Mar 1928	Bungalow	Farndon, below Farndon Hall in garden adjoining boathouse	Mr A.S. Evanson
18 Aug 1928	House (3 beds)	Farndon, Churton Road	
22 Jun 1929	New farmhouse (3+2 beds) (replacing old farmhouse)	Stretton, south of Stretton Hall,	
27 Apr 1929	Bungalow	Farndon	Mr. J. Simon
25 Sep 1929	2 houses (3 beds)	Tilston, Wet Lane	Mr G.F. Ince, Mr J. Simon
1931	32 council houses	Malpas	
12 Jul 1932	House	Tilston	Mr. Ashley
4 Mar 1933	House (3 beds. det.)	Farndon	
6 May 1933	House (3 beds det.)	Farndon, on road to Cock-A-Barton and Barton to Farndon Road	
2 Sep 1933	Bungalow	Farndon, on Farndon to Chester Road	Mr H.C. Nicholson
3 Mar 1934	House (3-beds)	Farndon, Old Brewery on Chester Road	Mr Lewis
2 Jan 1937	4 houses	Clutton	Messrs. Tyrie
16 Apr 1938	12 houses	Farndon	J. Cresswell
2 July 1938	Additional 2 pairs houses	Farndon	J. Cresswell
3 Sep 1938	New Public Elementary Church of England School	Malpas	Chester Diocesan Church School Association
7 Oct 1939	Pair agricultural cottages	Malpas, 'The Bank'	
<b>TOTALS</b>			
Houses	26 (7 definitely detached)	(It was clear from the context that some of these are semis although not specifically stated)	
Cottages (pairs of)	4		
Farm	1		
School	1		
Bungalows	12		
Council houses	32		

Tarvin RDC, which included Malpas, continued to buy land and build houses for the 'Working Classes' and in 1928 bought 1.6 acres at Tilston for this purpose.<sup>25</sup> It also sought loans from the Public Works Loan Fund to pay for land for approved schemes, for example, 2.32 acres in Farndon for the 12 houses agreed in 1938.<sup>26</sup> However, agricultural parishes received a more generous subsidy from the government than non-agricultural parishes. When in 1931 Malpas parish council received approval from the Ministry of Health for 32 council houses, the council queried whether they could rebrand the new houses as agricultural to take advantage of the larger subsidy. However they were informed that the difference between the two types of parishes was clearly defined and Malpas was on the non-agricultural list.<sup>27</sup> This no doubt came as a surprise to the council but was an indication that the town of Malpas, if not the Rural District itself, was no longer considered the home of a largely agricultural workforce. Again, the already expanding settlements in townships which had low HHIs in 1910 benefited from the bulk of expansion opportunities.

As Table 8:2 shows, approximately 87 dwellings were considered for or gained planning approval in the area during the inter-war years. Most building took place or was intended to take place in the larger, low HHI settlements, the former market towns of Malpas and Farndon.<sup>28</sup> This followed a national trend with the growth of former market towns or villages which became the centre of a building boom to accommodate the incoming urban dwellers who offset the decline in agricultural employees (counter-urbanisation). The difference was that building in Farndon (HHI 2188<sub>D</sub>) was detached or small groups of semis, only a few of which were council houses, while the main building in Malpas (HHI 2671<sub>D</sub>) was a large estate of 32 council houses. Not all building proposals were approved: in 1924 the Council had refused to sell land for houses to a Mr Garrad, although four houses were submitted for Clutton in 1937.<sup>29</sup> Single dwellings were built in the smaller settlements, those generally with high HHIs, throughout the area with slightly more at Clutton (HHI 6930<sub>D</sub>). However, it was the larger low HHI settlements such as Malpas and Tilston that were permitted large scale development, as well as selected

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<sup>25</sup> CCALS, RRT/14, p. 101, 5 November 1938, p. 12, 3 December 1938.

<sup>26</sup> CCALS, RRT/14, p. 48, 16 April 1938.

<sup>27</sup> *Chester Courant*, 19 August 1931, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping*, p. 290.

<sup>29</sup> CCALS, RRT/6, p. [loose sheets], 24 November 1924, RRT/13, 2 January 1937.

smaller high HHI settlements such as Clutton. Clutton was included in development plans because it was one of the few townships in south-west Cheshire with a school; buses also stopped there.<sup>30</sup> It therefore had the minimum of basic services that planners considered necessary for a viable community. The construction of council houses in Malpas and Farndon in the 1930s heralded the start of a slow, but significant, growth in local authority building in south-west Cheshire, following the national trend.

Within all the Administrative County and Associated County Boroughs in Cheshire there were 347,487 dwellings in 1939 with an average of 3.33 people per dwelling. Chester Rural District had 4,982 dwellings with an average occupancy of 3.62.<sup>31</sup> In south-west Cheshire itself there were some 1,455 dwellings with an average occupancy of four people per dwelling.<sup>32</sup> The higher occupancy rate can be accounted for by both the relatively low number of houses in the area and the large families of agricultural labourers.

Therefore, while the major landowners were selling their estates and local authorities were buying land for state housing, new government planning restrictions were beginning to control the type of development allowed. Although there was limited inter-war development in south-west Cheshire, it started a trend of increased development in the area, although it came increasingly under the ever more prescriptive planning laws as they were introduced.

### ***World War Two – marking time and changing planning***

Landownership had little effect on settlement development during World War Two because of wartime restrictions. World War Two was a period of limited settlement growth nationally because many projects had to be deferred for the duration. As the war approached the number of house completions fell rapidly and in 1939 the inter-war movement to the suburbs ceased.<sup>33</sup> By 1941 civil building development had virtually ceased because of strictly controlled building licences and a shortage of

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<sup>30</sup> Council Cheshire County, *County Record Office and Chester Diocesan Record Office* (Chester, 1983), p. 21. Clutton CE (Controlled) Primary School.

<sup>31</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. 54-5.

<sup>32</sup> Great Britain Historical GIS Project, *A Vision of Britain Through Time*, Department of Geography, University of Portsmouth <<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk>> [accessed 7 Mar 2006]. National census 1931.

<sup>33</sup> Merrett and Gray, *Owner Occupation*, p. 17; Best, *Land Use*, p. 90.

materials.<sup>34</sup> However, extra taxation and high death duties meant that land sales continued into 1941 and the value of agricultural land rose.<sup>35</sup>

There was no change in settlement distribution and little change in settlement development in south-west Cheshire during World War Two. Land acquired for housing before the war but not built on was rented out on condition that it was vacated when required for housing. Just prior to the war Tarvin RDC had begun to acquire more land for housing and tried to accelerate building on already purchased sites. For example, housing land next to the Sunnyside cottages in Malpas that had been acquired by Tarvin RDC in 1920 and earmarked for speedy construction was rented out at the start of the Second World War until the war ended. The estate was finally built some time between the end of the war and 1954.<sup>36</sup> Although temporary housing of various kinds, including urban 'prefab' housing, survived elsewhere in England after the war, there appears to be no evidence for building of prefabs in south-west Cheshire.<sup>37</sup> Most building in the area during World War Two involved 'temporary' structures, mainly garages, barns and wooden bungalows that were intended to be removed when the war ended.<sup>38</sup> However, occasionally these structures were declared permanent after the war, as was a Dutch Barn in Oldcastle in 1949.<sup>39</sup>

Farming was a reserved occupation, but farms were still being sold in south-west Cheshire during the war and in 1944 two farms, Egerton Farm (173 acres) and Egerton Hall (308 acres), were sold. Both included a farmhouse and Egerton Hall had an additional four cottages.<sup>40</sup>

### **1940s planning**

The power of individual landowners became subordinate to the power of planners from the 1940s onwards. Although building almost ceased during World War Two, a series of reports was produced by various bodies that laid the foundations for post-war development nationally for the second half of the twentieth century. As

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<sup>34</sup> Cannadine, *Decline*, p. 629.

<sup>35</sup> Cannadine, *Decline*, p. 630.

<sup>36</sup> CCALS, RP/10/1/5, p. 56, 7 March 1939, RRT/15, p. 5, RP/10/1/6, page opposite p. 83, 26 Aug 1954.

<sup>37</sup> The author can remember 'prefab' housing in Hammersmith in the 1950s which survived inhabited until the late twentieth century. Similar housing in East Dulwich was inhabited until at least the 1980s.

<sup>38</sup> CCALS, RRT/391.

<sup>39</sup> CCALS, RRT/391. Noticeably this was an agricultural building and not, therefore, on housing land.

<sup>40</sup> CCALS, DCH/II/18.

Cannadine noted, they found approval from a war-battered population which was also becoming more sympathetic to environmental planning.<sup>41</sup> These reports included some recommendations specifically aimed at rural areas such as south-west Cheshire.

The Barlow Report (1940) laid the foundation for other reports and modern planners such as Hall regard it as ‘very important’.<sup>42</sup> It praised decentralisation and referred to the growth of secondary or market towns that encouraged employment and became central to their regions, but which also provided ‘cheap and undesirable amusements’. Improved transport enabled commuters to live outside an urban area although the neglect of agriculture led to the depopulation of rural areas.<sup>43</sup>

The Scott Report (1942), significantly, regarded agricultural land as a ‘priceless asset’ and proposed that the planning system, ideally under a central authority, should involve rural as well as urban areas, and that the preservation of agricultural land had to be planning’s priority.<sup>44</sup> The report included some important recommendations specifically concerning land utilisation in rural areas, including bringing all rural development under planning control. Although advocating a large rural development programme, it also proposed that new building should take place preferably in country towns and villages rather than in the open countryside. Most importantly, the report stated that every land use planning issue had to relate to a specific plot of land, whatever the size.<sup>45</sup> The Scott Report was the first to understand fully the need to improve and maintain the rural infrastructure and allow new housing, albeit in line with the needs of rural areas.

Finally, the Uthwatt Report (1942) tackled the question of compensation, which was important as local authorities increasingly used their powers of compulsory purchase of land.<sup>46</sup> However, its suggestion that the state should be the initial purchaser of rural land for urban development led to opposition from people who feared it represented land nationalisation.<sup>47</sup> These reports were followed by

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<sup>41</sup> Cannadine, ‘Historical background’, p. 37.

<sup>42</sup> Hall, *Planning*, p. 57.

<sup>43</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. 3, 4.

<sup>44</sup> Hall, *Planning*, p. 62.

<sup>45</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. vi, 4-5.

<sup>46</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. 5, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Hall, *Planning*, p. 63. Land nationalisation was still a concern of writers in the late 1960s. As Wellar wrote ‘It may be, in the last resort, that the only solution will be for the nation to own the land collectively.’ (J. Wellar, *Modern Architecture and Rural Planning* (London, 1967), p. 12.) The ‘Right to Roam’ legislation of 2000, although falling well short of nationalisation, was belated acknowledgement of the public’s right to greater access to the land. (*Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000* <<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/en/2000en37.pdf>> [accessed 2002].)

others between 1942 and 1947.<sup>48</sup> Although advocating even more controlled planning, the emphasis was on the preservation of agricultural land: at the same time they sought to initiate rural development by developing existing larger rural settlements rather than by encroaching into the open countryside.

A Ministry of Town and Country Planning was created in 1943 to oversee planning nation-wide and legislation was passed following the recommendations of the Scott Report.<sup>49</sup> In 1946 the Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt reports, backed by legislation, provided a planning framework for regional and local authorities.<sup>50</sup> Particularly relevant to south-west Cheshire was the appointment of rural land utilisation officers to advise on proposed housing sites so that good agricultural land was not wasted.<sup>51</sup> Looking ahead to post-war reconstruction, the Town and Country Planning Act 1944 enabled local authorities to buy land for a limited period after the war to deal with extensive post-war regeneration. It also allowed local authorities to obtain land to sell to private developers and to list individual buildings of historical importance.<sup>52</sup>

An essential premise of all these Acts and Reports, and their successors from the later twentieth century, was that it was vital to preserve agricultural land despite the inevitable restrictions on rural settlement development that this entailed. This commitment was to have an important effect on settlement development in south-west Cheshire during the second half of the twentieth century.

The building trend following the introduction of planning, particularly after World War Two, was initially not obvious. All major planning reports and laws from that period contained a commitment to preserve agricultural land, a commitment later preserved in Cheshire's own contribution to planning development. This would ensure that already developed areas typified by the larger low HHI rural settlements

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<sup>48</sup> E.g. the Dudley Report on The Design of Dwellings 1944, the white paper 'The Control of Land Use' 1944, the Dower Report on National Parks in England and Wales 1945 <<http://www.dartingtonarchive.org.uk/pages/kenationalparks2.html>>; 'Interim Report of the New Towns Committee'(Reith Report), 1946, The Hobhouse Report, 1947, <<http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/newforest/documents/ca/caos.rtf>>; <<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sbe/planbiblios/bibs/house/06.html>>; Hall, *Planning*, p. 61.

<sup>49</sup> This included the Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage Act, 1944, the Water Act, 1945, and the application of planning control on agricultural buildings.

<sup>50</sup> TNA, *Transport Departments* <<http://www.ndad.nationalarchives.gov.uk/AH/14/detail.html>> [accessed 22 November 2005], p. 1. Ministry of Town and Country Planning.

<sup>51</sup> Lord Justice Scott's Committee, *Land Utilisation in Rural Areas* (Cmd. 6378) (London, 1942) (Scott Report), p. 90.

<sup>52</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 7.

were selected for development, while most smaller or high HHI settlements were allowed to stagnate or decline.

### ***Post-war reconstruction – planning policies up to 1971***

The post World War Two planning policies finally wrested much of the control over the development of the land from the landowners. However, as we shall see, the influence of eighteenth and nineteenth-century landowners remained in the landownership patterns of south-west Cheshire, linked through HHIs to the 1910 ‘Domesday, that survived until the end of the twentieth century.

The planning process that was to have such an important effect after World War Two had at its heart the need to preserve agricultural land that had proved so vital to the war effort while at the same time providing adequate housing for rural workers. An additional theme was the preservation of older settlement patterns, as there was increased public interest in preserving the country’s heritage.<sup>53</sup> Planning in the post-war period falls into two stages, both nationally and locally. First, up to 1971 planners were bound by the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, with Cheshire’s planners also guided by *A Plan for Cheshire* published the previous year.<sup>54</sup> Both documents developed ideas articulated in the war-time planning reports and utilised a zoning system based on basic land-use descriptions.<sup>55</sup> Second, the Town and Country Act 1971, consolidated from the Town and Country Planning Act 1968, introduced the concept of a structure plan into planning methodology, a way of working that still operates today. As will be shown, during both these periods the premise that agricultural land should be preserved from building was a key concept of rural planning and development. This section examines how the more prescriptive post-war planning policies as applied in south-west Cheshire have preserved the distribution pattern of settlements and the original farming land of the great estates, while allowing limited growth in certain settlements within specified limits. The period from 1971 will be covered in a later section.

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<sup>53</sup> Wild, *Village*, p. 128. Although heritage and environmental preservation became more popular throughout the second half of the twentieth century, it had its roots in the preservation societies of the thirties and earlier, e.g. The Council for the Preservation of Rural England (now The Campaign to Protect Rural England) founded in 1926 <<http://www.cpre.org.uk/about-us/index.htm>>, The Georgian Group founded 1937 <<http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk>>.

<sup>54</sup> Chapman, *Plan*.

<sup>55</sup> Greed, *Planning*, p. 115. *A Plan for Cheshire* will be discussed in detail in the next section.

The Labour government of 1945 ensured that post-war planning took into account the need to protect agricultural land to maintain the standard of food production that had been so vital during the war. It did so by gradually introducing controls for new buildings and improving the existing housing.<sup>56</sup> As Murdoch and others have pointed out, for much of the post-war period the concept of ‘rurality’ was closely linked to agriculture, because the government’s policy for rural areas effectively corresponded to and complemented agricultural policy. There was also an increase in rural population in the post-war period because of urban to rural migration patterns (or counter-urbanisation).<sup>57</sup> The national population rose by 11 per cent between 1951 and 1971;<sup>58</sup> the population of Cheshire by 19 per cent; and the population of south-west Cheshire by six per cent (see chapter three). Therefore there was a constant conflict between the need to preserve agricultural land from building, the desire to control development in the name of conservation and environmental preservation, and the need to house rural workers adequately, and pressure to provide the facilities and amenities that contributed to healthy rural communities. (This conflict continued during the last quarter of the twentieth century as the subsequent section will show.)

Although farm buildings continued to be necessary, the decreasing number of agricultural workers throughout the twentieth century reduced the need to build agricultural cottages. However, this was balanced by a need to accommodate new urban incomers demanding high standards of residential building. This contributed to rising house prices which had to be reconciled with the need to house local residents who wished to remain in the area. In-migration also included people who decided to work in rural areas in preference to urban areas, although their work had no connection with the area’s primary industry. However, nationally the construction of local authority housing was slow during 1946-7. During the economic crisis of 1947 building by private speculators fell by 25 per cent, partly due to restraints put on local authorities until mid-1947 on the amount of speculative building they could permit.<sup>59</sup>

Post-war land sales had slowed, largely because farmers were less inclined to take on mortgages, and the government had reduced death duties for agricultural land

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<sup>56</sup> Howkins, *Death*, pp. 144-5; Merrett and Gray, *Owner Occupation*, p. 18.

<sup>57</sup> Murdoch, and others, *Differentiated*, p. 57, 38.

<sup>58</sup> Gardiner and Wenborn, *British History*, p. 611.

<sup>59</sup> Merrett and Gray, *Owner Occupation*, p. 22.



so some of the aristocracy bought back farms.<sup>60</sup> Planning laws had gradually reduced the power of landowners to develop their land. By 1946 all land was subject to planning control and any development had to conform to ‘interim development control’ as laid down in the Town and County Planning Act (General Interim Development) of 1946.<sup>61</sup> As a result of these planning regulations, local authorities were encouraged to examine planning issues in their areas. Cheshire was the first to take up the challenge and in 1946 produced what was to be, nationally and locally, an influential plan which affected rural planning in Cheshire for at least 25 years.

## A Plan for Cheshire

Planning for rural Cheshire had its origins in its first major planning report *A Plan for Cheshire*<sup>62</sup> published in 1946 (hereafter the *Plan*), which was a far-reaching and innovative report on planning for the whole County of Cheshire. It was an inspired attempt to rectify the lamentably lax statutory planning regulations that had pertained since the start of World War Two. This wide-ranging approach to planning put Cheshire in this respect ahead of other local planning authorities in England and Wales. The *Plan* set an important precedent by advocating the limited development of rural settlements while maintaining agricultural land. One of its main strengths was to utilise the Scott and Barlow reports to introduce new concepts into the planning process for the area, and many of the *Plan*’s ideas were adopted later by other local authorities throughout the country. The *Plan* claimed to be the first report to provide a ‘reasoned pattern of village development based on the natural and economic functions of varying types of rural settlement’.<sup>63</sup> It was this report that ensured the survival of the landownership patterns of the previous centuries.

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<sup>60</sup> Howkins, *Death*, p. 146. As late as 1980 about half the families nationally who had great estates in 1880 still had a reduced version of their estates although mainly as farmland. In south-west Cheshire virtually all of the major landowners have disappeared. But a descendant of the Vawdrey family still owns and farms the Vawdrey estate and farmland in Tushingham township and a Dod still lives on the Dod estate at Edge which still accommodates a working dairy farm. The acreage of both these estates had declined little since the 1880s.

<sup>61</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 6. Chapman maintained that planning still relied on the 1932 Act.

<sup>62</sup> Chapman, *Plan*. The *Plan* provided guidance for at least 20 years from its publication (i.e. to about 1966) and demonstrated how the recommendations of the Barlow and Scott Reports could be applied to Cheshire in regard to agricultural revival and industrial dispersal, how to co-ordinate regional and local planning schemes and provide guidance for local authorities about how to achieve their own development or redevelopment plans.

<sup>63</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. x.

Lord Justice Scott praised the *Plan* for understanding and adopting the recommendations for rural areas in his own report.<sup>64</sup> However, Scott was critical of the *Plan* for ignoring his report's advice that industry should be introduced to small towns, not villages, in order to prevent village populations increasing and becoming small towns, but the *Plan* gained his general but not wholehearted approval for upholding the views expressed by his own committee four years earlier. W.D. Chapman, the *Plan*'s author, praised Cheshire County Council for recognising the importance of making planning effective, as it had failed to conform to Town Planning theory in the pre-war period.<sup>65</sup>

The *Plan* set out to maintain the agricultural character of the county where only six per cent of the area was urbanised as houses with gardens. It favoured 'inter-relationship' between regional centres rather than centralisation and the domination of urban centres over smaller towns, villages and hamlets.<sup>66</sup> A number of county towns and market centres, including Malpas, were categorised as historical centres and dormitory areas with modern buildings: in most cases they were too small to suffer from major development problems caused by unregulated growth or substandard buildings.<sup>67</sup> Realistically there was no likelihood of creating new urban centres in Cheshire's prime dairy area. The preference for a certain amount of growth in larger settlements was what kept smaller settlements in south-west Cheshire from expanding.

The *Plan* described Cheshire as a county of small villages or hamlets about two miles apart creating a roughly hexagonal pattern with each village having a service area of about three and a half miles and an average settlement containing less than 200 people. It described south-west Cheshire's settlement pattern, using the census of 1931,<sup>68</sup> as close to the county norm. This was well-populated rural areas consisting of groups of small villages with less than 300 people around larger villages of 600 to 1,500 people forming a District Unit of between 2,000 and 3,000 people with a service area of about nine square miles. It recommended development in three grades of rural settlements two miles apart – Grade I (smallest) to Grade III

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<sup>64</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. v, x.

<sup>65</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. vii-viii, xi.

<sup>66</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. x

<sup>67</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 51.

<sup>68</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 115. There was no national census for 1941.

(largest). This was clearly based on Christaller's Central Place Theory of 1933.<sup>69</sup> New rural housing would vary according to the classification of settlements: for example in the smallest settlements it would be the minimum for agricultural needs; suitable industry would be allowed in larger villages; country houses would be built only within village zones or specific areas of Grade II and III settlements; and settlements would provide the recommended services and utilities<sup>70</sup> (Table 8:3). In these recommendations we can see that as early as 1946 the emphasis was on enlarging larger settlements and restricting new development to existing settlements rather than open countryside.

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<sup>69</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 115; I. Carruthers, 'A classification of service centres in England and Wales', *Geographical Journal*, 123 (1957), 371-85; Pragya Agarwal, *Walter Christaller: Hierarchical Patterns of Urbanisation*, 11 Nov 2005, <<http://csiss.ncgia.ucsb.edu/classics/content/67>> [accessed 7 February 2006]; Johnson, *Spatial Structures*, pp18, 27. Christaller originally based his theory on a study of urban settlements in Germany. He envisaged a central place of primary importance to the surrounding area and serving subordinate places around it. The hexagon was chosen as the shape providing the maximum coverage without the problems of overlapping that using a circle would cause. Cheshire must have been one of the first English planning authorities to envisage putting Central Place Theory into practice.

<sup>70</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 197.

Table 8:3 Grades of settlement proposed in *A Plan for Cheshire, 1946*.

The Cheshire Plan			
Proposed grades of settlement			
Grades	I	II	III
Types of settlement	Small villages and hamlets	Villages	Main centres for rural life.
Roads			At nodal points on the road system.
Railway			Access to railway station
Population	<200	circa 500	Circa 1,500
Intervals between settlements (approximate)	2 miles	3 ½ miles	6 miles
Population served by each settlement (approximate)	400	1,200 – 1,500	Circa 4,000
Density of population per acre (approximate)	15	-	20
Shops	1-2	4	10-15
Pubs	1 small	1	
Village room/hall	1 small village room	Village hall with Council room	Large village hall/ community centre
Playing fields (approximate acres)	5	4 per 1,000 people (minimum 5 acres)	4 per 1,000 people (minimum 5 acres)
School playing fields (approximate acres)		3 per 1,000 people (minimum 5 acres)	3 per 1,000 people (minimum 5 acres)
Church/chapel		Church and/or chapel	Church and chapel
P.O.		Sub P.O.	Sub P.O.
Library		County-library branch	County-library branch
Blacksmith		1	
Engineer		Motor/agricultural	Agricultural and jobbing
Wheelwright		1	1
Garage			1
School		Junior	Nursery and/or Infants, Junior, Secondary
Bank			1

Source: Chapman, *Plan*, p. 121.

N.B. The *Plan* also proposed that new development should create Neighbourhood Units of approximately 7,500 people for towns. The proposed development of Malpas to create a Neighbourhood Unit never occurred. (Chapman, *Plan*, pp. 127-8, 192).

The *Plan* highlighted a shortage of Grade II villages in Cheshire and in south-west Cheshire a lack of Grade III settlements, such as Malpas, that could function as the main centres for rural life. By the *Plan*'s criteria south-west Cheshire had one Grade II village (Threapwood) and one small urban centre (Malpas) together with a number of small villages (Grade I). Therefore, according to the *Plan*'s criteria in 1946, south-west Cheshire was not a self-sufficient rural economy. Because dairy farming was predominant in the area, many rural villages were, and still are, below

the minimum recommended size of 200 people. South-west Cheshire was not considered to have any area of outstanding amenity value, although Broxton and Malpas were considered characteristic villages or towns.<sup>71</sup>

Malpas township had a population of 1,101 in 1931 and Malpas town was the only settlement large enough to be proposed as the Grade IV centre of a Neighbourhood Unit of approximately 7,500 people. However, south-west Cheshire was not well-populated and in 1931 a service area of nine square miles around an expanded Malpas town would have catered for a population of only about 1,641 people. Even in 2001 the same area only had about 1,940 residents, of whom approximately 85 per cent lived in Malpas township, mainly in the town of Malpas.<sup>72</sup> Malpas town had an actual service area estimated at 31.14 square miles with about 134 people per square mile, or a total of about 4,000 people. The comparatively large size of the service area was necessary to achieve the recommended figures and as a result, it covered approximately two-thirds of south-west Cheshire.<sup>73</sup>

Based on the 1931 census, 50 per cent of Cheshire's population was employed in agriculture in line with the national picture. The *Plan* assumed that virtually everyone not tied to the land could be housed in villages, with farmers living largely in scattered farmhouses. However, most farm workers would be housed in village centres leaving only a few workers in farm cottages. Farmers who were consulted preferred grouping housing in small hamlets so that stockmen who typically worked long hours could live near their work, but they did, however, approve of developing larger villages at reasonable distances apart so that workers could reach good social facilities by bus. The *Plan* therefore rejected as impractical a suggestion that development in rural areas of Cheshire should be based entirely on building up urban villages of between 1,500 and 1,800 people at intervals of four to nine miles.<sup>74</sup>

The *Plan's* calculations revealed that the Malpas service area could be served by six small villages of 207 people, two larger villages of 399 people and one urban village of 728 people giving a total population of 4,173. The small villages would be

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<sup>71</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. 116, 197, plate 37.

<sup>72</sup> National census 2001.

<sup>73</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 117. 31.4 square miles is approximately 81.33 square kilometres.

<sup>74</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. 42, 117.

two miles apart, the villages three and a half miles apart and the urban villages six miles apart.<sup>75</sup>

The *Plan* recognised that below an optimum size (presumably of population, although this was not specifically stated) a town would be too small to provide the social and economic amenities that a modern (1946) population required. Malpas and Farndon (both in low HHI townships which had started to expand in the eighteenth century) were and are today the largest urban centres in south-west Cheshire and neither had a full complement of amenities nor a large enough population to justify major development. The *Plan* proposed that new development should be confined to non-agricultural land or land so close to urban areas that its value had declined, which would make the loss to agriculture negligible.<sup>76</sup> The importance of preserving agricultural land was emphasised throughout the report. As we shall see, planned development in south-west Cheshire did concentrate on developing a limited number of settlements in the area, while maintaining the integrity of both the historic footprint of the settlements and the agricultural land around them.

The *Plan* specifically condemned ribbon and sporadic development on the fringes of urban settlements in Cheshire which would jeopardise agricultural land. It also stated that country houses should only be built in or close to defined village zones. The *Plan* suggested that attempting to make villages self-contained would fail and that it would be better to base schemes on the wider areas made possible by modern transport. Villages should have limited provision, whereas larger urban villages and small towns with populations of 1,000 to 7,000 (which would have included Malpas) should have greater facilities, with specialised social, cultural and recreational facilities provided in larger towns conveniently related to rural parts of Cheshire (for south-west Cheshire these were identified as Chester, Whitchurch and Bangor). This necessitated higher population levels and therefore the development of villages and small towns rather than large urban areas, with any increased population involved in non-agricultural industries. As will be seen later, several larger settlements in south-west Cheshire were eventually singled out for development while minor development was allowed in smaller settlements. The *Plan* asserted that unless these ideas were implemented the lives of rural workers could only be

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<sup>75</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 118. As there was no other urban village within a six mile radius of Malpas the latter figure was presumably theoretical.

<sup>76</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 87.

improved by providing higher wages and more leisure so that they could travel to larger towns, thus raising the cost of health, social, educational and sanitary services.<sup>77</sup>

Cheshire's *Plan* was therefore comprehensive and ambitious and drew upon the latest planning theories. It also appeared in tune with the newly elected Labour government's aim of social justice. The report was followed by national legislation which in many ways complemented Cheshire's planning document. A year after the *Plan*, the government produced its first major piece of post-war planning legislation, the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, which stated that no development could take place without planning permission which would be enforced by central government planning control.<sup>78</sup> After this Act local authorities were again allowed to licence speculative builders for up to one-fifth of their new buildings.<sup>79</sup> Although the laws were prescriptive and more actively enforced than earlier legislation had been, they enabled local authorities to increase their house-building while ensuring that they did so within guidelines. Both the *Plan* and the 1947 Act formed the basis for planning in Cheshire until the late-1960s and early-1970s.

### **The effect of planning in the 1950s**

It is important to examine how far the *Plan* actually affected south-west Cheshire, particularly after the 1947 Planning Act. Did the ideal area of linked villages and market towns emerge and which, if any, of the specific recommendations affected the area?

Although Malpas, in spite of having a low HHI (HHI 2338<sub>D</sub>), never increased its population enough to become the centre of a Neighbourhood Unit (a residential urban area containing amenities for about 7,500 people) there was enough of an increase in population and settlement size in the area to approach the level required for minimum viable communities as envisaged in the *Plan*. The Malpas area already included settlements reflected in two of the *Plan*'s three settlement categories. In 1931 the small villages would have been Bickley (HHI 10,000<sub>D</sub>), Cuddingham (HHI 2348<sub>D</sub>), Edge (HHI 2312<sub>D</sub>), Hampton (HHI 1399<sub>D</sub>), Threapwood and Tilston (HHI

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<sup>77</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. 89, 110.

<sup>78</sup> Greed, *Planning*, pp. 103-4.

<sup>79</sup> Merrett and Gray, *Owner* p. 24. In 1951 the Ministry of Housing and Local Government replaced the previous Ministry to be replaced by the Department of the Environment in 1970, in 2002 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and finally by Communities and Local Government.

2828<sub>D</sub>), while the larger villages of Broxton (HHI 4051<sub>D</sub>) and Farndon (HHI 2188<sub>D</sub>) and Malpas (HHI 2671<sub>D</sub>) would have been the urban villages. By 2001 Clutton (HHI 6237<sub>D</sub>) would have qualified as a small village and Tilston almost as an urban village with a population of about 600 people. Bickley by then qualified as a larger village and Farndon was by 2001 large enough to become a Grade III settlement in its own right with its own service area. Of these settlements, Farndon, Cuddington, Edge, Hampton, Tilston and Malpas were low HHI settlements in 1910. Malpas retained its central place role in the area with its wider range of amenities while some settlements had one or more amenities thus creating the spread of service access throughout the area as the Plan had envisaged, albeit on a smaller scale.

The farmers' preference for housing near where stockmen worked as well as developing accessible larger settlements was achieved because agricultural dwellings were few in number and therefore permitted in smaller settlements in the area. However, the demand for greater concentration favoured was undermined by the sparse population and the need to provide an effective plan for the existing situation.<sup>80</sup> These concerns demonstrated a conflict of interest between on the one hand farmers who wanted their workers housed near farms and on the other the altruism of the *Plan* which aimed to improve the lives of rural residents.

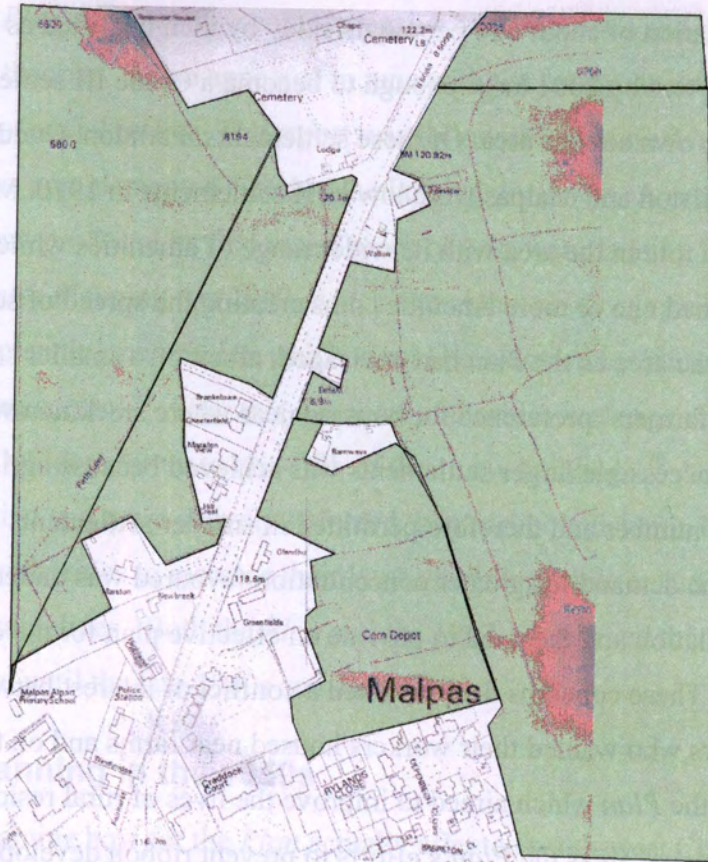
In some areas the *Plan*'s efforts to prevent ribbon development from encroaching on agricultural land were effective. Figure 8:4 shows the B6095 road from Malpas towards Hampton Heath where ribbon development from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was not continuous along the route because farmland interrupts it.

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<sup>80</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, p. 117.



**Figure 8:4: B6089 from Malpas towards Hampton Heath showing agricultural land bordering the road.**



Source: Digimap.

The *Plan*'s restriction on building country houses, except near or within village zones, was adhered to until planning permission was granted in 2000 for one new country house, 'Grafton Hall', on 54 acres of 'plum farmland' at Stretton with an opportunity to increase it to 113 acres. Although close to Tilston on the road to Farndon it was not within Tilston's village zone.<sup>81</sup>

As chapter four has shown, increased car ownership meant that in spite of the comparative isolation of some settlements in south-west Cheshire from main transport routes they remained viable as commuter settlements. The Malpas area, being within easy driving distance of larger towns such as Chester, Whitchurch and Bangor, needed little reorganisation to fit in with the *Plan*'s ideal of facilities based

<sup>81</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 3 November 2000, p. 12.

on the wider area that modern transport enabled. The *Plan's* main contribution to settlement development in south-west Cheshire was therefore to preserve agricultural land, to expand larger settlements that most closely approached its idealised settlement sizes for the area as a whole, and to permit small amounts of infilling in certain smaller settlements to cater for farmers' employees.

Throughout Cheshire, thought was also given to the location of post-war housing sites in rural areas to try to obtain a greater concentration in rural settlements while allowing an adequate distribution in relation to farming needs.<sup>82</sup> Data on the number of dwellings receiving interim planning permissions in south-west Cheshire are reported in Table 8:5.

**Table 8:5: Numbers of dwellings receiving interim planning permission in south-west Cheshire 1946-1967.**

Townships (parishes)	Cottages (agricultural)	Detached houses	Bungalows	Semis (pairs)	Unspecified dwelling or site for house or bungalow	TOTAL SINGLE BUILDINGS (including sites for intended dwellings and semis)	Housing developments
Agden	2				1	3	
Barton					3	3	
Bickley	1 (bailiff's)					1	1
Bradley		1 (farmhouse)				1	
Broxton	2	1	8	1	1	13	1
Clutton			7			7	
Cuddington		2				2	1
Duckington						0	1
Farndon		10	6+	3		19+	4
Hampton		1	1			2	
Larkton				1		1	
Macefen		1	3			4	1 (for 53 dwellings)
Malpas		3	6	3	3	15	3
Nomansheath		3				3	1
Oldcastle		1				1	
Shocklach	1		1			1	
Tilston			3	1	4	8	2
Threapwood		4	2			6	1
Tushingam						0	1
Wigland			1			1	
Wychough (Lower Wych)		1				1	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>17</b>

Source: CCALS, RRT/392.

<sup>82</sup> Chapman, *Plan*, pp. 56-7.

The construction of only six firmly designated agricultural cottages was agreed during the post-war period up to 1967, strongly suggesting that fewer agricultural workers were needed and few needed to live close to their work. Other buildings might have housed agricultural workers but with increasing car ownership housing stockmen close to farms was no longer necessary. Only one new farmhouse was built in the area (at Bradley) but many alterations and additions to farm buildings were approved during this period, as were new agricultural buildings, for example Dutch barns, but these extended or replaced existing farm complexes and therefore counted as a legitimate use of agricultural land. The majority of the individual buildings (built by private developers) were bungalows, a style of building that had gained popularity since the inter-war years.<sup>83</sup> Table 8:6 shows which townships, and therefore settlements, were granted planning permission for new buildings between 1946 and 1967.

Larger settlements were permitted more development and a limited amount of new construction was allowed in the smallest settlements (fewer than 200 people) presumably in order to bring them up to a viable minimum level of 200 inhabitants as specified in the *Plan's* recommendations. The aim was also to encourage a spread of amenities around the largest settlement (Malpas town). Farndon, Malpas and Tilston, (all with low HHIs and expanding in 1910) which were to become the largest settlements by 2001, were permitted the most new housing with each approved development ranging from as few as eight houses to over 19: Macefen, (HHI 9025<sub>D</sub>) by contrast, had one housing development but for 53 dwellings. Therefore the number of housing estates does not give a clear indication of the number of houses. The table shows an increase in the number of dwellings from those built during the inter-war years. This was probably the result of increasing counter-urbanisation which offset the decline of rural workers. Between 1961 and 1971, for example, approximately 60 per cent of the increase in Cheshire's population (which rose by 13 per cent during the decade) was due to in-migration.<sup>84</sup>

The *Plan's* recommendations, although never fully achieved, therefore favoured the larger settlements in low HHI townships that had been expanding since the eighteenth century while permitting limited growth in smaller, high HHI

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<sup>83</sup> Wild, *Village*, p. 134.

<sup>84</sup> Cheshire Planning, *County Structure Plan: Report of Survey/Housing* (Chester, 1977), p. 18 (see also chapter three).

settlements to allow agricultural workers to live close to their work. The emphasis on maintaining agricultural land while trying to improve life for local people meant that the landownership patterns of the eighteenth century were preserved in the twentieth.

**Table 8:6: Houses receiving interim planning permission in post-war south-west Cheshire showing their relationship to the population in 1951 and 1971.**

Townships (parishes)	1951 Census	1971 Census	TOTAL SINGLE BUILDINGS (including sites for intended dwellings and semis) 1946-1967	Housing developments
Malpas	1219	1493	15	3
Farndon	688	1162	19+	4
Broxton	471	392	13	1
Tilston	377	489	8	2
Bickley	325	328	1	1
Hampton	290	307	2	
Threapwood	290	219	6	1
Edge	267	218		
Shocklach (in Church Shocklach and Shocklach Oviatt)	252	c.180	1	
Cuddington	219	146	2	1
Tushingam	217	173	0	1
Wigland	109	85	1	
Bradley	105	78	1	
Overton	101	109		
Carden	98	87		
Barton	85	83	3	
Chorlton	82	57		
Oldcastle	71	74	1	
Clutton	67	125	7	
Macefen	62	95	4	1 (for 53 dwellings)
Crewe by Farndon	61	30		
Agden	60	82	3	
Duckington	59	52	0	1
Stretton	58	49		
Kings Marsh	56	35		
Larkton	53	46	1	
Caldecott	30	25		
Wychough (Lower Wych)	13	12	1	
Stockton	12	15		
Chidlow	11	10		
Newton	9	12		
Grafton	4	6		
(Nomansheath in Malpas, Hampton, Bickley, Macefen)	N/A	N/A	3	1
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>92</b>	<b>17</b>

Sources: National census 1951,1971; CCALS, RRT/392.

Note: The Nomansheath (No Man's Heath) nucleation contained housing developments in each of the townships it straddled.

The *Plan* and its government counterpart the 1947 Act resulted in limited development of smaller settlements and greater development in larger settlements in order to provide a wider area of access to amenities than developing one central settlement would have provided. But in doing so it followed planning guidelines and preserved agricultural land from development unless necessary for agricultural purposes.

### ***After A Plan for Cheshire - planning from 1971 to 2000***

Restrictions on the development on agricultural land were reinforced from the late 1960s and especially from 1971 by new guidelines and working practices for planners which increased restrictions on how and which settlements could be developed. These included dealing with rural areas, and settlements in particular, at the local level as part of a new national planning strategy. New conservation and environmental controls for local areas also restricted planners.

The major change to the 1940s planning system started with the Civic Amenities Act 1967 which acknowledged the strength of public feeling about preserving national heritage. It enabled the creation of Conservation Areas, paying particular attention to listing buildings of architectural and historical interest.<sup>85</sup> This was followed by the Town and Country Planning Act 1968 which incorporated the new Planning Advisory Group's (PAG) development plan system. This Act later became the Town and Country Act 1971, which introduced the concept of a Structure Plan, a development plan that identified a goal-based planning strategy for local authority areas. So from the late 1960s settlement development was subject to limitations from conservation and environmental guidance as well as development plans, particularly in selected historically and environmentally important areas. Planning policies for rural areas continued to stress the importance of preserving agricultural land and allowing limited development of larger settlements. It was this policy, as will be shown, that supported the development of larger settlements which was essentially a continuation (under a different framework) of the established pattern. This section assesses how this affected settlements in south-west Cheshire.

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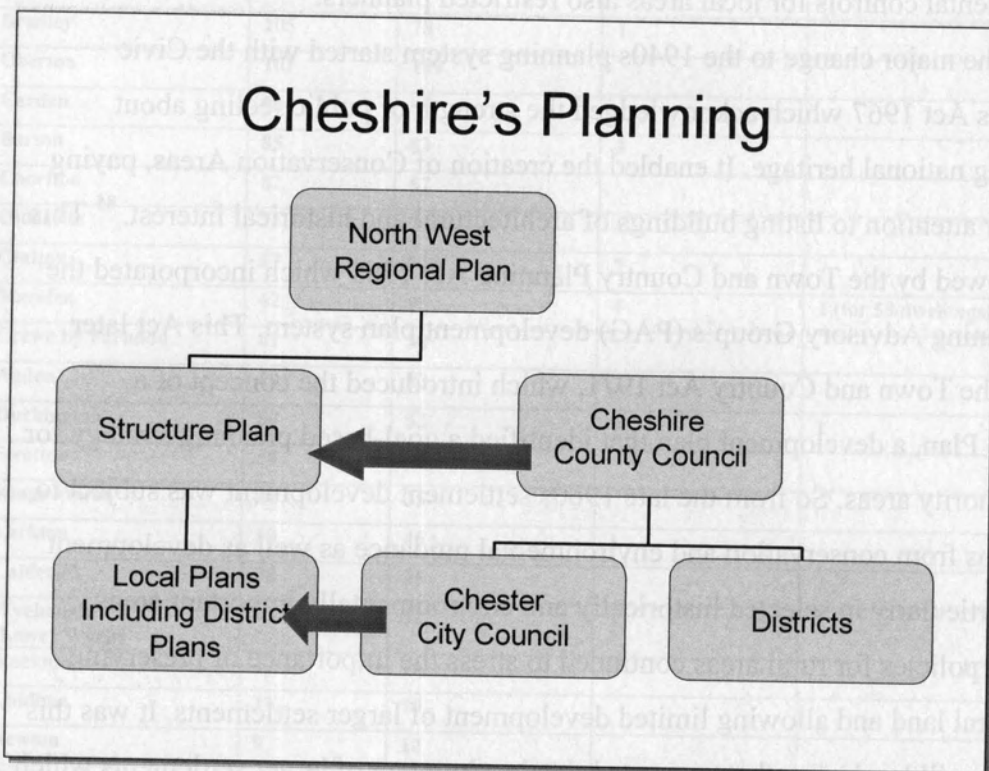
<sup>85</sup> Greed, *Planning*, pp. 115-16.



## The new types of plan

Three new kinds of plans affected settlement development in south-west Cheshire and created a planning structure still operating in the twenty-first century. First, a strategic (or structure) plan linked overall planning strategy to specific action areas subject to planned changes during the following ten years.<sup>86</sup> Second, district (or local) plans recorded detailed development control and the co-ordination of transport and environmental management. Third, small scale basic town and village local plans dealt with rural areas without detailed local plans. The planning system itself was two-tier with strategic structure plans being produced at county and urban level and the majority of local plans at district level.<sup>87</sup> This commitment to planning at a local level was still important in 2000, as was the need to ensure the ‘sustainability’ of communities.<sup>88</sup> The system for Cheshire is shown in Figure 8:7.

Figure 8:7: Cheshire's planning system.



Source: Conversation with R. Vernon of Chester City Planning Department, Chester City Council, 25 January 2001.

<sup>86</sup> A draft structure plan must go out to public consultation, after which the plan is amended, a Public Enquiry is held and the plan is finally approved by the government Inspector.

<sup>87</sup> M. Bruton and D. Nicholson, *Local Planning in Practice* (London, 1987), pp. 86, 96-7.

<sup>88</sup> E.g. Bruton and Nicholson, *Planning*, pp. 4-6, 19.

Planning for Cheshire County includes the Districts of City of Chester, Vale Royal, Crewe and Nantwich, Ellesmere Port and Neston, Congleton and Macclesfield. Chester District covers all of south-west Cheshire as defined by this study as well as parishes north of the area but, like this study, excludes Bickerton, Bulkeley, Egerton and Cholmondeley which are in the Vale Royal District.

Although this planning system appeared straightforward, in practice it was often complicated and lengthy. Planning rules changed according to prevailing government policy, sometimes mid-consultation, and the process had to restart. To the public the process could seem never-ending and planners themselves admitted that it was sometimes difficult to keep up with and understand new planning regulations. Also, far from the direct input of landowners in the nineteenth century, modern landowners had to satisfy a legal process before development could take place.

The strength of the post-war Acts and their interpretation depended on the type of government in power and Hall suggested that planning policies of the Thatcherite 1980s, in particular, 'did not pay sufficient attention to the profound emerging differences between the conurbations and the rural peripheries.'<sup>89</sup> Problems had been created by ignoring the fact that the relationship between rural and urban, although blurred by the ongoing 'suburbanisation' of rural areas, was still distinct enough to need separate planning considerations. From the 1970s to the end of the twentieth century several plans and reports were produced which affected south-west Cheshire. All drew upon and built upon the County's 1946 *Plan* (Figure 8:8).

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<sup>89</sup> Hall, *Planning* p. 97.



**Table 8:8: Plans and Reports affecting south-west Cheshire from the 1970s.**

Date	Name of plan or report	Date plan to last	Type of plan	Area covered	Main aims
1966	Rural Planning Policy in Cheshire: An Interim Report				Physical, social and economic remodelling of Region to improve quality of life for residents.
1967	Civic Amenities Act			National	
1973	Structure Plan	1986	Structure	Rural North Cheshire Rural South Cheshire	Restriction of new houses in rural areas
1973	Policy for Rural Cheshire			Rural Cheshire	
1973	Rural Conservation Area Character Assessments			Local areas of environmental or historic character	
1977	Structure Plan		Structure		
1979	Chester Rural Area District Plan	1991	Local	Chester Rural Area	Planning guidance for rural Cheshire
1980	Rural Community Study			Includes south-west Cheshire	
1985	Rural Area Local Plan. Written Statement		Local		To provide detailed planning guidance based on the structure plan.
1992	A Landscape Strategy for Cheshire	2001	Environmental	Cheshire	'To provide a framework for landscape policies and objectives'.
1992	Cheshire 2001 Replacement Structure Plan	2001	Structure	Cheshire	
1992	A Historic Buildings and Conservation Strategy for Cheshire	2001	Environmental	Cheshire	Strategy for the man-made environment
1994	PPG 15			National	'The objective of planning processes should be to reconcile the need for economic growth with the need to protect the natural and historic environment.' <sup>90</sup>
1997	Chester District Local Plan	2011	Local	Chester District	To create a planning framework based on the structure plan so that planning can be carried out at a local level
1998	Chester District Landscape Assessment and Guidelines	2011	Environmental	Chester District	To provide guidance on management and conservation of Chester District's landscape
2000	Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13)	2010		North West	
2000	Our Countryside: the future	2010			'to sustain and enhance the distinctive environment, economy and social fabric of the English countryside' (p.6.)

Sources: Documents as named in column two.

These plans and reports that affected south-west Cheshire were created under the new planning system from the early 1970s and reinforced three ideas which continued in planning regulations throughout the remaining years of the twentieth century: containment by restricted building in rural settlements and related landscapes designated Conservation Areas; block expansion where councils decided how much new building, generally housing, was necessary for an area which was permitted within specified limits; piecemeal expansion where individuals were allowed to build or convert a house if, for example, they lived or worked in the area. In south-west Cheshire the additional restriction on building on agricultural land remained and continued to be reinforced in plans for the area from the 1970s onwards.

Not all new planning policies affected all parts of rural Cheshire. For example, Cheshire County Council's 1973 *Policy for Rural Cheshire* broadly built on and simplified the aims of the *Plan*. However, only 320 acres of industrial land in rural Cheshire were committed for development against 3,200 acres owned by local authorities or developers and none of the settlements in south-west Cheshire were included.<sup>91</sup>

### **Planning for population change**

The 1973 Structure Plan recorded that most of the population in the Structure Plan area (57 per cent) was concentrated in eleven settlements of over 1,000 people including Malpas and Farndon but only Malpas was in the Chester Rural South Area (although Farndon was within the area of this study). Ninety-three settlements in the Structure Plan area had populations of less than 500 people and 43 had less than 100 people. The increase in population in the Plan Area from 28,260 (1961) to 32,613 (1971) was mainly in larger parishes close to Chester. In 1971 in south-west Cheshire 23 of the area's townships (and therefore main settlements) had populations of fewer than 100 people (68 per cent), nine had between 100 and 500 people (26 per cent) and only two had more than 500 people (six per cent). Farndon's increase since the 1960s (from 688 people in 1951 to 1,162 in 1971) was particularly high showing its growing importance as a commuter town for Chester and Wrexham. (See table 8:9) Between 1971 and 2001 the national population increased by one per cent,

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<sup>91</sup> Cheshire County Council, *Minutes of Proceedings. Report of the Planning Committee*. (Chester, 1973), pp. 1, 2, 60-1.

Cheshire's population decreased by 52 per cent (although this was partly due to boundary changes), but the population in south-west Cheshire increased by 13 per cent<sup>92</sup> (see chapter five). This tallies with the general observation that counter-urbanisation has been a factor in the modern development of settlements in the area.

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<sup>92</sup> Gardiner and Wenborn, *British History*, p. 611.

**Table 8:9: Change in population of townships in south-west Cheshire 1961 to 1971 and 2001.**

Townships (parishes)	1961 Census	1971 Census	2001 census	Percentage change between 1961 and 1971 census	Percentage change between 1971 and 2001 census	Overall percentage change 1961 to 2001
Malpas	1310	1493	1650	+14	+11	+26
Farndon	818	1162	1540	+42	+33	+88
Broxton	444	392	390	-12	-1	-12
Tilston	426	489	600	+15	+23	+41
Bickley	311	328	450	+5	+37	+45
Hampton	258	307	370	+19	+21	+43
Threapwood	239	219	270	-8	+23	+13
Edge	243	218	160	-10	-27	-34
Church Shocklach	89	81	90	+9	+11	+1
Shocklach Oviatt)	117	99	80	-15	-19	-32
Cuddington	159	146	170	-8	+16	+7
Tushingham	183	173	160	+5	-8	-13
Wigland	93	85	90	-7	+6	-3
Bradley	95	78	70	-18	-10	-26
Overton	109	91	60	-17	-34	-45
Carden	96	87	70	-9	-20	-27
Barton	72	83	70	+15	-16	-3
Chorlton	71	57	50	-20	-12	-30
Oldcastle	74	66	50	-11	-24	-32
Clutton	119	125	230	+5	+84	+93
Macefen	76	95	90	+25	-5	+18
Crewe by Farndon	43	30	20	-30	-33	-53
Agden	72	82	50	+14	-39	-31
Duckington	65	52	50	-20	-4	-23
Stretton	43	49	40	+14	-18	-7
Kings Marsh	46	35	30	-10	-14	-35
Larkton	47	46	30	-2	-35	-36
Caldecott	26	20	20	-23	0	-23
Wychough	15	12	10	-20	-17	-33
Stockton	12	15	20	+25	+33	+67
Chidlow	10	10	10	0	0	0
Newton	15	12	10	-20	-17	-33
Grafton	12	6	10	-50	+67	-17
Horton	77	63	90	-18	+43	+19
TOTALS	5885	6306	7100	+7	+13	+21

Sources: National census 1961, 1971, 2001

NB: The overall percentage change does not equal the sum of two intermediate percentage changes because of compounding.

Most depopulation was in the south of the Structure Plan area, which had important implications for future provision of services and facilities in smaller parishes.<sup>93</sup> The 1977 Structure Plan had forecast enough population increase between 1974 to 1986 to require approximately 2,500 new houses. It assumed that rural parishes (formerly townships) of less than 500 people would suffer depopulation while larger settlements with more young people, including Farndon, would increase.<sup>94</sup> Farndon, a low HHI township, on the major northern route in the area (A534) and with easy access to Wales and Chester was an obvious choice for controlled expansion. This implied a possible shortage of facilities in growing areas and the decline of shops in smaller areas. Employment mobility and widespread transport were considered contributory factors behind the decline of smaller settlements and a barrier to rural population increase. As the previous section showed, in south-west Cheshire many of the smaller settlements did stagnate or decline throughout the twentieth century. Transport provision in the area had long been unsatisfactory for settlements not close to the main roads (see chapter six). However, there was a steady expansion of dwellings at larger settlements like Tilston, Farndon and Malpas, although not matched by a growth in amenities in Tilston. Additionally, the survival of smaller settlements such as Bell O'Th Hill, Shocklach and Edge Green where new housing was evident, implies that this decline was reversed in settlements with a viable commuter base. This was in line with the Rural District Policy of encouraging the growth of commuter bases for Chester while ensuring that local housing needs throughout the area were met.<sup>95</sup>

The 1977 structure plan noted that allowing the development or redevelopment of approximately 50-100 dwellings overall could improve certain areas sufficient for local needs. The Council wanted to concentrate any limited future residential development in larger villages such as Farndon and Malpas or allow a few houses in each settlement throughout the area.<sup>96</sup> Again, it was the larger settlements that were earmarked for development.

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<sup>93</sup> C. M. Morris, *Chester Rural District Plan. Consultation on Key Issues* (Chester, 1979), p. 12.

<sup>94</sup> There were significant numbers of semi-skilled workers in places such as Edge, Duckington, Church Shocklach and Clutton (each with over 60 per cent). In the RDP area as a whole the percentages were 6.4 per cent professional, 17 per cent managerial, 25.4 per cent other non-manual, 24.9 skilled manual, 3.8 per cent unskilled manual and 0.6 per cent. Most of the professional and managerial occupations were in the larger towns. (Morris, *District*, p. 13).

<sup>95</sup> Morris, *District*, pp. 11, 13, 16.

<sup>96</sup> Morris, *District*, p. 16.

One exception to the trend of more open settlements being developed was Clutton. Clutton was one of the slightly larger settlements but (on HHI criteria, HHIs 6733<sub>T</sub>, 6930<sub>D</sub>) had had a high HHI in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. However, it was on the Broxton to Farndon road and was self-contained within a minor road system that enabled infilling to take place without encroaching on agricultural land. By the nineteenth century it had a primary school, thus qualifying it for late twentieth-century development as it had a basic service.

Another example was the settlement in the Macefen township with a high HHI (HHIs 9802<sub>T</sub>, 9025<sub>D</sub>). It was close to the A41 and had a bus service and was granted planning permission for a housing development of 53 houses as part of the development of No Man's Heath at the conjunction of the townships of Malpas, Hampton, Bickley and Macefen. It was no doubt chosen for development because of its good transport links out of the area and its proximity to the area's central place, the town of Malpas.

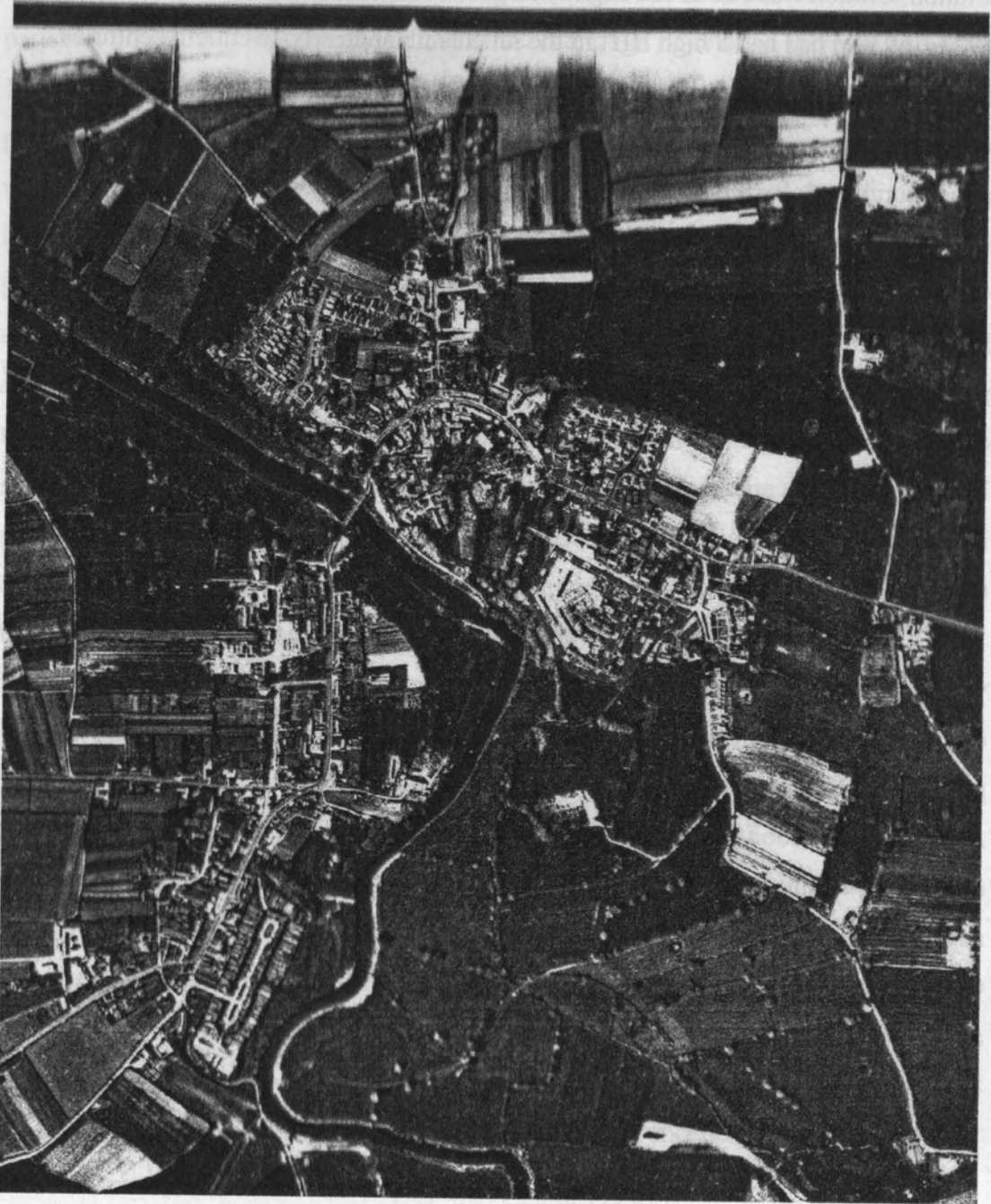
Most houses built between 1961 and 1978 in rural Cheshire were in the larger villages, often as new estates, mainly three-bedroom with some smaller properties for elderly people. In 1979 there were 1,120 outstanding planning permissions for private houses of which only 150 were in the southern third of the Structure Plan Area which included south-west Cheshire.<sup>97</sup> The Structure Plan wanted a maximum of 2,500 new houses built between 1974 and 1986 in the entire rural area, to restrict new housing to towns and to limit it in rural areas. In the 1970s in south-west Cheshire approval was granted for approximately 400 domestic buildings, including a new farmhouse, agricultural cottages, bungalows and housing estates<sup>98</sup> (Figure 8:10).

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<sup>97</sup> Morris, *District*, p. 15.

<sup>98</sup> CCALS, CPI 2/2/20.

**Figure 8:10: Farndon, 1971, showing modern expansion.**



Source: Copyright Cheshire County Council, HSL UK 71 66, 14 May 1971.

By the 1970s planners could not ignore the problems caused by rural decline nationally. Shops, post offices and other services closed and were not replaced. Even settlements in south-west Cheshire that had attracted urban incomers and could still support a school could not always attract other services such as shops. In the Rural District area this problem was attributed to the reluctance of private investors to invest in village locations or on a small scale. Although rises in disposable income

had increased the demand for goods and services, in rural areas investment in shopping had declined and the closure of amenities such as post offices and chemists caused problems. For example, even today in an expanding settlement like Tilston, the residents, while able to drink in two local pubs, must rely on one very small post office cum store for other services. The Rural Area District Plan (RADP) warned that private sector investment in rural shopping was affected by market forces and the availability of goods and services from nearby towns on a large scale should not be assumed.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Morris, *District*, p. 11.



Table 8:11: Basic amenities in settlements in south-west Cheshire, 2001.

Settlements in townships (parishes)	Post Office/shop	Secondary School	Primary School	Chemist	Bank	Bus service	Pub	Church	Chapel
Agden									
Barton						✓	✓		
Bickley								✓	
Bradley									
Broxton						✓	✓		
Caldecott									
Carden									
Chidlow									
Chorlton									
Clutton			✓			✓			
Crewe by Farndon						✓			
Cuddington						✓			
Duckington									
Edge						✓			
Farndon	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Grafton						✓			
Hampton	✓						✓		✓
Horton									
Kings Marsh									
Larkton									
Macefen						✓			
Malpas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Newton									
Nomansheath						✓			
Oldcastle									
Overton									
Shocklach (Church and Oviatt)			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Stockton									
Stretton						✓			
Threapwood						✓			
Tilston	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Tushingam			✓				✓	✓	✓
Wigland									
Wychough									

Sources: <<http://www.chester.gov.uk>>; <<http://www.pubinnguide.com/pubs.asp>>; <<http://www2.cheshire.gov.uk/scripts/webtriplanner.dll>>

Table 8:11 shows that although most settlements in south-west Cheshire were eventually on a bus route, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century only three settlements had the basic minimum deemed necessary for community survival of a post office/shop, primary school and bus service (Farndon, Malpas, Tilston). All three had

low HHIs in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries,<sup>100</sup> and only one, Malpas, the area's central place, had a wide range of facilities. All three settlements were larger 'open' settlements that had grown during the nineteenth century.

Debate arose from the late 1970s about the definition of local housing needs for planning purposes and whether this should include the need to live close to work or to a relative or a requirement to have been a previous resident of the area. Rural workers wanting to live in the area were priced out of a housing market affected by interest rates, government policy and disposable income and it was particularly difficult for first-time buyers. Although the Council could control the number and types of houses, there was no guarantee that the people who needed them would buy them. It suggested that each settlement should be examined in detail to determine where further development could occur without ruining the character of the settlement and leaving purchases to market forces. The Council's housing provision was questioned and it was suggested that housing could and should be provided that would be likely to meet the needs of local people.<sup>101</sup>

The Rural Area Local Plan (1985) (RALP) included detailed suggestions for population growth, citing more young adults and smaller households, but noted that falling numbers of school-age children might put schools at risk. South-west Cheshire appears to be resisting the risk of school closure as it supported (and still supports) one secondary school and six primary schools. Young families with primary-age children live in new-build private and council housing.<sup>102</sup> The housing recommendation was more precise and advocated allowing new houses specifically to cater for local needs in any village containing the basic services, to make new dwellings available to local people, to encourage the construction of smaller dwellings, and to ensure that any new housing was in scale and used spare capacity without reducing agricultural land.<sup>103</sup> The alteration to the county's Structure Plan (1977) provided for infilling, conversions and small groups of dwellings in the Rural Plan but did not try to accommodate the maximum number of households likely to

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<sup>100</sup> In 2003 an improved bus service was introduced between Chester and Whitchurch including stops at Clutton, Barton, Tilston, Edge, Hampton Heath, Malpas, No Mans Heath and Macefen thus putting some smaller settlements on the route. (Cheshire County Council, *News*, 13 March 2003). <[http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/1095BCF7-ABD9-4462-953D-5B404C65E49C/0/Improved\\_Bus\\_Service\\_Between\\_Chester\\_and\\_Whitchurch.doc](http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/1095BCF7-ABD9-4462-953D-5B404C65E49C/0/Improved_Bus_Service_Between_Chester_and_Whitchurch.doc)> [accessed 14 November 2005].

<sup>101</sup> Morris, *District*, pp. 8, 17.

<sup>102</sup> The schools are Malpas (2), Clutton, Farndon, Tushingam, Shocklach, Tilston.

<sup>103</sup> Chester Planning, *Local*, pp. 6, 7, 17.

form in the rural area because over development could spoil the countryside. The overriding criterion was to assess sites that could be developed without spoiling the rural character. The RALP aimed to ‘protect the character of the countryside by preventing sporadic development’ and individual houses were to be allowed only where the applicant had a strong reason and was already living or working in the area<sup>104</sup> (Table 8:11).

In summer 1980 each village in the RADP area was examined for potential infilling and the provision of small groups of houses that would not damage a village’s character. Four hundred and seventy such sites were identified, mainly in small groups at a density of 37 per hectare and up to 25 such infills annually were permitted.<sup>105</sup> In south-west Cheshire there were unfinalised planning permissions in Farndon (36 units), Malpas (22 units) and Threapwood (6 units)<sup>106</sup> and an additional suitable site was identified in Barton (4 units).<sup>107</sup> Farndon, Tilston and Malpas were to meet 289 units or almost a fifth of the total 1,504 proposed units for the whole area, with Malpas meeting about half of these.<sup>108</sup> The Council Housing Schemes during 1979-1982 produced 5 bungalows in Malpas, 12 in Bickley and 3 in Clutton, previously proposed sites at Shocklach and No Man’s Heath having been discarded.

The RALP Village Policy Areas included, among others, Barton, Clutton, Farndon, Hampton, Malpas, No Man’s Heath, Shocklach and Tilston. Some villages, including Farndon, Malpas and No Man’s Heath, were given planning permission for sites with three or more dwellings. Barton had a site but no planning permission. In 1910 five of these settlements had low HHIs (Malpas, Hampton, Shocklach, Farndon and Tilston) while three had high HHIs. Clearly, the original low HHI settlements continued to be singled out for development but a few high HHI settlements were also permitted limited expansion. When selecting settlements for Village Policy Areas importance was attached to the presence of a range of community facilities including a shop/post-office, primary school and bus service and the availability of suitable sites.<sup>109</sup> Few settlements fitted all these criteria for amenities so the presence of one or more of these features was very important for a settlement’s development.

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<sup>104</sup> Chester Planning, *Local*, pp. 3-5, 8-9.

<sup>105</sup> Chester Planning, *Local*, p. 10.

<sup>106</sup> Chester Council, *District Local Plan*; Chester Planning, *Local*, p. 11, Figure 3a.

<sup>107</sup> Chester Planning, *Local*, p. 12, Figure 3b.

<sup>108</sup> Chester Planning, *Local*, p. 14, Figure 3d.

<sup>109</sup> Chester Planning, *Local*, pp. 18, 21-2.

Further policies protected some villages so, for example, new buildings on land at the east of Top Farm, Farndon were to be built close to the road to fit in with other buildings and Barton was to have no new housing except on the allocated site and this had to be built in 'soft local brick' and slate. Hampton's existing industrial estate was to be extended to include five hectares of land on the opposite side of the new service road. In Tilston there was to be a presumption against infill in Church Lane and retention of its walls and hedges. The area around Tilston Green cross-roads was to be enhanced with planting schemes and the cobbles in front of the Carden Arms were to be retained. Large estate owners were to be alerted to the need for small industrial premises and how small employment use could be made of vacant buildings. This was to encourage a healthy rural economy and to fit new employment development onto suitable sites without eating into agricultural land.<sup>110</sup>

In the 1990s Chester City's planners took a more landscape-orientated approach, foreshadowed in the 1980s<sup>111</sup>, than in previous years. They identified six objectives for Cheshire's landscape: to ensure that new development did not harm important landscape areas, to conserve and enhance the rural landscape, to improve the urban fringe, to get maximum landscape development when reclaiming derelict land and further to understand the Cheshire landscape. New private development was viewed as an opportunity to improve landscape quality with the County Council's development schemes matching the quality of those of the private sector using the assessment model as used by the Countryside Commission. It proposed that the County Council and District Councils should work together to protect and improve the landscape and give importance to schemes that do not destroy or which improve the landscape.<sup>112</sup>

Cheshire's plans for development from the 1970s to the present therefore have continued the presumption of preserving agricultural land while allowing limited development in some settlements. This has had the effect of preserving the distribution of settlements in the area while allowing larger settlements to develop to accommodate a growing number of incomers following the post-war trend for counter-urbanisation.

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<sup>110</sup> Chester Planning, *Local*, pp. 30-1, 49-50, 53-9.

<sup>111</sup> See pp. 337-9.

<sup>112</sup> Chester Planning, pp. 9, 11, 12.

## **Conservation planning**

From the late 1960s Cheshire planners' work included conservation and environmental planning regulations that restricted the type and placing of new building or even forbade it entirely. This introduced factors to the planning process beyond those already discussed. In the planning area four of the 23 Conservation Areas created under the Civic Amenities Act 1967 were in south-west Cheshire,<sup>113</sup> each requiring a separate conservation or environment plan – Barton, Farndon, Malpas and Tilston.<sup>114</sup> Character Assessments supported this choice of areas. Three of these were low HHI townships in 1910 – Farndon, Malpas and Tilston (HHIs 2188, 2338, 2828) – and only one, Barton was high HHI (HHI 10,000).<sup>115</sup> Farndon was chosen for its medieval history and Civil War connection with Holt which faces it over the Dee; Malpas for its 'particularly important' architecture and history; and Tilston for its example as an 'early farming hamlet' albeit with modern development around its historical core. Barton was also 'a small farming settlement' and the writers comment on its 'rigid street pattern'. Four Areas of Special Scientific Interest (SSIs) were designated: Dee Cliffs, Farndon; Taylor's Rough, Wigland; and The Greaves/Well Rough and Long Plantation, Oldcastle. Wych Brook Valley, an area of botanical interest because its steep valley had discouraged modern farming techniques,<sup>116</sup> was one of four Areas of Special County Value in Cheshire, although access to it was limited. There was a presumption against development in such areas.<sup>117</sup> In Malpas town only three sites for new building were permitted within the Conservation Area.<sup>118</sup>

A representative range of buildings and a number of buildings in the south-west of Cheshire were listed. In 1979 there were 19 listed buildings in the whole of the Plan Area and 320 of local interest on a supplementary list. The Cheshire 2001

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<sup>113</sup> Chester City Council Planning Office, *Rural Conservation Area Character Assessments* (Chester, 1973).

<sup>114</sup> Modern planning requires separate plans for Conservation Areas. The Civic Amenities Act 1967 which gives County Councils as the Local Planning Authorities the duty to decide which areas of special historic or architectural character should be preserved or enhanced. (This does not apply to individual buildings.) (K. O'Male, *Rural Planning Policy in Cheshire. An Interim Report* (Chester, 1966, p. 3).

<sup>115</sup> Chester Planning, *Character Assessments*, pp. 23, 37, 58, 6.

<sup>116</sup> Morris, *District*, p. 60 ; *National Park and Access to the Countryside Act* (London, 1949).

<sup>117</sup> Chester Planning, *Local*, pp. 87, 89, 92-4, 96. Archaeology was dealt with in the 1979 Act and the onus was on local authorities to ensure that important archaeological features are protected, particularly Scheduled monuments. (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979). Morris, *District*, p. 57.

<sup>118</sup> Chester City Council Planning Office, *Local*, p. 55.

memorandum continued to acknowledge the importance of Cheshire's historic buildings and asserted that ongoing policy would favour conservation and a presumption against change of use unless conservation was impossible.<sup>119</sup> Local authorities were advised to take account of the landscape as a whole.<sup>120</sup> Reinforcing this new emphasis, the document noted that 'the historic environment embraces all those aspects of the country that reflect the shaping hand of human history. Scarcely any part of England was untouched...'<sup>121</sup>

The preservation of a few larger representative settlements of historic interest was the continuing aim of conservation plans for the area. This meant that Barton, Tilston, Farndon and Malpas received official permission for strictly limited development and Wych Brook as an SSI was spared development. Conservation and environmental policies therefore had the effect of limiting development in settlements to which they applied, while conservation planning had a negative effect on settlement growth because it introduced and reinforced a presumption against new building, but only in a limited number of settlements in south-west Cheshire.

### ***Counter-urbanisation***

Counter-urbanisation was originally an American term describing the out-migration from larger urban towns to rural or semi-rural areas in contrast with more traditional in-migration to urban areas from rural areas. Typically this was and is created by non-agricultural workers.<sup>122</sup> These newcomers changed landownership patterns and affected the economy and culture of rural areas. Historically the land used for urban development in many countries was often the best agricultural land,<sup>123</sup> but in Britain, and especially in farming areas such as Cheshire, the emphasis of planning law was on the preservation of good agricultural land from development.

During the second half of the twentieth century counter-urbanisation increased in rural Cheshire, including the south-west of the county. Planners not only

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<sup>119</sup> *Cheshire 2001. The County Structure Review Explanatory Memorandum* (Chester, 1990), Appendix 2.

<sup>120</sup> Theobald, "Distant Lands"; *Cheshire 2001 Memorandum*, p. 7.

<sup>121</sup> PPG 15 (1994) stated that 'The objective of planning processes should be to reconcile the need for economic growth with the need to protect the natural and historic environment.' Therefore development was not automatically wrong if it took PPGs into consideration and the relevant statutory bodies were consulted. Historic buildings were put to economic use whenever possible, either for residential or commercial purposes. (*Cheshire 2001 Memorandum*).

<sup>122</sup> C. R. Bryant, L. H. Robinson and A. G. McLellan, *The City's Countryside* (Harlow, 1982), p. 6.

<sup>123</sup> Bryant, Robinson and McLellan, *Countryside*, pp. 6, 52, 96.

had to work within planning, conservation and environmental guidelines, but had to allow enough settlement development to accommodate urban incomers. This caused increasing problems nationally as people moved from older built up areas to small settlements on the edge of rural areas. There were concerns about how to maintain the special character of towns and other settlements and how large smaller settlements had to become before they were reclassified as towns.<sup>124</sup> Cheshire's planning reports since World War Two had concerned themselves with the first problem, but not the second. In south-west Cheshire these problems had been tackled by allowing development in specific settlements and within strict physical limits in line with conservation and special area reports. The problem of redesignation had not been a matter of importance since Malpas and Farndon were already towns and no other settlements in the area came close to being one in physical size, population or amenities (although Tilston's population and physical size was increasing). Unless the district council allowed a much greater expansion of house building into agricultural land this was unlikely to concern planners for the area.

The trend towards counter-urbanisation had begun as early as the start of the century when a return to rural life was considered a culturally acceptable choice by the middle classes, those seeking either a rural idyll or others a better place to live and work. This trend was supported and reinforced by the 'back to the land' movement and artistic groups such as the Bloomsbury Group, which themselves stemmed from late nineteenth-century 'conservation' organisations such as William Morris's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).<sup>125</sup> Later, counter-urbanisation became a way of life for retirees, home workers and the wealthy.<sup>126</sup> The counter-urbanisation of England accompanied by suburban development led Simon Jenkins to observe that England since 1975 had, like America, 'suburbanised its countryside'.<sup>127</sup>

Counter-urbanisation increased in south-west Cheshire during the 1960s and 1970s when the role and function of many buildings and settlements altered because changes in agricultural methods resulted in larger farming units. This led to a reduced labour force and loss of agricultural cottages which reduced the amount of

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<sup>124</sup> F.I. Masser and D.C. Stroud, 'The Metropolitan Village', in *English Rural Communities; The Impact of a Specialised Economy*, ed. D. R. Mills, (London, 1977), pp. 235-48 (p. 235).

<sup>125</sup> Wild, *Village*, p. 143; Cannadine, 'Background', pp. 31-2.

<sup>126</sup> Wild, *Village*, pp. 143-5.

<sup>127</sup> S. Jenkins, 'Urban Landscapes' in *Remaking the Landscape: The Changing Face of Britain*, ed. J. Jenkins (London, 2002), pp.105-16.

low cost housing.<sup>128</sup> Planning concentrated on ‘key settlements’, for example, Farndon, with new estates surrounding the settlement cores which were left undeveloped.

The population of south-west Cheshire had been rising since the 1950s and 1960s in individual townships, but this was not due to the need to house agricultural workers in an area where, as elsewhere, the agricultural workforce had declined. The towns of Malpas and Farndon, while comparatively large for the area, and with low HHIs and therefore more amenable to businesses, offered very limited opportunities for employment. The inference was that new housing was built for incomers who commuted to the nearest large towns. As discussed earlier, increased car ownership since the 1950s meant that settlements with schools such as Bell O’th’ Hill and Shocklach appeared to be sustainable as commuter incomers increased building in settlements with access to reasonable roads out of the area (see chapter four). However, even comparatively marginalised places like Edge Green and Oldcastle contained new buildings, housing families with young children.<sup>129</sup> As long as access to larger towns such as Chester was possible, commuter housing was viable.

In 1979 Moseley wrote that counter-urbanisation would probably continue, resulting in a substantial rural population.<sup>130</sup> Although nationally out-migration from cities slowed between 1971 and 1981, the mid-1980s was a period of demand for second homes in rural areas. This trend led to a price boom in rural properties until the mid-1990s which coincided with a further decline in the number of agricultural workers. Remaining rural workers complained that they were priced out of the housing market and environmentalists protested.<sup>131</sup> However, counter-urbanisation helped smaller settlements survive but at the cost of displacing local people.

In 1982 Norton-Taylor drew attention to the comparative ease with which dwellings in need of substantial restoration received public funds: ‘In Cheshire, run-down cottages are selling for £35,000 or more and are then renovated with the help of government grants.’<sup>132</sup> Bearing in mind the difference in house prices then and 20 years later the inference was that not only were cottages in Cheshire priced out of the

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<sup>128</sup> Morris, *District*, p. 64.

<sup>129</sup> Personal observation during fieldwork, 2001-05.

<sup>130</sup> Moseley, *Accessibility*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>131</sup> Howkins, *Death*, pp. 208-10.

<sup>132</sup> Norton-Taylor, *Whose Land*, p. 232.



reach of local people but also the government was conniving in this by providing grants for renovation to already well-off buyers.

Although the impression given by council documents was that of a steady increase in housing in south-west Cheshire since World War Two, in fact the percentage increase over the past 100 years was small. In 1991 there were 1,204 detached houses and 1,519 semi-detached or terraced houses in south-west Cheshire, making a total number of 2,723 dwellings. This was an increase of only 3.1 per cent on the total number of household spaces or homes in 1881 of 2,642.<sup>133</sup> Jenkins's 'suburbanisation' was therefore proceeding in the area, but in a way that did not intrude on the character of the area.

According to Edward (cited by Whitby et al.) in north-east England during the 1950s settlements with fewer than 120 people lost the most population but those with more than 450 people showed a general growth. The threshold population was 120-160 people with 160 to 180 people being a good minimum size. Settlements with more than 180 but fewer than 450 people had mixed histories.<sup>134</sup> On the opposite side of the country in the north-west of England there was a similar but not identical result in south-west Cheshire. However, while two out of three of the settlements with more than 450 people increased their populations during the 1950s (Farndon, Malpas), one (Broxton) declined. Virtually all the other settlements, whether intermediate or with fewer than 120 people, experienced population decline. However, two townships with small settlements, Macefen and Clutton, increased their populations (although Clutton's population was 119) while population in three settlements of between 180 and 450 residents (Bickley, Hampton, Threapwood) also grew. All these places were specifically targeted by planners to improve access to housing throughout the area. Clutton, as mentioned, was chosen because it had the minimum basic services and was on the route between Farndon and Broxton. The settlement of No Man's Heath in Macefen was at the junction of four townships (Macefen, Malpas, Hampton, Bickley) and on the route from Malpas to the A41. It was therefore well-placed for improving housing provision in all four townships<sup>135</sup> (see chapter four). Both were well-placed on the main commuter routes and could take overflow from Farndon and Malpas (see chapters three and four). The evidence

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<sup>133</sup> National census 1981,1991.

<sup>134</sup> Whitby, and others, *Development*, p. 171 quoting Edward, 'The visibility of lower-size-order settlements in rural areas; the case of north-east England', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 11, 247-76.

<sup>135</sup> Council, *District*, pp. 176-82.

from south-west Cheshire therefore broadly supports the theory that during the 1950s the smallest settlements decreased fastest, the largest increased and intermediate-sized settlements had mixed histories. In south-west Cheshire this was the case during the whole of the twentieth century. However, as the growth of two of the area's smallest settlements shows, the evidence is not entirely clear cut. Whitby et al attribute the concentration of housing (and industry in some areas) around larger existing settlements to the acceptance of the ideas of limited urban expansion within defined areas and their incorporation into planning policy of the 1960s and 1970s,<sup>136</sup> but this controlled development had been part of Cheshire's rural planning policies since the 1940s. The next section looks at the result of building patterns during the second half of the twentieth century and relates them to earlier building patterns.

### ***Building patterns from the 1950s***

The gradual decline in the number of agricultural labourers during the second half of the twentieth century and the subsequent decrease in the need for labourers' cottages was counterbalanced by the building of dwellings for the new inhabitants. Since the 1950s the population of most of rural England grew and commuters moved into settlements in rural areas as well as suburbs. Rural settlements ceased to house mainly people working in agriculture but became places of leisure and 'community centres'. The tied cottages of the agricultural labourers were turned into residences and local authority housing was built on the cheaper or authority-owned waste land surrounding settlements. Older houses surrounded the village green, if any, and smaller private houses surrounded them, with local authority schemes farthest from the centre of the settlement.<sup>137</sup> The typical plan was modern housing built around the older core settlement.

Planning strategy for south-west Cheshire based on maintaining agricultural land, favoured infilling where possible, this not only preserved the original landownership patterns but also limited additional new development. This has had the effect of creating settlements with development stages similar to Burgess's *concentric circle ideal of urban development with modern housing built around older cores*.<sup>138</sup> The results of a building survey carried out in the area as well as map work

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<sup>136</sup> Whitby et al, *Development*, p. 89.

<sup>137</sup> Howkins, *Death*, p. 182.

<sup>138</sup> Hudson, *Geography*, p. 235.

show this pattern. This can be clearly seen in Tilston where the remnant of the green is surrounded by the oldest houses, further along the roads out of the town are the newer private houses, and there is local authority housing beyond this (Figure 8:12).

**Figure 8:12: Building development in Tilston, pre-eighteenth to twentieth centuries.**



Sources: Digimap; building survey by P. Bird.

In south-west Cheshire this concentric development had resulted in some settlements that appear to be older than the majority of their housing because of where and how this was placed. The settlements in the area are perceived as typical of the black-and-white villages so beloved of tourists in Cheshire, yet many mainly consist of red-brick eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings with a large number of modern dwellings in and around the larger settlements. Buildings in Malpas, for example, spread out from the older core with modern developments built downhill and hidden from view (Figure 8:13). Malpas, as planning and conservation strategy dictated, has preserved its older character while permitting limited modern development (Figure 8:14). The much older pre-eighteenth century buildings are actually few in number.



**Figure 8:13: Malpas town centre showing how the clustering of older buildings in the centre of the town distracts visitors from the presence of modern buildings hidden from view downhill.**



Source: Photo: P.Bird, 2004.

<sup>139</sup> See R. W. Bramhall, *An Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture*, 3rd edn (London, 1987), appendix 1.

<sup>140</sup> Survey of building types conducted for this study by P. Bird. See Tables 1.25 - 1.27.







The settlements at Shocklach and Edge show a similar development pattern (Figures 8:15, 8:16). In Shocklach the older buildings have been swamped by nineteenth-century building or alterations while in Edge the pattern is more dispersed although the concentric pattern is visible. In Tushingam also (Figures 8:17) the more modern buildings have been built further away from the older ones but there is no specific settlement core. In all the townships there are isolated buildings both old and new.

The results of a field walking survey based on one designed by Brunskill<sup>139</sup> show that the majority of houses are individual Ruabon red brick and slate of the nineteenth-century or modern lighter brick and tiled-roof twentieth-century houses. Only three townships have seventeenth-century dwellings (Tushingam, Shocklach, Edge) and between them they represent fewer than 18 per cent of each townships, dwellings. Only two per cent of the dwellings in Malpas are earlier than the nineteenth century.<sup>140</sup> (Tables 8:18-20). The main settlements in the townships are therefore not as old as they appear to the casual visitor.

Figure: 8:15 Building changes in Shocklach.



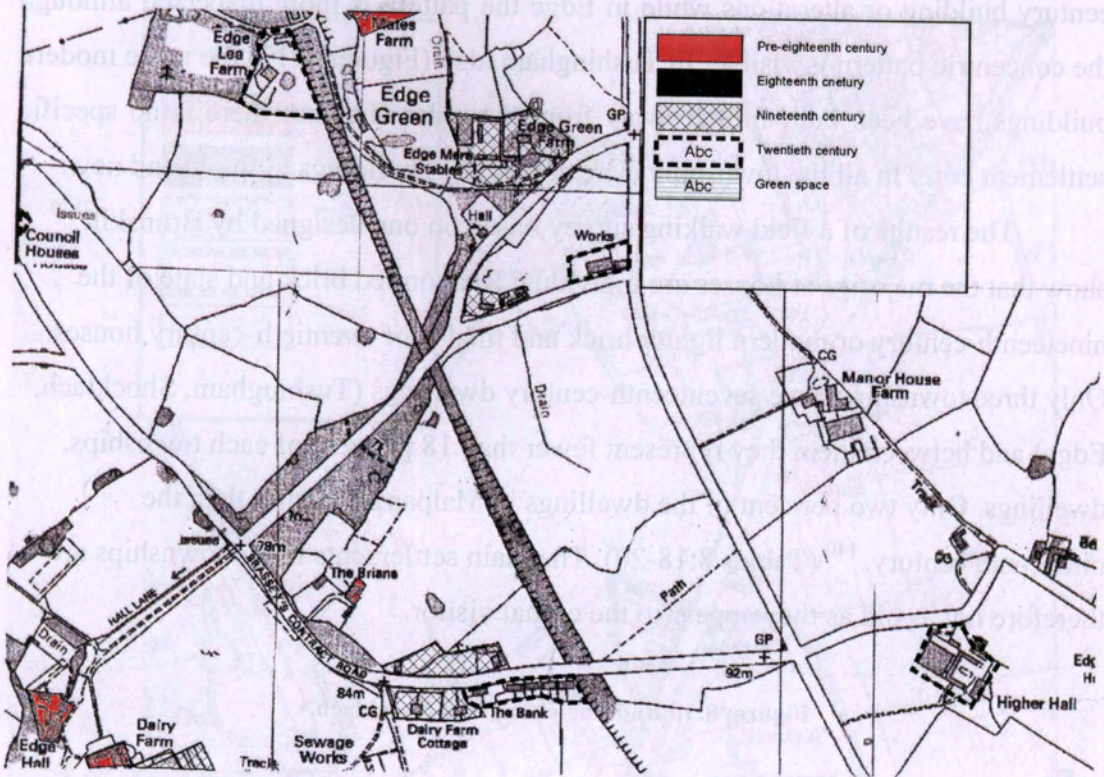
Source: Digimap; building survey.

<sup>139</sup> See R. W. Brunskill, *An Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture*, 3rd edn (London, 1987), appendix 1.

<sup>140</sup> Survey of building types conducted for this study by P. Bird. See Tables 7:25 – 7:27.



Figure 8:16: Building changes in Edge.



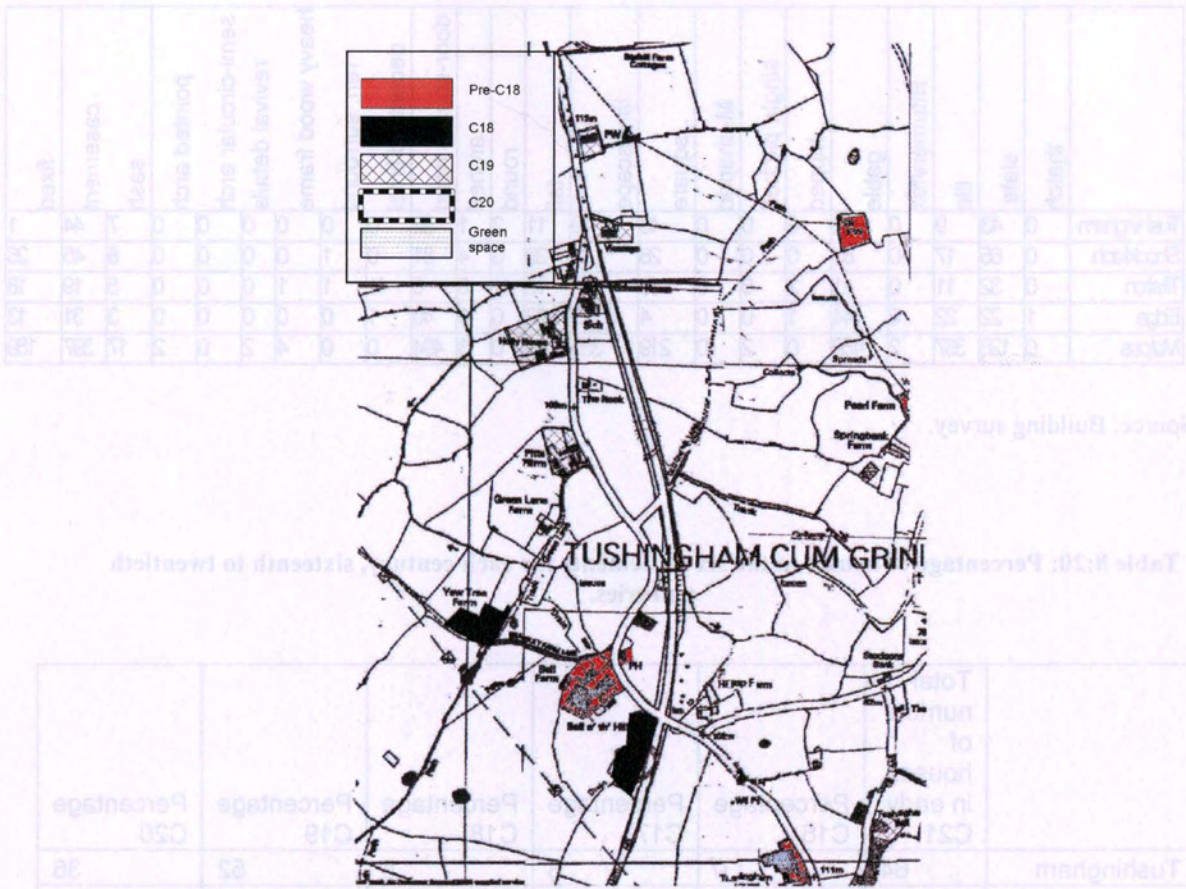
Source: Digimap; building survey.



Survey of building types conducted for this study by R. Bird See Tables 7:22 - 7:27.  
Appendix I.  
See R. W. Brasell, An Illustrated Handbook of Residential Architecture, 3rd edn (London, 1987).



Figure 8:17: Building changes in Tushingham.



Source: Digimap; building survey.

Table 8: 18 Brunskill house survey of the six settlements (1), sixteenth to twenty-first centuries.

	C-16	C-17	C-18	C-19	C-20	C-21	individual	attached to one house	part of a row	brick/red	brick/grey	brick/painted white	brick painted pink	half timber	weatherboard	stone	flint, rubble etc	panels	solid wall rendered	black and white	1 storey	1 storey and 2 storey wing
Tushingham	0	5	3	33	23	0	44	8	0	43	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	2	4	0
Shocklach	0	4	6	51	27	0	72	10	0	60	0	18	0	1	0	0	0	1	9	2	15	0
Tilston	0	0	0	12	29	0	14	8	12	42	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	1
Edge	0	3	6	18	22	0	21	22	0	37	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	0
Malpas	0	0	6	14	382	0	144	248	111	494	0	13	0	5	22	0	0	3	22	4	68	0

Source: Building survey.



**Table 8:19 Brunskill house survey of the six settlements (2), sixteenth to twenty-first centuries.**

	thatch	slate	tile	Bitumen/felt	gable	hipped	single pitched	M-shaped	square	landscape	tail	round	arched	door-square head	decorated lintel	ren. surround	heavy wood frame	semi-circular arch	pointed arch	sash	casement	fixed
Tushingam	0	43	9	0	52	0	0	0	43	19	11	2	1	82	0	0	0	0	0	7	44	1
Shocklach	0	65	17	0	81	0	0	0	28	33	26	0	4	81	0	1	0	0	0	8	45	26
Tilston	0	32	11	0	41	2	0	0	19	19	18	41	0	0	41	1	1	0	0	5	19	18
Edge	1	22	22	0	44	1	0	0	4	25	32	0	0	40	1	0	0	0	0	3	31	13
Malpas	0	128	367	2	459	0	2	0	219	330	141	0	3	494	0	0	4	2	0	17	397	189

Source: Building survey.

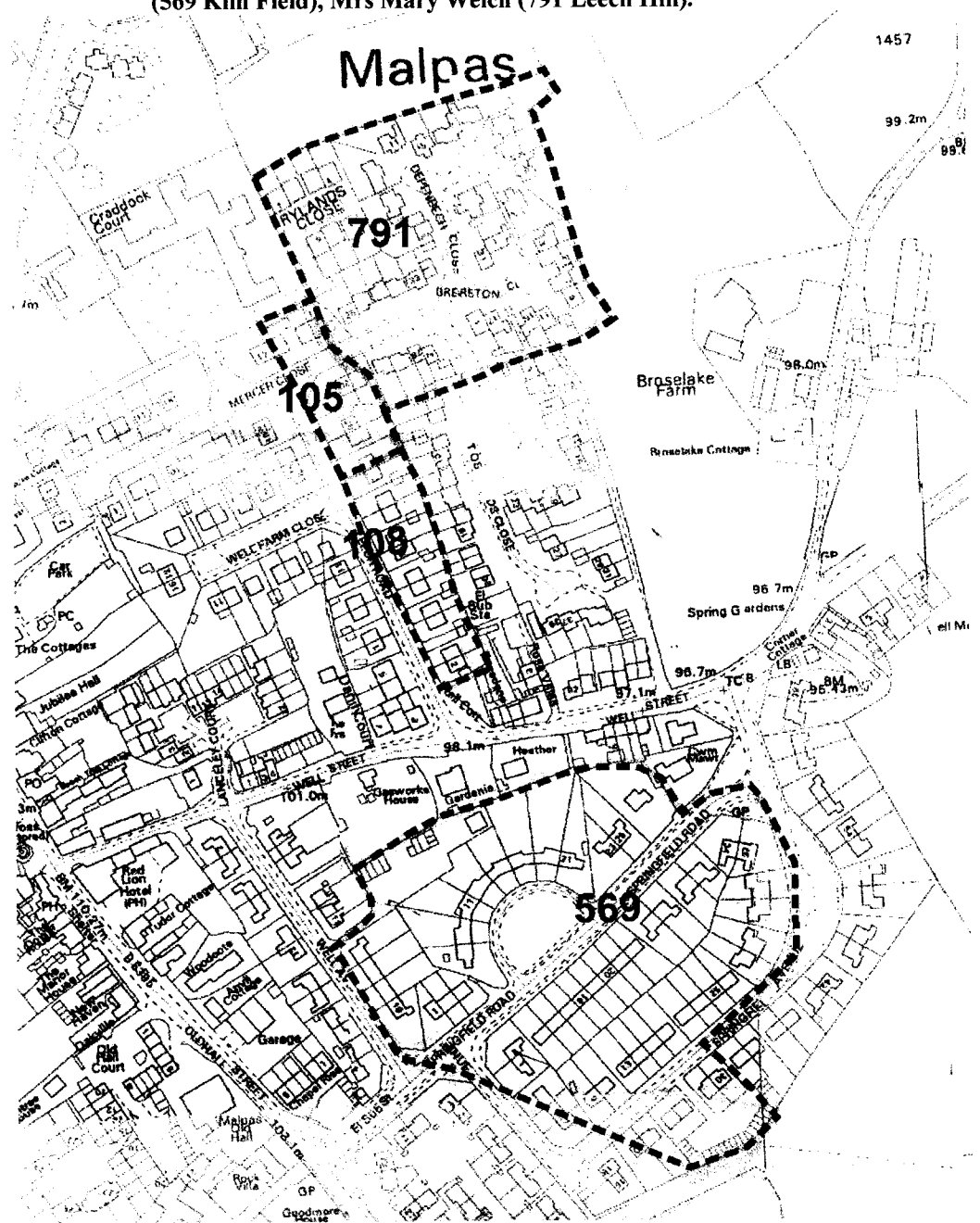
**Table 8:20: Percentage of houses in the six settlements for each century, sixteenth to twentieth centuries.**

	Total number of houses in early C21	Percentage C16	Percentage C17	Percentage C18	Percentage C19	Percentage C20
Tushingam	64	0	8	5	52	36
Shocklach	88	0	5	7	58	31
Tilston	240	0	0	0	12	177
Edge	49	0	6	12	33	45
Malpas	402	0	0	2	3	90

Source: Building survey.

New building often took place within the confines of nineteenth-century field boundaries. Although twentieth-century planning laws allowed for a certain amount of rural expansion they were still constrained by earlier field shapes. These earlier landscape patterns exist in the settlements in south-west Cheshire. Plots were often fields sold for building and builders, whether local authorities or private developers, had to build within the constraints of these boundaries. Examples at Malpas, Shocklach and Tilston show where modern estates were built within the boundaries of fields still traceable on title maps (Figures 8:21-8:23).

**Figure 8:21: Modern housing in Malpas built within the boundaries of nineteenth-century fields belonging to Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake (105, 108 House and croft), Marquis of Cholmondeley (569 Kiln Field), Mrs Mary Welch (791 Leech Hill).**



Sources: Digimap; CCALS, EDT 257/1&2.





permitting limited development in certain settlements to accommodate incomers able to commute. These settlements were not only the larger and low HHI settlements of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries but carefully selected smaller high HHI settlements that provided, or it was hoped would eventually provide, enough basic amenities to become viable commuter settlements. Post-war planning policies stressed the importance of adequate rural housing within carefully defined limits, while at the same time preserving the agricultural land on which the area's prosperity depended. *A Plan for Cheshire* aimed to create a wide group of settlements with smaller settlements within easy travelling distance of larger ones and all centred around a market town. It wanted limited building in smaller settlements in order to spread amenities throughout the area while larger settlements would be allowed to grow. Although most settlements were permitted some development until the late 1960s, only the largest were subsequently allowed further development because they became subject to conservation and environmental plans as well as much stricter planning laws.

As Table 8:11 shows, by the end of the twentieth century, smaller settlements had not attracted amenities as the *Plan* had hoped and it was the largest settlements, mainly with low HHIs in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, that continued to provide the basic amenities for the area, with Malpas continuing its role as the central place of south-west Cheshire. Both Farndon and Tilston have grown in size of population and physical footprint but neither has more than the basic amenities. All the six sample settlements had been constrained by the planning laws and Malpas and Tilston in particular by conservation legislation. Shocklach and Bell O'Th Hill in Tushingham demonstrate that the presence of a school in a smaller settlement could ensure viability while Edge reveals that even a comparatively undeveloped township could become viable as a commuter base. The *Plan* therefore encouraged growth while failing to attract the private investment in amenities necessary to ensure the growth of smaller settlements. Later planning and conservation laws ensured that this pattern of development continued with larger low HHI settlements and certain smaller settlements (mainly those that had high HHIs, on good transport routes) growing most rapidly. The power of nineteenth-century landowners over the land therefore continued to influence development of land and the location of new

building throughout the twentieth century. These policies continue into the future in the planning strategy defined in 2000 which looks ahead to 2020.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> North West Development Agency, RPG 13, *England's North West - A Strategy towards 2020* (London, 2000).



## Chapter nine

### Conclusions

The story of south-west Cheshire from the mid-eighteenth century is one of continuity rather than change. In spite of national trends the area's settlement pattern remained largely unaltered as local patterns of landownership and agriculture controlled the extent and type of development. In the twentieth century planning rules took over where landowners left off and the pattern of settlement location and development remained intact.

The main aim of this study has been to analyse how landownership influenced settlement development to create this situation and to explain whether the influence was direct or indirect. But a related challenge emerged: how could landownership be discussed without a reliable way of relating landownership patterns between townships? The traditional nineteenth-century terms of 'open' and 'closed' turned out to be, as this work has shown, unreliable as either descriptors or predictors of the effects of landownership control. The answer was found in economics and this study has proposed the Hirfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) as a superior replacement to the traditional terms in that it provides a more accurate and reliable method of comparing settlements through quantifiable measurement of landownership concentration.

This work has examined how far large landowners in south-west Cheshire's landownership patterns as measured by HHI influenced the course of change: in particular, change in the area's population, transport, farming, enclosure, planning and legislation. In addition to examining the townships in the whole area, six sample townships were chosen as typical of the area to illustrate the processes. This has led to a number of conclusions. Using population size as a proxy for settlement size, there was a trend for the largest settlements, generally in townships with low HHIs (low landownership concentration and therefore less control by large landowners) to expand and the smallest settlements in townships with high HHIs (high landownership concentration and controlled by large landowners) to stagnate or decline. South-west Cheshire's development was stunted by the inappropriate placing of its transport infrastructure and the reluctance of some resident landowners to encourage expansion in their township, although settlements in low HHI



townships on main routes survived best. Although land consolidation took place, the smaller landowners survived alongside the larger estates and their number even increased in places, with building taking place on a growing number of smaller plots, mainly but not solely in low HHI townships. Modern planning regulations restricted physical settlement growth mainly to already expanding settlements in low HHI townships in order to maintain a traditional feel and to protect local agriculture while at the same time making settlements more attractive to commuters. In all these respects, the dual effect of landownership on settlement development was determined directly through the buying and selling of land and indirectly through the influence of some major landowners on the placing of transport infrastructure: the prevailing landownership patterns, in turn, were effectively preserved in modern planning decisions. In using HHI as the measure of landownership concentration throughout this work its effectiveness for historical study has been demonstrated.

### ***HHI – towards a new precision***

This work has argued for the use of HHI to replace the terms ‘open’ and ‘closed’ when discussing landownership patterns. As chapter three has shown, historians have widely accepted the terms ‘open’ and ‘closed’ as generally descriptive of high and low landowner control over parishes, townships or settlements without concerning themselves about the reliability of the terms. In spite of work by Holderness, Banks and Mills which called into question many assumptions associated with the terms, historians not only use them to describe the extent of landownership control but also to predict certain commonly associated effects. Recent researchers such as Kemsley, while still using the terms, agree that there is no ‘simple dichotomy between open and closed townships’.<sup>1</sup> The number of landowners is still generally used as a predictor of the amount of landowner control (and therefore traditionally ‘open’ or ‘close’ status). The effects of landownership on settlement development cannot be discussed meaningfully unless there is a reliable method of comparing patterns of landownership.

In chapter four HHI was first compared against traditional criteria associated with the terms ‘open’ and ‘closed’. This showed that population and housing density and the number of farmers or agricultural labourers are not reliable indicators of landowner control. In south-west Cheshire there were certainly too many exceptions

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<sup>1</sup> Kemsley, p.394.

to make the terms reliable; as Holderness concluded, most townships had adequate numbers of agricultural labourers and, as Banks asserted, the traditional terms were not reliable predictive models of nineteenth-century society. Landownership concentration could not tell us about the distribution of land, except in the broadest sense that a high HHI pointed to more compact landholdings while low HHI townships were more likely to have a 'patchwork' pattern of landholding. Additionally, by using HHI it has been shown that even the number of landowners and the amount of population change, although providing a reasonable correlation with landownership concentration, cannot reliably predict the amount of landowner control nor can the amount of landowner control reliably predict its effects. However, HHI as a quantifiable and reliable measure of landownership concentration (and therefore by implication landowner control) can be used to make clear comparisons and allows small differences in landownership concentration between townships to be noted. It is therefore more useful than the terms 'open' and 'closed' and the non-quantifiable traditional effects associated with them. Whether or not a division into high and low HHI ultimately proves to be useful in other contexts remains to be seen in the light of further work. But using a division into high and low HHI (with 3000 as the threshold figure) has been helpful in the present study as a replacement for the terms 'open' and 'close' and has enabled a basic comparative discussion to be undertaken.

Any quantifiable measurement that is going to be useful as an historical tool also needs to be easy to calculate and simple to use. HHI satisfies these criteria, which will encourage its use by historians of all mathematical abilities and none. Also, as HHI weights towards the largest landowners, the absence of the smallest owners from many records does not create any problems in calculation; that only the largest ten landowners need be included increases its simplicity. This attribute enhances its use as an indicator of the influence of large landowners on a township. HHI is capable of detecting nuances in landownership control but allowing comparison over time and place using a variety of documents, some of which either do not specifically state the amount of land holdings or do not record many of the smallest landowners (e.g. land tax, tithe and 1910 'Domesday' records). It has the potential to be used with other records where the proportion of landownership for individuals can be calculated. The accuracy of HHI and its use as demonstrated in this work prove its value to historians.

Throughout this work HHI has been the driving methodological approach to the examination of the effects of landownership on the settlement development in the area. HHI brings to the study of landownership and the landscape exactitude and a statistically useful methodology which will contribute to future studies. It is time to discard the terms 'open' and 'closed' and turn to HHI as a more reliable method of comparison.

### ***Conclusions to be drawn from HHI and patterns of landownership***

Having established the benefits of using HHI, chapter four showed that by using the land tax records to follow landownership changes in the early-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries in the six townships in south-west Cheshire, the number of small landowners decreased in high HHI townships (townships with greater control by large landowners) and increased in low HHI townships, while medium landowners showed no change. However, subsequently throughout the area between 1831 and the early twentieth century the number of medium landowners decreased while the number of large and small landowners increased, possibly due to the loss of land by medium owners.

An analysis of how landownership as measured by HHI affected population figures throughout the period (chapter five) established a clear trend for large settlements in low HHI townships (therefore with less control by large landowners) to remain large and small ones in high HHI townships to remain small. This was an important trend analysed in relation to the effects of landownership. Although pre-1801 population figures had to be estimated, the figures showed that during the second half of the eighteenth century, although two ancient parishes in the area apparently declined or registered no change (Tilston and Farndon), both Shocklach and Malpas ancient parishes registered a general increase. The area followed national and Cheshire county population trends, albeit at a lower rate, and the population growth peaked between 1801 and 1851 (but at only 29 per cent increase compared to 137 per cent in Cheshire and 93 per cent nationally). Between 1851 and 1951 while the national population rose south-west Cheshire's population fell but then began to recover, partly because of counter urbanisation. It followed the national trend by rising again between 1951 and 2001, at a time when the county levels declined, partly because of boundary changes. HHI has also shown that the settlements that

were originally the largest settlements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, generally with low HHIs ( $\text{HHI} < 3000$ ), were the ones that increased in size both in population and physically throughout the period, while the smallest settlements with high HHIs ( $\text{HHI} > 3000$ ) stagnated or declined. Although there were a few exceptions (mainly due to fortuitous access to transport or the presence of a school), this trend has continued throughout the 250 years studied. Those large low HHI settlements that grew earlier were the settlements that have thrived in the twentieth century.

The number of townships with a high HHI and therefore under greater landownership control by large landowners increased during the first half of the nineteenth century, but began to decline prior to 1900, thus foreshadowing the break up of the great estates during the first half of the twentieth century. Townships with a low HHI, and therefore with more diverse landownership patterns, reduced their HHI score still further by 1910 – more so than settlements with a high HHI – showing an ongoing decline in landownership control.

An analysis of land tax records showed that, although consolidation of larger estates did occur, there was an accompanying increase in the number of small landowners and the trend in south-west Cheshire was to build on the increasing number of small plots thereby created. Small landowners therefore had a direct influence on settlement development as a result of their willingness to sell land for new building. Trends in landownership patterns were followed by examination of the tithe awards and, following Short's example, analysis of the '*landownership structures*' in the 1910 'Domesday' records for the area.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast, the sale of the great estates in south-west Cheshire during the early twentieth century took place mainly in low HHI townships and did not result in similar development. The land was sold as viable farms and there was therefore virtually no building on such agricultural land. Thus the sale of these larger plots preserved the existing settlement patterns. Therefore, small landowners influenced settlement through the sale of land for building while large landowners did not because their land was sold for farming.

As chapter six indicated, the development of settlements was stunted by the location of the transport infrastructure which reflected, in time, the reluctance of some large landowners to encourage growth. Selective objections raised by a few

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<sup>2</sup> Short, *Land*, pp.109-111.

major landowners, such as Drake, to some infrastructural improvements meant that the placing of the transport infrastructure isolated some settlements, thus stunting their growth, while enabling others to expand because landowners affected the location of new transport routes and therefore indirectly the location of new buildings.

The existing transport system in 1750 consisted of green lanes, footpaths and minor roads. Few green lanes became roads but an analysis of seventeenth-century staging posts established four well-used routes, two of which (the Roman Road, still so named, and Coach Road, now the A41) became the main routes from the eighteenth century. The placing of turnpikes, the canal and the railway, and the introduction of major road designation, affected different parts of the area in different ways. The placing of turnpikes benefited some settlements but isolated others, even though a few minor roads acted as popular through routes, with low HHI settlements on main routes benefiting most. The canal affected only its nearest settlement of Tushingham and helped to stimulate its growth in contrast to most of the area's settlements which did not benefit. The railway had little effect on most settlements in the area and only limited effect on the station towns of Broxton and Malpas (Hampton Heath). Its under use eventually led to its closure in the mid twentieth-century, thus slowing the growth of those settlements close to it. Only three roads on the area's borders were designated as main roads in the late-nineteenth and twentieth century which encouraged motor traffic to speed through or around the area rather than stop in it.

Thus the location of the transport routes encouraged the expansion of larger settlements in mainly low HHI townships on main routes and also settlements in high HHI townships on the main routes to expand and encouraged the stagnation or decline of smaller and generally, but not always, high HHI settlements elsewhere in the area. However, this very isolation has more recently made smaller settlements attractive to commuters and some smaller, more isolated settlements have grown from the late twentieth century onwards. The chapter supported Phillips and Smith's assertion that transport development had little impact on most agricultural settlements.<sup>3</sup> However, in some cases transport has been able to overcome settlement patterns as defined by HHI where access has increased development potential.

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<sup>3</sup> Phillips and Smith, *Lancashire and Cheshire*, p. 189.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, living outside the settlement where one worked became more common because of improved transport facilities and more diverse work opportunities. The growth in commuter housing began. This ultimately led to the start of a counter urbanisation trend in the first half of the twentieth century which increased in scale after World War Two. It contributed to some settlement development, mainly in low HHI townships with already expanding settlements permitted by planners. The trend accelerated from the 1950s with increased use of car ownership. Even in places with reasonable public transport, rural residents no longer had to rely on local amenities when they had easy access by car to larger settlements or towns.

Changes in agriculture affected and were affected by enclosure. Agriculture underwent major changes in the nineteenth century but it was also a period of agricultural depression and disease. The twentieth century saw a decline in agriculture after World War Two once the war needs were over and foreign imports increased. However, south-west Cheshire did not always conform to the national trend. The area had been subject to piecemeal enclosure since the seventeenth century and did not bear the impact of parliamentary enclosure as did a large part of the Midlands. Chapter seven has shown that the piecemeal enclosures of the previous centuries, determined by landownership patterns, continued in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and affected townships of both high and low HHIs. Smaller owners mainly used informal piecemeal enclosure. The number of small landowners increased in both high and low HHI townships. However, the number of landowners and occupiers increased more in low HHI townships. The larger landowners appeared to have favoured general enclosure, both informal and parliamentary, which took place more in high HHI townships where large landowners could control the process. Parliamentary enclosure itself took place mainly in high HHI areas, that is with high landownership concentration, where the landowners' desire to maintain farming land kept the enclosed land agricultural. However, in the only two low HHI townships in which parliamentary enclosure did take place, the landscape was significantly affected by it. These were Tushingam and Cuddington, one showing large scale landscape changes typical of the Midlands and the other some building on former farming land. In both these townships the enclosed land was shared among many landowners.

There is no evidence that enclosure either caused or was caused by a decrease of small farmers or exodus of agricultural labourers as the Marxist view proclaimed. Notably the Marxist interpretation of the effects of landowner power has been disproved in the area by following the landownership patterns through HHI. Although Marxists might portray large landowners as overbearing capitalists, there was no evidence of either the decrease of small landowners or exodus of agricultural labourers that an anti-capitalist stance would suggest. No doubt, as Winstanley noted of Lancashire, the burgeoning urban market for perishable food helped sustain farms – and therefore both owners and employees.<sup>4</sup>

Landownership therefore affected settlement growth during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: initially by the consolidation of estates and extended control of certain townships that stunted their settlement development while low HHI townships grew; and later by the sale of land which encouraged a growth in the number of small landowners and therefore additional building opportunities. Enclosure was not necessarily the main cause of population decline from the mid-nineteenth century to the early-twentieth century. Although dairying areas held up well during periods of depression some migration of small farmers and labourers occurred. Examples of enclosure by purchase and exchange appear in records of the whole area only for low HHI townships but no doubt also occurred in high HHI townships.

In the first 50 years of the twentieth century control over the land began to move away from the major landowners to small owners of individual house plots. Discussion of the early-twentieth century usually assumes that the release of estate land meant that there was a major increase in small landowners. However, the increase in south-west Cheshire did not occur primarily because of this process (although some tenant farmers took the opportunity to buy their farms), but, as before, because of the sale of smaller plots of land by less important landowners.

During the second half of the twentieth century control over land use moved from landowners of any size to planners. The twentieth-century break up of the great estates did not *in itself* result in an increased number of smaller landowners. However, although in south-west Cheshire building continued to take place mainly on smaller plots, the major landowners' preference for selling agricultural land as

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<sup>4</sup> Winstanley, *Industrialization*, p.172.

viable farms rather than building land meant that with the arrival of twentieth-century planning laws dedicated to preserving agricultural land the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landownership patterns were largely preserved. The reasons for the preservation of agricultural land were: first as the basis of financial importance for landowners, then to feed the country during two world wars, to cater for incomers without disturbing the farming on which the area's livelihood was based, and finally to preserve the area's heritage patterns while allowing the growth of commuter housing. The major landowners therefore indirectly determined twentieth-century landownership patterns, and thereby influenced the development of settlements as modern planners strove to preserve agricultural land. This continuation of major landowners' influence is important to understanding south-west Cheshire's relatively unchanged settlement pattern. Therefore settlements already expanding in the mid-eighteenth century were the ones that were in a prime position to develop further during subsequent centuries. From the end of the nineteenth century, landowners found themselves fighting a losing battle to maintain that control over the land.

Virtually no houses were built during World War One in the area although some expansion was allowed in the townships of Malpas and Hampton as well as selected growth in a few small settlements. Housing growth increased from the end of the war although it slowed during World War Two. Cheshire's *Plan* of 1946 with its aim of limiting development on agricultural land meant that the existing landownership patterns were preserved. From the 1970s settlement expansion was concentrated in selected already expanding settlements, and this, coupled with the introduction of conservation and environmental legislation, continued the bias towards preserving the status quo as far as landownership patterns were concerned.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this work are clear. HHI has shown us that it was settlements in low HHI townships, that is settlements with less landowner concentration and therefore freer from large landowner control, that remained viable from the mid-eighteenth to the end of the twentieth century. The comparative freedom from landowner intervention, at least at a level that could seriously inhibit growth, meant that while agricultural land remained of prime importance in the area, the increasing number of smaller landowners could build on land previously under the control of predominately medium landowners rather than of large landowners keen to preserve farming land from development. This did not preclude the late-twentieth century growth of a few selected smaller settlements



(such as Macefen and Clutton) in high HHI townships but these were ones specifically chosen by those in power, the planners, because of fortuitous proximity to certain amenities considered necessary to a viable settlement.

As this work has shown, landownership was as much an indirect as a direct influence on settlement development. Indirectly, through the major landowners' opposition to transport routes and directly through the sale and use of their land. This study has also demonstrated clearly that settlement growth was affected, often detrimentally, by the propensity of people with power over the land (whether landowners or planners) to interfere in the processes affecting individual settlements such as transport, the amount of land available for building, and planning rules. The apparent interference of some major landowners with the placing of transport routes meant that a large part of south-west Cheshire was isolated from easy access to the main routes to Chester, Shropshire and Wales. The acquisition of land by larger landowners during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to the stultification of settlement growth in closed townships with expansion limited to the larger settlements, mainly in low HHI townships. The twentieth-century planning laws that made the preservation of agricultural land a priority meant that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landownership patterns, as described by HHI, were preserved in twentieth-century building projects as planners were forced to limit building growth to larger settlements better able to accommodate an increased population while smaller settlements were allowed only limited expansion.

A few additional individual houses or small nucleated groups appeared but generally the dispersed settlement pattern of small nucleations and isolated farmhouses persisted. The settlements that prospered were the larger ones with low HHIs that had already proved themselves viable. Their viability in the nineteenth century, only partly due to the presence of a pub, attracted bus stops, shops, schools and churches or chapels which persuaded twentieth-century planners to select them as part of contemporary schemes to develop larger settlements.

Large landowners saw their farming land as vital to their way of life and whether deliberately through the buying and selling of land or indirectly through objections to transport routes, worked to maintain control over it. In doing so they maintained the area's landownership patterns and effectively decided which settlements (generally in large low HHI townships) would flourish. National and local interest coincided in a desire to maintain farming land during the two world

wars but it is ironic that Cheshire's *Plan* and national planning, conservation and environmental legislation have preserved what landowners started.

The settlements themselves, still rural but increasingly attracting urban immigration because of the counter-urbanisation trend, were under the control of planners by the late-twentieth century. Landownership no longer came with the right to develop land as the owner wished; permission had to be sought from local authorities or the government. No longer could landowners build what, where or when they liked. Building, when permitted, had to conform to type and was preferably infilling within specified settlement boundaries. As most of the land in the area was agricultural, the scope for building outside settlement limits defined by planners, unless strictly for agricultural need, was limited: although not impossible, as permission to build a country house in the area, 'Grafton Hall' at Stretton, in the year 2000 has shown.

Although there is a national dimension to the changes which have affected farming since the eighteenth century, in south-west Cheshire there was a particular response according to local needs. As dairying was the primary industry it survived better than arable because of increased demand for beef and later milk after 1941 and the growing importance of milk for urban areas such as Chester, Liverpool and Birmingham. At the same time the area's landownership patterns coupled with planning laws preserved local agricultural land. Although such land improvements were undertaken nationwide they were particularly important in the previously waterlogged acres of south-west Cheshire.

The research has also demonstrated that other changes took place in response to local need. The Coach Road, now the A 41, was turnpiked to facilitate delivery of cattle to market in Chester and later the railway was rerouted so that Drake's dairy herds were not disturbed. Major roads were designated to speed traffic between the main towns and cities accessible to the area, Chester, Whitchurch, Wrexham, Crewe, or Nantwich, and further afield to London and Liverpool. Twentieth-century planners permitted development in larger settlements to cater for the needs of local people as well as the growing number of incomers.

Some people might suggest that much of what this work has discussed is obvious. However, what it has done, using HHI, is to demonstrate the process in detail in an area larger than usually tackled by local studies and to show exactly why and how this continuity occurred. In the twenty-first century, an age of rapid change,

it is instructive to examine the reasons and processes behind an area's comparative lack of change.

### ***Contributions to knowledge***

This research makes several important contributions to general historical knowledge and understanding. First, this work contributes an original application of a methodology derived from economics (HHI) to analyse the extent of landownership concentration in a township (modern civil parish) and by using it within the study demonstrates its use to historians as a replacement for the terms 'open' and 'closed'. Second, it adds a modern-period dimension to the small corpus of previous academic work on the area which has concentrated mainly on the pre-modern period. Third, it includes a detailed analysis of the effects of twentieth-century planning laws which is tackled at a local level rather than in generalised studies. Fourth, it demonstrates that research over a longer time period than is usual in local studies is important to demonstrate trends in landownership patterns through to the end of the twentieth century. Fifth, it shows that a local study of a substantial area greater than a parish but smaller than county level, but with clearly defined boundaries, particularly in light of the new trend for 'micro-history', can allow comparisons within the area. Sixth, it establishes the importance of including the twentieth century in rural settlement research so that long-term trends can be followed. In a general sense, a study of this kind also contributes to the future prosperity of the area by informing planners and others concerned with the survival of rural communities. As Sir Neil Cossons, Chairman of English Heritage said: 'understanding the history of places and making that history work creatively for the future is the key to successful rural communities'.<sup>5</sup> Seventh, it shows that the provision of a local transport infrastructure does not necessarily result in settlement growth. Eighth, it demonstrates that it was as much indirect as direct influence by landowners that determined the amount and placing of any physical growth and the extent of any stagnation or decline of individual settlements. Ninth, it provides evidence of continuing piecemeal enclosure in south-west Cheshire during the period of parliamentary enclosure. Tenth, it provides evidence that the break-up of great estates in south-west Cheshire did not necessarily lead directly to more building nor an increase in the number of small

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<sup>5</sup> Sir Neil Cossons, 'Saving our soul', *Heritage Today* (2003), p. 6.

landowners. The increase in small landowners that did occur was not directly due to this.

At the start of this project twentieth-century rural settlement development was a largely neglected area of research for historians interested in the relationship between landownership and settlement development. Since then there has been more interest and historians such as Wild have produced overviews of the subject within general social histories or, like Williamson, have concentrated on particular aspects of the subject, for example, drainage. The importance of this study lies in the new insight it provides of the relationship between landownership and rural settlement development at a detailed local level.

### ***Further work***

Opportunities for further work arise from this research. First, further studies should be made of HHI to decide whether a distinction between high and low HHI is meaningful and, if so, to determine a generally acceptable cut-off point for low and high HHI settlements. Settlements should be compared across England both in time and place using HHI. While a cut-off point at 3267 makes sense, particularly in view of Mills's use of three landowners as a minimum number for ascertaining ownership concentration, this needs to be tested elsewhere in light of south-west Cheshire's clear separation point of 3000 and the economists' use of 1800.

The effects of landownership on transport facilities and therefore settlement development should be undertaken in other areas. Local historical transport studies are mainly conducted on a county-wide level or confined to one mode of transport.

Further studies of the effects of planning laws on modern settlement development would be useful for determining how national planning laws affected local communities. Although tackled by planners and by social historians at a general level, it is important that the twentieth century is not neglected at the level of local studies.

### ***South-west Cheshire today***

The six example settlements provided a small sample study and each demonstrated the changes that landownership as measured by HHI had on their physical development. Although each township has a few eighteenth- and pre-eighteenth-century buildings, as Malpas has shown their number is not as great as might appear.

Even Shocklach, with its scattering of much older buildings throughout the township, has a mainly nineteenth-century core. All six townships contain modern building to cater mainly for incomers who live in the area but work elsewhere. However, in line with the trend for the area, and although building has been allowed in all six township settlements within the constraints of planning, conservation and environmental laws, it is the larger settlements in the townships of Malpas and Tilston, both with low HHIs, that have seen the most twentieth-century growth. Even Edge, originally with a high HHI and the only township without any amenities, has been subject to modern building as commuters with cars seek out once-isolated parts of the area for their homes. The other settlements have at least the minimum of a school and pub, even Tushingam, a township with variable HHIs and the only other township with an estate still occupied by a descendant of the original family. But the former market town of Malpas, as the central place and largest settlement, is the only one to have a full range of basic amenities. (Even Farndon, the next largest town in the area and in a township with a low HHI, has few amenities compared to Malpas.) However, although small plots of land were built on from the eighteenth century through to the twentieth, nineteenth-century landownership patterns are preserved in the outlines of modern estates.

### ***The future***

South-west Cheshire is becoming more popular as a commuter base and modern housing continues to be built within planning limits, although these are being stretched. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landownership patterns are still visible in the placing of modern housing and the transport routes. Whether south-west Cheshire will maintain its characteristic dispersed settlement pattern within its agricultural landscape is debateable. Like other areas of the country it faces the problem of how to provide acceptable housing in adequate numbers for both local people and incomers.

Since 2000 there has been increased pressure on planners to release land for building. Although more acute in south-east England, nowhere in the country can agricultural land be truly considered safe from development or settlements safe from expansion. In 2006 the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (OPDM) proposed increased housing on 'brownfield' sites which had already been developed; green belts and large areas of open countryside might be considered safe since PPG2 was

issued,<sup>6</sup> but planners can still make exceptions. Chris Miele astutely pinpoints the essential problem facing planners, particularly those dealing with conservation areas, which is the inherent contradiction between preserving the historic settlement bases and government pressure to increase housing by infilling.<sup>7</sup> He regrets that conservation planners often lack knowledge of statutory planning that could reinforce conservation aims.<sup>8</sup> Although south-west Cheshire has only four conservation areas, it also has four sites of special scientific interest, one site of special conservation value plus 19 listed and 320 locally listed buildings. Planners of all kinds will therefore err on the side of conservation whenever possible. Blunden and Curry point out that increased personal transport has made the countryside within 100 miles of major cities accessible.<sup>9</sup> As south-west Cheshire is within approximately 11 to 14 miles of Chester, 57 miles from Liverpool, 42 miles from Manchester, and 85 miles from Birmingham, it will find its agricultural land, preserved for so long, under siege, particularly as it is becoming increasingly popular as a commuter base. Its proximity to Chester makes it arguably part of Chester's rural-urban fringe, that is the part of the countryside connecting urban and rural life. It is a rural area easily accessible to urban dwellers and therefore the type of rural area most under pressure from development.<sup>10</sup>

As the previous chapter showed in the example of Stretton, it is possible to overcome planning objections to even large projects such as a new country estate, or if, it is argued, the proposed building will be of exceptional architectural merit and will enhance the environment.<sup>11</sup> Whether such merit is deserved is a matter of opinion but the rich often succeed where permission for smaller developments might be problematic. Once the principle of preservation has been eroded, no rural land is safe.

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<sup>6</sup> Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, *900,000 more homes in SE England planned*, <<http://www.iema.net/news/envnews?q=900%2C000>> [accessed 5 April 2006]; I. Whyte, 'The costs of parliamentary enclosure in an upland setting: south and east Cumbria c.1760-1860', *Northern History*, 43, 1 (2006), 97-115.

<sup>7</sup> C. Miele, 'Conservation plans and the development process', *Journal of Architectural Conservation*, 2, 2 (July 2005), 23-39 (p. 23).

<sup>8</sup> Miele, 'Conservation Plans', p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> Blunden and Curry, *Future*, p. 78.

<sup>10</sup> Durham County Council, 'Broad Issues: The Rural Urban Fringe' <<http://www.durham.gov.uk/landscape/usp.nsf/pws/Landscape+-+Landscape+Strategy+-+Broad+Issues+-+The+Rural+Urban+Fringe>> [accessed 18 November 2005].

<sup>11</sup> Planning Guidance PPG7.

South-west Cheshire's agriculture industry not only suffered from environmental problems and livestock disease towards the end of the twentieth century but in the twenty-first century must still contend with cheaper foreign imports for their products. Although, as a dairying area, farmers are better placed to survive than most of the sector, profit margins are low and the incentive to sell to developers might eventually become too strong.

This thesis has demonstrated that, through the influence of large landowners, for 250 years south-west Cheshire's agricultural land has remained largely unaffected by major settlement development. However, it is becoming increasingly a place of commuter settlements of varying sizes, most with very few amenities, the residents of which pursue their leisure and work interests outside the area. The gradual expansion of south-west Cheshire's settlements will create a semi-rural area looking outside itself for its life and livelihood. As this research has shown at a detailed local level, the historical influence over settlement development on the area's land of landowners and subsequently planners created a rural stability which now seems increasingly fragile. Historians examining the area during the next 250 years may well find themselves walking streets rather than crossing fields.

## Appendix A

### Methodology for calculating populations from 1750 to 1800

The methodology for calculating the pre-census populations in the six sample townships can be demonstrated by using Tilston township as an example. First it was necessary to create Tilston's parish and township population figures from 1750 to 1800 (1751 to 1791 at ten-year intervals to align with the national census returns). This was done by using a constant ratio over the period between parish register entries and population. Census populations from 1801 were used to calculate the percentage ratio between township and parish populations. The means of these percentages were used as multipliers to obtain the pre-census township figures. As only a basic estimate was intended, there was no attempt to factor in variables, such as fertility changes, mortality or net migration.

The mean of the number of christenings was taken over a ten year period around the years corresponding with the census intervals to reduce the fluctuation, for example, the mean christenings for 1751 were calculated from christening totals from 1746 to 1755. 1741 was chosen as the starting date for population calculations, where the christening figures are available, in order to show the trend just before the start of the period covered by this study. The methodology was tested on the township of Tilston and then applied to the other sample townships.

As can be seen from the figures for Tilston (Table A:1) both marriage and burial totals fluctuate more widely than those of christenings even after means have been calculated. Christenings are more uniform but they too produce more variable figures after 1861 with the fall in the birth rate. The figures for Tilston's CMBs demonstrate that Christenings fluctuate less markedly than Marriages or Burials for the period 1801 to 1861. Christenings therefore offer a broadly stable relationship with the population figures for 1801 to 1861 and can be used with some confidence to estimate population figures before 1801. This period not only gives the best fit statistically but, because from 1872 the area was changed by the building of the railway with its station at Broxton and Malpas (Hampton Heath), the population of



townships pre-1801 would have had more in common with that of the pre-railway age.

**Table A:1:Tilston, ten-year averages of christenings, marriages and burials, 1741 to 1991.**

	Christenings	Marriages	Burials
1741	18.8	3.9	17.4
1751	17.6	3.1	11
1761	17.4	5.0	14.9
1771	17.2	4.0	12.9
1781	19.8	3.3	14.4
1791	18.6	3.5	7.6
1801	18.0	4.5	8.4
1811	21.3	3.7	11.6
1821	26.6	2.2	15.6
1831	26.6	3.8	16.5
1841	22.3		19.2
1851	23.2		15.8
1861	24.5		16.8
1871	16.7		14.1
1881	13.4		14.2
1891	20.1		11.4
1901	18.4		10.5
1911	15.3		9.8
1921	11.9		
1931	10.2		9.8
1941			8.6
1951			9.6
1961			8.5
1971	9.8		8.8
1981	7.4		6.9
1991	10.2	3.1	6.8

Source: CCLAS, Mf. 70/13/1.

To compare census populations from 1801, population figures for the modern civil parish equivalents of the townships were added together to provide a population figure equivalent to those of the ancient parishes.

Table A:2 shows how the population of both parish and township from 1741 to 1791 were calculated. The CMBs are records for the ancient parish of Tilston rather than individual townships, therefore the figures for the *parish* of Tilston have

to be adjusted to give results for the *township* of Tilston. The relationship between township and parish census population was calculated as a percentage ratio, as was the relationship between the mean christening figures and the parish population. This method was also used to calculate the separate township figures for Edge, Malpas, Tushingham, Church Shocklach and Shocklach Oviatt (Tables A:4-8).

This methodology consistently gives a fall in population between 1791 and 1801 so the estimated population for 1741 to 1791 may be too high. Although this dip may be the result of the methodology rather than a true reflection of real events, the eighteenth-century estimates provide a useful overview of trends and rough guide to population levels.

Table A:2: How the population of Tilston township 1741 to1791 was calculated.

How the population of Tilston Township 1741-1791 was calculated								
	Years	Tilston Parish population census figures	Tilston Township population census figures	Township population as % of Parish population	Ten year mean of christenings in parish	Christenings as % of Parish population	Estimated Parish population estimated (christenings/3 x 100)	Estimated township population (45% of estimated parish population)
	1741				18.8		627	282
	1751				17.6		587	264
	1761				17.4		580	261
	1771				17.2		573	258
	1781				19.8		660	297
	1791				18.6		620	279
	1801	599	257	43	18.0	3.0		
Census	1811	711	294	42	21.3	3.0		
figures	1821	833	370	44	26.6	3.2		
chosen	1831	873	395	45	26.6	3.0		
as								
best fit	1841	923	450	45	22.3	2.4		
	1851	837	425	51	23.2	2.8		
	1861	817	382	47	24.5	3.0		
	1871	721	344	48	16.7	2.3		
	1881	720	360	50	13.4	1.9		
	1891	651	305	47	20.1	3.1		
	1901	696	320	46	18.4	2.6		
	1911	756	382	51	15.3	2.0		
	1921	697	368	53	11.9	1.7		
	1931	710	347	49	10.2	1.4		
	1941							
	1951	641	377	59	9.6	1.5		
	1961	654	426	65	8.5	1.3		
	1971	694	489	70	7.0	1.0		
	1981	850	614	72	6.9	0.8		
	1991	850	632	74	6.8	0.8		
	2001	812	627	77				
			Mean of township population as % of parish population 1801-1861 to nearest whole number	45%	Mean of christenings as a % of parish population 1801-1861 to nearest whole number	3%		

Source: CCLAS, Mf. 70/13/1; 1741-1791 figures estimated; 1801-2001 from national census returns.

Using the 1801-1861 figures the mean of the percentages was taken. These were used to provide a workable multiplier for both parish and township populations pre-1801. For example, for Tilston this gave a multiplier of 45 per cent for the relationship between township and parish and 3 per cent between christenings and parish. Both multipliers were rounded to the nearest whole number. By using these

multipliers parish and then township population figures from 1751 to 1791 were calculated.

**Table A:3: Percentage multipliers for the six townships (to nearest whole number).**

	Tilston Ancient Parish	Malpas Ancient Parish			Shocklach Ancient Parish	
	Tilston	Malpas	Edge	Tushingham	Church Shocklach	Shocklach Oviatt
Township population per cent of parish population 1801-1861 multiplier	45	21	6	43	6	40
Christenings per cent of parish population 1801-1861 multiplier	3	3	3	3	3	3
Christenings per cent of parish populations 1801	3	3	3	3	3	3

Source: CCLAS, Mf. 70/13/1.

The parishes consisted of several townships so townships in the same parish had the same multiplier calculated from christenings as a percentage of the parish population. However, the resulting estimated pre-1801 township figures vary according to the multiplier calculated from township population as a percentage of the parish population.

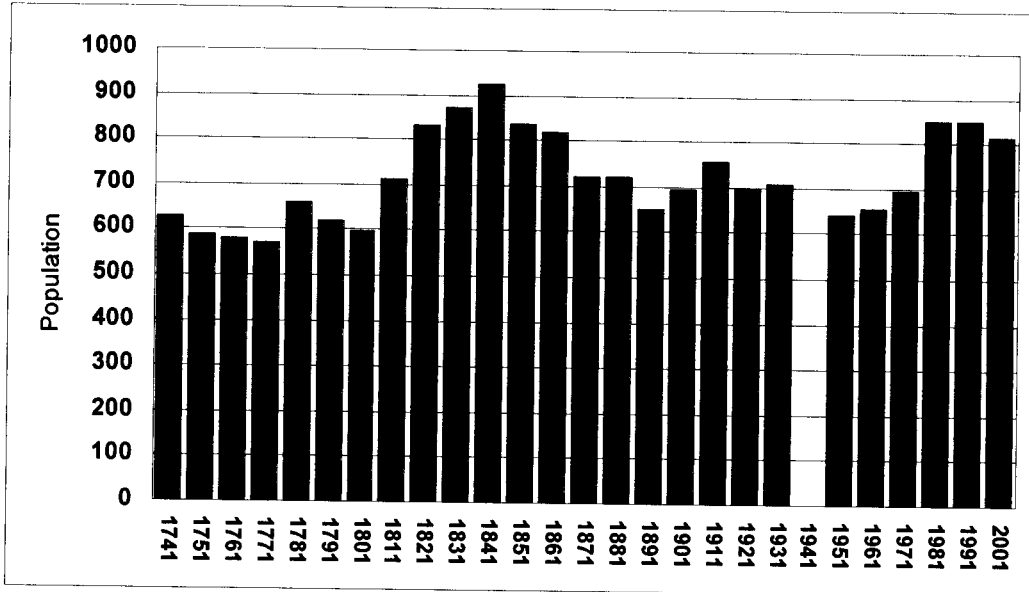
As Table A:2 shows, the multiplier for township christenings as a proportion of total parish population is consistently three per cent. The figure for 1801 is shown separately to demonstrate how closely the calculated multiplier matches the multiplier to the closest census period to the pre-1801 period. This figure applies not only to townships in the parishes of Tilston, Malpas and Shocklach, but also to the parish of Farndon. The parishes of Threapwood and Kings Marsh could not be included in the calculation of pre-census populations because they were extra-parochial and therefore had no CMB records.

The christenings multiplier equals the percentage of christenings for 1801 which is the closest census year to the period for which population needed to be

calculated. This reinforces the likelihood that the resulting estimated populations are credible (if possibly a little high in view of the 1779 to 1801 fall).

The resulting population figures from 1751 to 1991 for Tilston are shown in the following graph (Figure A:4), as significant to the historical development of the townships concerned.

Figure A:4: Population of Tilston township 1741 to 2001.



Source: *VCH Chester 2*, p. 235.

Note: 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-1991 from national census.

This is a far from perfect method, but it does provide a basis for suggesting broad population trends prior to the 1801 census. Similar methods were used to calculate population levels in Malpas, Edge, Tushingham, Church Shocklach and Shocklach Oviatt (Tables A:5-9).

Table A:5: Estimated population of Malpas township, 1741 to 1791.

	Malpas Parish population	Malpas Township population	Township % of Parish	Christen gs	Christen gs % of Parish	Estimated Parish population	Estimated Township population
1741				103.8		3460	727
1751				100.9		3363	706
1761				97.7		3257	684
1771				120.8		4027	846
1781				131.4		4380	920
1791				143.8		4793	1007
1801	4470	906	20	135.6	3.0		
1811	4326	938	22	147.8	3.4		
1821	4917	1127	23	154.6	3.1		
1831	5127	1004	20	166.2	3.2		
1841	5211	1022	20	161.0	3.1		
1851	5269	1054	20	119.4	2.3		
1861	5163	1037	20	114.7	2.2		
1871	5112	962	19	89.2	1.7		
1881	4850	939	19	45.1	0.9		
1891	5038	1164	23	48.2	1.0		
1901	4884	1139	23	48.2	1.0		
1911	4979	1166	23	45.9	0.9		
1921	4720	1098	23	42.3	0.9		
1931	4558	1101	24	40.9	0.9		
1941				37.9			
1951	4520	1219	30	29.6			
1961	4422	1310	30	30.6			
1971	4458	1493	33	26.8			
1981		1510		22.6			
1991		1545		21.7			
		Multiplier	21%		3%		

Source: *VCH Chester 2*, p. 221.

Note: 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-1991 from national census returns.

Table A:6 Estimated population of Edge township, 1741-1791.

	Malpas Parish population	Edge Township population	Township % of Parish	Christenings	Christenings % of Parish	Estimated Parish population	Estimated Township population
1741				103.8		3460	208
1751				100.9		3363	202
1761				97.7		3257	195
1771				120.8		4027	242
1781				131.4		4380	263
1791				143.8		4793	288
1801	4470	266	6	135.6	3.0		
1811	4326	276	6	147.8	3.4		
1821	4917	298	6	154.6	3.1		
1831	5127	310	6	166.2	3.2		
1841	5211	313	6	161.0	3.1		
1851	5269	263	5	119.4	2.3		
1861	5163	270	5	114.7	2.2		
1871	5112	262	5	89.2	1.7		
1881	4850	248	5	45.1	0.9		
1891	5038	244	5	48.2	1.0		
1901	4884	212	4	48.2	1.0		
1911	4979	251	5	45.9	0.9		
1921	4720	250	5	42.3	0.9		
1931	4558	238	5	40.9	0.9		
1941				37.9			
1951	4520	267	6				
1961	4422	243	5				
1971	4458	218	5				
1981		152					
1991		174					
		Multiplier	6%		3%		

Source: *VCH Chester 2*, p. 221.

Note; 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-1991 from national census returns.

Table A:7 Estimated population of Tushingham township, 1741 to 1791.

	MALPAS						
	Tushingham						
	Malpas Parish population	Tushingham Township population	Township % of Parish	Christenings	Christenings % of Parish	Estimated Parish population	Estimated Township population
1741				103.8		3460	208
1751				100.9		3363	202
1761				97.7		3257	195
1771				120.8		4027	242
1781				131.4		4380	263
1791				143.8		4793	288
1801	4470	194	4	135.6	3.0		
1811	4326	216	5	147.8	3.4		
1821	4917	283	6	154.6	3.1		
1831	5127	328	6	166.2	3.2		
1841	5211	320	6	161.0	3.1		
1851	5269	315	6	119.4	2.3		
1861	5163	324	6	114.7	2.2		
1871	5112	270	5	89.2	1.7		
1881	4850	221	5	45.1	0.9		
1891	5038	256	5	48.2	1.0		
1901	4884	264	5	48.2	1.0		
1911	4979	252	5	45.9	0.9		
1921	4720	250	5	42.3	0.9		
1931	4558	234	5	40.9	0.9		
1941				37.9			
1951	4520	217	5				
1961	4422	183	4				
1971	4458	173	4				
1981		156					
1991		173					
		Multiplier	6%		3%		

Source: *VCH Chester 2*, p. 221.

Note; Ten-yearly population figures. 1741-1791 estimated, 1801-1991 from national census returns.



**Figure A:8 Estimated population of Church Shocklach township, 1751 to 1791.**

SHOCKLACH							
Church Shocklach							
	Parish population	Church Shocklach Township population	Township % of Parish	Christenings in parish	Christenings % of Parish	Estimated Parish population	Estimated Township population
1741							
1751				8.6		287	115
1761				8.7		290	116
1771				10.2		340	136
1781				10		333	133
1791				11.1		370	148
1801	350	146	42	10	2.9		
1811	367	156	43	13.5	3.7		
1821	422	158	37	14.6	3.5		
1831	431	140	32	14.1	3.3		
1841	427	178	42	12.1	2.8		
1851	405	175	43	14.1	3.5		
1861	414	180	43	13.4	3.2		
1871	376	149	40	6.6	1.8		
1881	325	135	42	7.4	2.3		
1891	365	158	43	8.4	2.3		
1901	358	147	41	8.6	2.4		
1911	408	159	39	9.6	2.4		
1921	384	146	38	8.4	2.2		
1931	353	162	46	7.9	2.2		
1941				4.6			
1951	285	127	45	3.9	1.4		
1961	232	89	38	1.8	0.6		
1971	200	81	41	1.3	0.7		
1981	196	89		1.8			
1991	191	82		3.8			
		Multiplier	40%		3%		

Source: *VCH Chester 2*, p. 230.

Note: Ten-yearly population figures. 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-1991 from national census returns.

Table A:9 Estimated population of Shocklach Oviatt township, 1751 to 1791.

	SHOCKLACH						
	Shocklach Oviatt						
	Parish population	Shocklach Oviatt Township population	Township % of Parish	Christenings in parish	Christenings % of Parish	Estimated Parish population	Estimated Township population
1741							
1751				8.6		287	123
1761				8.7		290	125
1771				10.2		340	146
1781				10		333	143
1791				11.1		370	159
1801	350	145	41	10	2.9	333	
1811	367	155	42	13.5	3.7	450	
1821	422	180	43	14.6	3.5	487	
1831	431	216	50	14.1	3.3	470	
1841	427	180	42	12.1	2.8	403	
1851	405	168	41	14.1	3.5	470	
1861	414	168	41	13.4	3.2	450	
1871	376	159	42	6.6	1.8		
1881	325	135	42	7.4	2.3		
1891	365	158	43	8.4	2.3		
1901	358	167	47	8.6	2.4		
1911	408	193	47	9.6	2.4		
1921	384	191	50	8.4	2.2		
1931	353	149	42	7.9	2.2		
1941				4.6			
1951	285	125	44	3.9	1.4		
1961	232	117	50	1.8	0.8		
1971	200	99	50	1.3	0.7		
1981	196	82		1.8			
1991	191	84		3.8			
		Multiplier	43%		3%		

Source: *VCH Chester 2I*, p. 230.

Note; Ten-yearly population figures. 1741-1791 estimated; 1801-1991 from national census returns.

The pre-1801 populating figures should be accepted for what they are – a crude but useful portrayal of a general trend providing an idea of the physical size of the settlements and their rate of growth or decline. Any major changes in the trend need to be explained, as significant to the historical development of the townships concerned.



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