

A History of North Leigh.

The Tenants and the Manor, John Hunt, May 2010

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Introduction:

North Leigh parish is roughly rectangular bounded on the north by Akeman street and the Evenlode river, and on the south by a Portstreet, the Woodstock-Witney road. The parish covers about 2400 acres (1000 hectares) or 4 square miles. A small stream, which in medieval times was called the Itchen, meanders through the central part of the parish, joining the Evenlode at Ashford mill. The present village from the North is shown in Figure 1. The picture shows the church from what would have been the pre-inclosure Church Field.



Figure 1. View of church from pre-inclosure Church Field.

The village consists of a scatter of houses from New Yatt in the west through the centre of North Leigh to East End. A map of the parish drawn from an 1880 map is shown in Figure 2. The map is based on that in the Victoria County History of North Leigh and additions will be made to this map to illustrate various aspects of the village's history.

There is very little direct evidence to suggest Bronze Age ((2000-600 BC) or earlier settlements in North Leigh but it would seem to be reasonable that there were settlements on the alluvial terraces on the banks of the Evenlode. Grim's ditch provides good evidence that there was extensive Iron Age (600-0 BC) settlements in the area. North Leigh has the remains of a palatial Romano-British villa and is surrounded by many other smaller villas. There is evidence of Anglo-Saxon burials and a possible late Saxon church tower. From this period onwards there is extensive written documentation.

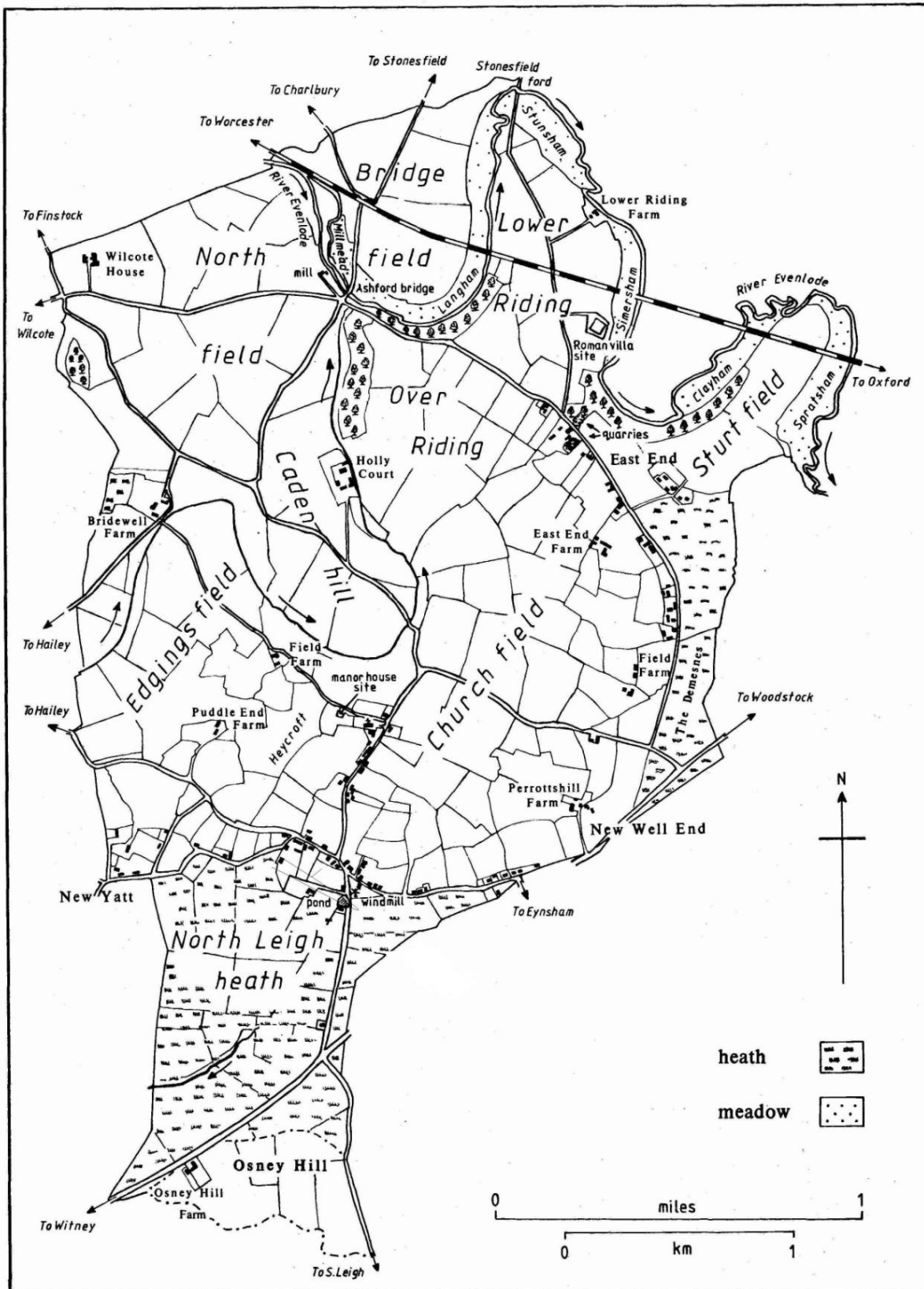


Figure 2. Map from the Victoria County History of Northleigh¹, based on an 1880 ordnance survey map.

The Victoria County History¹ written by Christopher Day gives a detailed and definitive history of North Leigh. What is to be attempted in this account is to trace what has happened not from the point

of view of an historian but by a writer who has little detailed knowledge of history. For this reason, there will be times when over simplifications have been made and additional detail is included which would have been unnecessary for the knowledgeable. Much of the quoted material comes from the notes made by Christopher Day while he was writing the Victoria County History of North Leigh. The notes have been deposited in the Public Records Office, with a copy in the archives of the North Leigh History group². The fascinating notes were not intended for publication but the present author found them so interesting that he felt encouraged to write a history of the tenants of North Leigh. Although the notes are quoted the comments and interpretations are those of the present author. Additional detailed information comes from the writings and correspondence with Beryl Schumer and both are gratefully acknowledged.

The background, geology and soil fertility.

It is too easy to underestimate the importance of an all year round supply of water to early farming communities. Water on the surface for livestock is essential for a good site for mixed farming. This would have been true for an Iron Age farmer as it was for an 18th century farmer. Water in a well would be of less value to early farmers because only buckets and manual pumps were available to lift the water to the surface. Another factor of importance was how easy the land was to cultivate. Early ploughs or ards did little more than tear apart the soil. A more modern plough with a coulter, to cut the turf and a plough share that turned the sod over, was not developed until the Roman or Anglo-Saxon periods. Even with a better plough light soils would be cultivated in preference to clay soils because they could easily be broken into a good tilth for planting seeds. Cereal crops were an important part of an early diet since the grain could be stored and used throughout the year. Cereals grow best on well drained soils. The geology has to be considered to understand where there is water and where there is easily cultivatable land. A simplified geological map of part of North Leigh is shown in Figure 3 superimposed on top of the map of the village. The geological details are sketched from^{3,4}. Only the different types of clay and the later glacial deposits are shown. In this region of Oxfordshire there are different layers of clay over layers of limestone. The layers are tilted slightly upwards towards the north. This is schematically illustrated on vertical section A-A of the figure. The tilt together with the higher ground along the southern boundary of the parish means the clay outcrops over the southern and eastern parts of the parish and this is marked on the map. There are different limestones outcropping in the lower central and northern parts of the parish. It will be shown that the arable fields were almost exclusively in these limestone based areas. The early enclosed areas were on the clay near the boundary of the clay and limestone. To understand the water supply it is necessary to notice the sand and gravel which were deposited by glacial action much later than the clay. These areas are marked in pink on the map and occur at the top of Church Road, at Perrottshill farm, and at East End farm. These glacial deposits provide natural water storage and surface water. Another source of water is the Kellaway band of sandy clay towards the bottom of the layers of clay. This band of more permeable material, outcrops at NewYatt, Puddle End Farm and Church Farm. The geology of North Leigh is interesting because although there is water at the top of the hill, streams disappear into sink holes before the streams reach the Itchen at the bottom of the valley. The position of sinkholes are shown as red dots and the position of ponds as blue dots on Figure 3. The sinkholes follow the edge of the clay. When slightly acidified water reaches cracked limestone it dissolves the limestone and over time produces a sinkhole. The Itchen itself often does not reach the Evenlode and even in winter disappears into the ground below Holycourt farm. In summer it is often dry below Field Farm.

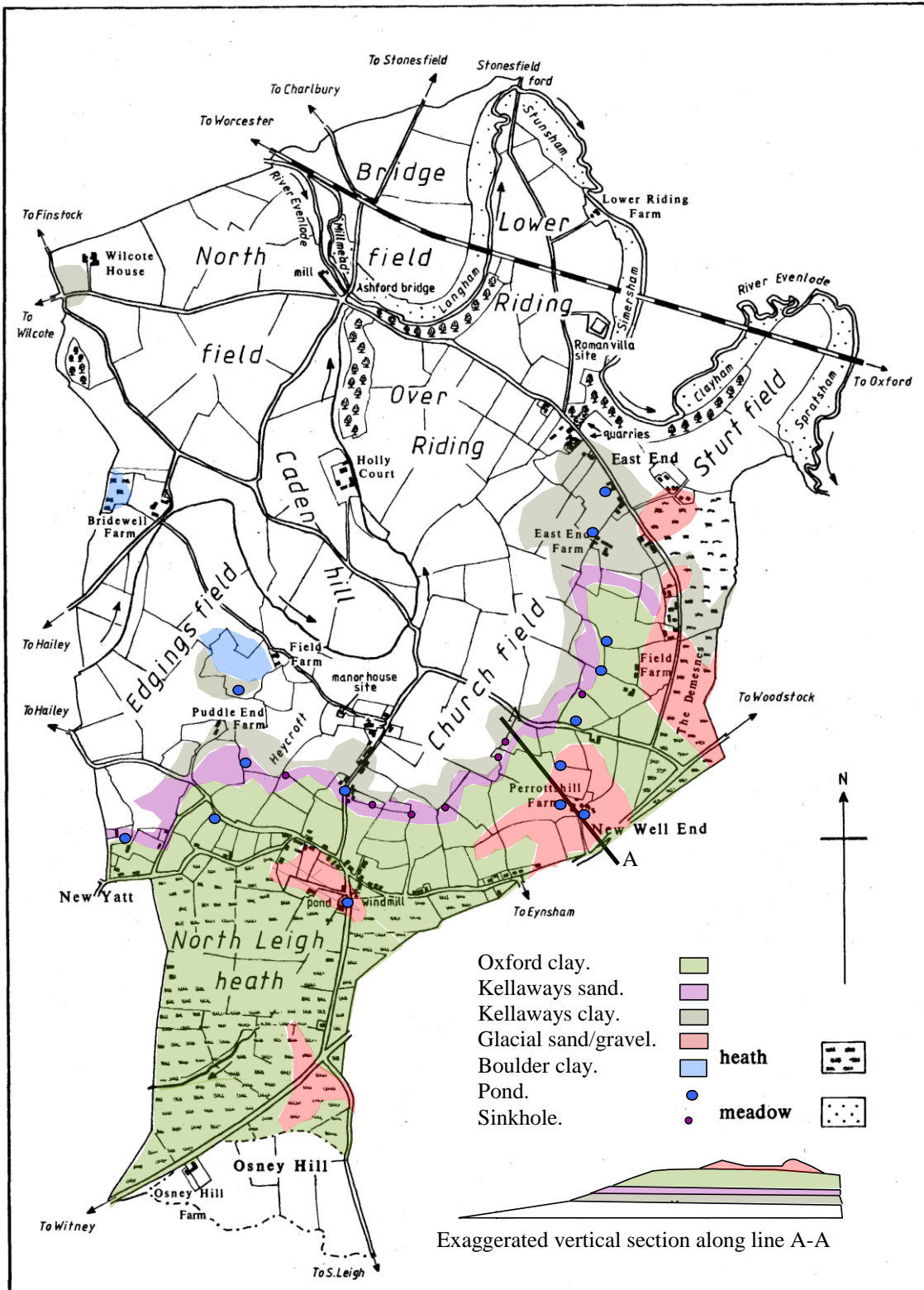


Figure 3. Map of village with added geological features.

If a crop is grown on the same site continuously and removed from the site, nitrogen, phosphorous and sulphur, as well as certain trace elements, will be taken from the soil. Before the advent of artificial fertilisers these would have needed to be returned to the soil by some process. Nitrates can be returned to the soil by the growth of crops which have nitrogen fixing nodules on their roots such

as pulses, beans and vetches. Some of the other nutrients would be returned to the soil by a slow leaching action from the minerals within the soil, particularly in clay soils. Dung from farm animals could be used to enrich the soil and improve the humus content but this would need to have been taken from another site to balance the net loss due to the removal and sale of a crop.

What this means is that fertility could be improved after a cereal crop if one or more years elapsed before another cereal crop was grown on the same land. There is evidence that a two year and later a three year crop rotation was used in North Leigh. In intermediate years, the growth of crops that have nitrogen fixing nodules, such as pulses for winter animal food, would improve soil fertility. The fertility would also be improved if farm animals grazed during the day on rough pasture and were penned overnight on the arable fields, or where dung from animals collected from penned animals was spread over the field; alternatively livestock could be penned on the arable land during winter and fed on hay cut from another source. There are instructions in the manor court rolls, to be discussed later, of attempts to minimise the loss of fertility. Even so, the loss of soil fertility would have been an ever present problem and the arable land would have always operated with minimal soil nutrients. When uncleared land was plentiful a solution would have been to clear more land and allow arable land to become grazing.

The pre-history of North Leigh.

Because the density of population was low, early Bronze Age settlements possibly only existed along the banks of the Evenlode. The light alluvial soils would be easily cultivated, water would be present for livestock and wood would be available nearby. Fertility could be maintained as a result of winter flooding deposited new soil, but in addition because of the low population density, clearance of a new site would be an alternative. Good sites within the parish would be at Ashford mill, within the loop in the river around the North Leigh Roman villa and on the south side of the river below Combe. In later years these became the manorial meadows.

As the population increased it might be expected that other good farming sites would be exploited further from the river. A good indication of where these might have been is to note where the 18th century farms (pre-inclosure farms) are and to propose that the earliest farms were established on these sites, since these sites would be those that have a good all year round supply of water. Possible sites in addition to those along the Evenlode would be along the Itchen; these include the site of the Shakenoak Roman villa, and Holycourt farm. As mentioned previously, in dry summers the Itchen often disappears into the ground from below Field farm making the stream in these areas less desirable sites. Other sites of more importance would be near the glacial sand and gravel deposits at the top of Church road, Perrottshill farm and East End. Others are where the Kellaway sand/clay bed outcrops at Puddle End farm and Church Farm. From the map (Figure 3) based on an 1880 map almost all the houses are on or just off the clay or the glacial gravel on top of the clay.

As indicated earlier, Grim's ditch, is a ditch and rampart surrounding an area of about 22 square miles with a length if ever complete of about 20 miles. It's position with respect to the standard village map but with a changed scale is sketched from reference⁵ in Figure 4.

Archaeological evidence in the 1930s and 1950s showed iron age pottery fragments underneath the rampart and Romano- British fragments half way up the backfill and so suggested an iron age date. Excavations in Blenheim park where the Roman Akeman street crossed Grim's ditch suggested that

Grim's ditch existed when Akeman street was constructed^{5,6}.

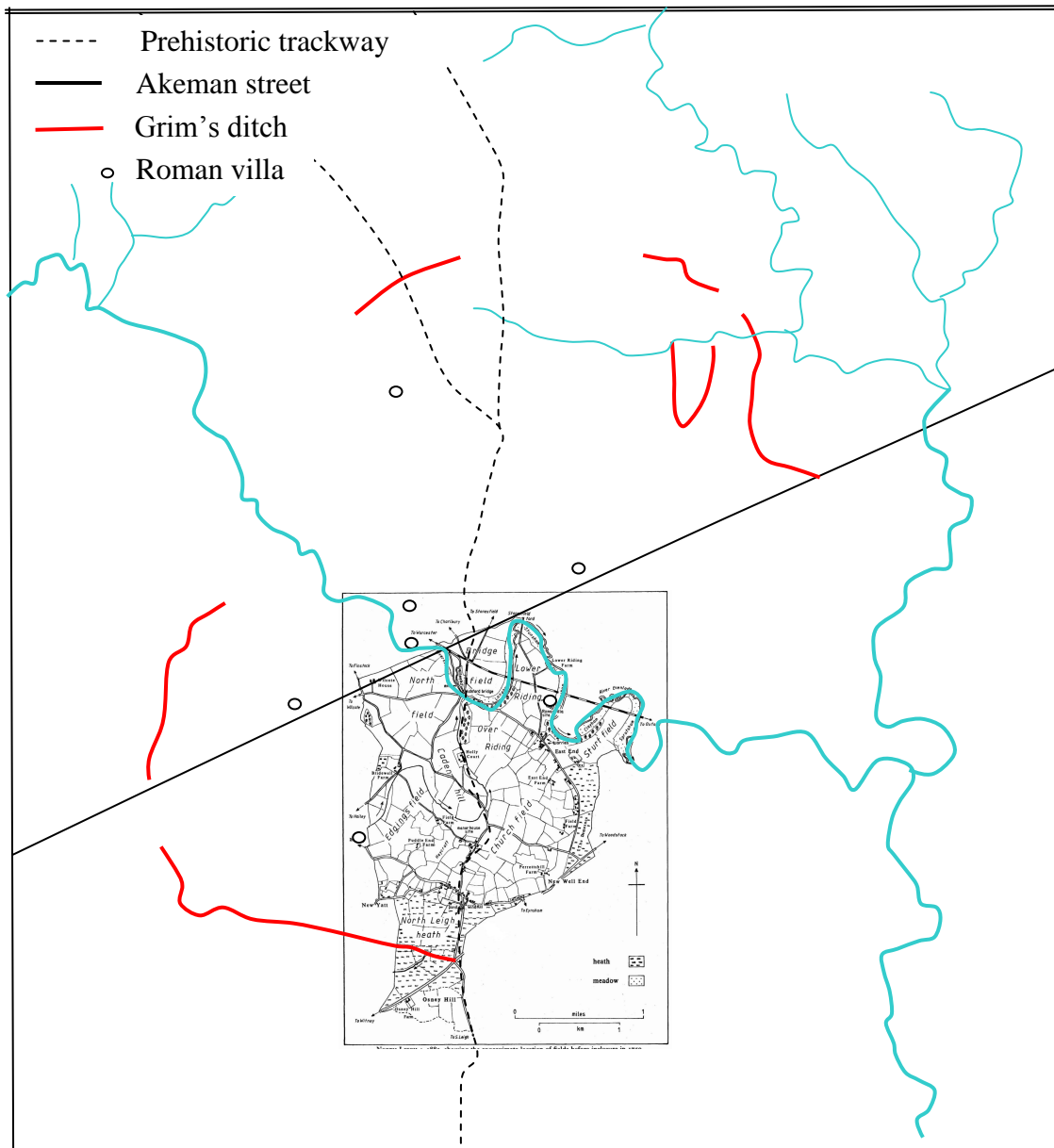


Figure 4. Showing map of village in relationship to Grim's ditch⁵.

There is a small section of the ditch marked on the map to the south of North Leigh which is crossed by the public footpath from New Yatt to the A4095 near Osney Hill farm. Here the ditch and rampart have almost been ploughed out but can still be seen. The ditch is also visible as a slight undulation, near the first bend, on the road from New Yatt to Witney. The ditch is on the outside and was originally about 10m wide, 1.5m deep with a rampart of a similar size. Realistically the rampart is too long to have ever been manned in a defensive manner. It seems probable that Grim's ditch advertised to the world that the ditch enclosed a group of farms which could build and maintain an extensive structure. Because the group could cooperate they would appear to be too dangerous to be attacked. The presence of the boundary would also indicate to an outsider that the land had been claimed and settled. The centre of the ditched enclosure appears to be approximately the site of the North Leigh Roman villa so that it might be speculated that a powerful chief of the Dobunni lived there in the late Iron Age and that he had underlords in farmsteads around him perhaps at about the

density of modern farms (100 - 300 acres). It has been suggested that in the middle Iron Age period there were trading centres but not extensive long range trade. Each farmstead would be almost self sufficient. Leather and wooden objects and woollen clothing would be produced on the farm; the plough and tools would be made from wood and tipped with iron; the iron would be forged and, where ores were available, produced on the farm; simple pottery objects would be made and fired. Probably the only imports that were needed would be salt and metal. In this context it is of interest to note that the 'Roman' villa is lined up almost exactly with the end of the Chipping Norton – Stonesfield saltway (Figure 4). Agricultural products such as cheese, cereals and woollen products might be traded for external goods. Without a ready market for excess produce, the farms would operate at almost a subsistence level. Each family would have a few sheep, some oxen, some pigs and poultry. They might cultivate 5 acres or so of cereals or pulses on the lighter land. They would probably have small enclosures for stock but would be surrounded by rough pasture or scrubland which would be used in common for winter grazing. Some excess produce would also be needed to support the ruling elite who were the overlords and organised the defence of the group. In the late Iron Age, coinage and trading centres (oppida) were being developed showing the growing importance of trade; the nearest oppidum appears to have been at Cassington.

In summary it is suggested that before the Roman period the area operated as a loose grouping of farmsteads within Grim's ditch. The farmsteads consisted of a number of farms and operated at an almost subsistence level but could be called upon to cooperate to form an armed defence force if necessary. The ditch and rampart perhaps showed the limits of the group and its building would help ensure loyalty within the group. There was probably a wealthy local chief and elite, under the king of the Dobunni, who maintained the integrity of the group by force and levied taxation in the form of produce.

The Romano-British period.

There is a considerable evidence of Roman influence in the area of North Leigh. Akeman street runs along the northern boundary of the parish (Figure 4). The North Leigh Roman villa became one of the largest and most palatial in the country. The Shakenoak Roman villa was situated on the old parish boundary between North Leigh and Wilcote. The Fowler, Ditchley, Stonesfield and Blenheim villas are all within a mile or so of the northern parish boundary.

The Roman road, Akeman street, ran from Cirencester to Alchester (just south of Bicester) to Verulamium (St Albans) and these were important early Roman forts. It has been suggested that Akeman street was engineered in about AD 47, perhaps from an existing earlier road, very soon after the invasion of Britain in AD 43. The North Leigh Roman villa was first excavated in 1813-16 and later in 1910, 1956-9, 1975-7. It appears that a villa 20 m long containing a row of five rooms with a colonnaded passage between projecting wings was constructed in the later part of the 1st century and evidence for iron age dwellings were found nearby. The villa was extended and rebuilt at many different times. The later palatial villa surrounded a courtyard on three sides and a map is shown in Figure 5 from reference⁷. Each wing was about 80 m long. The villa was large and prestigious; it had a dining room with a mosaic floor and underfloor heating and suites of baths.

The Shakenoak villa⁸ was excavated⁸ very thoroughly by Broadribb, Hands and Walker between 1960-7. There was some evidence of Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation near the site. A building

26 m by 13 m of a Roman style was built in the later part of the first century. The villa was expanded

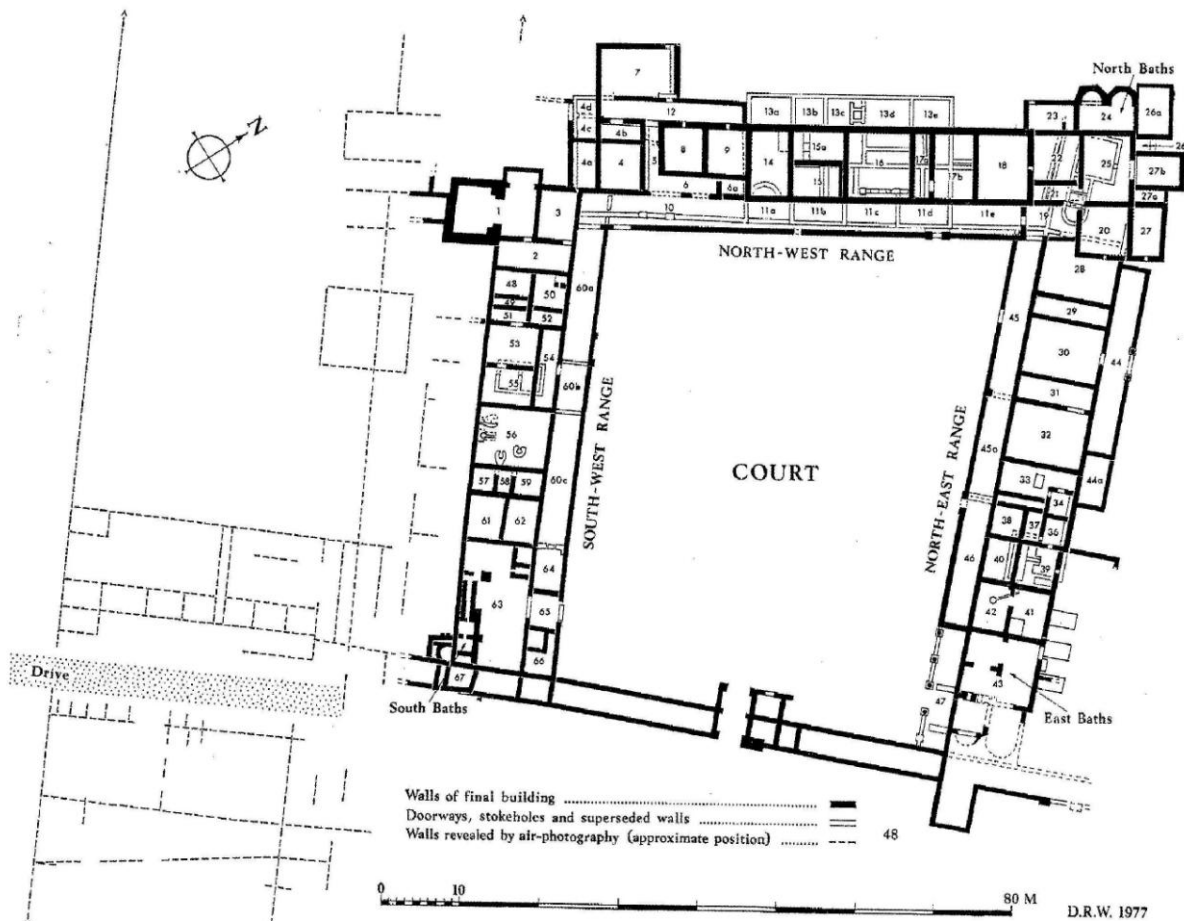


FIG. 2. General plan of the North Leigh villa, as revealed up to 1980. Mosaic pavements in Rooms 1, 4b, 5, 6, 8-10, 15, 16, 21, 24, 25, 26a, 30, 35 & 48. Plain tessellated floors in Rooms 2, 17a, 19, 29, 31, 33, 44-46, 54 & 60. Under-floor heating in Rooms 1, 8, 9, 18, 20, 24, 26a, 27, 36, 43 & South Baths. (Drawing: D.R. Wilson and English Heritage)

Figure 5 Plan of North Leigh Roman villa from D. Wilson⁶.

over the next hundred and fifty years becoming a colonnaded villa with projecting wings about 42m long. Although a large building, it was considered to be farm rather than a villa. In the later part of the period it became a much more modest settlement. It was suggested that the farm was owner-occupied up to about AD 200 and then became an outlying farm of the North Leigh Roman villa in the third and fourth century. A series of plans at different times⁸ of building A and B is shown in Figure 6.

The archaeological evidence is consistent with the Iron Age chieftain's settlements within Grim's ditch gradually becoming Romanised rather than an influx of Roman settlers. Even though many Romano-British farms are known there may have been more. Those that are known are only those that have been discovered, perhaps because they were abandoned and not re-occupied at a later date. Others will have been re-built over many times leaving little or no trace of the earlier buildings. A good farming site in the 18th century was probably a good site for a farm in the late Iron Age or during the Roman period. It is possible that many of the large Iron Age homesteads became Romano-British farms with Roman style houses. Even so many of the farms would have continued to be built in wood and so would leave minimal archaeology. As late as about AD 200 a Iron Age style roundhouse, but with a low wall, was built at Shakenoak.

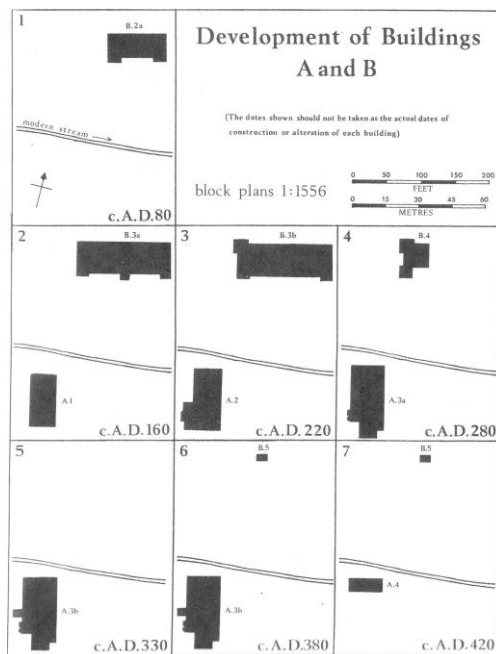


Figure 6. . Plans of Shakenoak Roman Villa at different times from reference 7.

As towns were developed and became centres of trade, many of the tasks previously carried out on the subsistence farms such as pottery making or metal work would be carried out by specialists in the town. A good money supply allowed taxation to be imposed by the provincial authorities. The taxes supported tribute to Rome and local facilities such as road maintenance and a standing army.

The presence of the Roman army in Britain meant that there was stability and a good market for cereals. Initially it is possible that the subsistence farming families just increased the amount of arable they cultivated but later larger estates were formed either by force or the power of wealth. More easily cultivated limestone based rough pasture and woodland would have been cleared for arable. On these larger estates the crops would be cultivated by a range of workers with a varying amount of freedom. Some might be slaves, others may have worked for a wage, while other might be workers who cultivated the master's land in return for the use of some of the land. There is evidence that two and three year crop rotation systems were used in the Roman period. Intermediate crops of pulses were grown to return nitrates to the soil to maintain soil fertility. Even so it would have been necessary

to have livestock to try and replace the soil nutrients that were exported from the land with the grain.

The excavations at Shakenoak suggested a flock of 100-200 sheep for meat, wool, milk and cheese. The mature age of the sheep, determined by a study of the bones, suggested they were kept for breeding wool and milking. Short horned cattle and work oxen for ploughing were kept and again the ages of the bones indicated that they were over wintered. There was evidence of constructed fish ponds at Shakenoak in the mid second to mid third century suggesting a market for fish.

A picture of the North Leigh area at the mid to late Roman period might be one where there are number of large Romano-British estates with smaller satellite farms. The estates would have been heavily taxed. Most of the light limestone based land will have been cleared at some time and used for cereal production. The heavier clay based land would be used for livestock either as closes around farm settlements or as rough pasture. There would probably still be extensive woodland on the clay soils and on land too steep to plough. It would seem probable that the difficulty in maintaining soil fertility would mean that some of the arable fields would have reverted to pasture and that only the recently cleared land was being used to give good cereal crops.

The Roman army was withdrawn from Britain in 410. In 380 Britain was part of the Roman Empire by 420 it was on its own. It would seem reasonable to suggest that little changed initially. Coinage would no longer brought in from Rome and would become scarce so that trading and taxation would become difficult. There was evidence for the counterfeiting of coinage at the North Leigh Roman villa towards the end of the 4th century, perhaps to alleviate the problem. When the army left there would be much less of a market for cereal crops so they would not be grown. The towns would not

be able to support themselves and long range trade would cease. Later even short range trade would cease as towns were abandoned. In some areas a local organisation might have taken over, but in others a complete loss of order could have occurred with armed bands roaming the country and sacking wealthy settlements. The North Leigh Roman villa appears to have been abandoned in the early 5th C soon after it was destroyed by fire. There was evidence of squatters at a later date but the region around the villa became wooded. Later the area was known as Lower Riding and Over Riding and was probably cleared in the early middle ages; riding is an Anglo Saxon word for clearing. By 420 Shakenoak farm was considered to have only one room in occupation and ceased to be occupied by about 430. Twenty oriented burials were found in the ruins of the Shakenoak villa. These were carefully oriented E-W in line with the last inhabited building. All but one were male between the ages of 15-55, half were between 15-25 and four had marks on the bones due to weapon blows. The fact that there were almost all men of fighting age suggests that they could have been a band of mercenaries. No grave goods were present which indicated they were Christian burials. Recently (2010) the bodies have been carbon dated⁹ and found to be late 5th century. Previously a connection was made to an Anglo-Saxon Witney charter boundary of 1044, where a landmark is described as 'where the *cnihtas* (young men or knights) lie'. The excavators of Shakenoak proposed that the burials were between 630 and 1044. The much earlier carbon date suggests the *cnihtas* landmark is elsewhere, perhaps nearer the original Witney (now Hailey) boundary with Wilcote.

An early 5th century Saxon brooch was found in a boundary ditch at Shakenoak and in the same ditch there was extensive evidence of Anglo Saxon occupation in the 7th century. Although the site of the Anglo-Saxon settlement was not found, it was assumed to be in the near vicinity. There was no direct evidence for occupation between 450 and 600 but it was argued that continued occupation occurred as it would be unlikely that the same site was resettled after 150 years when there were similar sites all along the stream. But this now seems less likely now that it is known that the burials were late 5th century.

In summary, towards the end of the 5th century the large Romano-British estate centred around the North Leigh villa had ceased functioning. The workers who previously cultivated the land remained and now cultivated subsistence farms. Many of the large arable fields would revert to scrub and rough grazing since there would be no market for excess cereal produce. Evidence for a decrease in cultivation in the surrounding area is provided by the rate of deposition of silt in the Thames⁹. The rate gives an indication of the run off from ploughed land. During the late Iron Age and Roman period the amount of silting increased but it decreased dramatically and remained low from the 5th to 9th centuries. There would probably initially be little local organisation. The population is thought to have decreased because of unrest and plague. It would seem reasonable that many of the ideal farming sites would remain occupied; but because of minimal population pressure much of the land previously cultivated for profit would revert to woodland. This period is thought to be the beginning of the medieval Wychwood forest.

Anglo-Saxon period¹⁰.

There is much non-conclusive discussion on the way that Sub-Roman Britain became Anglo-Saxon. It seems reasonable that Germanic soldiers within the Roman army may not have returned to the continent. Groups of Germanic soldiers would be well trained to act together as soldiers and take control of local areas and so fill a political vacuum. Restricted trade with the tribes along the north west coast of continental Europe could lead to further Saxon mercenaries travelling up the Thames, taking over by force and so becoming local chiefs. The chiefs would then group together to form larger groups and eventually form local kingdoms in much the same way as had occurred in the Iron

Age. Political control at all levels in society would eventually lead to the imposition of the English language in preference to the Celtic language.

There is little evidence of early Anglo-Saxon buildings because most were made of wood. Dating, for this period, comes from burials which suggest there was a significant number of Saxon burials in the late 5th century in the surrounding area. Early local Saxon cemeteries have been found at Cassington and Minster Lovell. It is proposed⁷ that in 450 the Upper Thames was British territory with pockets of Germanic settlers; in 600 it was English territory which may have contained pockets of independent British.

In North Leigh, the remains of eight Saxon burials of both sexes with grave goods, possibly of the 7th century were found in 1928 near the turning to Holycourt farm from the Ashford mill road¹. Another observation from the excavation of Shakenoak⁷ of relevance to understanding early Anglo-Saxon society in North Leigh was that there was debris from 7th century smelting of iron in the boundary ditch. It was proposed that ores were available in the Middle Lias which outcrops between Fawler and Chalbury. It would have been difficult and time consuming to produce metal from such low grade ores. The fact that smelting was being carried suggests that trade for iron from the richer iron ore deposits 30 miles or so to the NE was not possible.

The archaeological evidence is consistent with an early Saxon influence and that there is little reason to suppose that farming ceased in the North Leigh area. Rather it continued at a subsistence level. The Anglo-Saxon name *Leah* which becomes North Leigh means a relatively open wood-pasture and could mean a region which remained clear as the forest grew up around it. At some stage a local chief would have imposed control and defence in return for tribute in the form of service and food supplies. This would probably not have a large effect and subsistence farming would continue. Later a group of chiefs would act together or be forced to support an overlord or King. This appears to have occurred in the upper Thames region in the late sixth century with the formation of the Gewisse. There would now be a different food render or another layer of food render but there is no reason to believe this led to a large increase in agricultural production since there was still no market for perishable food stuffs. The Gewisse became christianised in about 630 and expanded to the east and south into Hampshire and Wiltshire. After 680 Bede describes the federation of the Gewisse as the kingdom of the West Saxons and the land they then occupied was called Wessex. In the early 7th century the Angles, from East Anglia to the North of Oxfordshire, grouped together to become the Mercians. At about the same time, to the west of Oxfordshire the Hwicce formed a federation. In 643 an alliance of the Hwicce with Mercia pushed the Gewisse south of the Thames and much of the land which is now Gloucestershire became Hwiccian territory. The name Wychwood *Huicewuda*, the wood of the Hwicce, comes from this period, although the later boundary between Hwicce and Mercia appears to have been the county boundary between Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

There was continued conflict between the Mercians and the West Saxons over the next 150 years but Oxfordshire and the Thames remained under the control of the Mercians. Initially being part of a Kingdom would have little impact on a rural region such as North Leigh. There would be little concept of land ownership in a modern sense. The King or one of his nobles would control large tracts of land and would exact tribute and military service from their estates but most farms would operate with little external interference. The work on the farms could only be carried out by the people who lived on the farm. Any excess of produce would be of little value unless there was a market for the excess produce.

In this period and later, the unit of taxation was the hide. A hide was the amount of land needed to support a family, but more realistically a family group and was notionally 120 acres. The King and

his court would move around their estates getting a defined food and service render based on the number of hides. Changes began to occur when coinage started to be commonly used again, when the very large estates were broken up, and later when towns were established.

In 680 – 760 silver coinage *sceattas* began to be produced in large quantities showing that trade was picking up. Three rare early 8th century coins were found at the Shakenoak villa indicating that produce, perhaps wool, was being paid for in the area using coinage.

The large estates began to be broken up when christian minsters were founded by prominent noblemen. These religious centres housed wealthy communities of monks nuns and clergy; they provided devotional services and eventually the sites became centres of trade. There were no local churches, and the minsters operated as very large parishes. The minsters were endowed with estates, some very large. In 821 the minster at Eynsham was endowed with a 300 hide estate. Other minsters in the area included Minster Lovell, Shipton under Wychwood and Charlbury.

In the 8th and 9th century similar grants of land were given to noblemen to ensure their loyalty. Despite granting the land, the King would need to retain the right to demand military and public service. To be able to provide the military service, the minsters and nobles broke up their grants into smaller units of 5-10 hides and gave them to men prepared to provide a knight service when required. Later North Leigh was held for 2 knights fee.

The break up of the estates into 5-10 hides meant that many of the estates became owner occupied. Now instead of the farm workers farming the land independently and infrequently paying food render and service to an absent noble or king, they now had to pay service and food render to a resident lord who nominally controlled all the land in the settlement. The change appears to be small but becomes more important in the 9th and 10th century when the settlement becomes a manor and can be exploited for the benefit of the lord of the manor.

To the south of Oxfordshire Wessex was becoming more powerful and began to build fortified towns or burhs, and battles between 821-829 led to King Ecgberht ‘conquering’ the kingdom of Mercia’. The ‘conquest’ lasted a year but the political dominance of Mercia and Wessex was reversed. Later an alliance between the two kingdoms occurred with Wessex as the dominant partner. In 865 the Danish Viking army invaded Northumbria and East Anglia and later Mercia and finally Wessex in 875. King Alfred of Wessex defeated Guthrum the Viking leader in 878 and much of the boundary between Wessex and an occupied Mercia was set as the Thames. In 886 Mercia again became the junior partner in an alliance with Wessex and acted as a barrier between Wessex and the Viking settlements to the north. This situation continued until the Vikings returned in the years after 990, leading to Cnut’s conquest by 1017 of Mercia and Wessex. Danish rule was never overthrown but faded away. Cnut was succeeded by his sons Harold 1 and Harthacnut. When the latter died in 1042 the English nobles brought back Edward (‘the Confessor’) from the old royal house. Harold II succeeded briefly to be followed, after the Norman conquest by William in 1066.

The structure of local government developed from that introduced by the West Saxon kings in the 10th century, and little was changed by the Viking kings. The organisation was based around a hide (one family unit), a tithing (notionally a group of ten households), a hundred (originally a group of 100 hides) and a shire (a group of 12 or 24 hundreds). As for many other shires, Oxfordshire was formed with 24 regular hundreds. Members of tithings were mutually responsible for peace keeping and law-enforcement and their court was held one or two times a year, at the view of frankpledge (see below). Hundred courts met monthly to transact local business, settle disputes and deal with such matters as trading and cattle theft. The shire court met normally half yearly and was the chief

assembly of important members of society to deal with a whole range of business including geld (taxation), military service and other royal exactions. Soon some of the regular hundreds were joined and North Leigh became part of the Wootton hundred which contained three regular hundreds.

In a late Anglo-Saxon manor, the lord of the manor held all the land from an overlord. He would farm part of the land, the demesne, and allow workers or villeins to farm other parts of the manor in return for work carried out on the demesne land. The lord would have serfs who worked on the demesne land and possibly free tenants who owed no service but paid for the use of the land with money and goods. There was a royal survey of the country in 1279, the entry for North Leigh manor is unusually detailed and describes the different types of tenants and their duties and this will be discussed later. It is not clear when North Leigh began to operate as a manor or from which large estate it was formed though it might be expected to have been originally part of the 300 hide Eynsham estate or perhaps the royal estate of Woodstock. It seems probable the boundary of the manor only becomes important when there was sufficient trade to make exploitation of the land possible. There is little reason to think the boundary of the manor and later parish has changed much since it was defined except for changes in the last century. The path of the boundary gives some indication of when it was fixed. The manor and later parish boundary between North Leigh and Wilcote passes through the edge of the Shakenoak villa site but does not respect any enclosure that would have existed had it been a working farm at the time. The area next to the boundary became Edgings field part of the common arable field system in the middle ages. This could suggest that, at the time the manor boundary was fixed, the area was rough pasture with the ruins of the villa showing as a land mark. The debris in the boundary ditch from the undiscovered Anglo-Saxon settlement continued to the middle of the 8th century. So the boundary is later than that, probably much later, perhaps in the middle of the 9th century when Eynsham developed into a trading centre.

Another aspect of the manorial system was the development of the common field system in the middle to late Anglo-Saxon period. Under this system arable land was farmed as strips in large open fields. Non adjacent strips were farmed by members of the township. In North Leigh the fields were originally farmed in two groups in a two year rotation pattern. Probably common arable land existed in North Leigh for a 1000 years until inclosure by act of parliament in 1759. North Leigh was not unusual in this respect, all of the surrounding manors operated the common field system.

There does not appear to be much agreement on why the open field developed but it was probably due to the way the land was cleared and the way the manor farmed the land. As discussed earlier, after the Roman period there was a considerable reduction in cereal cultivation. This would mean farming would have been reduced to a number of small subsistence farms. These would be centred around a water supply and would have small enclosed pasture and arable fields. The Romano British arable fields, not having water would have become wooded or be used as rough pasture for winter grazing.

This state of affairs would continue until it was possible to trade excess produce. When this happened there would be a benefit for the vill to expand the amount of arable land. This would be difficult because agreement would be needed from those using the shared grazing before manoralisation and from those who held it after the manor was established. The lord of the manor would not object if several acres were cleared for shared use, the manor still owned the land and the tenants paid rent for the land. It is possible that clearing new land was the method of maintaining soil fertility when there was plenty of land to be cleared. While there was land still being cleared it would seem reasonable that strip farming would continue. When most of the land had been cleared, strip farming would continue because of the complexity of use and ownership would not allow anything

else. In addition, it would probably be easier to organise the fallowing, dunging, cultivation, and harvesting in the larger fields by the workers in the settlement, all owing different duties of work.

The tenants of the manor would have houses with small closes, shared arable fields, some shared meadows, and possibly some shared woodland. In addition, in North Leigh, there was a large area of shared rough pasture. This heathland was part of an extensive heath on the S and SE of the village extending towards Eynsham and Handborough and was on the difficult to cultivate clay based soil, and had thus not been incorporated into the arable field system. The heath was important for grazing livestock but also as the source of thorn and furze for fuel.

In the 11th and 12th century chapels were often founded next to the manor by the local lord. Later the chapels became churches to be used by the whole township. In North Leigh the parish church is adjacent to the site of the original manor and the tower is 11th century so it was probably founded in that way. In North Leigh the ecclesiastical parish has the same boundary as the manor but this is not essential in other parts of the country; a parish can have more than one manor and there are manors in which parts are in different parishes.

Domesday survey¹.

Twenty years after Duke William defeated King Harold at Hastings in 1066, a survey was made of the whole of England. The main reasons for making the survey was to assess the ability of a shire or hundred to pay geld (tax), to reveal the resources of the newly established feudal order and to codify the changes in land holding that had occurred since the conquest.

In Domesday book Leigh (North Leigh) appears as:

Godfrey holds Leigh from Roger (d'Ivri). 10 hides, Land for 10 ploughs. Now in lordship 2 ploughs, with one serf. 33 villeins with 8 smallholders have 12 ploughs. A mill at 12s 8d; meadow, 100 acres less 10; woodland 1½ leagues long and 1 league wide.

Roger d'Ivri was one of the Norman lords who fought at Hastings and was given estates throughout Oxfordshire. He was the chief lord of North Leigh. Godfrey was the under tenant or lord of the manor and probably owed the 2 knights fees mentioned in the 1279 survey (see below). The manor was 10 hides (about 1200 acres) with arable land for ten ploughs. It had 90 acres of meadow and woodland 1½ leagues long and 1 league wide. At the time a league was about 1½ miles so this is about 2160 acres. The total area of the old parish in 1876 was 2423 acres so the amount of woodland has probably been exaggerated. It is likely that the woodland was nearer 1133 acres or about 50% of the total area. It was probably to the north and east of the parish. The manor had two ploughs and one serf. A serf was an unfree labourer who worked full time on the manor and was provided with housing and food for his family. There were 33 villeins and 8 smallholders who had 12 ploughs. The 41 villeins and smallholders held land from the manor in return for work on the demesne, for produce, and possibly rent. It is usually estimated that the total population was between 4 to 5 of that listed in Domesday book to allow for other family members so that the population may have been about 190, about a third of the population in the census of 1921.

The chief lordship becomes of less importance over the next centuries. It descended with other d'Ivri possessions as part of the honor of St. Valery, passing to the crown on the death in 1300 of Edmund earl of Cornwall. North Leigh was said, in the 1470's to be held by the royal honor of Wallingford.



Figure 7. The ruins of Netley abbey

The under tenant Godfrey held three other d'Ivry estates in 1086. The tenancy (the lordship of the manor) was given in the late 12th century by Thomas St. Valery to the abbey of Lieu Dieu which had been founded by his father. The abbey sold the manor of North Leigh in 1247 to another St. Valery foundation, the Cistercian abbey of Netley in Hampshire, which retained it until the abbey was dissolved in 1544. A picture of the present abbey ruins is shown in Fig. 7. The Cistercian order was an enclosed order and the monks had little contact with the outside world. When the abbey was dissolved in 1536 there were 7 monks, all priests, and 29 servants or

officials.

The church would originally have been endowed with glebe land and the greater and lesser tithes to support the church. The greater tithes were typically 1/10 of the crop from the arable fields and woodland, and the lesser tithes 1/10 of the value of the produce from other sources. Roger d'Ivry the chief lord¹ in 1096 granted two thirds of the tithes to St. Georges church in Oxford castle and these were passed onto Oseney abbey in the 12th century. The church and the other portion of the tithes were given to Eynsham abbey between 1140-50 but the abbey seems to have lost possession of them. The church and a third of the tithes then passed with the manor until 1247, and in 1279 Edmund earl of Cornwall gave them to Hailes abbey in Gloucestershire, a Cistercian foundation. In 1314 Hailes abbey agreed to pay Oseney abbey 33s. 4d p.a. for their part of the tithes because the collection of the two portions of the tithes had proved difficult and had often led to arguments and violence. This payment continued until the dissolution of the monasteries. Hailes abbey took over the tithes and appointed itself as rector (holder of the assets) and ordained a vicar as the resident priest. In 1279 the vicar had the house, altar offerings, 5a of glebe in one field and 5a in the other and a part of the hay tithes; the rector had the farm buildings and the greater tithes. The fact that reference is made to 5a in *one* field and 5a in *the other* is important because it indicates that a two field arable system (see later) was in operation at the time. Some indication of the relative value of the glebe and the tithes to the vicar and rector, is that at inclosure in 1759 the vicar was given 126 a of land and the lay rector was given 323 a. Hailes abbey retained the right to appoint the vicar (the advowson) until the abbey was dissolved in 1539 when the right passed to the King.

Hundred Rolls 1279.

Soon after Netley abbey gained possession of North Leigh, a Royal survey was made of England and Wales which has been termed the 'The Second Domesday'. The main objective of the survey would have been to provide a written description of the manor and the manorial tenants. The document¹¹ is quoted from Christopher Day's notes² and gives a very good indication of the way the manor of North Leigh was run at the time. The translation of the document is in italics and the present authors

clarifications are put in brackets, and at the beginning or end of the paragraph. Other documents will be treated in a similar fashion.

North Leigh

The abbot of Netley holds the vill of North Leigh for 2 knights fees of the earl of Cornwall, and the earl of the king in chief of the honor of St. Valery. The abbot has the liberty that the king's bailiff does not make entry except on the king's command.

The earl's bailiff enters twice a year and holds view of frankpledge, taking 20s for the view and 5s for hidage, and all the perquisites (the money received) of the day

The view of frankpledge was the leet court or the lowest royal court of jurisdiction. Its members were mutually responsible to each other and were required to report all misdeeds and produce the miscreants for justice. Minor offences could be dealt with while others such as felony, homicide, assault and poaching would be passed up to the higher hundred's court. Originally the money paid for the view and hidage was designed to cover costs but became a form of taxation.

The whole of the vill (all male members over 12 but not the lord's family) was accustomed to attend the view of frankpledge of Wootton and to give 5s. Now the earl has the view of frankpledge and receives the 5s, and that 5s. has been increased to 20s. by the earl's bailiff, by what warrant the jurors know not.

The Abbot holds 3 ploughlands in demesne (a ploughland was nominally the amount that could be ploughed by one plough team in a year, possibly about 100 acres), with meadows and pastures adjacent and two water mills (Ashford mill will be one but it is not clear where the other was, there were possibly two mills at the same site) ; for 1 mill he pays the earl an annual rent of 4d. The abbot and all his freemen (freemen see below) have the freedom to fish from a meadow called Thatcham as far as Stontesford and (the abbot) has a wood and three groves out of regard, and he has the cattle of fugitives, by what warrant they know not.

A wood and three groves out of regard means they were not subject to Wychwood forest law and the abbot could cut down trees without the permission of the chief forester. This was a very rare and valuable privilege. No other township in Wychwood appeared to have this concession. There then follows in the survey a list of villeins with their duties.

A villein was a tenant who held land and a croft from the manor in return for working part of the time on the manor. He was considered to be unfree and owed service to the manor. An unfree tenant inherited his status through the male line and was an asset of the manor and might be sold to another lord when the manor was sold. Because he was unfree he could not hold free land. When his daughters married out of the manor he would need to pay 'merchet' to the lord since her children would no longer belong to the manor. When he died a 'heriot' or death duty would be paid, often the most valuable animal he owned. If he moved away from the manor and hoped to return he would need to pay 'chevage' that is an annual payment to the lord to live outside the manor. His children had no right of inheritance but often inherited; the lord could in principle take over the land and livestock but this would not usually happen unless the villein did not carry out his obligations. The villeins were said to hold customary tenancies in that their duties were set out by custom.

Villeins.

Augustine Bokenore holds ½ ylld (ylld. is a yardland and was about 30 acres. So he holds about 15 acres in the arable fields) of the lord in villiage and works every fourth day except Saturday and festivals from the feast of St John the Baptist (24th June) to the feast of St. Michael (29th Sept.). He mows the lord's meadow for two days and the lord gives him and all mowers with him holding the same tenure 1 qtr of wheat, 32d, a basin full of salt and a cheese worth 4d. (presumably shared between all mowers).

Augustine also carries the corn in the autumn, and whenever he carries he is entitled to 4 sheaves or his food on that day.

Augustine also obliged to carry hay on above days, and to carry 1 pack-animal's load of wood for Christmas.

Augustine also owes 2 carrying services per annum, but not outside the county.

Augustine is also to thresh and winnow 1 bushel of wheat and carry it to the (lord's) field, and he is to plough as much land as required to sow the bushel and he is to harrow that land.

Augustine is also to plough 2 selions (strip of land in an arable field) called Grassacre; if he should have an entire plough he is to plough 2 selions and if not 1 selion. For those ploughing services he may put all his animals in the lord's animal pastures except for the lord's close.

Augustine and all those who have mowing services have a small plot of meadow called Grassham in the lord's meadow of Stontesham.

Augustine is to make a qt. of malt at Xmas and the abbot is to find wood for the drying Augustine is to carry to the mill and from the mill to the lord's court.

Augustine is to wash and shear the lord's sheep.

He owes pannage of 1d for a year old pig, nothing for a 6 months pig.

He is to have 1 quittance (presumably release from one obligation), and he may not have a foal or calf of his own, nor (cut down?) an ash nor an oak without the lord's licence.

He is to redeem his children at the will of the lord, to render aid to the abbot, and to pay a toll of 1d. (this may mean his children were presented to the lord as they were not free ?)

On the coming of the lord or his steward Augustine is to find a horse for 1 day with fodder provided by the lord.

He is to pay a rent of 2s. 2d. per annum.

He also holds a croft of the lord for 6d. per annum.

He owes ¼ d for hidage (presumably to pay the hidage at the view of frankpledge).

In summary he has a large number of detailed service obligations, works about one day in four on the manor land and has to pay 2s 10 ¼ d p.a. (assuming two pigs). There follows 50 other names holding a ½ ydld. for the same duties and rent but most of the others hold small assarts (newly cleared land) varying in size from ¼ to 8 acres paying rent at about 6d an acre p.a. but with no additional service. Typically in the early 13th century a villein would hold 1 ydld; the fact there are so many holdings of ½ ydld and assart land is being cleared indicates that there are more tenants than available land at this time. After the 50 villeins having similar duties to Augustine Bokenor there are 6 villeins with specialist duties such as blacksmith, ploughmen and pigman

William Faber holds ½ ydld. in villeinage. He makes two of the lord's coulter and two ploughshares, as is the custom with that ½ ydld. and the lord is to find iron and steel and provide help in manufacture. He also makes the iron shoes and nails for 2 of the lord's horses. For that service he is allowed from the lord ½ acre of sown wheat.

He comes to the lord's great boon-reap (harvest) with his whole family except for his wife and shepherd. He ploughs 2 selions (strip of land in arable field) if he has a whole plough 1 selion if not. He mows the lord's great meadow and performs carrying service. William holds ½ acre of assart for 3d and pays ¼ d. hidage. (the blacksmith appears to pay no rent for his ½ ydld. and croft).

William Winkepen holds ½ ydld. in villeinage. He drives the lord's plough the whole year. He works as required on the second day after dinner the whole year except Saturdays. Works as required for a day from the feast of St. Peter in Chains until the feast of St. Michael. For that service he is allowed from the lord ½ acre of sown wheat and has the use of the lord's plough every Saturday. He pays ¼ d hidage, (this ploughman, appears to pay no rent for ½ ydld and croft). There follows Hugh de Benicho and William Dyray much as William Winkepen but they also make the lord's plough as is customary the lord provides the timber.

William Henry holds 1 ylld. in villeinage for double the services owed by Augustine Bokenore. If the lord wishes he keeps pigs 11 sows and 1 boar. He holds 1 acre of assarts for 6d and pays hidage of 1d. (the lord's pigman?)

William Mokelmer holds as much as William for the same service except he does not keep the lord's pigs. Holds ½ acre of assarts for 3d and pays 1d for hidage.

After this comes 11 (cottars?) who were also unfree tenants holding 1 cotland which was typically about 5 acres or 1/6 yardland.

Cotland.

Richard Boke holds 1 cotland of abbot in villeinage and works as required on Mondays from feast of St John the Baptist until the feast of St. Michael except for feast days.

He is obliged to turn the grass for drying in the lord's great meadow, to make hay and stack it. For that service he has of the lord 3 stooks of hay.

Richard also performs 3 bederips (harvesting) in the autumn without food. He gets two sheaves on whatever day he should be engaged in binding sheaves, none if not.

Richard is to attend the great bederip (gathering in of the harvest) and to have one meal.

He pays 9d p.a. rent, a cock and three hens and ¼ d hidage.

There follows 9 others with the same duties and rent except that some hold small assarts of about ½ acre or so at 6d an acre. Stephen Ernard also mows the lord's great meadow.

Cottagers.

There follows 31 names all different. 17 with a messuage (small house), croft or cottage,

alternatively just holding assarts most in the 1 or 2 acre size one of 8 acres all at about 6d per acre.

Typically they help at the lord's great hay making and perform 1-3 bederips partly with and without food.

Free tenant.

John de Aula holds 3 ylld. freely of the abbot. He owes suit at lord's court (manor court) every 3 weeks. He holds 1 croft of abbot for 1s 6d p.a.

Holds 1 piece meadow called Refham for 2d.

Holds 1 headland (strip of land at end of the furrow where plough team is turned, useful for feeding livestock) by charter from the abbot; also by that charter he may have for himself and heirs 1 oak in lord's wood against Xmas and two carts a year in the pasture enclosure (presumably hay).

He comes twice a year to view of frankpledge before earl's bailiff.

Owes such scutage (payment in lieu of military service) as goes with his tenement and pays 2¼ d hidage.

John de Aula (John of the Hall) is a freeman; he does not hold his land for service other than for military service. He does not 'own' the land in a modern sense but holds it under conditions which if not upheld would allow the lord of the manor to reclaim the land. Free land could be inherited, purchased by agreement or granted by the holder without the lord's permission. On entering as a new tenant, the tenant was required to pay homage and swear an oath of allegiance to the lord followed by a payment of a 'relief' (fee) for entry and a formal record would be made of the transfer. On death, a death duty would be paid to the lord of the manor. After c. 1200 a freeman could defend the title of his land in the royal court; the unfree tenant could only defend his title in the manor court.

John of the Hall has 1 villein, 4 holders of cotlands and 7 cottagers on his land. These were:

Villein.

Thomas de Fonte holds ½ ydld from John in villeinage, performs the same services and rents as Augustine Bokenore above who holds such tenure from the abbot ¾ d hidage.

Cotland.

Walter Notebin holds 1 cotland of John in villeinage and works as required on Mondays from feast of St John the Baptist until the feast of St. Michael. He is to turn the grass for drying in John's great meadow, and is to make and stack the hay. He must performs 3 bederrips in the autumn without food and 1 with food.

He pays 15 d rent and must redeem his children.

He pays tallage (a seigniorial right to tax unfree tenants) at feast of St. Michael and ¼ d hidage.

There follows 3 other with very similar duties and rent.

Cottagers.

John Brod holds 1 cottage and 1 piece of land of John and pays 2 s and must carry out 3 bederrips in the autumn without food and 1 with food.

There follows 5 other cottagers with similar duties and rent. There are 3 cottagers where only land is mentioned and the rent is about 12 d per acre.

Because religious institutions, particularly the Cistercians, often preferred to have their manors away from the centre of the settlements, the site of the manor may have already been moved from next to the church to Holycourt farm where it remained until the 17th century. If this was the case, John de Aula's house was probably on the original manor house site and his tenants might have been in Church road.

Other free tenants.

John Kynne holds 1 ydld. of abbot and piece of land called Benincho for 6 s. He owes suit of the lord's court every 3 weeks and attends the view of frankpledge as for John de Aula. Owes scutage as it occurs and 1½ d hidage.

It has been suggested that the land called Benincho later becomes Bunges. If this is the case, John Kynne may have lived at the croft which becomes Field farm. An alternative suggestion would be that it was the farm that becomes Wilcote house and appears as 1 ydld freehold in a later survey of 1581.

William of Henton holds 1 cotland freely of the abbot for 1 s. He attends the lord's court and view of frankpledge. He owes scutage as it occurs and pays ¾ d hidage.

A William of Henton appears in the list the Abbot's villeins. It may be two people with the same name but it could have been a freeman who held the cotland freely and also held the ½ ydld. unfree land, carrying out all the duties of a villein. It would not have been possible for an unfree man to hold freeland. An unfree man could acquire free status by being knighted or taking holy orders; another method was to purchase a charter of manumission from the lord, probably for a few pounds. More usually others became free by leaving the manor without permission and living for over a year in certain privileged boroughs.

Adding the cotlands (11), half (55) and full (2) yardlands together means that there is a total of about 31½ yardlands held by unfree tenants from the lord of the manor and about 4½ yardlands held by the freetenants. There were 86 assarts in all; 58 were a half acre or smaller in size; as will be seen later in 1581 the strip size in the arable fields was typically a half or quarter an acre. This probably indicates that the assarts had periodically been incorporated into the yardlands or half yardlands. The

total number of cottagers, cottars, villains and free tenants comes to about 100 which using the factor of 4.5 used to estimate the domesday population would indicate a population of about 450. This compares with 190 in 1086, 517 in 1801 and 578 in 1921.

The forest perambulations 1297 and 1300.

Following pressure from the barons, the bounds of the royal forests were defined towards the end of the 13th century. The bounds of Wychwood were set out in a perambulation in 1297 and again in 1300 when the subject was raised in parliament. Despite the perambulations there was an almost continuous attempt to re-extend parts of the forest. Most of North Leigh appears to have been outside the forest, but the bounds were disputed in a 1609 survey (see later). The bounds of the forest were important because they determined whether the area was under forest law and whether rent was due to the king for assarts.

The present discussion is from the definitive article¹² by Beryl Schumer. The parts of the boundary of interest to North Leigh on the East were:

*and so through the middle of Roweleye to a spring where Lethambrok begins.
and so descending the Leyhambrok to the as far as Colneham
and so thenceto where the Colneham falls into the water of the Bladen
and so by the same water of Bladen to Stuntesford*

Roweleye is the point where the 19th century Eynsham, North Leigh and Hanborough boundaries meet. Leyhambrok is the stream rising on North Leigh common which defines the present parish boundary. The Bladen is an old name for this part of the Evenlode river and Stuntesford is the ford at Stonesfield. The forest boundary then goes north. What this means is that none of the east part of North Leigh was within the forest.

The corresponding part of the perambulation on the west was:

*and thence to Madlebrok
and thence to Madlebrok to the spring at Madlewelle
and so through the middle of the town of Northleye
and so by the way of Northleye to Grundesweleye
and so thence along a hedge to Sulleseye
and thence to Forsakenhok
and thence to Sigardesthorn.....*

This first part to Madley brook to Madleywell is straightforward and refers to the stream running south from the pond which was near the North Leigh end of Common road. There is more of a problem with Grundesweleye. In fact the uncertainty of the position of Grundesweleye was one of the reasons for the dispute in 1609. It now appears that Grundesweleye was near the Hailey - North Leigh boundary at New Yatt. Confirmation of this has recently been given in Witney manor records where reference is made to assarts in Grundesweleye. Forsakenhok is probably the site of the Shakenoak villa. What this means is that only a corner of the heath, or south west corner of the village, was within the forest.

The Black death.

At the time of the 1279 survey, England was the height of agricultural prosperity. At the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century the population in England reached a peak not to be exceeded for four centuries. The amount of land in arable cultivation probably also reached a

maximum. In 1315 to 1317 the cereal crops failed because of poor weather at harvest time. In the following years there were wide scale deaths, first of sheep, then cattle in 1321-22 and these events led to famine. In 1348 the Black Death swept through Britain and within a year the population of England had been reduced to about a half. The speed of the disease spreading through town and country has led to the proposal that it was a virus of the Ebola type rather than a bacillus carried by rats and fleas which has often been suggested. Other less severe epidemics reoccurred in 1361-2, 1369, 1375 and 1391 and further more localised epidemics are documented throughout the 15th century.

After the Black Death it became much more difficult to find tenants who were prepared to take over as villeins holding customary tenancies with duties of service. At first the tenancies were made more attractive by reducing the entry fee, merchet and heriot; then by reducing the service obligation in return for payments. Even so, many tenancies were described as being in the lord's hands. Over the next 100 years different types of tenancy developed which have been described as contractual tenancies and leases (the former become copyhold tenancies). As will be seen below, the lack of customary tenancies meant that permanent staff had to be paid to carry out work on the demesne (ploughman, shepherd and dairyman) and wages needed to be paid for some of the work during hay making and at the harvest. The pattern of agriculture changed, less cereals were needed because of the reduced population and less customary work was available from villeins because payment was being made for the work obligation. Far fewer workers were needed for sheep farming on the demesne than for cereal production.

Manorial accounts 1372.

The changes in agriculture provide the basis for considering the North Leigh manorial account of John Rignon reeve, 1372-3, this account and later accounts are taken from Christopher Day's notes² (the original accounts are held in the Public Records Office). The reeve at the time was one of the villeins who would have taken over the duty on some form of rota. He would have been helped by a jobbing scribe to prepare the accounts. Accounts¹³ at the time were not meant to be records of profit and loss but instead were designed to describe the money the reeve should have received less the money he paid out and these should be equal. The purpose originally was to ensure the lord of the manor was not cheated. On the reverse side of the account there would be a form of inventory but this did not enter into the accounting process. The accounts would have been audited by a representative of Netley abbey. If it had not been possible to collect money, the reeve might try to have it allowed, or written off, but the auditor could decide that it be carried over as arrears to be paid in the following year. Two accounts in 1372-3 and 1373-4 have been translated; the first and most detailed is given in italics and comments and clarification are put in round brackets. Square brackets are used to give the totals for the following year.

Account of John Rigom, reeve, 29 Sept. 1372 – 29 Sept. 1373

Arrears 59s 6½d (rent or items not collected in the previous year)

Received: (rents from tenants)

58s 6½ d for term of St. Thomas Apostle; 58s 6½ d for Easter; 58s 6½ d for St. John Baptist; 110s 10 d for St. Michael; 10s 10 d for rent of mill from St. John Baptist – no more because mill was vacant for ½ year.

20 ¾d for hidage this year. (Total £14-19-1½, [£17-9-3])

Land rented:

Nothing because sown for the lords use (sown with grass for lord's sheep?) 3s 4d for Greenditch furlong.

Issues of manor:

2/- for herbage (grazing) of meadow belonging to the tenement once held by William Urle the lord's villein sold to Richard Sheresrend.

2/- for herbage of $\frac{1}{2}$ ydld belonging to the tenement once held by William Temples once the lord's villein sold to William Smyth (notice arable being used for pasture).

2/11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d for pannage this year. (pannage fattening pigs, in the woods, on acorns and beechmast in the autumn)

Herbage belonging to 8 half ydlds usually sold for 16/-, nothing this year because was mowed and carted away for lord's use, for the maintenance of the lord's sheep in winter. (again arable being used as pasture in addition at least 8 half ydlds are in the lord's hands).

Hay from the other meadows equals nothing for the reason stated.

23/4 for 40 sheep fells sold at 7d a fell (a fell is the skin with fleece still on).

14d for lambs fells.

15/- for 15 skins sold.

10/- for dairy produce from the cows and no more because 6 cows were accounted for after calving (feeding calves?) and 4 were milch cows for whole year.

14d for carcase of a cow dead of sickness.

6d for rear of bullock (dead of sickness?)

20d for 10 skins of dead calves

11d for 11 skins of dead sheep.

3/- for 11 beasts sold.

10d for 200 hens' eggs sold.

7/1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d from John Crips for honey. (Total £3-11-8, [£3-5-2])

Sale of corn:

15/4 for 5 qtr. 6 bu. of dredge (qtr. or quarter, bu. or bushel measurement of volume, 8 pints = 1 gallon, 8 gallons = 1 bushel, 8 bushels = 1 quarter; dredge is an equal mixture of oats and barley)

9/4 $\frac{1}{2}$ for 3qr. 1 bu. dredge sold at 4d a bu. (Total £1-4-8 $\frac{1}{2}$, [17/3])

Sale of stock:

10/- for 1 plough ox sold; 10/- for 12 calves; 1/- for 2 lambs sold (Total £1-1-0, [£5-13-10])

Vend. Oper; (this is money paid by the villeins to recompense the lord for not carrying out all or part of their customary work)

101/- for estimated works from 5 ydlds, 10 half ydlds, and 2 cottagers.

(Total £5-1-0, [£5-1-0]))

Perquis. curia; (money received by the court)

23/8 for perquisites of court held 25 Feb. and 27/1 for court held 6 July.

(Total £2-10-9, [£2-10-6])

Forinsec; (sales outside manor?)

106/8 from John Robyns for wool sold. (Total £5-6-8, [£15-12-1])

Total £36. 4. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$

Allowances:

In allowance of the reeve's rent because of his office; he holds 1 ydld for 5/- and his works are worth 6/6. (This is rent and money paid for works allowed because John Rigom's is the reeve and shows he was a villein)

In allowance of rent from Chalclyne carried over in the rental and in the lord's hands 7/-.

In allowance of rent of a tenement once Hert's with $\frac{1}{2}$ ydld because it is in the lord's hands 2/2 $\frac{1}{4}$. (cf. Augustine Boknore 2/8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in 1378) the works were worth 3/4.

In allowance of 1 parcel of meadow in Symondsham twice carried over in the rental 3/4.

Total 27/3. [31/7]

Plough expenses:

For 4 ploughs newly made from the lord's timber 2/-. 4 share beams 4d, 2 new ploughshares 3/-, various other pieces of equipment 19/-. [13/7]

Cart expenses:

1 cart mended, various parts bought and made. Total 8/6. [16/6]

Horse expenses:

Fette lock for hobbling horses in pasture 2d. Various other pieces of equipment. Total 20/6½.

Mill expenses:

1 mill shaft, 4/-. For two carpenters working three weeks on the shaft and on a water wheel and cogs, and for other timber for repairs and new work 18/-, that is 6/- a week and other. Total 32/9.

[following year horse and mill and other expenses 35/6 includes 6/8 for clerk for writing and making the account showing John Rigom had help preparing the account]

Building expenses:

1 man working 3 days rethatching the grange (granary or barn) 12d. Total 18d

Sheep expenses:

6 gallons tar-pitch for the sheep 4/- and other items. Total 12/7. [20/8]

Corn bought:

4 qtr. wheat for seed at 8/- qtr.

3 qtr. wheat for seed at 7/- qtr.

5 qtr. wheat for seed at 6/8 qtr.

2 qtr. wheat for seed at 6/4 qtr.

1 qtr. wheat for seed at 6/- qtr.

3 qtr. 2 bu. pulse for seed at 2/- qtr. Total 104/-. [6/8]

Expenses of stock:

1 horse bought for stock 26/8, 2 oxen 45/-, 3 oxen 60/-, 9 sheep 28/6, 1 lamb 20d.

Total £8 1 10. [following year 2 sheep 10/-]

Threshing:

Paid in piece work for threshing 16 qtr. 1 bu. wheat at 4d a bu. 4/-. For 53 qtr. 2 bu. dredge, pulse and oats 11/-. Winnowing nothing because done by dairyman. Total 15/-. [17/-]

Hoeing:

45 workers, various days 7/6. [7/1]

Meadow expenses:

Mowing for 5 days in lord's meadows of Mulmead, Clayham and Sprotisham 13/4.

Mowing other of lord's meadows, le Mychulmed and Stoutesham nothing because done by the lord's customary tenants of custom. In herbage of the meadows, the auxiliary servants receive 2d a day 7/- in all for carrying, lifting and stacking the hay, except for the hay of Mychulmed.

For 12 men with 6 carts carrying the lord's hay and making 2 great ricks 3/-. Total 24/2. [21/6]

Harvest expenses:

For 102 reapers hired for divers days, each for 1 day for reaping and binding the lord's corn 42/-. (i.e. 5d a day each). For 28 reapers at 4d a day 9/6.

For the expense of 53 customary tenants coming to the great boon service in bread, 2 bu. wheat from store 3/9; in meat bought 18d; besides 1 sheep from store 6d; fuel 12d.

Total 50/-. [58/2]

Servants wages:

Wages of 1 ploughman, 1 reaper and plough holder for a year 22/-. Another plough holder 9/-. 2 plough drivers and cowman 21/-. 2 shepherds p. a. 20/-. 1 dairyman p. a. 6/-.

Total 78/-. [78/-]

Abbot's expenses:

Expenses of the lord abbot, cellarer and others when they came 14 Feb. to oversee the manor 3/6.

Expenses Walter Yonge steward attending 2 views 6/4. Total 15/6 [18/10]

Foreign expenses: (paid outside manor)

Paid to the abbot of Daventry for 2nd year for a tenth of the temporalities 25/-. Paid to John of Nettle (Netley) for the ? thirteenth £12- 7- ¼. For the King's subsidy 2/-. Total ?

[6/9]

Stewards fee: (The steward would be an official of higher status paid by the lord of the manor to visit perhaps twice a year and be his representative).

Paid to Walter Yonge 20/-. [22/-]

Unfortunately the rest of the 1372-3 account was damaged and not readable. What would have happened at this stage was that the arrears plus the money that should have been collected from above, that is £36-4-11¾, would have the allowances, expenses and payments already made to the abbot subtracted and the reeve should then pay the difference to the abbot or vice versa. The details are available from John Rigom's 1373-4 accounts and these are given below between square brackets from foreign expenses onwards.

[Foreign expenses:

Paid for the fifteenth granted to the King for vacant tenements in the manor 5/6. Paid to the abbot of Netele for the tenth temporalities(?) granted to the King 25/2¼. Paid to the abbot of Warcon(?) for King's subsidy 2/1½. Paid to the abbot of Oseney for the King's tenth annals 12/7½. Total 46/9

Steward fee: *Paid to Walter Yonge 22/-.*

Payments:

Paid to abbot in presence of John Robyns for 16 sheep sold 15/-.

Paid to abbot by 1 tally 20/-;

Paid to abbot by 1 tally, by hand of John Stilhard 100/-;

Paid to Clement Barbour £6;

Paid by hand John Robyns for 2 sacks wool, 5 oxen, 3 cows sold £20-6-0.

Total £33-6-0.

Total of all expenses £53-7-5¼.

Reeve owes £7-1-0½

Reeve allowed £2 for divers payments, therefore total £55-7-5½ and there remains £5-1-0½.]

It can be seen the auditor permitted £2 of the difference for divers payments (that is written off) but that the remainder be paid or passed onto the next year as arrears. We are not told why the arrears arose in these accounts but in later accounts they are itemised and it will be seen later that arrears often got passed on for many years until they were paid or written off.

The other side of the roll (verso) recorded the flows of grain and livestock into and out of the manor during the year and was for 1372-3 as follows.

Wheat: *Wheat sown 13 qtr. 1 bu. on 42 acres. [remaining 1373-4 4qtr. 2bu.]*

Dredge: *Dredge sown 12 qtr. on 32 acres. [value remaining 1373-4 3qtr]*

Pulse: *4 qtr. received from issue of the grange, levelled measure, threshed:*

7 qtr. received for feeding the lord's calves and sheep in winter:

3 qtr. 3 bu. purchased for seed:

of which in seed 7 qtr. 1 ½ bu. on 23 ½ acres, at 2 ½ bu. per acre; 6 qtr. actually used for feed; sold 1 qtr. 5 bu. Remaining 5/4 [10/-] (presumably the value remaining?)

Oats: *12 qtr. threshed oats received from issue etc.; 5 bu. received for lambs:*

of which in seed 5 qtr. on 11 acres; that is 4 bu. per acre; various amounts used in provender,

particularly for abbot's palfrey at North Leigh; 2 qtr. used to make porridge for the servants; sold 2 qtr. Remaining 5/4. [6/3]

For servants: 16 qtr. 2 bu. wheat and 16 qtr. 2 bu. dredge for payment to servants; of which, in payment to 1 plough holder, 2 plough drivers, 2 shepherds and 1 cowman 25 qtr. 4 bu. for 12 weeks; for 1 plough holder from feast of St. Thomas to feast of St. Michael, 40 weeks, 3 qtr 2 bu.; to 1 dairyman p.a. 3 qtr. 2 bu. Sold 3 ½ bu.

Remaining 2/11¼. [2/-]

Horses: 2 horses brought forward 1 bought. [3]

Oxen: 8 brought forward; 4 added from the bullocks; 12 received from the cellarer of Netley; 5 bought. Total 29. (the cellarer was an important abbey official who was responsible for ensuring the monks were fed and would have been in charge of the abbey farm)

Of which, 1 paid to John Robyns (given in payment?), 5 sold 23 remaining. [21]

Bulls: 2 brought forward; 1 received from cellarer with the oxen. Total 3.[2]

Cows: 12 brought forward; 6 added from heifers; 7 brought from Netley with the oxen. Total 25.

Paid to John Robyns 7, 1 died. Total remaining 23. [16]

Bullocks: 4 brought forward; 4 received from cellarer brought from Netley. Total 8. [5]

Heifers: 6 brought forward; 2 received from cellarer brought from Netley. Total 8. [8]

Calves: 14 added from yearlings of which 1 to John Robyns. Total 13. [23]

Yearlings: 12 brought forward; 13 received from cellarer. Total 25. 1 died. Total remaining 24. [9]

New born calves: 19, 9 died. Total remaining 10. [8]

Hides: Hides of a cow and a bullock dead of murrain (name given for any disease which kills an animal); 9 from dead young calves. Sold.

Sheep: (not rams, ewes, young animals or lambs)

328 sheep brought forward; 45 received from John Robyns; 9 bought; 4 others (bought?). Total 386. Of which 20 died; 13 used for the great 'parcar' and for other 'parcars' (presumably for the tenants food when they carry out their customary boon service); 16 sold. Total remaining 337. [300]

Rams: (breeding males)

2 brought forward; 3 received from John Robyns. Total remaining 5. [5]

Ewes: (breeding females)

98 brought forward; 2 received from John Robyns; 60 received from John Robyns at feast of St. Michael; 4 added from younger animals. Total 164. Of which 26 died total remaining 138.[18]

Young animals: 10 brought forward. Of which 4 added to sheep, 4 to ewes. Total remaining 2.[47]

Lambs: 61 new born; 1 bought. Total 62. Of which 6 died; 2 sold. Total remaining 54. [110]

(in summary 536 [480] from 499 brought forward from last year)

Hides: 48 all sold. [37]

Fleeces: 497 [495] weighing 24 tod (weight measure for wool 28 lbs.) all sold.

Shorn sheep skins: 15 [26] from dead animals all sold.

Lamb skins: 11[12] from dead animals all sold.

Boar: 1 still remaining. [1]

Geese: 1 plus 4 bought and 10 new born. Of which 1 paid to reeve and servants; 9 sold. Total remaining 5. [1gander, 4 geese]

Capons:

6 plus 8. Of which 3 paid to the lord at Oxford, 1 paid to Walter Yonge steward. Total remaining 10. [3]

Cocks and hens: 1 cock and 5 hens remaining. [1 cock, 5 hens]

Pullets: 15 new born; 8 made into capons. Total remaining .

The rest, as for the front side, was torn off. There are a number of observations that should be noted. The cellarer from Netley bought 38 (oxen, cows, bullocks heifers and yearlings) presumably from the abbey farm near Southampton a distance of over 100 miles. This extreme measure must have

been to improve the stock and to provide oxen for the 4 new ploughs on the demesne. The intention, taking into account the new ploughs, was probably to increase the amount of cereals grown. A large quantity of seed corn was bought in 1372-3 but very little was bought in 1373-4; even so, little was sold in both years. The main crop from the demesne farm in both years was wool (£5-6-8, [£15-12-1]). Rents from tenants and the money paid for part of their customary work was the major income £20 [£22]. The abbot appears to have been paid £33-6-0 in 1373-4. To put this in context, from the account, this is equivalent to the purchase of about 30 oxen, or the yearly wage for 60 agricultural workers having free accommodation and food. There is, what must be a very early reference to the use of horses for ploughing, in the 1374 account under *Oats; provender for three plough horses*. Oxen were usually used for ploughing at this time.

It can be seen that the movement away from the demesne being worked by customary tenants to wage earning tenants appears to be well advanced. Some tenants are now paying money so that they do not have to carry out some of their service obligations but may still have hay making and harvesting obligations. Even so the manor pays daily wages (presumably mainly to the tenants) for threshing, hoeing, hay making and harvesting.

The Peasants Revolt 1381.

In 1381 the Peasants Revolt occurred. This was a large wide scale revolt, initially against raising taxes for the war in France. Parliament granted a third poll tax in 1380 following that in 1377 and 1379. A widespread revolt occurred and marches from Essex and Kent to London led to executions of officials and extensive destruction of property. The rebels confronted the boy King Richard II on two occasions; in the first they demanded that villeinage be abolished and he conceded and ordered that charters and letters patent be drafted. The aim of the King's advisors was to disperse the rebels as quickly as possible with concessions which could then be revoked because they were made under duress. In the second confrontation Wat Tyler demanded the abolition of villeinage as before but added a series of other demands; the replacement of all law by the law of Winchester; the abolition of outlawry; the abolition of all forms of lordship; the disendowment of the church and the redistribution of its wealth and property to the common people; and finally the abolition of serfdom so as to create social equality. As before this was agreed but Wat Tyler was stabbed in an argument with the Mayor of London and a royal valet. He was carried to the hospital of St. Bartholomew but later taken from his bed and executed by the Mayor of London. The rebels soon dispersed having achieved their objectives and being confronted by armed men. The dispersal of the rebels led to swift and bloody repression by the government. The charters abolishing serfdom were revoked because they had been granted under duress. There is no evidence that men from North Leigh were involved, indeed the evidence from the 1372-74 accounts given above indicate that villeinage was already being replaced by contractual tenancies and leases, and much of the work on the demesne was being carried out by waged employees.

Manorial accounts 1418-1483.

From 1380 to 1530 there was a sustained period of agricultural depression particularly between 1440-80. There are accounts for North Leigh for many of the years between 1418 and 1483 from Christopher Day's notes. Some are translated in detail while others are brief summaries. In the first part of the period, 1418 to 1423, the demesne is rented to the 'tenants', then between 1424 to 1444 to one farmer and then from 1445 to 1450 the manor is not rented as a block instead parts are rented to different individuals. For the next period 1450 to 1469 the manor is rented either to one or two farmers. The last period is unusual in that although the manor is rented to a farmer, the farmer is acting as the shepherd for the lord of the manor. This may mean keeping sheep on tenant land which

is now in the lord's hands because tenants cannot be found. From the family names all the reeves appear to be tenants and all the farmers, with the exception of the last, appear to have been tenants before they took over the manor.

In the account of Nicholas Howe 1418-9 (45 years after the 1373-4 account above) the demesne farm has been rented out to tenants so that there are no details of the produce or stock on the manor farm. There is no mention of an allowance for the reeve's rent so it is possible the reeve was directly paid by Netley Abbey. This account is of interest because of the form of the account and the details of the repairs and building works on the manor.

Account of Nicholas Howe, reeve, 29 Sept. 1418 – 29 Sept. 1419.

Rent: £25-13-8 for rent and sale of lord's tenants' work. (note work obligations still being paid for but this may be at the level of a contractual tenancy see later).

Issues of land: £10 issues of demesne land and meadows rented out to the lord's tenants at lord's pleasure. (tenants rather than tenant probably means that parts are rented to different tenants).

Issues of manor: Nothing (because not being farmed for the lord's benefit).

Perquisites of court:

20/- from the hockday court. (Hockday was the Tuesday after Easter). 26/4 perquisites of courts etc. except fines which are farmed (given to?) the lord's tenants at the lord's pleasure. (presumably the court)

Total receipts £38

Building expenses:

1 carpenter mending 'le skelyng supra stancile' (framework above the post?) and mending divers defective privies, and making a stable outside the north door of the hall, and also mending divers doors inside the manor house. For 8 days 4/4.

1 mason mending the stable walls for 3 days, 12d.

1 thatcher and 2 assistants covering the stable roof for 2 days, 14d.

1 tiler recovering the hall roof and the chambers at both ends of the hall ?? in the south part of the east chamber, £4-1-8.

9000 slates bought for same at 26/-, 100 broadslates 2/10.

Expenses of lord's tenants coming 'de precio' (forced work?) with 18 carts, in bread and other food 4/-.

6 ridge tiles bought for 6d; 4000 slates for 30/10d; 12000 lathe nails 15/-; ordinary nails 11d;

2 qtr. 2 bu. lime bought 3/-.

1 mason for remaking a wall, 2/6.

1 thatcher for covering the grange (barn) on both sides 12/4.

25 cartloads of reed bought for same, 16/8; 3 cartloads of straw, 3/-; 400 laths for same 2/-; carriage of reed to the manor 3/-.

Total £11-17-9½.

Fees: fee of the steward of the tenant's court and surveyor of the manor 40/-.

Expenses: payment of the fifteenth to King 25/3

Payments: paid to William Nyton, bursar; by tally £5, by another tally £17-17-0.

Total £22-17-0

Sum total of expenses and payments £38. Owes nothing

A series of accounts follow 1420 – 1423 where the tenants prepare the accounts. Unusually there are just three headings arrears, rent and payments. The rent is £39 which is roughly the amount received from the combined tenants and the manor. So it appears that the tenants are jointly paying for and

using the demesne land. Over the period the arrears become very large, £2 then £27-6-0, then £31-6-0 and finally £21-18-0. This means that it has not been possible for the rents to be collected from the tenants presumably because of the agricultural depression. Netley abbey has been responsible for the expense of maintaining the manor buildings, paying the steward and paying tax to the King. In the 1424-25 account James Howe takes over the accounts as the farmer. This means he is renting the manor farm and is responsible for collecting the other tenants rents and receives the money from the court and pays the King's tax. Notice that James Howe must have got the other tenants to pay the arrears as well as the present years rent since.

Account of James Howe, farmer , 29 Sept. 1424 – 29 Sept. 1425.

Arrears: £21-18-0

Farm of manor: £10

Rents: £26-15-3½ for rent of assize.

Perqs. of court: 35/6½ for perquisites of tenants' court.

Total receipts and arrears £60-8-10

Allowances:

Stewards fee 40/-; 6/8 for collector (of rents) and other offices; 12/7½ for the tenth to King; 6/8 for a writ acquiring upon a charter of liberties(?); 22d for stewards expenses with respect to the writ; 3/4 for his expenses for two visits to Netley.

3/4 distributed among the poor tenants from the lord's alms; 6d for the fine (entry fee) of Thomas Blaket pardoned (a freeman); 4/- for rent of 1 tenement.

Total £3-18-11½

Payments:

To bursar of Netley for arrears £21-18-0

To bursar of Netley for rent £17-5-0

To bursar of Netley on account £16-6-8½

Owes nothing (has cleared arrears in one year!)

There follows similar accounts including minor building costs with no arrears ending in 1436-37. After this period the accounts become more detailed and the arrears start building up.

After the 1434-5 account assart land begins to be handed back to the lord of the manor. This means that land previously paid for in addition to the yardland, half yardland or cotland was no longer profitable to the tenants and it is handed back so that they do not have to pay the extra money. This may be some of the assart land mentioned in the 1279 survey but may be more recently assarted land. There would have been much less pressure for arable land after the Black Death in 1348 but freshly assarted land would be fertile whereas poorly maintained arable land might have lost its fertility so assarting may have continued. In 1440 a messuage and half ydld remains untenanted and is in the lord's hand and it is joined by another in 1449. Assart land continues to be handed back until 1465 and the 2 half ydlds remain untenanted until the 1480's when they are each rented for 4/- rather than 7/2. This is a measure of the continued agricultural depression and loss in value of arable land. There is an interesting example of these accounts in 1442-43 when the Holycourt manor was destroyed in a flood.

Account of James Howe 29 Sept. 1442 to 29 Sept 1443.

Arrears: £8-11-2½

Rent: £26-15-3½

Rent of Manor: £10

Issues: £6-13-4 for oak lopping in Conneswode sold to James Bonde, John Smyth, Thomas Lewell and Richard Lewell. 13/4 for sale of old ash trees and other wood on the banks of the stream next to Mullemede.

Fines and perquisites: 11/6 on 16 Oct. 41/7 on 21 May. 6/- for pannage from customary tenants. Total receipts and arrears £55-12-3

Lost rents:

1 tenement and half yardland called Porter's 3/- and no more because 4/- is raised from the issues. (this means the land was cultivated by the farmer and he is deemed to have earned 4/- on it).

2 acres of sartland (referred to later as assart land) lately Rygonys, because in lord's hands 16d.

2 acres of sartland lately Richard Lewell's 2/-

2 acres of sartland lately John Howy's 16d and 1 lately William Frere's because in lord's hands 8d.

Building costs:

To Walter Wodeward, stone mason, for walls from the bay in the hall totally thrown down and destroyed by flood waters as far as the gable at the eastern end of the buildings, with the said gable end, and 2 partitions between the hall and the kitchen and store room completely rebuilt; and for mending and strengthening a wall in the cellar under the upper chamber. In all 92 perches in length, at a perch of 16 feet, 69/-. To the same Walter for a buttress on the north part of the chimney gable end 3/4. For stone for the walls and buttress taken from the quarry nil. For 20 qtr of lime bought from Thomas Mokemers 21/8. To Roger Rame for carrying 28 cartloads of stone 5/-. 6 scaffold hurdles bought 12d. To Roger for 4 old gable ends directed to be pulled down and the stone carried to the above work and for 10 pieces of young oak for scaffolding timber. To John Wilcocks carpenter for door posts and other timber pulled down and prepared and for making 6 doors and 5 windows for the aforesaid walls, and for taking down and preparing 1 beam for the hall and for joists for the solar beyond the store room with a partition and a door and stairway 20/-. For Roger Rame for carrying 11 cartloads of timber 2/9. To John Ballard for old walls, timber and slates pulled down 3/4. For John Wilcocks for work at the bridge called Ashford bridge 12d. 1 labourer taking slates from the dairyhouse 12d.

Total spent £6-13-5

Foreign payments: To King's tenth 12/-

Steward's fee: 30/- to William Bonde

Expenses: To John Combe for riding to London and Oxford on business 5/11.

Paid to the abbey: £33-13-4

Total expenses and payments £43-1-8. He owes (the arrears are) £12-10-7

'In all 92 perches in length, at a perch of 16 feet, 69/-.' Would imply 1472 ft of wall which is clearly impossible. Oddly at the time a perch could be a unit of length, area or volume. When associated with masonry it would usually be volume; in this context a perch was the volume of a wall 16 foot long 18 inches high and 12 inches thick. So that a wall of 92 perches, 15 ft high, 24 inches thick would be 73.6 ft long, a not impossible length and the statement would be correct if it said. 'In all 92 perches, at a perch of 16 feet, 69/-.'

James Howe gives up the manor farm after 26 years in 1444-45 with arrears of £11-10-2½. John Hykeman, a half yardlander, takes over the accounts with the title of reeve; his first account is interesting because now instead of £10 being paid for the manor property, the manor land and meadows is entered under issues of the manor and were rented to named individuals. This probably means that Netley abbey was unable to find a renter of the manor because of the agricultural depression. John Hykeman takes over the previous years arrears.

The accounts of John Hykeman, reeve, 29 Sept. 1445 to 29 Sept. 1446

Arrears: £11-10-2½

Rent: £26-15-3½ assized rents including the rent of the mill 20/-.

Issues of the manor:

5/- for pasture in *le Stert* (later called *Sturt*) sold this year to *Richard Harcourt*;

¾ for 1 parcel of arable land called *Folycourtpiece* (*Holycourtpiece*) demised to *Richard* this year;

50/- for meadow called *Longenham* 'exopposite' the mill (meadow north of river east of mill) demised to *Richard* this year.

6/8 for *Horsemoor* demised to *Richard* this year.

26/8 from *Richard* for meadow called *Closemead* next to the mill, demised to him in payment of his fee as steward.

20d from *Agnes Bocher* for pasture called *Leynys* at *Ashfordbridge*.

6/- from *John Smith* for 2 acres meadow in *Stonsham*

34/- for divers pieces of meadow in *Stonsham* sold to various people.

9/- from *John Jordan* for 1 piece of meadow in *Clayham*.

14/- from *William Smith* for 1 piece of meadow in *Sprottysham*.

6d from *Nicholas Ashdon* for a piece of (arable) land in *Dudwell hill*.

6d from *John Jordan* for a piece of (arable) land in *Dudwell hill*.

16d from *John Jordan* for a piece of (arable) land in *Folycourtpiece*.

2/- from *John Breckespere* for piece of (arable) land in *Dudwell hill*

6/8 from *John Howys* for *Sheephouse close*.

20d from *John Hykeman* for 1 croft at *Folycourt*.

16/8 from *John Rygon* for meadow called *Fishwere*

12d from *Walter Wodeward*, builder, for the quarry.

Total £9-6-8

The value of the pasture, meadow and closes come to about £8-13-0 whereas the value of the arable is only 7/8. This shows, that, as in 1372, wool is still the most important product from the village.

Sturt is later usually used as an arable field. Most of the approximate positions of the named properties can be made. There is also implicit information about the grouping of the arable fields; it would only be possible to rent out arable land which is not fallow. *Dudwell hill* is in *Church field* and *Folycourtpiece* is in *North field*.

Sale of works: 32/4 for works of customary tenants this year, at a rate of 12d per yardland and 6d per half yardland, 2d per cotland.

The statement shows that a cotland was about sixth of a yardland. It is interesting that there appear to be so many villeins paying the manor in lieu of a work obligations. There are about 32½ ydlds now which compares with the 31½ ydlds held from the lord of the manor in 1279 excluding freeland. The difference in 1445 is that they are all contractual tenancies where the contract includes money paid for the croft and land and a nominal amount in lieu of work which happens to be itemised in this account. In 1372-3 account payment for the work obligation for 1 ydld. was 6/8 now it is only 12d. Later there is evidence that even the 12d was not paid. Some concessions to this sale of works are made below in the lost rents section and these concessions become extensive in the rest of the accounts.

Fines and perquisites:

29/3 for fines (entry fees), *heriots* (death duty) and *perquisites of court*. The court roll remain in hands of *William Boorde*, late Steward.

Total receipts and arrears £51-13-9

Lost rents:

½ acre assart land at *Oteslade* lately *John Croke's* because in lord's hands 2d.

1 messuage (building with land around it) and half yardland formerly *Wymplole's* and before that *Nicholas Smyth's* (previously referred to as *Porter's*) with 1 parcel of land annexed, works worth 6d,

rent 2/- and no more because 5/- raised from issues. (this means the reeve is deemed to have earned 5/- from the land in the last year)

5 acres of assart land, lately John Rygon's, in Overriding upon Berkclif because in lord's hands 2/-.
6 acres of assart land, lately Richard Newell's, in Overriding upon Berkclif because in lord's hands 2/-.

Acquittance for John the reeve because of his office for half yardland 6/8 and for his works 6d,
The works of 2 yardlands, 1 half yardland and 3 cotland – relief granted to James Howes by indenture for life, 3/-.

1 paddock called Hannyngs, lying in a lane called Wylmagyslane, because in lord's hands 3d.

Works of half yardland, formerly John Revell's which William Hykeman junior holds in lease 6d.

(this is the first mention of a lease which is a new form of contractual tenancy which is usually for a fixed period; it would not have included a work obligation, so although entered with all others in sale of works above it is remitted here)

Total 16/11

Building costs: (Holycourt manor destroyed in a flood is still being repaired 2 years later)

Richard Caase, slater, for putting 16,000 new and old slates on the new roof of the hall, chamber and kitchen at Folycourt 72/-.

8200 slates bought at various prices 32/8;

2000 slates collected in the lord's soil 3/4 (presumably from what is now Stonesfield common but was until 1983 part of North Leigh). 18/- for carting.

1000 laths 3/4; 2000 laths from lord's timber 5/-; 4000 lathnails 5/-; 16,000 tilepins (wooden pegs for slates) 4/-; moss collected (for insulation?) 22d;

To John Wylcocks, carpenter, for installing 3 pairs of rafters above the hall 3/1;

Iron work for 2 doors in the hall 5/-; 100 nails 20½d.

To John Wylcocks, carpenter, for boarding the floor of the high chamber and for cutting down and shaping the timber 13/4.

Total £9-1-2½.

Mill costs: nil.

Foreign payments: part of King's tenth 12/11¼.

Steward's fee: Richard Harcourt, steward 26/8; William Boorde for his council 6/8.

Payments: to abbot £34-2-11

Allowances:

20d which the abbot pardoned Thomas Mockmer.

Expenses of John Langport and others coming on business 6/6.

Expenses of John and others when they came to survey the manor and receive the account 6/4.

2/- for the expenses of John for riding to Somerton for the bailiff of Wallingford's fee there, on the order of the steward. (Wallingford was said to hold the chief lordship of the manor in 1470).

12d amercement (fine imposed by manor court) of abbot of Eynsham, pardoned by abbot.

6d amercement of King's tenants in Combe. (the last 2 items must have appeared in the fines and perquisites but were assumed to be uncollectible).

7/1¼ given by the lord to John Hykeman in reward for his diligence this year in selling (that is leasing) the lords land and meadows.

Total 26/5¼

Total expenses, payments and allowances £47-13-9

Owes £3 (it should be £51-13-9 minus £47-13-9 = £4, perhaps the reeve was allowed £1 for divers payments)

William Hykeman takes over from John Hykeman as reeve in 1449-50 and reduces the arrears from £15-4-0½ to £4-10-1 and for the first time the arrears are itemised at the end of the account; the

detail of the arrears in this and later accounts gives an indication of which rents or fines have not been paid.

Unde super: (details of arrears)

Heirs of William Wilcotes and Elizabeth Blacket hold divers lands at Wilcote and a manor formerly Paynell's and before that Lye's, and divers other lands, all which tenements are held from the lord of the manor for 9/5 p.a. For this and 4 preceding years 47/1.

Amercement (fine) of the heirs 2/-.

William Pope of Woodstock, for his rent 9d.

Robert Goddard for rent of the quarry 12d.

John Hykeman, lately reeve, 40/3.

William Hykeman nil.

Presumably this was done to show that no further arrears occurred during the last account when William Hykeman was the reeve. From this point on the arrears owed by a previous reeve are not passed on to the next reeve. 'Heirs of William Wilcotes and Elizabeth Blacket hold divers lands at Wilcote and a manor formerly Paynell's and before that Lye's' is of great interest and needs some explanation¹. The freeman, John D'Aula mentioned in the survey 1278 was also referred to as John of Leigh and the estate was passed through William of Leigh to Sir Thomas Paynell. After Sir Thomas's death in 1410, the rents and the reversion of his estate in North Leigh, said to comprise a

house and 1 hide (4 ydlds) were bought by Sir William Wilcote. This then is the original manor house next to the church and Lye is an early form of Leigh. Sir William's wife Elizabeth inherited another estate partly in North Leigh which was to become Wilcote house. After Sir William's death Elizabeth married Sir John Blacket (d. 1430). It was Elizabeth who had the magnificent Wilcote chapel built in North Leigh church (c. 1440) in memory of her first husband and two sons killed in the French wars (about the time of Agincourt). The chapel is shown in Fig 8.



Figure 8. The Wilcote chapel.

Elizabeth Blacket died in 1445 the year when the rent was first not paid and her heirs were a married daughter from her first marriage, and her grandchildren. There is no evidence that there ever was a second manor in North Leigh, so the reference 'and a manor' is probably just a reference to the fact that it was the original manor house. In 1278 John of the hall had held 3 ydlds freely of the lord and a croft for 1/6. At some stage another yldd may have been added with a rent and work obligation which could add up to about the 7/11 per annum.

In the 1452-3 account, instead of the demesne being rented to a number of individuals it has been leased to Richard Newell and John Bonde for 9 years this being the second year. The rent has been reduced from £10 in 1444 to £8 to persuade the local men to take on the manor and it remains at this level to the end of the accounts in 1484-5. In 1455-6 the Wilcote arrears reaches a peak of £3-18-4 when £1-6-8 gets paid, leaving £2-11-8. This corresponds to the time¹ that William Brome of Holton acquired the estate. William Pope, Robert Goddard and the Abbot of Eynsham still owe their money. The remaining Wilcote arrears eventually get written off in the 1477-8 accounts after a further 24 years.

When the 9 year lease runs out Richard Newell takes over and is the manor farmer in 1460-1 and continues until 1467-8. One of the receipts in 1463-4 was;

12d for the rent of the quarry, demised to the keepers of the goods of South Leigh church to dig freestone. This item appears for the next 21 years, until the last account in 1484-5 and coincides with extensive alterations to South Leigh church. John Newell and William Heron take over as farmers in 1468-9, the payment to the abbey for the year was £26-13-6 and the arrears have built up to £30-14-10½. The itemised arrears were:

Unde super:

The heirs of William Wicote and Elizabeth his wife, 52/8. (the same for the last 13 accounts)

John Bullock, late keeper of mill 10/-.

Abbot of Eynsham 40/-.

John Smith, late reeve 15/-.

John Bonde, late farmer 6/8.

Robert Sutton, late reeve quit

John Heron, late reeve 23/2½.

John Jordan, late reeve 26/2.

Richard Corneweyle, late keeper of mill 3/4.

William Hickman, late reeve 11/4

Richard Newell, late farmer 3/- which he has paid and therefore he is quit.

John Newell for the farm £2.

William Heron the other farmer £2.

John Schell, collector of rents £19-3-3.

In this period, the acting reeve did not take over the uncollected rent and money owed to the previous reeve but only the rent and money he should have collected. The amount he owes did not include money owed by the more important individuals like the Wilcote heirs, the abbot of Eynsham, the miller, and farmer(s) of the demesne. It seems unlikely that the amount the reeve owes was considered to be a personal debt but was a record of the rent he has not been able to collect and as such was a loss to Netley abbey. It was sometimes not allowed until the tenant who owed the money or the late reeve died. As a result the arrears gradually built up until they were as large as the amount of money paid to the abbot. John Schell owes (has not collected) rents of £19-3-3 over the last three years and is a large part of the above arrears.

In a damaged account of 1470-1 a new barn was built and Thomas Hicks became the farmer. After the 'Unde super' entry a new heading appears which lists the objects held by the farmer, owned by the abbey at Holycourt:

Utensils:

1 trestle table, 1 standing bed in the upper chamber for the abbot. Another trestle table called a standing board in the hall. 4 lead weights, 1 of 14 lbs, 1 of 7 lbs, 1 of 5 lbs, and 1 of 2 lbs. 2 new ladders 1 of 26 rungs and 1 of 24 rungs. To be held by Thomas Hicks.

Sheep farming began to be carried out again for Netley abbey even though Thomas Hicks was renting the demesne for £8, the usual amount for this period. As mentioned earlier this was probably because every year more assarts and contractual tenancies were left in the lord's hands, because tenants could not be found. In 1470 there was Cleyham meadow, about 16 acres of assart land and two half yardlands in the lord's hands after renting out the demesne property. Prior to this the renter of the manor or reeve probably used the untenanted land but Netley only received the deemed profits which was always less than the rents they should have received. In the 1466-7 account under lost rents the relevant parts are;

1 messuage and ½ ydld formerly Wynpole's with 1 parcel of land, 3/2 no more because 4/- is raised from issues.

1 messuage and ½ yldd lately Ric Pope in the lord's hands, 3/2 and no more because 4/- raised from issues

½ a assart at Oteslade lately John Croke's 2d

5 a assart land lately Jn Rygony's in Overriding upon Berchlyf 16d

6 a assart land lately Ric Newell's 2/-

a piece of assart land called Buckspiece which Thos Newell held in lord's hands, 2d , raised from issues 10d.

1 parcel of assart lately Wm Cripp's 10d

1 parcel of assart lately Wm Pope's 9d

1 a in Overriding lately Wm Philpots 12d

½ a of assart formerly Jn Bonde 2d

½ a of assart 2d

In effect, Netley abbey got (or the renter of the manor paid) the amount not allowed or that above raised under issues, that is 8/10 instead of 21/- which they would have got if all the land had been rented out.

In the allowances 1472-3 one of the tenants, John Bonde, who farmed the demesne in 1452 to 1459 is reduced to poverty.

6/8 to John Nowell, late reeve, which the lord pardoned John Bonde part of the money due from his tenement, because of his poverty and begging.

Also in the 1472-3 allowances section Thomas Hicks the demesne farmer 1470-1485 is allowed *6/8 for his gown owing to him for last year.*

6/8 is owed again in 1480-81, 12/4 for two gowns in 1482-3 and 13/4 for two gowns in 1484-5. Unlike the other renters Thomas Hicks does not appear to have the same name as a local family; this might mean Thomas Hicks was a monk with some connection to Netley abbey and would fit in with the payment of the gown and the expense of the repair and refitting of the manor chapel which is described later.

Another aspect of this period was the growing importance of the coppices. Considerable sums of money were raised by selling the coppice wood. As is seen below a schedule listing the purchasers included North Leigh residents as well as residents of all the surrounding villages. The importance to the surrounding villages may be because the North Leigh woods were out of regard, that is, outside the control of Wychwood forest. In a properly managed wood, the coppice was cut down almost to ground level, then left for about 7 years for regrowth. During the growth the coppices needed to be hedged or enclosed to prevent them being used as rough pasture and in the 1473-4 accounts under 'Allowances'

9/6 to Thomas Hicks for hedging the lord's coppice called the Shaw, 118 perches (c.590 m)

13/4 to Thomas for hedging Sprottesham, 160 perches (c. 800 m)

The coppices were important because the wood from them would be used for fencing and hurdles necessary for folding sheep on the arable and general sheep farming.

Since sheep farming was being carried out for Netley abbey more detailed accounts were necessary, similar to the early accounts when demesne farming was carried out by Netley Abbey in 1372 for the whole of the demesne. Two concurrent accounts will be given as examples; the first when sheep farming was being carried out and the second after almost all the sheep had died of murrain.

Thomas Hykks farmer and John Blowend, rent collector, Sept. 1474 to Sept. 1475.

Arrears: £30-9-9½.

Assised rents: (not entered in notes but should be about) £27-8-0¼.

Farm of the demesne: (not entered in notes but should be) £8

Issues:

£3-7-9 for 7 tods and 14 lbs of wool. (24 tods were sold in 1373 during full demesne farming)
12d for the rent of the quarry, demised to the keepers of the goods of South Leigh church to dig freestone.

Cleyham nil, because in hands of reeve for keeping the lord's sheep in winter.

£4-12-10 for wood sold by John Brekespere, woodward as appears on attached schedule.

54/2 for produce of coppice called Ashwell sold by Thomas Hykks as appears on schedule.

7/2 for 36 sheep skins; 4d for skins of 7 dead sheep.

Total £11-3-3.

Sale of works: 31/6

Total receipts and arrears £80-17-1½.

Lost rents:

Total 29/-. (total given but details not translated).

Building expenses:

Carpenter making a smoke vent for the manor kitchen 2/-; a tiler covering the vent, the chamber of the lord's stables and various places on the manor house 20/4; tiles 15/8, ridge tiles 19½d, lime 2/4.
Total £2-3-11.

Expenses: 2 visits by abbot 21/10

Foreign payments: 2d to Thomas Stockton (of Fawler) for a 'lawstherd' (sluice?) upon his land above the mill for draining the water in time of necessity. (this was made about 5 years earlier in the 1468-9 accounts)

Stock bought: 25 sheep £1-13-10, 1 sheep in exchange for a ram 1/-.

Steward fee: Sir Richard Harcourt 40/-.

Payments: to abbey £33-9-0.

Allowances:

2/- allowed to William Brekespere, formerly rent collector, for paying the lord's amercement (fine) for not attending and doing homage at Wallingford in the court of the chief lord.

Interesting that the lord of the manor should still should be attending the court of the chief lord.

5/- to William, part of the wages of Nicholas the Shepherd.

18/8 to William, for the rent and amercement (fine) pending against John Holeway, because Roger (Rydley), the vicar, stands pledge for John.

2/8 to William paid to John Ballard, late shepherd.

9/10 to Thomas Hikks, woodward of the lord's coppice (and farmer), for making an inclosure of 118 perches (about 590 m, this is presumably around Ashwell coppice to prevent it being used as rough pasture).

6/- to Thomas for sheep shearing;

4d to Thomas for carrying wool from the manor of Northlygh to Burford for sale;

7d to Thomas for wool customary payment at Burford, as is the usage of the country;

1/4 to Thomas for his expenses 2 days and nights selling the wool;

3d to Thomas for tolls paid on the wool;

14/- to Thomas for 2 qtr. wheat, 1 qtr. barley and 1 qtr. malt paid to Nicholas the lord's shepherd;

1/6 to Thomas for payment to Thomas Mokkalmer for mowing Cleyham;

3/4 to John Brekespere woodward for wages.

10/- to John Blowend for payment of part of this years wages to Nicholas Shephurd.

9/8 to John Blowend for payment to the glazier, for glazing the windows of the lord's chapel.

There has been a number a references to the lord's chapel over the last few years see also below under Utensils.

Total £5-9-6

Total expenses £49-7-1¾. Owes £ 31-9-11¾.

Unde super: (not translated this time)

Schedule of wood:

Coppice at Ashwell belonging to the lord abbot sold by Thomas Hikks.

Northlyghe:

Richard Nowell 2/-, Thomas Rideley 3/-, John Nowell 1/6, James Colyar 1/6, John Blowend 1/6, the vicar 4/6, John Bayly 1/-, Nicholas Coupe 3/-, John Taylor 1/8, Nicholas Rawlyn 1/-, William Heron 2/-, William Allyn 7d, John Ballard 6d, John Blowend 7d, John Herte 1/4, Henry Davy 10d.

Southlyghe: *Richard Blowend 1/8, William Maprows 1/8.*

Fawler: *Thomas Stockton.*

Coombe: *Thomas Cooke 1/2, Richard West 3/-, John Stokke 3/-.
Hanborough:*

Robert Aston 1/1, John Spencer 1/1, William Ford 1/1, John Statteford 1/1, William Roche 1/4, John Savage 7d, Geoffrey Carpenter 1/6, John Notye 8d, William Peke 8d.

Worton: *John Cooke 9d.*

Total 48/2.

'Vurrur' (Furze?): *sold by Thomas (Hikks);*

Thomas Rideley 1/8, the vicar 6d, Robert Aston 2/8, John Stratteford 1/2.

Total 6/-

Sum total 54/2.

Northlyghe wood: *sale of branches by John Brekespere.*

John Boonde 1/6, William Boonde 1/6, Nicholas Coupe 1/8, John Hikeman 1/4, Thomas Ridley 4/6, Richard Newell 4/3, William Brekespere 2/-, John Shephurd 1/4, John Brekespere 2/-, John Holeway 1/8, Henry Davy 1/8, John Nowell 4/-, John Bayly 1-8, John Colyar 2/-, William Heron 3/4, John Taylor 1/-, William Holeway 10d, William Alyn 2/6, William Herte 1/8, William Sawyer 3/-, the vicar 3/6.

Southlygh: *Richard Mason 1/1, John Hobcock 1/2, John Kyres 1/4, John Clyfford 1/8, William Cosselyn.*

Witney: *Robert Tasker 1/4, William Dyer 1/-, Edward Yoxhale 1/-, Little Sifford 1/2, William Sterre 1/10, John Hille 1/8, Richard Disselyng and his family 3/4, Isabella Mason 1/2, Isabella Davy 1/2, John Howlande 1/8, Richard Martyn 1/2, John Evan 1/4, Henry Coupe 10d, William Bayly 2/-, William Cokkys 5/6.*

Worton and Cassington: *John Compnore 1/-, William Water 1/2, Michael Sythar 1/2, John Cocke 1/2, William Colyar 1/-, William Fynsham 1/1, William Amys 8d, Elena Este 9d, Robert Mershe 8d, William Carpenter 1/-, vicar of Cassington 2/-, John Gibbs 1/10.*

Sun total £4-12-10

Stock:

Rams. *William Hykks, farmer and shepherd there, accounts for 5 rams from last year, 1 sold. Total 4.*

Sheep: *169 from last year; 25 bought; 6 added from sheep in 2nd year; 10 died before shearing 7 after. Total remaining 185 .(183?)*

Ewes: *40 from last year, 40 sold.*

Sheep in 2nd year: *30 from lambs, 24 died, 6 added to sheep. Total 0.*

Wool: *7 tods 13 lbs, all sold.*

Utensils:

1 trestle table, 1 standing bed in the upper chamber for the abbot; another trestle table called the standing board in the hall, 4 lead weights for weighing wool (14 lbs, 7 lbs, 5 lbs and 2lbs), 2 new ladders made for the abbot for the thatch of the manor.

2 stained (embroidered, painted?) cloths for the alter in the chapel, newly bought; 1 pair of vestments with all furnishings belonging; 1 portable altar, 2 altar cloths; 1 corporal; 1 good gold and gilt chalice; 2 cruets; small sanctus bell; 1 pyx for the bread for the celebration of mass. 1 good chest with lock and key for keeping the abbot's evidences. 2 standing beds in the chapel for the lord's servants. 1 new 'siltyngtrowe' (saltingtrough?).

In the account the chapel has been glazed and fitted out with an altar, gilt chalice and pyx. The amount of wool sold has reached a peak selling for £3-7-9; even so £7-7-0 was obtained for the coppice and wood. In the next account only 3/4 is obtained for wool.

Thomas Hykks, farmer, William Aleyn, rent collector Sept. 1475 to Sept. 1476.

Arrears: £31-9-11³/₄.

Assised rents: (not entered in translation but should be about) £27-8-0¹/₄.

Farm of the demesne: (not entered in translation but should be) £8

Issues:

3/4 for 10 lbs of wool.

12d for the rent of the quarry, demised to the keepers of the goods of South Leigh church to dig freestone.

9/- from Cleyham demised this year to Thomas Hykks.

2/- for 1 cartload of hay remaining from last year sold to Thomas Hykks,

69/2 for skins of 174 sheep and rams dead of murrain this year.

£5-4-8 for wood sold by John Brekespere, as on schedule.

1d for skin of a sheep dead of murrain after shearing.

Total £9-11-3.

Sale of works: 31/6

Sale of stock: nil

Total receipts and arrears £79-0-4³/₄.

Lost rents:

Total 30/-. (total given but details not translated).

Building expenses:

Carpenter making a door for the pound within the manor, and for making window covers (shutters?) in the lord's chamber and in other places 1/3. A table and board 1/3.

Total 2/6.

Expenses: 1 visits by abbot (not entered should be about 10/-)

Foreign payments: 2d to Thomas Stockton for a 'lawstherd' (sluice?) upon his land above the mill for draining the water in time of necessity.

Stock bought: nil.

Steward fee: Sir Richard Harcourt 40/-.

Payments: to abbey £35-3-0¹/₄.

Allowances:

5/- allowed to John Blowend, for part of the wages of Nicholas the Shepherd.

2/6 allowed to John for money paid to Roger Ramme for making an inclosure at the Stert.

1/- allowed to John for loss of rent of parcel of land called Lokk's piece, in lord's hands.

2d allowed to John, part of the amercement (fine) of Henry Davy.

4/8 allowed to Thomas Hicks, for the drying the animal skins.

2/6 allowed to Thomas, spent in Oxford in matters of law pending between the lord and the vicar of North Leigh.

10/- allowed to Thomas, for payment to the shepherd of the lord's sheep for ½ years wages.

6/8 allowed to Thomas, for 1 qtr. of wheat and 1qtr. of barley, by custom paid to the shepherd.

6/8 allowed to John Blowend, for the fine (entry fee for new tenant) of Richard Milleward, pardoned.

3/4 allowed to John, for part of the rent of Roger Ramme, for inclosing the coppice of Ashwell.

2d allowed to John, for the amercement (fine) of John Shepherd, pardoned.

12d allowed to John, for the amercement of Henry Davy, pardoned.

Total 43/3

Total expenses etc. £43-0-10¾. Owes £ 35-19-6.

Unde super: (not present or not translated this time)

Stock:

Rams, 4 from last year, 4 died of murrain before shearing, none remain.

Sheep, 185 from last year, 174 died of murrain before shearing, 1 after. 10 remain to be sold.

Wool, 10 lbs, sold.

It has been a disastrous year for livestock and marks the end of sheep farming by the lord of the manor. But was it being run down anyway as the 40 ewes were sold in the previous year. The 'Utensils' entry has been expanded to fully fit out the chapel.

Utensils:

1 trestle table, 1 standing bed in the upper chamber for the abbot; another trestle table called the standing board in the hall, 4 lead weights for weighing wool (14 lbs, 7 lbs, 5 lbs and 2lbs), 2 new ladders made for the abbot for the thatch of the manor. 2 stained (embroidered, painted?) cloths for the altar in the chapel, newly bought; 1 pair of vestments with all furnishings belonging; 1 portable altar, 2 altar cloths; 1 corporal; 1 good gold and gilt chalice; 2 cruets; small sanctus bell; 1 pyx for the bread for the celebration of mass. 1 good chest with lock and key for keeping the abbot's evidences. 2 standing beds in the chapel for the lord's servants. 1 new siltyngtrowe.

John Brekespere: arrears 64/2. Has paid 20/-. Owes 44/2 (present woodward)

John Blowend: arrears 46/11. has paid 15/-. Owes 31/11. (last year's rent collector)

William Alleyn: arrears 117/2. has paid 48/4. Owes 68/10. (present rent collector)

Sale of coppice wood by John Brekespere.

Northlygh, John Blowend 2/6, John Boonde 1/8, Nicholas Coupe 4/-, Thomas Ridley and his brother 4/-, John Hikman 1/-, Richard Nowell 7/-, William Brekespere and his brother 7/-, John Shephurd 2/-, Alice Davy 1/-, John Nowell 7/4, John Bayly 3/-, James Colyar and his brother 5/6, William Heron 8/-, William Alleyn 3/4, William Holeway 8d, John Taylor 1/4, John Holeway 4/-, William Herte and his brother 4/-, Robert Sawyer 3/-, William Hikman 1/4, Thomas Jaks 1/8, the vicar 3/-.
Sutton, John Heron 1/8, John Brown 1/2, vicar of Cassington 2/-, John Cooke 1/6, William Nowell 7/8, John Banning and Howland 2/8, John Evan 1/8, Richard Fuller and his family 4/-, Matilda Billingsford 1/8, Cock Dyar and his family 4/4.

Total £5-4-8

In the next year, 9 of the remaining 10 sheep are sold before shearing and 1 dies; the income from sale of coppice wood drops to £2-2-11 and is 4/8 for the year after that. Thereafter for 7 years (the end of the accounts) there is little income from coppice wood, only small sums from the sale of loppings or underwood. This is a further indication that sheep farming has ceased and the tenants are no longer interested in buying coppice wood for making hurdles.

In the 1472-3 account under 'Stock' *9 lambs were given in tithe*. That is 9 out of 89 lambs or about a tenth. The vicar might have expected to get the lesser tithes or a tenth of the produce other than from the woods and arable fields. This was the only reference to the tithes as they were normally paid by the renter of the manor and each individual tenant. In the 1475-6 accounts under 'Allowances' *2/6 allowed to Thomas Hykks, spent in Oxford in matters of law pending between the lord and the vicar of North Leigh*. In the 1480-1 accounts under 'Sale of stock' *8/- received from Roger Ridley, vicar of North Leigh, for lambs and wool received by him and recovered by the lord*. It seems the lambs should not have been taken by the vicar possibly because Netley abbey did not pay tithes.

Over the period of accounts there was a constant stream of repairs to the demesne building, the mill and Ashford bridge. The manor house at Holycourt was rebuilt 1442 to 1446 after a flood. A bridge was built over a ditch or moat surrounding the building in 1448; the ditch was possibly dug to take water flowing down the hill away from the manor so preventing flood damage. A stone byre and a sheep fold was built in 1453, a pound in 1461 and a new barn in 1470.

In summary over the period 1418-1484 Netley abbey, as elsewhere, did not carry out full farming on the manor farm; instead they preferred to rely on the money from the rent of the manor. Their main source of income was rents and sale of works from the small tenants, rents from the manor itself and a small amount from the sale of wood. Over the period the average yearly income was £31-15-0 similar to that in 1373. Initially Netley abbey rented the manor farm to the tenants as a whole but this soon led to arrears of uncollected rents. A single tenant then rented the manor farm; again this was at first successful but arrears soon built up. There was a short period when it was presumably not possible to find a tenant for the manor and individual parts were rented to individuals. This was followed by renting the manor to one or two tenants at a reduced rent. At all stages it seems likely that the arrears built up because the tenants were unable to pay because of the agricultural depression. It was not clear what redress the manor had for non-payment. There was one case when the steward threw a tenant off his half yardland and another when a tenant became a fugitive. Even so, unless a new tenant could be found it was probably better to have a tenant who owed money than to have the property unused in the lord's hands. In the last stage of the period Netley abbey seems to have persuaded an outsider to take over the manor and to carry out some demesne sheep farming on land which had reverted to the lord of the manor. This was reasonably successful until almost all the sheep died because of murrain. Over the period the picture is not one of tenants subjugated by the lord of the manor but rather as a group of poor tenant farmers working together with very little leadership from a non resident lord of the manor. Despite this there was the Wilcote and later the Blacket family holding 4 ydlds of freeland living in the original manor house next to the church. The families were wealthy enough for Elizabeth Blacket to fund the building of the Wilcote chapel. Little information can be gleaned from the accounts on the relative importance of cereal farming with respect to livestock farming: but at three periods 1372-4, 1445-50 and 1470-75 extensive sheep farming seems to have been occurring and this was probably true for much of the period.

The manor and leet courts.

So far the manorial accounts have been considered. The second type of record was the court roll; these were records of the manor and leet courts¹³. Examples for North Leigh occur between 1499 – 1529. Another name for the manor court was the court baron, and another name for a leet court was the view of frankpledge.

The view of frankpledge was the lowest form of royal jurisdiction and fits in with the structure of local government developed by the Anglo-Saxons which was briefly considered earlier. The

organisation was originally based around a hide (one family unit), a tithing (notionally a group of ten households), a hundred (originally a group of 100 hides) and a shire (a group of 12 or 24 hundreds). There would often be more than one tithings in a vill or township. The royal court of jurisdiction for the vill was the view of frankpledge or leet court. Above the leet court was the hundred court and so on. The holding of the view of frankpledge was mentioned in the 1279 North Leigh survey. The relevant part was:

The earl's bailiff enters twice a year and holds view of frankpledge, taking 20s for the view and 5s for hidage, and all the perquisites (funds received) of the day

The whole of the vill (all male members over 12) was accustomed to attend the view of frankpledge of Wootton and to give 5s. Now the earl has the view of frankpledge and receives the 5s, and that 5s. has been increased to 20s. by the earl's bailiff, by what warrant the jurors know not.

What this means is the leet court used to be held at Wootton but by 1278 was held by the earl's bailiff; the earl got 20/- and the proceeds of the court rather than 5/- which the shire reeve (sheriff) received. In the North Leigh views of frankpledge considered below, the right to hold the view and the proceeds has reverted still further to the lord of the manor. Both the free and unfree were members of the court, were mutually responsible to each other, and were required to report all misdeeds and produce the miscreants for justice. Minor offences could be dealt with while other such as felony, homicide, assault, poaching would be passed up to the hundred's court. Originally the money paid for the view was designed to cover costs but became a form of income for the person who had the right to hold the court. The person holding the court did not act as a judge instead decisions were taken originally by the whole court but at this time probably by an appointed representative jury. The presentation jury heard the case and reached their conclusions and presented their verdict (true saying). Only the decision was recorded in the court roll. The guilty party was said to be in mercy of the court and paid a financial penalty or amercement. Physical punishment was rare but committal to the stocks or pillory was possible. The jury were known as capital pledges and represented the vill at the hundred court at Wootton and were responsible for inquiries from the higher courts. Unfortunately there are no early examples of the leet court and by the time of the first examples the court is becoming much less important. It has however, taken over the job of regulating brewing and baking. The examples¹⁴ are taken from Christopher Day's notes².

Northligh. View of frankpledge and court, 22 April March 1512.

Robert Vettley, receiver. Tithing came and gave the lord the tithing-penny 20/-. (originally the fee was charged at the rate of a 1d per male in the frankpledge but has become a fixed sum of 20/-)

And that John Hopcock has unscoured ditches next to Kenestrete as a result of which the 'via regia' is miry; he is to make repairs under penalty of delinquency and forfeiture to the lord of 3s and 4d. (Kenestrete, literally cows street, later Kings Street becoming Church Road)

Newelend (area around Perrottshill farm): Simon Maunsell, tithingman, swore all was well.

Nicholas Dey, ale taster, presents that John Mokmer (6d) and John Noty (6d) are common (ordinary) brewers and give to the lord for licence to brew, as much as appears above.

Constable: Thomas Hobbis, constable, presents all is well.

Jurors:

Thomas Ridley, John Cross, Thomas Fox, Thomas Hethen, Nicholas Brekespere, Richard Couper, Thomas Fipps, William Boulde, John Nowell, Robert Hobcock, John Warde, John Colyar.

In another view in 1525 there are two tithingmen; there is a dishonest baker and miller each fined 2d. and Kenystreet is still in bad repair. This was also the only example when the abbot was present.

Northligh. View of frankpledge with court baron of John abbot of Netley, 31 March 1525.

Jurors:

Thomas Ridley sen, Thomas Hethen, Thomas Hobbis, Richard Cowper, Thomas Colyar, Thomas Fypps, Thomas Smyth, William Hobbes, Nicholas Nowell, John Sutton, William Cross, Thomas Hykman, Thomas Nowel, Richard Hobcock.

Constable:

Richard Jaks, constable, has nothing to present

Newelend: 20/- Simon Mauncell, tithingman there.

Churchend: (Church road) John Smith, tithingman there.

Jury presents that they give certified money on this day.

William Bolde, ale taster for the year, presents that Richard May(6d) and Margaret Me.....(6d), widow, are common brewers and they give for a fine (means fee) at feast of St. Michael as above. And that John Johnson (2d) of Witney is a common huckster of bread and sells bread under weight; he is in mercy (guilty and fined 2d).

And that John Brekespere (2d) is the common miller of the water mill and takes excessive toll; is in mercy (guilty and fined 2d).

(The jury) Presents that royal road at Kenys strete is in bad condition. Vill is to repair it before feast of Trinity on a penalty of payment of 3s. 4d.

There are details of 4 leet courts in the sequence and all were held on the same day as a court baron. The record of the court baron appears on the roll immediately after the view of frankpledge. In this sequence of court rolls there is one view of frankpledge and two court barons a year. The view with the court baron is held in the spring and the other court baron in the autumn. Both the free and unfree tenants were required to attend the view of frankpledge but the freeman were probably expected to attend one court baron a year unless they had business with the court. The procedure for running the court baron should have been as for the view, that is the decisions should have been taken either by the court as a whole or by a presentation jury. Only one jury is listed (for the 1529 court baron), so it is possible that the same jury was used for both the leet and court baron and for the following court baron. As before only the decision is recorded of a trial or an inquiry. There are details of 10 court barons held between 1499 and 1429. An example of the court baron in 1425 is given below

North Leigh: Court baron held there 28 Oct. 1525.

Essoins: (essoins are excuses or apologies for not being present)

The earl of Shrewsbury, abbot of Eynsham, Thomas Somer, gent, William Enstone, John Colpresse, Hugh Kyrton, Thomas Brekespere of Eynsham, Christopher Briggar, free tenants, owe suit of court. All essoin.

The earl of Shrewsbury holds the original manor house next to the church; the abbot of Eynsham holds the farm that becomes Wilcote house.

The homage (the members of the court), presents (has decided) that Roger Fathers (2d), Richard Hobcock (2d), Thomas Whitmyll (2d), tenants at the lord's will (another name for contractual tenants) have made default (by not attending) and are in mercy (guilty and should pay as above)

The homage *Presents that Simon Maunde, tenant at will of a messuage and ½ yldd, late John Heaths, has died; heriot (payment on death) to lord of a red cow, price 8/-; Robert Curtes, farmer there, received the messuage and ½ yldd from the lord and to hold at will according to custom of manor, rent and customary service; 20/- entry fine (fee); performs fealty and is admitted.*

Robert Jaks, Robert Hobcock Thomas Smith Thomas Hykman, Roger Father, William Crosse presented for not digging their ditches at Edgyns moore brook. Have until feast of St Martin to make amends; penalty 3s 4d.

Edgyns moore is part of the Edgings field, a common arable field shown on map Figure 2.

Present John Johnson 3s 4d, and Richard May 3s 4d as common removers of fuel, viz thorns and furze growing in the heath; penalty as above.

At first sight this is odd since the heath was the source of fuel for much of the manor but it make more sense if read with the previous view of frankpledge and court baron. In the earlier view of frankpledge given above, John Johnson of Witney was in mercy for selling underweight bread and Richard May paid a fee to brew beer and was therefor a beer seller. In the earlier court baron (*It is ordained that no freetenants nor their sub-tenants are to take any thorns or furze growing in the heath, penalty 3s 4d.*) This presumably means there was a shortage of fuel on the heath and attempts were being made to ensure that only those having rights could use the fuel.

Present Roger Fathers 3s 4d for bringing cattle from outside (the manor) without pledge and surety (without permission); is in mercy (he is guilty). This is again probably associated with grazing on the heath. The vicar later has a penalty for overstocking the heath.

Present William Bolde; he is to make his boundary marks next to the holding of John Smith before feast of St Martin on pain of 3s 4d.

Present Robert Hobbys: he is to dig a watercourse at Crysmore before feast of St Martin on pain of 3s 4d.

Present that all tenants having boundary marks and hedges lying open should close them before the feast of St Martin (11th Nov.) on pain of 3s 4d each. (to prevent livestock damaging winter wheat?)

Present that Robert Curtes (must be renting the manor) has inclosed a close and a parcel of meadow at Stirt and excluded the tenants from their common there. The lord's council. This means the lord of the manor was not present and his advice is being sought.

Present that William Cross has died; held a messuage, 1 yldd and 2 half yldds. 3 heriots due to the lord, viz. for 1 yldd 1 heriot, and 2 heriots for 2 half yldds, assessed in all at 20s. John Swift came and received the tenement paying entry fee 20s.

Richard Herne is elected to office of messor. (or hayward oversees the harvest).

Other court barons were similar paying heriots, transferring tenancies, digging ditches, making repairs to hedges and tenements. A number of individual decisions are given below to show the court's scope.

Tenants were generally responsible for the repair of their tenements and examples are those given in the court baron of the 30th Sept. 1528.

William Boolde has a ruinous tenement. To be repaired before the feast of the Annuciation on pain of forfeiture.

Thomas Hykman, Nicholas Cowper have ruinous tenements. To be repaired on pain of 40d.

Tenement of Mr. John Sawyer badly ruinous; John Townsend the tenant is responsible for repairs.

He has a day (date below) for new building 3 bays, a hall, chamber and kitchen, thatched, before the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.(25th March, 5 months)

The freetenants were expected to attend some court barons and to have the changes in holding recorded in the court rolls; in the court baron of 22 April 1512.

Homage presents the abbot of Eynsham 6d), lord Shrewsbury(6d) and Christopher For...(3d) who owe suit of court (should attend this court) and are in default and in mercy (guilty and must pay the sums above)

Presents that John Holway holds of the lord a free close called Sparous close and that Agnes Holway is his sister and next heir; she seeks admittance to the close; granted, admitted at the old rent; pays relief (entry fee for free tenants, generally a fine for unfree tenants) of 3s 1d.

5 Oct, 1529

Thomas Somer, gent, holds freely of the lord a close lying under Bully's close and Estmond Green in le Estend at rent 4d a year p.a. Somer has died. Next heir owes relief of 4d and the homage is to make inquiry as to the next heir by the next court,

In the court baron 29th Oct 1499 Margaret Smith was a common scold.

The homage presents that Margaret Smith is a common scold at the complaint of her neighbours; from now on she is to refrain on penalty of public disgrace upon the pillory, and her daughter for concealment (denial of the offence?). And that Margaret Smith the younger is a common tearer down of fences and is in mercy.

In another example of 30 Sept. 1528

Alice Langford, widow, has made a subtenancy without licence of the lord, namely William and Margaret Hethen, who are not of good repute. Margaret is a scold to her neighbours. It is the court's decision that they should leave the tenement by the feast of All Saints (1st Nov. i.e. in one month)

The tenants were expected to have their corn ground in the lord's mill. In the court held 29th Oct 1499.

Also present William Hurn for grinding away from the lord's mill contrary to the custom of the manor, 6d.

In the court 30th Sept. 1528,

Thomas Reley, Thomas Hethen, William Howes and Robert Curtes have grindstones called querns and often do not grind malt at lord's mill. To do so in future on pain of 2d,

Batholomew Gunstone took over as vicar from Roger Ridley in 1525 and would already have held the glebe lands. In the court baron of 1st May 1526.

Bartholomew Gunstone, clerk (vicar), received from the lord a toft (an enclosure for a homestead) and close and two half ydlds of scattered land lying in the fields of Northligh, lately in tenure of John Newell for service and rent 10/-. 2 heriots value 7/-. Entry fine (fee) 13s 4d. Given licence to sublet to tenant or tenants 4d.

In the court baron 11th July 1527.

Presents Bartholomew Gunstone, clerk, vicar of Northligh unjustly occupies an acre of land next to the claimant, Thomas Hethen at Strode gate; also the quarter part of an acre lying at Cuddewell cross next to the boundary there belonging to the tenure of Thomas Smyth of lands of the manor. He (Bartholomew) has occupied it (them?) for 3 years past. Is not to continue to occupy them on pain of

payment to the lord of 6s 8d. The said acre and ¼ acre are already sown with wheat and oats. The bailiff of the manor should make distraint (confiscate) up to 10/-
In the court baron 30 Sept. 1528.

Bartholomew Gunstone is overstocking the commons with the sheep of outsiders to the damage of the lord and the lord's tenants. He is to remove them by the feast of All Saints on pain of 3s 4d.
John Sawyer and John Swift are transgressors with their sheep in the sown fields. In mercy (guilty, their sheep must have got out earlier in the year?).

Other transgressions were the non ringing of pigs; in the court baron 11th July 1527.

Richard May unjustly permits his pigs, viz. 7 boars to go unringed and unyoked, contrary to the order of the court, in mercy (6d). (ringing pigs prevents them digging up roots and lifting fences and so getting out. Richard May was the beer seller and common remover of fuel above).

Roger Fathers permits his pigs to wander in lands in severalty to the damage of them and their tenants, in mercy (6d).

Finally there was a case of leniency in the court baron 28th Oct. 1527.

Presents William Hewes unjustly carried away ½ acre of barley belonging to the manor farm rented by Robert Curtes; pardoned.

The impression given from the court rolls, is a court organised for the benefit of the lord of the manor but also for all the tenants of the manor. The decisions in most cases appear to have been reached in a reasonably democratic fashion by the jury and not solely by the abbots representative.

Case of rights of common in North Leigh 1540¹⁵.

There is an interesting record of witness statements enquiring into the rights of common of the neighbouring manors in North Leigh. Some of the testimonies are given below.

Thomas Ridley (44): About 9 years ago John Bowden (Stonesfield?) put 2 horses in Langham meadow (just North of river from Ashford Mill part of which is now Stonesfield common) with the intent of taking his common there. Ridley took the horses to the common pound of North Leigh. Bowden complained to the King's Council when the King came to Woodstock, and the council found in Ridley's favour.

Robert Jakes (67): About 30 years ago he knew old Mr. Eliott then one of the King's sergeants at law, dwelling at Long Combe, who then made a bridge from Lordship of Combe to Lordship of North Leigh at a place called Symondsham (that is the position of the bridge at present used as a public right of way between the Roman villa and Combe) so as to drive his cattle into North Leigh. Jakes and Thomas Ridley, the elder, went to the bridge and plucked it up. Eliott sent for Ridley, then the 'substantialist' man of the township of North Leigh and demanded to know why he had broken the bridge. Ridley said it was to prevent Eliot having common there. Was 'contention' for a time, but Eliott then let the matter drop.....(Stated that) All the time that Sir Richard Harcourt was steward (14 years) neither Stonesfield or Combe nor any other of the King's demesnes claimed common in North Leigh.

James Hukwell of Fulwell (67): tenants of Combe and Stonesfield have time out of mind enjoyed with all manner of cattle (cows and sheep etc.), horses only excepted, the common and pasture of fallow fields, meadows and stubble within all the common fields of parish of North Leigh from Lammas (1 Aug.) to feast of Annunciation (25 March). Three years ago the tenants of North Leigh were condemned by a jury at the King's leet held in Wychwood forest called Swelmouth court for digging

up 2 common fords, one called Stunsford, the other Roberts ford, and a close called Sturt, and another place called Millmead. Also condemned at the law day of the hundred court at Five Oaks in said forest.

From the last testimony it appears Hukwell was claiming grazing on the fallow fields and on the stubble after harvest and meadows after hay had been carried. It is possible to see how the right might have arisen because putting livestock on fallow fields or stubble would tend to increase soil fertility. This would be encouraged when cereals were the main crop but would be discouraged when livestock became more important. The results of the enquiry are not given but from the fact that at inclosure in 1759 forty acres of heath and about fourteen acres near Stonesfield were left for the use of the manor of Woodstock (Stonesfield and Combe) means that North Leigh was not able to exclude its neighbours. This was certainly a fortunate decision for the present day inhabitants of North Leigh since it led to the valuable amenities of North Leigh common and Stonesfield common which otherwise would not have existed.

The dissolution of the monasteries.

Monasteries had been founded and endowed mainly in the 10th and 11th centuries and since that time they had amassed vast wealth. The monasteries, particularly the enclosed orders such as the Cistercians, might have appeared to be of little direct benefit to society. As far back as 1381 during the peasants revolt, one of Wat Tyler's demands was the disendowment of the Church. In 1521, Martin Luther published the treatise which led to the protestant church and declared that the monastic life had no scriptural basis, and was pointless and immoral in that it was not compatible with the true spirit of Christianity. In 1527 the King of Sweden began to confiscate monastic lands, followed by the King of Denmark in 1528. In England in 1534 Henry VIII had parliament enact the Act of Supremacy which made him head of the church in England. Although the main purpose of the act was to allow Henry to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, it also allowed the crown to take over the wealth of the monasteries. First the monasteries were visited to assess their value and assets.

On 30 May, 1536, the commissioners presented their report on Netley abbey¹⁶ and described it as '*A head house of monks of the order of the Cistercians, having a large building and situated near the sea shore. To the King's subjects and strangers travelling the seas, a great relief and comfort*'. The commissioners estimated its total revenues at £181 2s. 8d. They found there seven monks, all priests, by report of good religious reputation, who desired to continue as monks and had the capacity to do so. There were twenty nine other officials and servants, four waiting servants, four officers of the household, eleven officials of the monastery, seven farm workers and three for the dairy. The church, mansions and buildings were in good repair. The lead and bells were worth £57; plate and jewels, £43 2s. 11d.; ornaments, £39 4s. 8d.; stuff, £9 3s. 4d.; corn, £10 17s.; stocks and stores, £103 13s. 4d. The woods were worth £81. The debts of the house were £42 3s. 4d., but there was £28 5s. owing to the house.

The abbot and his seven monks were forced to surrender their house to the king late in the summer of 1536. The abbot and six of his brethren joined Beaulieu abbey and the seventh opted to resign and become a secular priest.

Hailes abbey which had the advowson of North Leigh church and held much of the endowments as the rector, was dissolved late in December 1539.

It is possible that the tenants of North Leigh were not unduly worried that the manor had been taken over by the king. It might have seemed that they were joining the manors of Stonesfield, Combe and

Hanborough, all part of the royal manor of Woodstock. But by 1544 the manor of North Leigh with the view of frankpledge had been granted to Sir Thomas Pope for a fee of £691-13-6.

The Pope lords of the manor.

Sir Thomas Pope¹⁷ (c. 1507 – 1559), was born at Deddington, near Banbury, probably in 1507. He was about sixteen years old when his father, a yeoman farmer, died in 1523. He was educated at Banbury school and Eton College, and entered the Court of Chancery in London. He there found a friend and patron in the lord-chancellor Thomas Audley. As Clerk of Briefs in the Star Chamber, Warden of the Mint (1534-1536), Clerk of the Crown in Chancery (1537), and Second Officer and Treasurer of the Court of Augmentations for the settlement of the confiscated property of the smaller religious foundations, he obtained immense wealth and influence. He left the last office in 1541, but from 1547 to 1553 he was again employed as Fourth Officer. He himself won, by grant or purchase, a considerable share in the spoils. The twenty nine manors, which came into his possession, were originally church property. "He could have rode," said Aubrey, "in his owne lands from Cogges to Banbury", about 18 miles. He was married three times, but had no children. In 1537, he was knighted and became a member of the Privy Council. Between 1555-6 he founded Trinity college, Oxford. In 1556, he was sent to reside as guardian in the house of the future queen Elizabeth.

In 1544 Thomas Pope became the lord of North Leigh manor. The manor passed from being the most valuable in a small number of properties held by Netley abbey, to just one of the twenty nine manors held by Sir Thomas Pope. In 1559 he was succeeded by his brother John Pope (d. 1583) who passed the manor on to his son William (d. 1631). William was created earl of Downe in 1628, an Irish title created to ensure the colonisation of Northern Ireland, and passed the manor on to his grandson and heir, another Thomas Pope, the third earl of Downe. As will be seen later the third earl of Downe was forced to sell land in North Leigh, and in 1660 the manor of North Leigh having been fined for supporting the King in the civil war.

Advowson and rectorship¹.

The advowson, the right to appoint the vicar, remained with the King. The rectory estate set up by Hailes abbey in 1279 to benefit the abbey was granted to three prominent London business men, Sir John Allen, Ralph Allen and Sir John Champneys and was conveyed to the City of London in trust for the recently established Bridewell Hospital. The hospital received about 20 acres of glebe land, the greater tithes (1/10 of the proceeds from corn) and part of the hay tithes, in North Leigh.

Simon Perrott; the 'hill' Perrotts.

The first Thomas Pope's widow Elizabeth appointed Simon Perrott as steward of many of her manors, including North Leigh. Simon Perrott already had copyhold property in North Leigh. He was an Oxford lawyer and academic who had helped Sir Thomas Pope when he had founded Trinity College. In addition he had married Thomas Pope's sister's step daughter Elizabeth Love so would have been well known to the Pope family. The relationship mainly from reference¹⁸ is shown in Figure 9 which also shows the connection between Simon Perrott and James Perrott who later became lord of the manor. Simon Perrott had 19 children with his first wife Elizabeth and five with his second wife Avis.

The Pope and Perrott families.

The pedigrees are not complete but show the relationship between persons mentioned in the text.

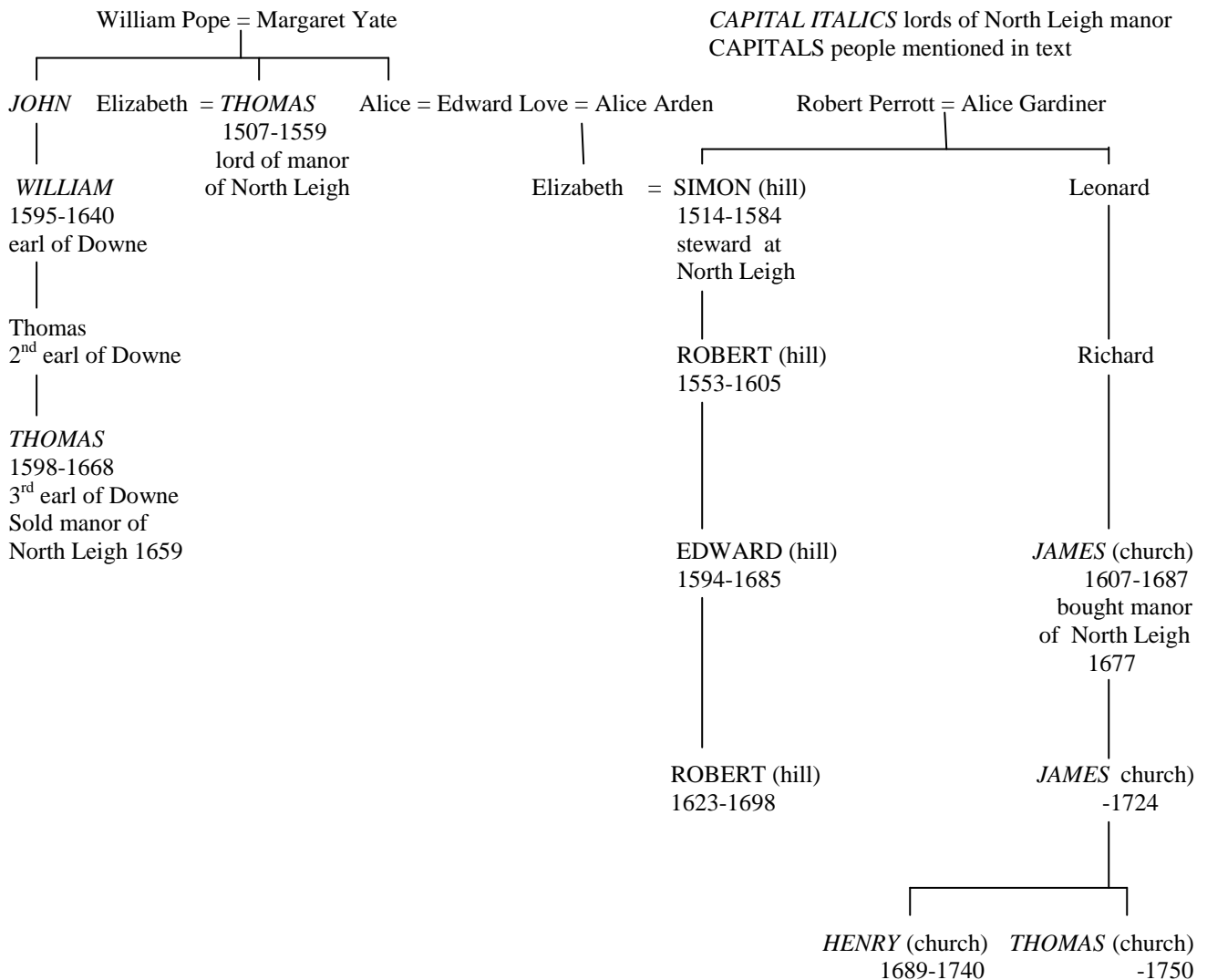


Figure 9 The relationship between the Pope family and the two branches of the Perrott family.

Simon Perrott died in 1584 and the brass commemorating his death¹⁹, in St Peter's in the East, Oxford now St Edmund Hall library, is shown in Figure 10.

The first part of the inscription reads:

Here resteth the bodies of Simon Parret Gentilman: master of arte: late fellowe of Magdalen Colledge and twice procter of the Universitie of Oxford: and Elizabeth his wife, daughter of Edward Love of Aenohe in the Countie of Northampton Esquier.

Simon Perrott was a fellow of Magdalen College 1533-50 and principal of Magdalen Hall 1541-50. At 37 he appears to have concentrated on the law and became steward of the manor of North Leigh at the age of 46 and continued in that capacity until he died in 1584, 25 years later. As steward of North Leigh he carried out a survey of the manor in 1581 which seems to have been lost but was copied into a notebook by his great grandson Robert Perrott in about 1655. The notebook gives details of the tenants and land holding in 1581 and 1655 and provides considerable information about farming in that period. The notebook will be considered later.



Figure 10. The Perrott brass in St. Peter's-in-the-East, Oxford.

Some North Leigh wills:

The number of wills registered in North Leigh increases dramatically after Sir Thomas Pope gained possession of the manor in 1544. There was 1 before 1544 and 44 in the remaining part of the century. They are generally concerned with livestock and farm implements but as time goes by they include tools of other trades, blacksmith, weavers, tailors, shoemakers and glovers. A few summaries of the wills will be given as they give an impression of the people. Most seem to have been written almost at the time of death. All summaries are quoted are from M.S. Wills Oxon transcribed by Christopher Day². One of the first was the vicar in 1537:

Henry Walkelat, vicar of North Leigh (1546, proved 1546).

Bequeaths to brothers Thomas, William, Lawrence, John and Robert. 20s. each.

To Lawrence a featherbed, folding table, great kettle, best gown and a chamblet(?) packet.

To Thomas his second gown.

To George his nephew a cupboard, a short gown, and a flock bed.

To godson Henry a sage gown, the great chest and a mattress.

To other godchildren 1s, each

To Joan Farmer his frock, a coffer, a pair of sheets, 10s, best table cloths, bed hangings.

2s. to the bells, 2s. to the torches.

To Joan Williams, his niece, 2 pots, 3 platters, 2 pair sheets,

1d. dole to poor on day of funeral.

To niece Margaret his carpet and a saucer

To niece Agnes his chafing dish and a saucer.
To niece Elizabeth 2 platters.
To niece Joan 2 pewter pots, 3 cushions, and 2 candlesticks.
Overseers: Robert Curtis and John Swift (3/4 each)
3/4 each to Alice Curtis and Alice Wright.
Is. to Catherine Mason.
Remainder to brothers.
Executors: William Wright and brother Lawrence.
 It would seem that this was a will on Wakelets death bed .

Next is a will referring to a cow named Gentle.
Richard Cosyne (1559)
To daughter Margaret a brown cow named Gentle.
To son William a mare colt.
To son Nicholas a horse colt.
To daughter Katherine a ewe.
To daughter Alice a ewe.
To son John half my blue bullock, or it's price.
Rest to wife Elizabeth.

An example of a copyholder.
Thomas Curtis (1559, proved 1560)
To brother Philip half my farm and underwood in North Leigh until my daughter Alice is 17 when he is to deliver the lease of them to her.
To Philip £40.
To Philip's 3 children, a lamb each.
To Mary and Alice Curtis, a lamb each.
To Alexander Hedges, my sister's son, 5 marks, but only if takes up an occupation.
 (things were ever thus),
Rest to wife Emma
Witnesses Richard Poore, Harry Poore, William King.
Inventory £20.18.0.
 So presumably brother Philip did not get his £40.

Even Richard Collier, a labourer made a will.
Richard Collier, labourer (1567)
To son William 4 ewes.
To son Thomas 4 ewes.
To son Philip my brown Heifer.
To daughter Alice my pied cow.
To daughter Margaret my red cow.
Rest to wife Maud.
Witnesses: Mr. Simon Parret, John Mitchell, clerk (vicar), and Philip Curtis.
Richard owes John Horsley of Oxford 10s, Mr. Bracegirdle of Brasenose 10s, Philp Curtis 2 bu. barley, a bu. malt, and 3 pecks of peas, William Collier 8d.
Is owed 10d. by Thomas Hanks of Witney, baker.
 Many of the wills have long lists of money that is owed to and by the writer of the will probably showing how the society handled poverty and need.

The will of William Dimock gives a good impression of the articles of value in a household.

at that time.

William Dimock, labourer. (1582).

To son Edward best brass pot, best kettle without a handle, the great charger with saucer, lattine(?) candlestick, 1 pair of sheets, 1 noble. Wife Elizabeth to have use during her life.

To daughter in law Mary little brass pot with one handle, great kettle with one handle, iron broche, saucer and lattine chafing dish.

To daughter in law Alice Passeons second brass pot, 3rd best brass kettle, the least iron broche, a gridiron, 2nd coffer with lock and keys.

To son in law William Passeons a bedstead.

To daughter in law Joan Passeons 3s. 4d. salt cellar, and coffer.

Rest to wife Elizabeth.

Inventory £4 15s.

A part of a will of Thomas Pearson, husbandman 1609 states:

My mind and intent is that the glass in the windows, the benches in the house, and the trestles under the table shall not be moved but remain and be as standings in the house for ever.

Manor court rolls 1559 – 1593.

A few manor court rolls exist from 1559-60 and 1591-93. An example follows²:

North Leigh, manor court 4 April 1559 by Simon Parrett steward.

Essoins (apologies): Francis earl of Shrewsbury 'for his lands there owes suit of court', essoin by William King (William King was the earl of Shrewsbury's tenant who later bought the farm next to the church); Henry earl of Derby 'for his lands there owes suit of court' essoin by Thomas Calcott (this is the estate which became Wilcote House).

Roger Ridley surrendered a cottage and close called Brigg's lately in tenure of Thomas Ridley to use of William Lane.

Richard Wright did fealty for a messuage, curtilage, and 1 ydld lately Ball's, a toft and ½ ydld called Maiter's (?), 2 tofts and ½ ydld called Wimpole's and Pope's, a cottage and land called Temple's.

Richard Sutton surrendered a tenement called Watt's to use of James Rafe.

The homage presents that no customary tenant is allowed to live outside the manor without special licence of the lord on penalty forfeiture of his tenement. Edward Orpwood, who holds of the lord a messuage 1 ydld, and 2 half ydlds, lives at le Morre and is in precept to the bailiff of the manor and is summoned to the next court to explain why his tenements should not be seised by the lord.

The tenants of the manor are to make and repair the bounds and limits of the manor called le woodmarks, as well as the gates and hedges around the common fields.

Tenants to ring their pigs.

The following was crossed out. *John White to have a copy made of a curtilage lying at Otmans well for building his house there. Marginal note: the fine (fee) of 20s not paid because White attained of felony and afterwards hanged at Northampton.*

Memo. That the steward with Curtis the bailiff, of the manor, are to view the decay of the tenements, with oversight of 4 of the lord's tenants, and cause necessary timber to be provided for repair.

A single constable and tithing were appointed. In the following year practically the whole manor was fined for not ringing pigs.

By 1566 William King, the earl of Shrewsbury's tenant, had bought the farm next to the church, that is the site of the original manor house. The farm now becomes known as King's farm and Church Road previously known as Kynne street soon becomes Kings street.

Case brought by the executor of John Mitchell, vicar of North Leigh 1574.

When the vicar, John Mitchell died in 1573 his book of accounts disappeared, and there was an inquiry into the loss²⁰ brought by his nephew and executor, another John Mitchell, the rector of Somerton. Unfortunately the relationship between the different people involved is difficult to unravel since there appears to be two Margaret Kings. William King is married to a Margaret King and they have three sons Edmund, Henry and Thomas, because Edmund King talks about his brothers Thomas and Henry King. Henry talks about his mother in law Margaret King, and Edmund talks about his mother Margaret King. So there must be two Margaret Kings. One Margaret King was previously married to Humphrey Kent but has now married a King, possibly William King's brother and Henry must have married a Kent daughter.

Case brought by John Mitchell, rector of Somerton and executor of John Mitchell, vicar of North Leigh. 1574

Examination of Margaret King (Henry King's mother in law)

Margaret King when married to late Humphrey Kent, took 14s to John Mitchell, late vicar of North Leigh, in part payment of a debt of £4-6-8. Mitchell kept a book of accounts in which he entered details of the tithes owing etc.

She heard the rector of Somerton say that Edmund and Henry King had burnt the book.

She said that on the night the vicar died, Thomas and Henry King went into the church with the clerk and removed the book and took it to their father, who wanted to see if his expenses as church-warden had been entered in the book.

Admitted she received into her house the clothes that Mitchell died in. She handed them over to the rector of Somerton.

There is damaged part of the document which probably says:

(Examination of Margaret King wife of William King). Henry King's mother.

She went to the vicar's house to get some weights of hers that the vicar had. She found him ready to die in the hands of John Ryve his servant and she and others 'got life again of him, and within one quarter an hour he departed his life'. She admitted tarrying in the vicar's house until 10 pm. Denied taking any money or goods that weren't her own, except a book she did deliver and one turkey cock. William King, her husband, owed Mitchell £5.

Examination of Henry King. (son of William King)

Denies any knowledge of the account book although he has heard people talk about it.

Didn't know what became of his bills of debt.

Admitted going into the church on the day of the vicar's death, but only to check that money for the church laid out by William King had been entered into the accounts.

A child named Margaret Browne came crying to the house of William King, where Henry King was and said the vicar was dead. He went there and found the vicar in a swoon. He recovered a little but died within half an hour. Henry remained in the house until 10 pm.

By commandment of his mother in law Margaret King he took home to his father's house one hose cloth of 1¾ yards of Kersey.

Denied opening the chest and removing anything from it, but admitted carrying pewter and other household stuff to Alice, the vicar's servant, and telling her to lay it up.

Denied any knowledge of debts owed to the vicar, but heard say that William King, his father, owed £5.

Examination of Edmund King. (son of William King).

Had heard from his mother Margaret King that the late vicar had a book of accounts, but knew nothing of it.

Knew of no bills of obligation in vicar's possession.

Thomas and Henry, his brothers, went into the church with the parish clerk to see if the vicar had entered into the church book a bill of William King's, his father, of 33s 4d.

After the vicar's death Margaret and Henry King had a hose cloth, a gown, a cassock and a pair of hose, and carried them to his father's house.

The vicar sold to John Sharpe of Southleigh a score of tegs (second year sheep) at 2s 4d each, payment to be on St. James's next. Edmund's mother Margaret King borrowed £5 from the vicar.

Knew of other debts due to vicar, but didn't know details.

Examination of William King.

Never saw a book of accounts, but had heard of it. The wives (the two Margarets?) who laid out the vicar and stripped him sent his clothes to King's house.

Was present when the vicar's maidservant and Margaret King opened the chest at the foot of the bed. Didn't remove anything.

Was present ¼ hour before death and ¼ hour after. Owed vicar £5. The money and cloth were ready to be included in an inventory.

Examination of (torn off)

Half an hour before vicar's death saw vicar's book of accounts in which he entered details of debts.

Last Michaelmas eve the deponent (person making a statement under oath) went into the vicar's chamber and saw an empty money bag on his bed. Asked vicar where the money from the bag was.

Vicar replied that had been great deal in it, but that he had loaned William King's wife £7 with promise of £3 more and that William King owed £20.

Examination of Thomas Clare, Mitchell's servant.

Vicar had book of reckonings with dealings between him and neighbours. Of paper covered in parchment. Wont to lie in chamber window.

Last Michaelmas one Nicholas Gunnes of Witney paid vicar £7 for wool in his hall in the vicarage.

Vicar loaned William King's wife £7 with promise of £3 more and that William King owed £20.

The document gives no indication of the result of the inquiry but it is fairly clear that the King family colluded in trying to reduce their debt to the vicar by destroying the account book.

The manorial survey 1581.

As mentioned earlier Simon Perrott the steward from 1559-84 prepared a manorial survey. The survey appears to no longer exist but large tracts of the survey were copied into a notebook²¹, probably by his great-grandson Robert Perrott in about 1655. Beryl Schumer transcribed the notebook and has commented on it in a thesis for the Extra-Mural Department of the University of London 1974¹⁵. The thesis is available in the archives of the North Leigh History Society. The quotations given in this section come from Beryl Schumer's transcription. The survey in 1581 was probably carried out to make a reference copy of the strips in the common arable fields. Because of the number and complexity of the strips there always must have been a list of strips which was amended as changes occurred. A benefit suggested by Beryl Schumer would be to enable strips in the arable fields to be gathered together so that exchange would produce fewer larger blocks of land and this can be seen to have occurred. In 1655 the great-grandson, Robert Perrott, was a trained lawyer and probably also just wanted an updated record of land holdings and a record of customary practice which was the basis for the decisions in the manor court.

From the survey it appears that in 1581 that the tenants hold 5 ydlds and 50 half ydlds or 30 ydlds in total. This compares with 31½ ydlds held by unfree tenants in 1279 and 32½ ydlds from sale of works in 1445. The differences are even smaller if holdings of freemen or freeholders are included the numbers then become 35 5/6 in 1275, 36 ½ in 1445 and 36 in 1581. This suggests that the ydlds and half yardlands were established very early and remained much as they were except for the absorption of assarts. One difference that occurs between 1279 and later is that tenants often hold more than one yardland or half yardland at the same time. This would have become possible when the customary work was no longer being carried out but was paid for or included in the rent. As well as the tenant's land and freeland the demesne had 8 ydlds of arable land in 1581 (241 a.) and 3 ploughlands in 1279. A ploughland is usually considered to be about 100 acres but would not be inconsistent with 80 acres.

Earlier it was suggested that in 1279, when the Church was endowed, a two field grouping of arable fields was in operation because the glebe was divided between *one* field and the *other*. The 1581 survey indicates that there were three groups or years of common arable fields. The notebook states:

<i>1 y(eare) fallow</i>	<i>2 yeare</i>	<i>3y(eare)</i>
<i>Over Riding</i>	<i>Edging Field</i>	<i>the Church Field</i>
<i>North Field</i>	<i>Caden Hill</i>	
<i>Beyond the Bridge</i>	<i>Nether Riding</i>	

North Field, Over Riding and Beyond the Bridge are the first year; Edgings Field, Caden Hill and Nether Riding are the second; and Church Field the third. From the notebook it is apparent the Sturt Field and Heycroft were included within Church Field. The whole of Sturt was held by the renter of the manor but could be used in common in the other two years. The colour coded groups and the components are shown on map Figure 11. The three year rotation would mean that the three years could be wheat field (cereals), hitching field (pulses) and fallow. In the reeves reports in 1373, 85 a of cereals were planted (23½ a of pulses), in 1374 129 a of cereals (16 a of pulses) were planted and this would leave only 27 a. for a possible third year assuming the demesne had the 241 acres it had in 1581. This probably means a two year system was in operation in 1374 and this also appears to be true in 1450 but not for 1581.

The first part of the notebook consists of a list of the holdings of different strips in the arable fields for 1581 and those of some but not all the corresponding holders in 1655. What is surprising is that

there are so many strips, over 1700 entries. In 1581, the manor farm and the freeholders, Edmund

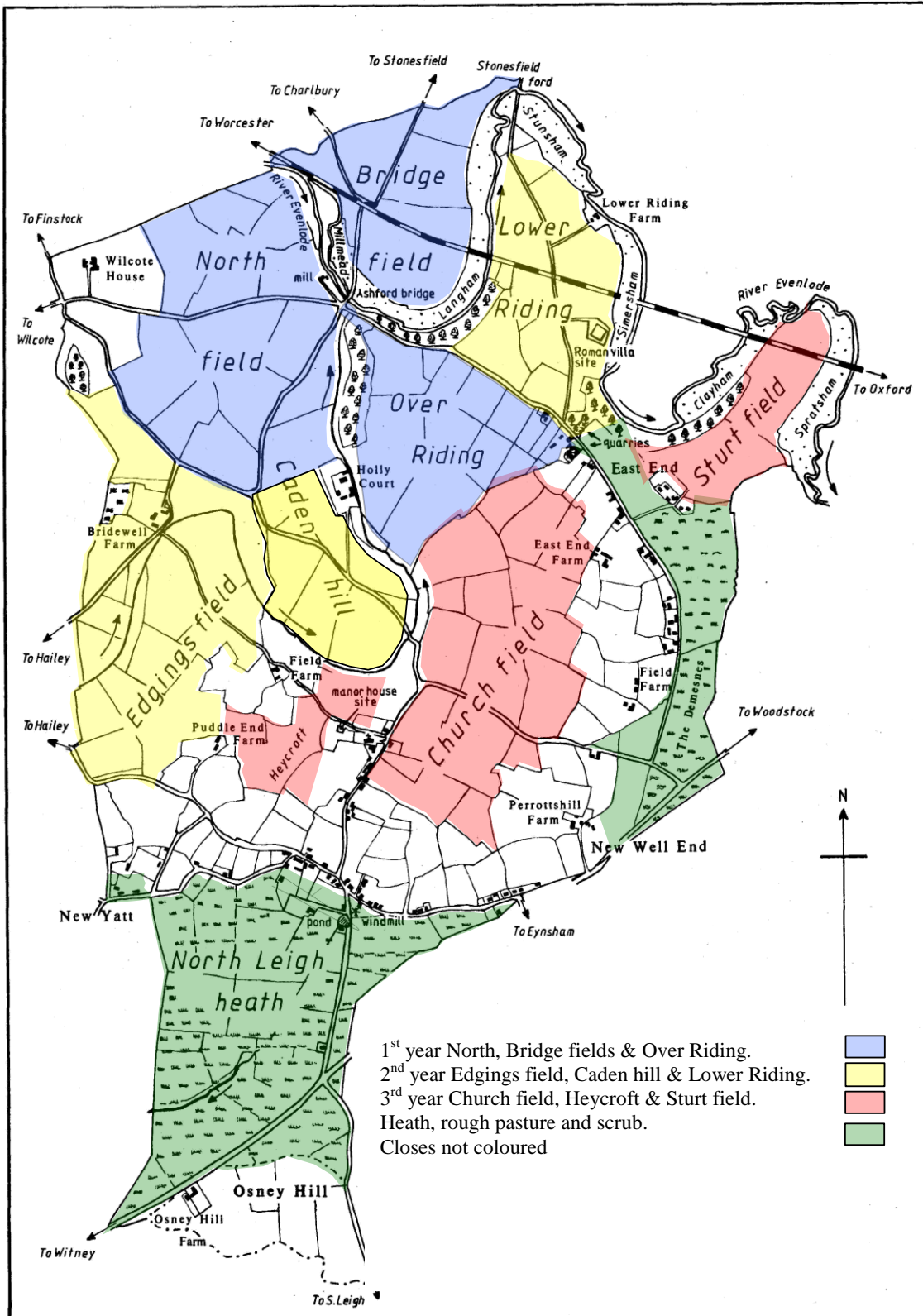


Figure 11. Showing arable fields heath and years before 1759.

King and the Bishop of Oxford, have larger blocks of land, varying between 3 and 40a. Some of the copyholders also hold blocks of a few acres but the vast majority of holdings are equivalent to a ½ a

or $\frac{1}{4}$ a or smaller. It must have been extremely difficult to fix the boundaries or even remember the sequence of so many strips each year and this must have been the main function of the 1581 survey. The strips are entered into the notebook as 1 yeard (abbreviated as y) or 1 land (abbreviated as l). The yeard should not be confused with a yardland (yld) about 30 acres, or a yard the old unit of length (that is 3 feet). Yeard in this period is used as another way of spelling yard; in the present work yeard should always be taken to mean a unit of area. Robert Perrott says the yeard should be about a $\frac{1}{4}$ acre and a land $\frac{1}{2}$ acre but can be as little as half this size. It is difficult to see why the strips are so small since one acre was supposed to be the land that could be ploughed by one ox team in one day, but the reason may go back to when the land was originally assarted. In the 1279 survey the 55 villeins held their half yardland (about 15 a) but also typically held assarts of $\frac{1}{2}$ a and $\frac{1}{4}$ a. Of the 86 assarts mentioned, 58 were $\frac{1}{2}$ a or smaller and it seems reasonable that these small assarts eventually became incorporated in the yardland or half yardland. A possible reason for the small assarts might be a measure of the land that a tenant could clear in one year; considerable additional time and effort would be needed for clearing trees, stumps and roots from a quarter or half an acre of woodland and would be in addition to work on the villein's land and on the lord's land. Once one strip was cleared the process could be repeated by another tenant.

It is not clear from the 1581 survey how long the strips were; for an acre strip the piece of land should be one furlong (furrow long or 220 yards) by 22 yards wide. Thus it should be 11 yards wide for a land and $5\frac{1}{2}$ yards wide for a yeard. It seems unlikely that the shape of the fields bounded by roads streams and rivers would allow strips of exactly 220 yards long. Butts, which are strips shorter than usual, and pikes which are strips that are tapered because of the field shape, are mentioned but not very frequently. On page 70 of the notebook Robert Perrott is complaining that his strips have been encroached upon by his neighbours.

29) It appears on measuring by Edw Calcot and John Fox and me that allowing 6 yards breadth to a yeard, Edw to his peece ($8\frac{1}{2}$ lands or 102 yards) has about 8 yards over measure, and Mason on the other side of me has 7 yards to his yeard, yet to my 1 land and 2 yeards there is but 21 yards so that I have lost there $\frac{1}{2}$ yeard (3 yards). Mine is 21 (yards) broad and (1)74 (yards) long.

The 29 refers to the page in the notebook and the page is given below as an example of a typical page. Robert Perrott's 1 land and 2 yeards should be an acre but in fact even if it were 3 yards wider would still only be only 0.87 acres because the length is (1)74 yards rather than 220. Hence Robert Perrott's statement on page 64 of the notebook:

We do account 2 lands or 4 yeards for an acre because it is commonly called notwithstanding by measure 4 lands or 8 yeards will scant make an acre.

The acreage at inclosure in 1759 was about 1309 acres which included 50 acres of meadow in 1581 (see below) giving a total of about 1259 acres in the arable fields. This can be compared with the acreage calculated from 4 yeards and 2 lands to an acre assuming that the fields have not changed in area:

	Acreage	Acreage from y and l.	Ratio
Total arable	1259	1535	0.82

Counting the yeards, lands and acres in the three years gives in field acres:

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
North Field	342	Edging Field	228	Church Field	273
Over Riding	117	Caden Hill	92	Heycroft	47
Beyond the Bridge	126	Nether Riding	188	Sturt	119
Total	585	Total	508	Total	439
38 %		33 %		29 %	

These values should be considered to be approximate since the precise values depend on how headlands, butts, pikes and certain 'peeces' of unknown size are treated. The value 119 for the Sturt is estimated below. Provided the Sturt Field is included in Church Field the amounts in each year is reasonably uniform and would become more so if the 'peeces' in Church Field had significant size.

Page 29 of the notebook previously referred to is given below: the first column of names are the holders in 1581 and the second column the holder in about 1655 some 74 years later.

NETHER RIDING

At the way going to Simmersham

1	y	<i>Ph Curtes</i>]	<i>R Perrot</i>
2	y	<i>Joan Curtes</i>]	
2	y	<i>Mag Barfoot</i>]	
2	y	<i>Joan Curtes</i>		<i>E Calcot</i>
2	y	<i>Calcot</i>]	
3	y	<i>Barfoot</i>]	<i>R Barfoot</i>
5	y	<i>Mag Barfoot</i>]	
3	y	<i>Gilman</i>		<i>Grainger</i>
2	y	<i>Mason</i>		<i>Mason</i>
2	y	<i>Ph Curtes</i>		<i>R Perrot</i>
2	y	<i>Brown</i>		<i>Whitley</i>
2	y	<i>Joan Curtes</i>		<i>R Perrot</i>
2	y	<i>Calcot</i>]	
1	l	<i>Brown</i>		
1	l	<i>Calcot</i>		
1	l	<i>Brown</i>		
1	l	<i>Calcot</i>		<i>E Calcot</i>
1	y	<i>Ph Curtes</i>		
1	y	<i>Perrot</i>		
1	l	<i>Calcot</i>		
1	l	<i>Ph Curtes</i>		
1	l	<i>Calcot</i>]	
1	y	<i>Perrot</i>]	
1	y	<i>Ph Curtes</i>		<i>R Perrot</i>
1	l	<i>Calcot</i>]	
1	y	<i>Mason</i>		<i>Mason</i>
2	y	<i>Gilman</i>		(blank not named)
1	headland	<i>Calcot</i>		<i>E Calcot had the former year</i>
1	headland	<i>Brown</i>]	
1	y	<i>Barfoot</i>		<i>Whitley</i>
1	y	<i>Calcot</i>]	
2	y	<i>Ph Curtes</i>		<i>R Perrot at the north end of these yeards</i>

It is interesting that 2 yeards in the above example do not become 1 land, and 2 lands do not become 1 acre, when held by an individual and this is true throughout the survey. The only exception seems to be when the blocks are many acres; even so there are blocks for example of 12 yeards. The blocks may become acres when they consist of a mixture of yeards and lands. It seems the strips usually remain in the same units probably to maintain consistency between surveys, perhaps adding weight to the argument that they were the result of assarting hundreds of years earlier. The fact that the sequence of names in 1581 repeats such as, Curtes, Calcot, Perrot, or, Brown and Calcot, probably means almost adjacent strips have been swapped to make ploughing easier. That is each strip is ploughed in one direction with the return taking place by ploughing the next but one strip in the other direction. This eliminates the need for figure of eight turns on the end of the furrow or headland (see

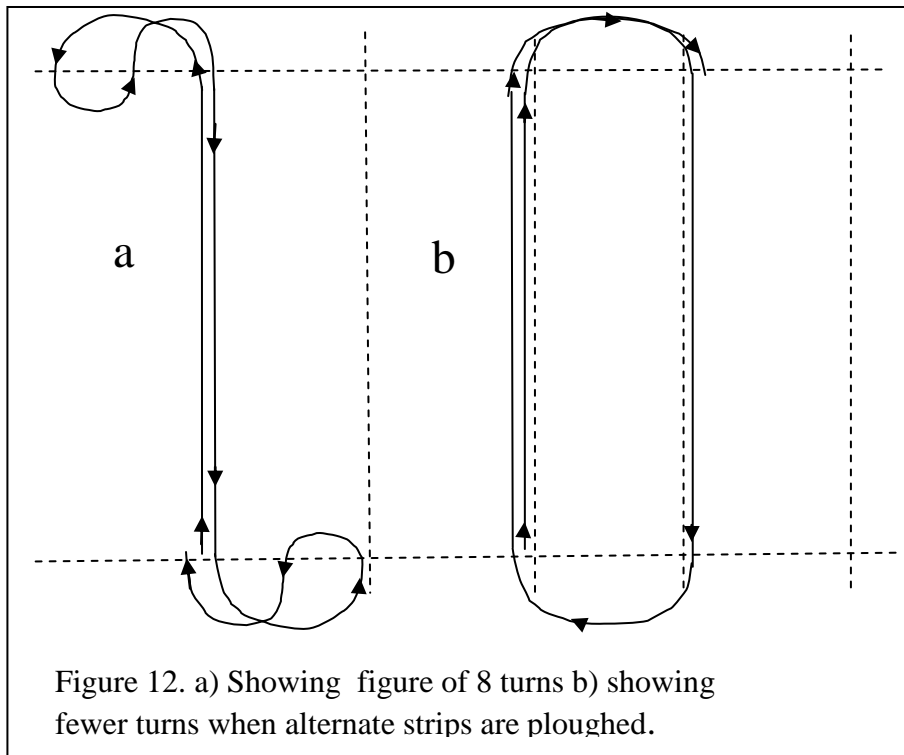


Figure 12. a) Showing figure of 8 turns b) showing fewer turns when alternate strips are ploughed.

Figure 12). In this example some of the names remain the same in 1655, such as Mason while others have been grouped together to form larger blocks. It is interesting that the headland is held by an individual and so appears to be cultivated; presumably it could not be ploughed until all the strips had been ploughed. There are 59 pages of similar details for the rest of this field and the other fields.

In Edgings Field, also known as Ichynfield (the field of the Itchen stream), Echensfeld and Eginges field, a part is called Edgings Moore and this is

divided into plats and lots rather than yeards and lands. This probably indicates that this part of this field was too wet to be ploughed and was used as a permanent meadow. A small number of the strips are described as leys (grass for hay). In addition at various times, parts of the arable fields such as, for example, Dudwell Hill is described as pasture (Reeve's report 1448).

On page 69 of the notebook the meadows are listed:

<i>There are 5 common Lott meadows appertaining unto this manor of North Leigh.</i>	
1. Langham containing by estimation of measured ground by the pole	13 acres.
2. Stunsham containing by estimation of the pole.	10
3. Simersham containing by measure	8
4. Clayham by measure	7
5. Spatsham by measure	12
<i>Total</i>	50 acres.

These are along the river and are marked on the figures with a map.

In 1581 there were 5 types of tenants; the renter of the manor, 24 copyholders for life, three lord's cottagers, 2 freeholders and 21 copyholders of inheritance. The farmer rented the manor of 8

yardlands. The copyholders were called copyholders because the details of their tenancies were entered in the manor court roll and they would have a copy. The villeins or customary tenants of 1279 survey, paying a rent and working part of the time for the lord of the manor, became contractual tenants in the 1372 accounts where money was paid to the lord of the manor instead of carrying out part, or all, of the customary work. Later the rent and sale of works become combined into a sum of money paid by contractual tenants who become the copyholders. In 1581 all of the half and full yardlands of arable land were held by the copyholders for life; this means that in principle the lord of the manor could give the tenancy to another family when the tenant died, although in North Leigh this seldom occurred. The lord's cottagers were similar but have smaller amounts or no land. The two freeholders are the Bishop of Oxford and Edmund King. Both pay money to the lord of the manor but are able to sell their holdings. The Bishop of Oxford holds 1 yardland and the farm that becomes Wilcote House; Edmund King holds 5 yardlands and the original manor house next to the church. By this period freeland probably need not be held by freemen as it had been in the 1279 survey since the distinction between free and unfree had been blurred. The copyholders by inheritance have cottages and small amounts of land some of which is stated to be freeland which they can sell or pass onto members of their family. They pay a sum of money to the lord of the manor and appear to have the freedom to do what they want with their paddocks and closes. Many of the copyholders of inheritance have built new cottages on their closes.

Some of the holdings will be given below as examples; a summary of the land held calculated by adding yeards, lands and acres in the detailed listing will be given.

The manor farm:

<i>The lords farmer of Holy Court holds 8 yardlands thereto belonging with one close to his house adjoining by estimation</i>	<i>3 acres,</i>
<i>2 moores (wet pasture) by estimation</i>	<i>4 acres,</i>
<i>1 close at the Bridge by estimation</i>	<i>2 acres,</i>
<i>Stirt Close by estimation (not the Stirt arable field)</i>	<i>1 acre,</i>
<i>and Sheapherds Close by estimation</i>	<i>2 acres,</i>
<i>with a certain peece of meadow in Langham by estimation</i>	<i>7 acres,</i>
<i>in Stunsham another peece of meadow by estimation</i>	<i>6 acres,</i>
<i>and a peece in Spratsham by estimation</i>	<i>2 acres,</i>
<i>to the quantity of 40 loads of hay.</i>	
<i>The number of arable (land) appertaining to the farmer, viz</i>	<i>241 acres</i>
<i>the rent</i>	<i>£6-13-4</i>
<i>The same farmer holds of the lord 5 little coppices of wood containing 15 acres,</i>	
<i>by rent</i>	<i>£3-6-8</i>
<i>The rent of all</i>	<i>£10-0-0</i>

It is of interest that as far back as 1424 the rent for the manor was £10 and it was reduced to £8 in the agricultural depression of 1454 probably to ensure that the manor was rented out. The farmer has 15 out of the total 50 acres in the meadows and there are about 30 field acres per yardland.

By adding the yeards, lands and acres in the survey of strips the manor farm has:
 North Field 40 acres, Beyond the Bridge 30 acres, Over Riding 3 acres
 giving a total for the first year 73 acres or 30.3%

Edgings Field 9 acres, Caden Hill 32 acres,
 giving a total for the second year 41 acres or 17%

Church Field 8 acres, The Sturt 119 acres (?)
 giving a total for the third year 127 acres or 52.7%

and a total, for the three years, of 241 field acres (or about 198 statute acres).

The size of the Sturt was not given in the survey, the 119 acres was chosen to give the correct total of 241 acres. A value of 119 acres estimated from yeards, lands and acres would be consistent with the measured size at inclosure of 102.56 acres when an allowance for the meadows is included.

Copyholders for term of life:

Simon Perrott, the writer of the original survey, is the steward and a copyholder for life; his 2½ yardland holding is as follows:

Imprimis Simon Perrott one messuage with appurtances at New Well End wherein he dwells called Wenepoles and Popes with one small close on the backside of his house, one half yardland thereunto apperteyning.

*Item. One close called Martyns, commonly called Picked Close estimated 1 acre
 with one half yardland thereunto apperteyning.*

*Item. One close called Ball's Close by estimation 2 acres
 with one whole yardland thereunto apperteyning;*

and other close called the New Close lying at New Well End by estimation 3 acres

*Item. One cottage late free ground called Temples lying at Eastman Yate with a close there unto belonging by estimation ½ acre
 and certain lands in the corn fields to the quantity of one half yardland
 and certain lotts of grass in the common meads to the quantity of 5 loads of hay.*

By a yearly rent of 31/4, of which the free ground called Temples 2/2

*Item. One meadow called Close Meadow by estimation 3 acres,
 by rent 26/8
 and one close called Maggotts by estimation 1½ acres
 by the rent of 4/-
 The arable land apperteyning to the aforesaid 2 yardlands and ½ 77 acres.*

*Item, the said Simon holds the corne mill called Ashford Mill with 2 acre of arable land in the common field (1 in Over Riding and 1 in Edgings Field), with one close called the Dove Close and one orchard and three haines, and the fishing of the waters from the end of Lady Grove to Stunsford, by the common of one yardland in all places of the lordship,
 by the rent of 33/4*

The amount of arable land in each year for Simon Perrott (not including the mill) was calculated by adding the yeards, lands and acres in the survey:

North Field 11.5 a., Beyond the Bridge 3.25 a., Over Riding 10.25 a.
giving a total for the first year 27.5 acres or 36.2%.

Edgings Field 5 a., Caden Hill 2.5 a., Nether Riding 22.5 a.
giving a total for the second year 29.5 acres or 37.3 %.

Church Field 19 a.
giving a total for the third year 19 acres or 25 %

and a total for the three years of 76 acres and 30.4 field acres or 24.9 statute acres per yardland.

*Philip Curtes holds 1 messuage with 2 yardlands and 2 closes adjoyning to his house and one paddock at East End by estimation 4 acres
and one other close called Watkins by estimation 1 acre and 3 yeards
of certain meade in Symersham, 1 yeard of meade
in Claum and 1 yeard of certain meade in
Spratsham, with certain lotts of gras in the common meades to a quantity of 4 loads of hay. By the rent of 27/-.*

The amount of arable land in each year for Philip Curtes calculated by adding the yeards, lands and acres in the survey:

North Field 13.25, Beyond the Bridge 5, Over Riding 9.5,
giving a total for the first year 27.75 field acres or 42.7 %

Edgings Field 5, Caden Hill 2.75, Nether Riding 10.25
giving a total for the second year 18 field acres or 27.7 %

Church Field 19.25
giving for the third year 19.25 acres or 29.6 %

and a total for the three years of 65 acres and 32.5 field acres or 26.7 statute acres per yardland.

There follows 22 other copyholders for life with holdings varying from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ yardland. Walter Curtes appears twice in the list in the notebook but by counting his strips all his land appears in the first entry. The holdings for the tenants include certain lotts in the common meadows but almost always at the rate of 1 load of hay per half yardland; an exception is the demesne with $2\frac{1}{2}$ loads per half yardland and two of the two yardlanders

Twelve of the copyholders for life pay rent at the rate of $\frac{7}{2}$ per half yardland with holdings from a half to two yardlands. This appears to have been the rate since about 1448 when the rent was $\frac{6}{8}$ plus 6d for works for a half yardland. In 1279 the rent was $2\frac{1}{4}$ per half yardland and in 1373 the rent was still $2\frac{1}{4}$ but works could be paid for at the rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ per half yardland. This shows how remarkably stable the rent and works had been. Some of the other tenants paid more and some paid less than the standard rate for no very obvious reason. The $\frac{7}{2}$ per half yardland compares with $\frac{12}{6}$ per half yardland paid by the renter of the manor farm.

Cottagers for term of life:

There are three cottagers for term of life and their rent in comparison with the copyholders for life is extremely high.

Robert Goon holds 1 cotage and 1 close by estimation 1 year, ½ acre of a certain meade in Simersham and 7¼ acres of arable land. Rent 9/4

Martin Harris holds 1 cotage and 1 close by estimation 1 acre, and 1 ½ acres arable land in the corne fields. Rent 9/4

Widow Lane 1 cotage with the appurtenances and one close called Bonges by estimation ½ an acre. Rent 4/4

Freeholders and suitors unto the lord's court:

1. *The Bishop of Oxford for his house and lands in the parish of North Leigh owes suit and service at the Lord's Court and paies yearly unto the Lord of North Leigh 4/6*

2. *Edmund King holds 5 yardlands in North Leigh of the lord and owens suit and service for the farm at the Lord's Court and payes yearly unto the Lord of North Leigh 4/9½*

The total for the two of 9/3½ is reasonably consistent with the 9/5 owed each year for the two properties by the heirs of Willam Wilcote and Elizabeth Blacket in 1445 and even with the total for the two free tenants in 1279 of 7/8 with an unspecified amount for scutage (payment in lieu of military service) This suggests the two freeholds were formed very early but have now grown in size from a total of 4 ylds to 6 ylds. An average of 1/7 per yardland per annum is being paid by the freeholders: this is a significant amount of money but is about one tenth of that paid by the copyholders for life.

There follows the 21 copyholders of inheritance, they hold one or more of cottage, close and arable land. Some of the arable land in the list of strips is marked as freeland some is not. New cottages have been built on 11 of the closes. Examples of the entries are:

Copiholders of inheritance and suitors unto the Lord's Court.

Imprimis Robert Parret (probably Simon Perrott's son) holds of the Lord 2 old cotages and 3 closes lying at New Well End and 1 acre of ground in the Church field and 3 quarters of an acre of arable in the corn fields by a yearly rent of 2/2

The sayd Robert Parret holdeth also one close called Mockmeres close lying at New Well End by the yearly rent of 8d

The arable land is marked as free in the list of strips.

Henry Pombery holds 1 old cotage with a small paddock on which ground he hath builded a new cotage. Rent 4d

*Philip Cox holds a little stripe of ground in Kite Lane. Rent 5¼d
He hath built a new cotage on the same.*

Thomas Ridley holds three closes and 12¼ acres of arable land in the common fields. Rent 5/7¾

Most of this arable land in this holding is not marked as free in the list of strips.

None of the copyholders of inheritance appear in the list of copyholders for life although there are many examples of the same family name appearing. It is possible that an old cottage just means it was present when the close became copyhold of inheritance and it is a new cottage when it was built after that time. Even if this is the case it is apparent that new cottages are needed. Copyholders of inheritance have developed into a form of freehold. Item 6 from Usages and Customs from the notebook, which is summarised below, gives an indication when this occurred and how the system operated.

Old and Ancient usages used without the memory of man within the Lordship of North Leigh.

1. States the tenants have the use of the heath *with all manner of cattall* and also *hath the fures* (furze) *growing upon the said ground.*
2. *The Lord has tyme out of mind granted copies in new surrender within the Lordship as appears by ancient copies registered in the book of survey.* That is, a new tenant is given a written statement of his holding including the strips in the common fields.
3. States Bishop of Oxford's land is like any other 1 yardland.
4. States five whole yardlands and 50 half yardlands in Lordship.
5. *The Mill is accounted for 1 ylld in all payments whatsoever among the tenants.*
6. *That no copiholder of inheritance shall pass from him that is in possession by testament or by any other means, but only by surrender in the Lord's Court by him that is in possession (or his attorney), unto whom the surrender should be made. And it is lawfull for the heir that is in possession to alienate, sell, surrender, or put away his inheritance aforesaid from his heirs to any stranger whatsoever he or she bee; so (provided?) that he do it in his life tyme by his owne act in the Court or (of?) his surrender; this appears in the old Court Roll bearing the date 24 Sept 37 H 8. (24 Sept in the 37th year of the reign of Henry the VIII, 1546)*
7. Ashfield (Ashford) bridge should be repaired by the farmer, the freeholders and by all the tenants of North Leigh
8. Is concerned with the route to Close Meade which has been changed.

Thus it appears that copyholders of inheritance were introduced in about 1546 immediately after Sir Thomas Pope gained possession of the manor and that the copyholder could sell the property to anyone provided the transfer was registered in the manor court. There appear to be very few wills registered in North Leigh before 1545, but after that date there is a rapidly increasing number showing that copyholders of inheritance have property to leave.

A possible reason why the manor is charging such high rents for the cottagers for life and only 3 remain is that the lord of the manor is trying to put pressure on the cottagers to become copyholders of inheritance. One reason for doing this might be the money that is immediately raised; another less obvious reason is the manor does not have to repair the cottages when the tenant dies.

In summary, there appear to be about 54 cottages or houses mentioned in the survey. About half the households farm a significant amount of land between 2½ yllds (about 62 acres) a half ylld (12 acres). The arable land is held in small strips or in larger blocks in the arable fields. The arable fields are divided into three years groupings. The amount of land in each year is not uniform in the three groupings nor is it uniform for each tenant. In addition to the arable land, most of the tenants have small closes of a few acres and grazing rights on the common rough pasture. The tenants holding little land, probably worked on the demesne, on the freeholders land and on the larger copyhold properties. There would also have been a blacksmith, baker, bootmaker, quarryman, limekiln worker, brewer and beer seller living in the copyholders of inheritance properties. By this time there may also have been glovemakers associated with Woodstock and weavers with Witney.

From the 1581 survey a picture can be built up of the topography of the village in 1581 and before. As discussed the common land in the village consisted of three parts, the arable fields, rough pasture or heath and the hay meadows. The woods do not appear to be held in common.

There were the three groups of arable fields; each of the arable fields would have been an open expanse of land with blocks typically of 10 acres (220 by 220 yds, a furlong by a furlong) The blocks would each consist of numerous strips of land mostly a land (½ acre) or a yeard (¼ acre) At the end of each block perpendicular to the strips there would have been a headland. This might have been slightly raised because of sods dropped off the plough and plough oxen over many hundreds of years. There would probably not have been the deep ridges and furrows seen on downland farms because nowhere is the soil particularly deep and there was little need for drainage above the limestone based soils. Livestock would be fed and grazed on the fields not being prepared for crops or growing crops in an attempt to maintain soil fertility. The arable fields would have been fenced, particularly from the closes and the coppices. In addition the fields would probably have been fenced and gated from each other to prevent livestock straying from one year to the next. There must have been some method for marking the strip boundaries, probably by the merestones referred to later.

The rough pasture or heath was the large expanse about 400 acres on the south and south east of the parish on the clay based soils. This would have been impoverished rough grazing with small amounts scrub and furze not unlike parts of the present North Leigh common. The common pasture would be open but fenced from the closes and coppices. The 50 acres of meadow were along the flood plains by the river and so were fertilised after each flood. The meadows were used to provide most of the hay needed for winter sheep and cattle feed. The woods and coppices were controlled by the lord of the manor and were probably where they are now, on the steep banks above the river and the Itchen at Hollycourt. There is evidence that North Leigh wood was felled soon after the civil war.

In summary the heathland and arable fields would have been very open. The arable fields would be hedged and gated from each other. There would be small closes and orchards around the houses and the patches of woodland would have stood out in contrast to the generally open landscape.

Court rolls 1588-1602²²

These rolls are very much those of a farming community governing itself and concerned with ensuring the efficient running of the village, ringing pigs, mending hedges, and show the importance of wood and woodland.

Items from 7th of April 1591.

Alice Greville and her son Fras. fined 3s. 4d. for breaking the regulations with respect to the common of pigs.

John Greville cut down an oak next to the spring called Otemeale well on the common called the heath. The homage is to meet on 30th April to inquire re. Trees cut down by John Greville on the heath.

All hedges between neighbours and the fields to be put in repair before 1 May. Penalty 10s.

No one is to gather peas except from his own land. Penalty 12d.

No one to introduce cattle in 'le hades' (the headlands?) beyond the bridge after 10 Apr. on penalty of 10s.

There is granted by Mr. Pope (crossed out) two trees for the repair of Ashford bridge and one tree for Felstrete gate. Mr. Pope is William Pope, son of Sir Thomas Pope's brother John, the new lord of the manor.

Examination to be made re. the controversy between Richard Pore and Jacua Gilman, widow, about certain trees growing at Wilcote, and re. a controversy between John Write and the said Jacua at Spysers herne.

It is the custom of the manor of North Leigh that every householder being copyhold for term of life ought to pay for headsilver 7d p.a. and every cottage and servant receiving wages 2d.

From the 1594 court.

Essoins: William Lenthall, gent., for his lands at Wilcote; Edmund King

William Lenthall should pay to the lord of the manor 4s.6d. p.a. quit rent and 7d p.a. headsilver.

This is the sum paid by the Bishop of Oxford for the Wilcote freetenancy in the 1581 survey but is now called a quit rent, that is tax paid to be quit of the duties attached to the tax. William Lenthall was the father of William Lenthall the Speaker of the Houses of Parliament in the Long parliament. When King Charles I entered the House of Commons in 1640 to seize five 'disruptive' members and when asked to point the members out Lenthall replied "May it please your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as the House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here." The father William Lenthall appears to have paid an active part in the manor.

From the 1595 court.

After the harvest no cattle are to be allowed in the fields of Nether Riding or Over Riding or the meadows adjoining them without the consent of William Lenthall, Robert Parret, Edmund Hart and Edmund King. William Lenthall and Edmund King were the two freeholders and Robert Parret (Perrott) was the Pope's steward. The Lenthall family did not stay in North Leigh very long, and in 1610 John Lenthall sold his lands at Wilcote.

An item in 12th April 1600 Court Roll shows a much more forceful court.

It was agreed that Thomas Franklin, John Calcut, Arthur Holden and John Bailey do set down what every tenant shall have for satisfaction in exchange with Hollycourt land, and the tenants to stand thereto on pain of disagreeing 20s; except John Kent, who is to be satisfied in the Church field, and Henry Phipps as far as he may. And it is agreed that Mr. Pope's land being land together it shall be lawful for him to inclose the same, except in the fields beyond the bridge and the Stirt because in those fields his lands cannot be inclosed, in consideration whereof Mr. Pope agrees to relinquish all his common in all his fields and meadows,.

This is clearly an attempt by the lord of the manor to put all of Hollycourt's land into one area so that it can be inclosed and taken out of the common fields. In 1581 Franklin, Calcut, Kent and Phipps were local families. Arthur Holden and John Bailey were not and were probably the lord of the manor's agents. It is interesting to note that in 1581 all of Hollycourt's land was in blocks and mostly in large blocks; even so further consolidation was occurring. It is also interesting to note that Stirt (Sturt) which was already fully held by Hollycourt in 1581 could not be inclosed. This was probably because it was commonable by the residents of Combe after the harvest and in the fallow years. As was established in "Case of rights of common in North Leigh 1540" which was discussed previously This was probably also the reason why Beyond the Bridge could not be inclosed, but in this case it would have Stonesfield's grazing rights which would have been infringed. By this time there could have been little benefit for the manor to have arable land within the common fields. The tenants of North Leigh could be persuaded or forced to give up their grazing rights but the manor could not apply pressure on the people of Combe and Stonesfield.

Items from the 9th October 1602 court.

John Drinkwater fined 10s. for refusing the office of constable.

No cattle to be allowed in the wheat fields after the feast of St. Luke. (18th October)

Thomas Franklin and William Phipps appointed ale tasters.

No one to cut furze on the heath or in Netley wood for 3 years.
The latter extreme measure must have been to allow regrowth.

Survey of Wychwood 1609²³

When King James I came to the throne there was an attempt to restore the funding presumed lost from the royal forests. Sir Henry Hobart, the Attorney General tried to include much of North Leigh within the forest of Wychwood based on a survey in 1609. The survey was supposed to follow the 1300 survey, discussed earlier, but now the survey appeared to include the heath and all to the west of Church road and much of the land south of the Wilcote road. The contention that much of North Leigh was in the forest could have been based on the uncertainty of the site of Grundesweleye, discussed earlier, and because rent was paid to King Henry VIII for assarts. The lord of the manor Sir William Pope pointed out that money for assarts was paid when the manor was held by the King after the dissolution of the monasteries. Sir William won for North Leigh but lost the argument for many of his other properties. If he had lost he would have had to pay tax for the assarts that had been made in the King's forest.

Hollycourt.

In about 1600 Sir William Pope the lord of the manor let the manor farm to George Berrington for 21 years at £10, plus 4 capons and 4 hens p.a.. Berrington paid £500 and agreed to rebuild the house which was to cost another £500, The house was rebuilt and in 1612 Berrington conveyed the remaining part of the lease to Robert Thorpe.

In 1621 Sir William declared the lease to Robert Thorpe forfeit.

In Thorpe's statement²⁴ in 1622 he says:

In 1612 Thorpe sent the poultry to Sir Williams Pope who returned them saying it was customary to pay money instead at a rate of 12d. a bird. This Thorpe paid until the death of the rent collector, Robert Taylor, in 1615. Taylor's successor, William Steane, said he knew nothing of the rents in kind and declined payment until he had gained further information. Thorpe remained at the farmhouse at Hollycourt, for 12 months, ready to pay when asked. Then moved to London, and was prepared to pay each rent day but heard nothing. Pope declared the estate forfeit and has made new leases of the farm to Thomas Haynes et al.

Reply by Sir William Pope and Thomas Haynes:

They accuse Thorpe of being a "pragmatical and a factious man full of quarrel and contention" They acknowledge the lease to Berrington who promised to build "a fair and substantial dwelling house on the premises". In consideration of that promise and because of the potential cost, Pope accepted a payment of only £500, although the farm is reckoned to be worth £140 p.a. Also the lord of the manor provided the timber for the house, taken from North Leigh wood not part of Hollycourt farm. The stone was dug from near the house. Pope doubts that Berrington paid more than £200. Sir William Pope and Thomas Haynes do not know of any poultry paid by Robert Thorpe since Berrington assigned the lease to him.

Whitsun ale.

Evidence of Thorpe's pragmatical and fractious nature is given by the ***Case of the Churchwardens of North Leigh versus Mr. Robert Thorpe with reference to contributions to Whitsun Ale 1618***²⁵.

It was usual for each yldd in North Leigh to give 1 bu. malt p.a., irrespective of whether a Whitsun Ale was brewed.

The exceptions were two farms, Holycourt and King's, the former paying a total of 5 bu. barley and 1 bu. of wheat, the latter paying 3 bu. malt and 1 bu. of wheat.....

Customary for the parishioners to have a tree from Netley (North Leigh?) wood whenever a church ale was brewed.

Thorpe had refused to pay; said to be the chiefholder of King's farm and leaseholder from Sir William Pope.

Sometime he dwells at Holycourt, sometimes at King's farm and sometimes in other places leaving his servants to manage his husbandry.

Thorpe was still in possession of King's farm in 1638 but had left by 1642 when it was held by Sir William St. Ravy who had succeeded Thorpe at Holycourt.

Royal connections with North Leigh¹.

Sir William Pope was created the first earl of Downe by Charles 1 in 1628 and died in 1631. The manor passed to his grandson Thomas Pope the third earl of Downe. Hollycourt farm was leased to Sir William St. Ravy a prominent Frenchman in the King's service in the 1630-40s. At the beginning of the Civil War in 1642 a recusant (somebody who refused to attend Church of England services) was reported in North Leigh and was said to be George Stuart, Seigneur d'Aubigny, brother of the duke of Lennox and ward of king Charles 1. He is assumed to have lived with Sir William Ravy at Hollycourt.

The Civil War 1642-49

Both Sir William Ravy and George Stuart were commanders of Royalist troops in the battle of Edgehill and George Stuart was killed in the battle. After the battle Royalist troops were billeted in the parish and the neighbourhood was said to have been plundered and pillaged by St. Ravy. Edward Perrott, a grandson of Simon Perrott, heard that St. Ravy was making "strict inquiry after me" and decided to bury all his papers. This was done and when they were dug up a year later all but one box were spoiled. The event was recorded so that his heirs could explain the lack of documents. Edward Perrott was a trained lawyer called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1621. He married Elizabeth Stonehouse, eldest daughter of William Stonehouse of Radley. The Stonehouse family had close connections with King Charles and Edward Perrott was able to obtain a protection for his person and property from King Charles.

In 1644 Oxford was about to be encircled by two parliamentary armies. The royalist army slipped out of Oxford and after a night march camped on what is now North Leigh common; King Charles and the young Prince Charles (aged 14) were entertained by Edward Perrott at Perrottshill farm²⁶. In gratitude King Charles gave to the two eldest daughters a ring and a pendant as mementoes of his visit and these have been handed down on the female side of the family ever since.

The lord of the manor Thomas Pope, earl of Downe, was fined²⁷ £5000 in 1645 for his estates in Oxfordshire by the parliamentary Committee for Compounding for supporting the royalist cause. He agreed to pay £1000 but asked for time to raise the rest. The committee also sequestrated (seized goods or lands) from Sir William St Ravy and Edward Perrott²⁸.

Interregnum 1649-1660.

Over the interregnum the earl of Downe sold or leased a considerable quantity of land and property in North Leigh to help pay his fine. Much of North Leigh wood, 80a., had been felled in the late 1640s. These sales continued the movement that was already apparent in the 1581 copyholders of

inheritance, towards freehold in the modern sense. Many of the sales were for small properties but others appear to have been quite large. Many of the leases on smaller properties were for 99 years, so these would have reverted back to the manor by the time of inclosure in 1759. Edward Perrott continued to build up his properties in North Leigh. But another branch of the Perrott family appears in the village, James Perrott bought¹ King's farm from the sequestered Sir William St. Ravy in 1655. James Perrott was descended from Leonard Perrott the younger brother of Simon Perrott who carried out 1581 survey (see Figure 9). The two branches of the family are usually differentiated as "church" Perrotts, James Perrotts descendants living in the farm by the church; and the "hill" Perrotts, Simon Perrotts descendants living in what was to become Perrottshill farm. Sales of property by the earl of Downe continued and eventually the manor itself was sold to Philip Holman in 1660. The manor then passed to his son George who sold it to James Perrott in 1676.

James Perrott.

The first James Perrott is supposed to be the first resident lord of the manor. This would have certainly been true for the years since the early 13th century. The two branches of the Perrott family do not appear to have got on well with each other. This may have been from the time Leonard Perrott (see Figure 9) challenged his mother's will²⁹ (Simon Perrott versus Leonard Perrott in 1573). The quarrel may have been the reason that James Perrott got confirmation from Sir Edward Bysshe that his coat of arms were the usual Perrott coat of arms except that the pears were described as silver rather than gold. Later "the occupiers of the largest Perrott house near the church were called the Silver Perrotts, the others near the turnpike the Golden or gentleman Perrotts".

The influence of the Puritans

There appears to have been little evidence of influence of the Puritans in North Leigh except for a penance for fornication³⁰ transcribed by Charles Batey.

A form of penance to God performed by Millesant Thatch of North Leigh in the Diocese of Oxford upon Sunday the 19th of May 1667 as followeth.

The said Millesant Thatch shall be present in the parish church of North Leigh at morning prayer standing in some open and publique place of the church where the minister shall appoint in a white sheet downe from her shoulders to her ankles bare faced bare legged and bare footed with a long white rod in her hand; shall between the first and second lesson make this acknowledgement in an audible voice.

Good people whereas I have to the great displeasure of almighty God and the offence of the neighbourhood committed fornication and stand convict thereof by my owne confession, I am therefor according to ord... hither to make this acknowledgement. I do humbly confesse my fault and am honestly sorry for the same and beseech God to forgive me and for you all to joine with me in prayer for the assistance of his holy spirit that I offend not in ye againe.

Then shall the penitent repeate the Lords Prayer saying after the minister Our father ...

The performance of the penance was certified by Humphrey Jones Curate at the next (church?) court. It is not known who Millesant Thatch was and the name Thatch does not appear elsewhere, This may have been a response to the change in morality at the court of the newly restored King Charles II.

Court rolls 1651-1721³¹

These included numerous agricultural instructions and give an indications how the boundaries of the yards and lands were maintained.

25 Oct 1651

The wheat fields shall be hained 1 Nov and the mounds made.

No hogs to go in the common fields after 1 Nov.

To be hained meant that cattle and sheep should be removed from the field. This would have been to allow the grazing to recover or in this case to allow the wheat field to be ploughed and prepared.

Mounded probably meant repair the hedges and boundaries to the fields. If this is the case, the mounding was to keep livestock out of the fields rather than to keep them in. The other 2 years were hained in the spring to allow grazing and cultivation in the hitching field.

11 Oct. 1656

Fallow fields, meads and hitching fields to be hained 4 March next

The opposite of haining was being broken.

1 Oct. 1677

Neither of the fields shall be broken until all the fields are? ridd, and that the Church and Edging field shall be first broken (with cattle and horses?), and the sheep shall not come into the fields until the 11th day after the same are broken.

No one to break Stirt field or meadows with sheep until 6 days after the great cattle have broken the same.

No one to break Lower Riding until 8 days after the great cattle.

From the Perrott notebook, Church field and Stirt are in the third year, Edging field and Lower Riding in the second year.

14 Apr. 1652

No one to give or take more than 2/- a 100 for furze faggots taken upon the commen heath.

No one to take dung from the heath.

The first must have been an attempt to conserve an important fuel supply and the second to try and maintain the fertility of the heath.

Each year the jury of the manor court went on 1 Nov into the arable fields to set the merestones and view any encroachments. The merestones presumably marked the strips of land in the arable fields.

4 Oct. 1695.

Thomas Dore presented for moving merestones in the North field. Fined 2/6.

Each year a constable, two tithingmen and hayward were appointed.

Lease by Robert Perrott to William Stock of much of Perrottshill farm.

In 1693 Robert Perrott who was then 70, leased most of his land to William Stock (yeoman) for 6 years at £105 p.a. and two fat pullets or 3s 4d. The lease³² is of interest because of the detailed instructions which were included. *If William Stock should plough the ground called the Leys or any other grounds which have not been ploughed for 25 years, he shall pay £5 an acre. But he may plough all the graten (?) land in Northfield and the lay in Churchfield under the said Stout's close hedge, and the lays at the crabtree in Wilshirne (Wilshene 1888) so as he does not meddle with the thorns and bushes (Perrott's fuel supply?).*

No dung to be sold or removed.

Mole castings and hog routings to be prevented or cleared.

Stock to do 3 days work p.a. for Perrott provided it is not in seed time, or hay time, or harvest and provided he doesn't have to travel more than 8 miles from home.

Bounds to be maintained and encroachments reported.

Have free passage for carting through the Leys and may make use of the sawpit there.

Perrott will keep no more poultry than 1 cock and 4 hens.

Perrott may make use of the malthouse for making at convenient times 15 qts. barley into malt. Stock may take away with him any furnace that he has set up in the hall of his dwelling. Perrott may take the showlings (dung?) in the street from the north corner of the malthouse to Gunn's yard, except the showlings of the pool and of the hollow before the great yard gates, allowed yearly a load of dung for the same. No straw etc. to be laid in the street leading to Robert Perrott's dwelling house into the heath. Robert Perrott to provide hurdles for the fencing in the lots here by and in the lot meadows, to be kept well and dry in the shed and from time to time carried out and placed there so long only as shall be needful for fencing the said lots, and carried back until the next occasion. Robert Perrott to make a buttery in the woodhouse adjoining Stock's house, by the oven there, and will endeavour to make him a well of water, and pump in the little back court there, and will set up a pig-sty for 2 hogs, and a wagon house in Curtis yard. Stock allowed a load of thorns for fencing his hayrick to be set in the fields.

Endorsed Memo, that Robert Perrott is to let Stock have all the fern platts in the heath and will not require 3 days work p.a. Stock paying instead 5/- a day. Stock to be allowed 20/- from the first years rent towards hiring a barn for 1 year. Also allowed a load of dung for Curtis's close and also the expense of the furrowing and trenching that close next winter to destroy the rushes there. These details show how important maintaining soil fertility was at that time.

The Perrott chapel.

Soon after taking over as lord of the manor, from the first James Perrott in 1687, James Perrott, of the church Perrott family, applied for and got permission from the church authorities to build the Perrott chapel and crypt on the north side of the church. The crypt was to be used by his family and contains Perrott and Musgrave coffins (see Fig 13). James Perrott's wife Ann gave 50/- a year to provide teaching and buy books for poor North Leigh children between 2 and 10, and a school was established in 1724.

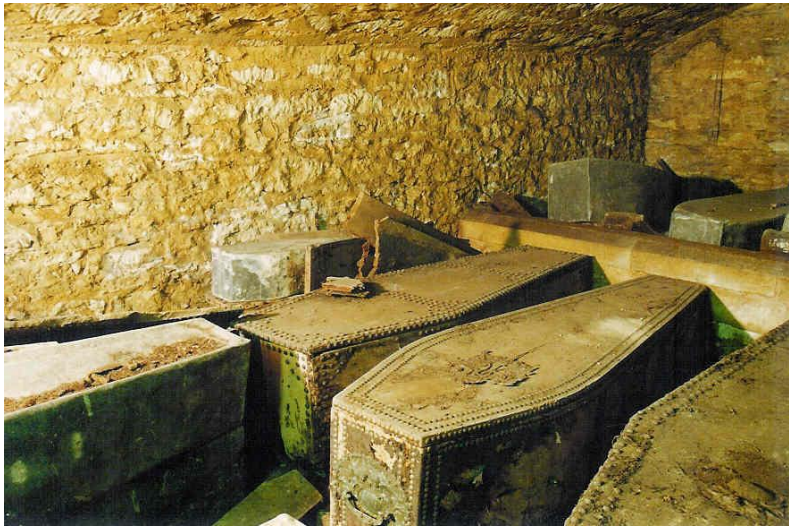


Figure 13. The Perrott crypt

James Perrott initiated the refitting of the church in 1723. The pews were to be replaced including the Perrott on the hill family pew. This led Edward Perrott (grandson of the

Edward Perrott who entertained King Charles) to complain and to ask for faculty to be rescinded. In a lengthy document³³ transcribed by Charles Batey concerning the faculty.

The matter of the revocation of a proclamation and annulment of a faculty or licence to destroy all the ancient seats, which it claimed are common in the nave of the parish church of North Leigh in the diocese of Oxford and to make new ones in their stead and to allot places in the new seats to the parishioners according to their rank or degree in the judgement of the vicar and the wardens of the church as proposed in the proclamation by James Perrott esquire against all such as have, or claim to have, an interest in the seats or wish to object to a grant of such a faculty.

..... *The truth is and this objicient doth allege that the said common seats are all of good solid oak and in sufficient repair for 100 to 200 years to come and longer than any seats that can be newly erected of deal.....*

.....*The truth is and this objicient doth allege that the majority of the parishioners of the said parish paying Scot and Lot (paying taxes) have no ways given their consents to the rebuilding of the said seats, but are entirely against the same.....*

Edward Perrott goes on in this manner for many more clauses. It is not clear whether his objections are firmly held or are based on the rancour that must have existed between the two families. It appears James Perrott got permission for the changes to be made.

The Rectory.

From 1698 James Perrott leased the rectory, the present Churchmead on Church Road, from Bridewell hospital. James Perrott seems to have lived in the rectory rather than in the manor house. The lease was for 31 years and the details become apparent when his son Henry tried to renew the lease in 1721. The Perrott arms appear on a cartouche on the wall of the rectory.

A possible reason the manor was not being used was that it may have lost its water supply. As may be seen from the geological details Fig 3, the manor was built on the absolute edge of where water should be available. The well cover is visible from the end of the graveyard. Originally it would have been dug into the final layers of the cornbrash (alternate layers of clay and limestone). If it was then dug deeper it would have acted as a magnificent drain or sink hole. According to James List, a recent owner of the land, the well is very deep and dry.

Rebuilding the vicarage.

In 1726 the church authorities were petitioned³⁴ by Thomas Haywood, vicar of St Giles (Oxford), William Holdsworth, vicar of Northmoor, Henry Perrott (church), new lord of the manor), Edward Perrott (hill), Thomas Martin (Wilcote house), Thomas Perrott (church) and the churchwardens Thomas Taylor and William Harris to rebuild the vicarage.

.....*the vicarage house is now become very much decayed and permission was sought to pull down the said house and at 6 yds. distance from it to build another upon the vicarage ground consisting of three floors and two rooms on each floor, each 19 ft square with a space between them 7 ft. in breadth.....*

The house was presumably built soon after 1726. In 1811 the vicarage was considered too small, but was sold in 1981 because it was too large.

Henry Perrott,

The new lord of the manor was Henry Perrott the eldest surviving son of the second James Perrott (d 1724). Henry was supposed to be a dilettante³⁵ and a member of circle of the duke of Chandos. The duke of Chandos had recently built Canons in Middlesex which was said to be 'the most magnificent house' in England. In 1719 Henry married Martha Bouchier, the only child, of the sister of the Duke of Chandos and Brereton Bouchier (d. 1713). Brereton held the manor of Barnsley in Gloucestershire. Henry built a palatial house in Barnsley Park 1720-31 and became the Member of Parliament for North Oxfordshire from 1721. It is clear that North Leigh no longer had a resident lord of the manor. Henry died in Paris in 1740.

Henry did not have any sons and devised the manor to his brother Thomas (d. 1750). Thomas left the manor to his great-nephew James Leigh on condition that he took on the additional name of Perrott.

This he did and he became James Leigh-Perrott. One of the first things he must have done was to set about organising the inclosure of the common land in North Leigh. His reason for doing this would have been to increase the value of his property.

The background to inclosure.

By the mid 18th century the village was very different from how it had been in Simon Perrott's survey of 1581. In the survey, there was the Hollycourt farm of 8 ydlds, the freeholders Kings farm of 5 ydlds, and the farm at Wilcote of 1 ydld, the last two paying a form of quit rent. Almost all of the rest of the land, 30 ydlds, was held by copyholders for term of life. That is the manor could regain control of the land when the copyholder died. Most of the cottages and a few acres of land were held by copyholders of inheritance which could be sold or passed on to heirs. These properties were effectively no longer owned by the manor although a payment or quit rent was made to the manor each year.

In the 1650s the earl of Downe leased and sold large quantities of land on his many manors to cover his £5000 fine after the civil war. Sales were continued by the Holman lords of the manor but probably ceased when James Perrott took over. As discussed earlier James Perrott already held Kings farm when he took over the manor. Assuming for the moment that the land that was sold by the earl of Downe was not Hollycourt land this would have meant James Perrott directly controlled about 13 of the 44 ydlds or about 30% of the arable land. Over the period from 1581 the hill Perrotts were also building up their ownership of land in North Leigh. As well as these main holdings numerous other small freehold farms had become established.

The method for tenants other than freeholders to hold the land had also changed. In 1581 almost all the land, not held by the freetenants, was held as copyhold for term of life. Although lifehold still existed, records show that leasehold for long periods occurred. In the 17th century in North Leigh it became common for the land to be rented yearly for thirds (landlord takes 1/3 of crop) and in the late 17 century for rack rents (money rents).

As mentioned earlier, before the inclosure Bridewell hospital was the lay rector and held glebe land and received the greater tithes (possibly 1/10 of the proceeds from the arable fields) and part of the hay tithes.

The vicar received the lesser tithes (possibly 1/10 of the proceeds from other sources) and the other part of the hay tithes.

The Inclosure Act 1758³⁶

James Leigh Perrott wrote to the Governors of Bridewell Hospital in Dec 1757 suggesting that the common fields and heath be enclosed. This was agreed and a petition was made to the House of Commons in Feb 1758 for a act to be passed. The petition :*James Leigh Perrott, the Governors of Bridewell Hospital, David Price (the vicar), Thomas Brown (Puddle End farm), Elizabeth Wisdom (Wilcote), William Compton (New Yatt farm), Edward Caulcot and divers other proprietors.... were desirous that the common fields and wastes (of North Leigh) might be inclosed* The reason given for inclosure was that the land *yields but little profit and while the same remain open and uninclosed are incapable of improvement.* There was a counter petition by various North Leigh proprietors and the Honour of Woodstock. Presumably the other North Leigh proprietors included Edward Perrott the hill Perrott (or his uncle William who succeeded him in 1759). The Honour of Woodstock (Combe and Stonesfield commoners) would have petitioned against the proposal to

safeguard the grazing rights that were established in the 1540 court case discussed earlier. The Inclosure Act passed its second reading and a committee was set up, which reported that 42 cottagers of North Leigh were against inclosure. The bill passed its 3rd reading in the Commons and passed by the House of Lords in April 1758. The Inclosure Act for North Leigh was one of the first in Oxfordshire. It stated that *commissioners Anthony Keck of Great Tew, William Lenthall of Burford, Esquires; Thomas Baseley of Pryors-Marston, Gentleman; John Salmon of Itchington, Gentleman; Moses Brookes of Minster-Lovell, Yeoman; and Edward Moulder of Swinbrooke, Yeoman* should arrange for a survey before 28th Sept, 1758 and for the land to be divided by or soon after March 25th 1759. Samuel Driver was appointed as surveyor and later William Lenthall and Edward Moulder were replaced by Robert Morgan and John Forster.

The Inclosure Act set out to inclose the common arable land, common meadows and pastures, and the North Leigh Heath. In addition the tithes paid to Bridewell Hospital and the vicar were to be eliminated, as were *several quit rents* to the lord of the manor.

All leases and rent agreements (rack rents) for periods less than 21 years were to cease from the 25th March 1759 and the commissioners were to set compensation for the tenants. This meant that rented property appeared under the name of the owner.

All other leases and lifehold property was to remain unchanged by the award. That is a lease for over 21 years or lifehold would still exist on the land to be awarded.

The Inclosure award 14 April 1759³⁷.

A total of 1705 acres of land was awarded. At inclosure this consisted of 397 acres of heath, 1258 acres of common arable land and 50 acres of common meadow. After the award there were about 1504 acres of inclosed land and 202 acres of uninclosed land which was mainly on the heath. The total land awarded from the heath (inclosed or uninclosed) was 397 acres and not the 600 acres mentioned in the award and in the VCH¹.

The award listed the amount of land given to each recipient and described the boundary in such a way that the position of the award can be deduced and then be correlated with field boundaries on early Ordnance Survey maps. Although an inclosure map does not seem to have been made, it has been possible to produce one from the detailed descriptions of the boundaries. This is shown in figure 14. The commissioners tried, where possible, to award land close to the recipients' existing closes and houses so it is often possible to determine where the award holder lived. The commissioners were instructed to set out which part of the boundary *hedges ditches and mounds* of an award was to *be made maintained supported and preserved repaired and kept in repair now and for ever* by the award holder.

The Governors of Bridewell Hospital were awarded about 25 acres for the glebe land (about 26 field acres held by 'parson' in 1581) and for their rights and interests in the common fields and heath, and 298 acres for the greater tithes and their part of the hay tithes. Twenty five acres were awarded in Church Field opposite the present Churchmead in Church Road, 237 acres around the site of the present Bridewell Farm and 61 acres on the heath. The land awarded for the rector's tithes represented about 20 % of the total of land allocated.

David Price, as vicar and his successors, was awarded 14 acres for his glebe land (16 field acres in 1581), and 113 for the vicars tithes. The land was in two pieces on either side of Boddington lane.

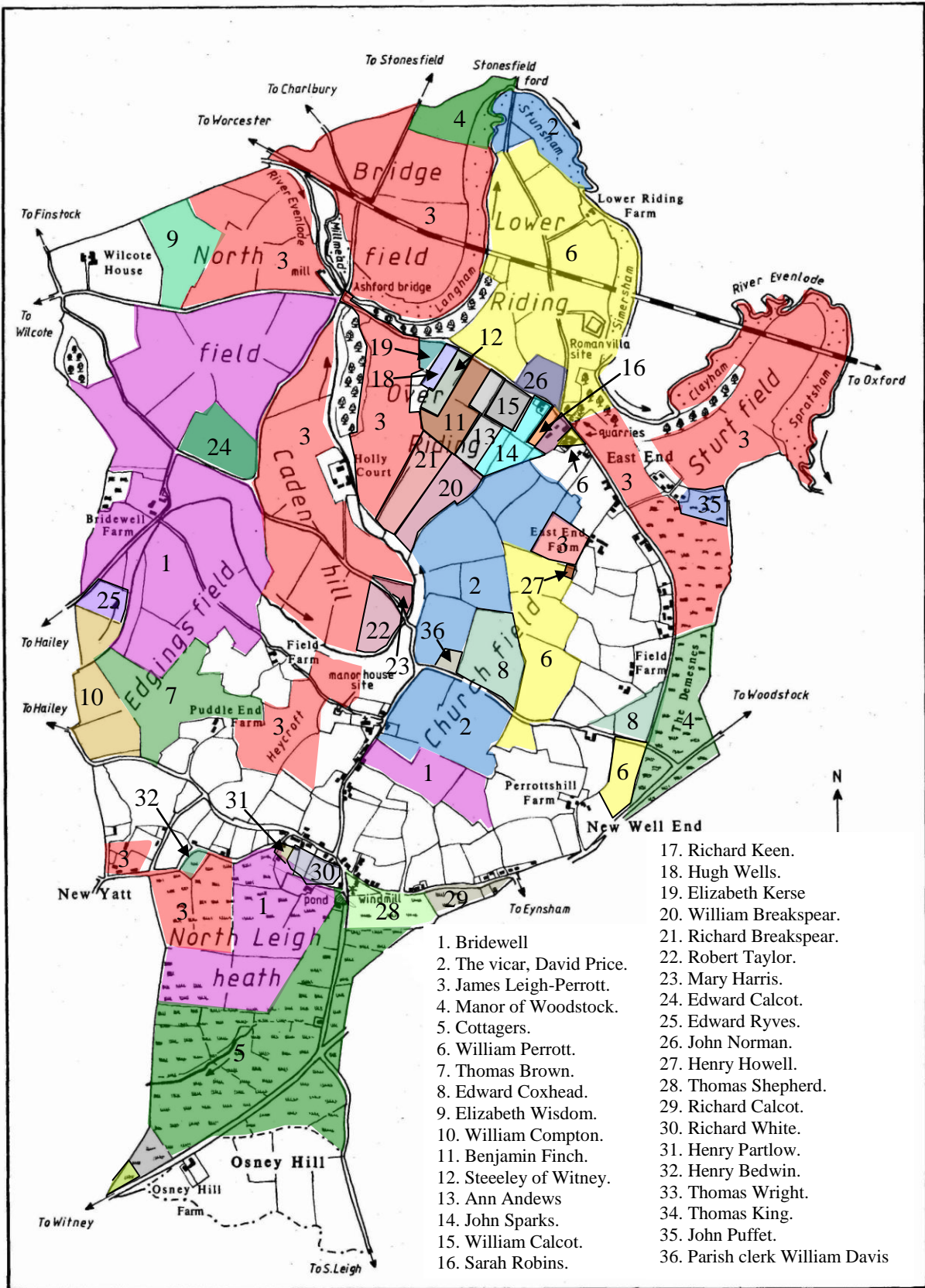


Figure 14. Inclosure map deduced from inclosure award.

The parish clerk William Davis was awarded 3.57 acres, probably for his grazing rights. The land for the vicar's tithes represented about 7.5 % of the total of land allocated.

James Leigh Perrott as lord of the manor was awarded 22 acres *for his rights and interests in and to the soil of North Leigh heath*, and 524 for *all his other lands rights and interests*. This would have included all rented land and some quit rents. The land lay in a band from the heath near New Yatt, between the church and Field Farm to Hollycourt then to Ashford Mill and the included most of Bridge Field. There was another part near East End Farm and included the Sturt Field with the meadows below. These are shown in figure 14. This represented about 32 % of the total land allocated

At the end of James Leigh Perrott's list of allocations, land was awarded for the use of the commoners of the manor of Woodstock. This was awarded for the common grazing rights established for Combe and Stonesfield in the court case of 1540¹⁵. There was 14.8 acres in Bridge Field, the present Stonesfield common, and 40.2 acres on the heath, the present North Leigh common.

The cottagers of North Leigh were allocated 146.5 acres. on the heath south of the centre of the present village in return for their grazing rights on the common land of North Leigh. There were 52 cottagers listed. The share of the rights was assessed by past usage and *the court baron of North Leigh was from time to time to limit ascertain and agree the proportion in respect of each cottager*. Although most of the cottagers lived in North Leigh, thirteen were from the surrounding villages or towns. Rented cottages appear to have been listed in the name of the owner, but cottages held as copyhold for life would have been listed in the name of the copyholder. The 146.5 acres allocated between 52 cottagers represents about 2.8 acres each. In the award it was stated that a cottager could ask for the land to be allocated as land to be inclosed. There were eight allocations of inclosed land of about 2.8 acres or less which was probably made to cottagers. There were 4 at East End where the distance to uninclosed land would have been a contributing factor.

There were four James Leigh Perrott's copyholders for the term of one life. The awards were made in the name of the copyholder but the new land remained as copyhold. Instead of the land being awarded near the tenant's farm, the land was awarded next to James Leigh Perrotts land so that it could be incorporated into his land at a later date when the tenant died. The four lifeholders were awarded about 44 acres and this meant that James Leigh Perrott was effectively awarded about 35 % of the total. The copyholders are listed in Table 1.

Each of the freeholders (freetenants or copyholders of inheritance) were awarded land in amounts from 205 acres to William Perrott down to the 1 or 2 acres which as mentioned earlier was probably given to cottagers with no arable land in the common fields for their grazing rights. The awards are listed in the Table 2 and in many cases the site of the farmhouse can be deduced from the position of the awarded land and other details. The position of the awards are shown in figure 14.

Table 1.

Copyholder for life	House site of award holder	Award	Place of award
William Breakspear	adjacent to Greystones ³⁹	13.84	Upper Riding
Richard Breakspear	Church Farm Cottage 1763 ³⁸	12.48	Upper Riding
Robert Taylor	Greystones ³⁹	12.99	Cayton hill S side of road
Mary Harris		4.89	Cayton hill N. side of road
	Total	44.21	

Table 2.

Freeholder	House of award holder	Acres	Place of award
William Perrott (hill)	Perrottshill farm	205.11	Near farm and lower riding
Thomas Brown	Puddle End Farm	39.69	Near farm
Edward Coxhead	Cottage in Boddington lane	27.37	Church field - heath
Elizabeth Wisdom	Wilcote House	32.66	North Field near house.
William Compton	New Yatt farm	27.57	Edgeings field near farm
Benjamin Finch	Somewhere in East End	12.29	Upper Riding
Steeley of Witney *	Somewhere in East End	5.78	Upper Riding
Ann Andrews	Somewhere in East End	9.10	Upper Riding
John Sparks	Somewhere in East End	12.37	Upper Riding
William Calcot	East End Farm in 1763	6.14	Upper Riding
Sarah Robins *	Somewhere in East End	2.36	Upper Riding
Richard Keen *	Somewhere in East End	2.26	Upper Riding
Hugh Wells*	Somewhere in East End	2.71	Upper Riding
Elizabeth Kerse*	Somewhere in East End	2.49	Upper Riding
Edward Calcot *	Field Farm in 1763	16.26	North field
Edward Ryves *	New Yatt ?	6.14	Edgings field
John Norman	Somewhere in East End	7.02	Lower Riding
Henry Howell	Somewhere in East End	0.79	Church field
Thomas Shepherd	Near Masons Arms	15.24	Heath
Richard Calcot	Farm N of Common Rd	4.78	Heath
Richard White *	At top of Church Rd.	7.19	Heath at top of Church Rd
Henry Partlow	At top of Church Rd.	1.97	Heath next to White
Henry Bedwin	Whitehill farm	2.09	Heath opposite Whitehill farm
Thomas Wright *	Witney or Osney Hill	3.71	Heath just off A 4095
Thomas King	Witney or Osney Hill	1.32	Heath just off A 4095
John Puffet	East End Green	5.37	Heath East End,
	Total	459.77	
* indicates did not pay tithe			

The names of the property holders previously liable to tithes were listed at the start of the Bridewell award. There were 18 freeholders, 3 (4?) lifeholders and 14 out of 52 cottagers. The people not on the list are of interest; presumably cottagers without old inclosures or closes were not liable to tithes. There remain 9 recipients of land; five of these were probably cottagers with too little land to pay tithes. One of the remaining was Edward Calcot who was renting Field Farm in 1763; it is possible that land was awarded to him because in 1759 he was leasing Field Farm for a significant period but less than 21 years. The award could have been made to him as compensation and would have come from James Leigh Perrott's share. It is possible that the other three award holders are not listed for similar reasons. The award holders not paying tithes are shown by a * in Table 2.

The fraction of the land awarded to the different groups of recipients is given in Table 3..

Table 3.

Type of award holder	% of total land awarded
Lord of the manor + lifeholders	34.6
Governors of Bridewell Hospital	18.9
Vicar and parish clerk	7.7
Manor of Woodstock, Combe and Stonesfield	3.2
Cottagers	8.6
All freeholders	27.0

It is difficult to assess how fair the award was. The freeholders would probably have expected to get about as much arable land as they had already owned; since although they no longer had to pay tithes but they would have given up rights in the meadows and on the heath. This is borne out by the award of about 13 acres to William Breakspear⁴⁰ and Robert Taylor⁴¹ who each held ½ yld³⁹ (12-13 acres

or 15 field acres) as lifeholders. The cottagers would have expected to have about as much heath as they had before inclosure.

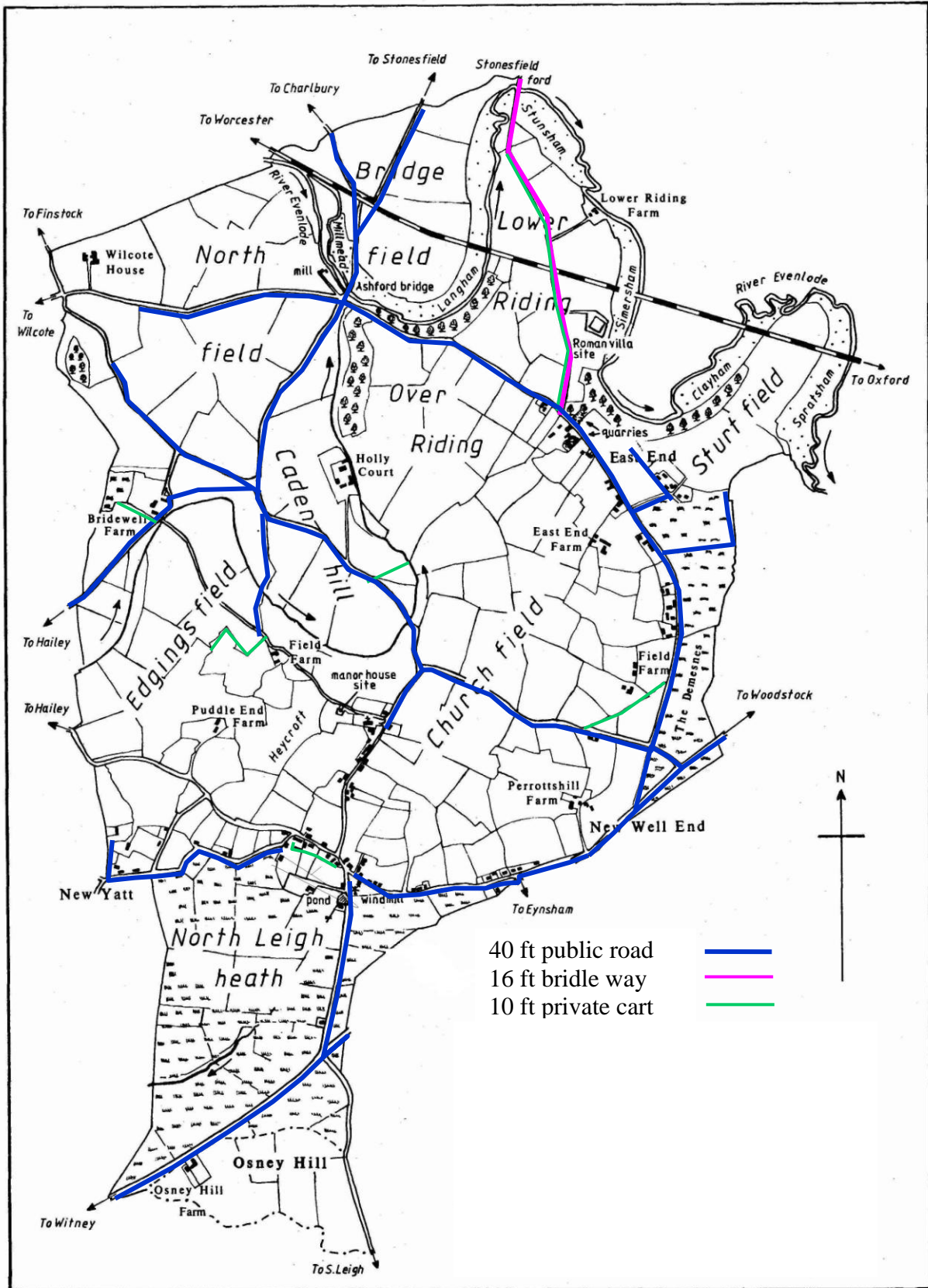


Figure 15. Roads, bridle ways and private cart ways defined at inclosure in 1759.

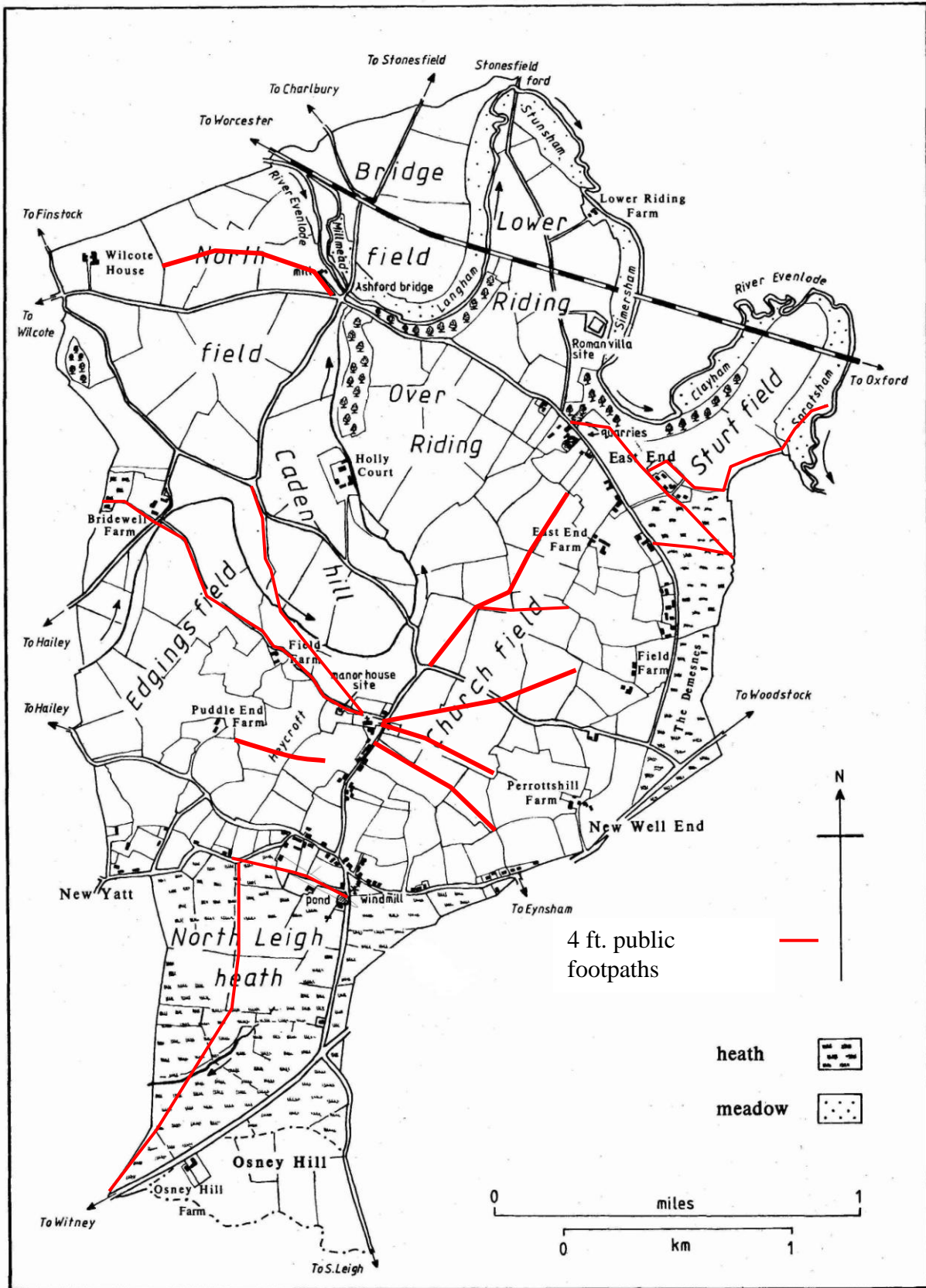


Figure 16. The probable position of the footpaths defined in 1759

Assuming that the tithes were 1/10 of the produce and that they could be collected, would have meant that Bridewell and the vicar should have got about 1/10 of the inclosed land between them and

then some additional fraction for the value of work in producing the tithe. In fact they got about 24 % of the inclosed land for their tithes. This seems to be a rather generous allocation and must have meant that all the other award holders got less.

The Inclosure Act also required the commissioners to set out public and private roads, bridleways and footpaths through the new inclosure. The public roads, bridle way and private cart roads are plotted in figure 15 and the footpaths in figure 16. There is some uncertainty for the exact position of some of the footpaths and cart roads. The public roads were to be 40 ft wide, the bridle way 16 ft, cart roads 10 ft and footpaths 4 ft. Very few of the public roads are at present 40 ft. wide and this explains why the awards next to roads appear to be slightly too big. Most of the roads probably existed before inclosure and only roads which went through common land were described. All but two public roads still exist and some of the public footpaths appear to be still used as public footpaths.

The cost of the award was £1500 and was to be borne by the proprietors in proportion to their awards, with the exception of David Price the vicar and the tenants of the manor of Woodstock. The share of the lifehold tenants was to be paid by James Leigh Perrott.

The results of inclosure:

The result of inclosure was to mean that the village no longer had to operate as a cooperative organisation. There no longer a need for the arable fields to be hained and broken on particular dates and no need for merestones at the end of the strips to be frequently inspected. From this time on there was little need of the manor court except to organise the remaining cottagers common. Inclosure must have been the single most important event in the village since a lord of the manor had imposed himself on the village, perhaps a 1000 years earlier.

The cottagers were the section of the village which appeared to have been most threatened by the award. The labourers and small traders would have relied on the heath to provide fuel and grazing. Even before the award was published a report was made 3rd March 1759 in the Oxford Journal that rioters had broken down hedges and fences on the heath. On the 9th of March in the Oxford Journal there was an advertisement for information about *ill disposed persons who did break down and destroy the fences ... on North Leigh heath*. On the 21st of March in the Oxford Journal it was reported that Militia and Grenadiers had been called to prevent a large crowd from destroying fences on North Leigh heath and the ringleaders were sent to Witney and Oxford for trial. On 14th of April 1759 the Inclosure Award was eventually signed. Further riots in 1761, directed against Bridewell Hospital and William Perrott led the authorities to send the Berkshire militia to restore order.

The cottagers had a case, they had previously used about 397 acres of heath and had common grazing rights on the arable fields. The heath was also shared by the other land owners but they probably had used it less intensively. The cottagers must have relied on the heath whereas other land owners would have had their own closes. To compensate for their loss of 397 acres the cottagers were given 147.5 acres of land, held in common. In the wake of the disturbances the manor court met 6 Nov 1761 and fixed a stint of 4 sheep or 1 cow or ½ a horse for each cottager, who might also cut and remove as much furze as he could carry on his back. The resentment rumbled on for a number of years.

George Spencer the duke of Marlborough.

James Leigh Perrott prepared a rental of the estate in 1763 and sold the manor of North Leigh to the duke of Marlborough in 1764 for £22,386⁴². The estate included six farms which can associated with

Holycourt Farm, East End Farm, Church Farm, Field Farm, Ashford Mill, and the manor farm near the church, formerly King's Farm. There were 7 rented cottages one of which was a smiths shop and various small pieces of land. There were 4 lifehold small farms and fourteen lifehold cottages. A newly built farmhouse was mentioned at East End. In the rental the manor house was described as *an ancient built house; grounds including a bowling green*. After the sale the manor farm land seems to have been added to Church Farm and Field Farm and in 1768 Mr. and Mrs. Beviere, formerly of Kencot, were using the North Leigh manor house as a girl's school⁴³. In 1806, Henry Hinton described the church in a note book and reported that little remained of North Leigh manor house except for a ruin with little standing except for a dove cote with a bell in it⁴⁴,

William Perrott died in 1765 and his heirs, three sisters and two nieces, sold the Perrott's on the hill estate⁴⁵ to the duke of Marlborough in the following year for £19,000. It was reported to include 900 acres but could not have been more than 300 acres, The land appeared to be exactly the land which was awarded to William Perrott by the Inclosure Act. Other small estates including the land awarded to John Norman and Edward Coxhead were eventually bought by the duke of Marlborough.

Puddle End Farm and the Bridewell estate were not taken over by the duke of Marlborough. The Bridewell Hospital land was turned into three farms, Bridewell Farm near Wilcote, and two much smaller farms Bridewell Church Farm off Church Road, and Heath Farm near Cuckamas green. A large new farmhouse was built near the boundary with Wilcote immediately after inclosure in 1761, The three farms seem to have remained in Bridewell Hospital possession until early in the 20th century. Bridewell Farm absorbed the Edward Calcot and Edward Ryves awards.

Poverty.

Because the smaller properties were taken over by the larger landowners the net effect of inclosure was to reduce the number of owner occupied farms and also to increase the size of rented properties. The small tenants with half ydld (12 acres) or 1 ydld (24 acres) in 1581 would now be working as labourers on the larger rented farms of 100-300 acres. Since agricultural methods had not changed significantly workers would have carried out similar work, but these workers would now only be employed and paid when labour was needed. Previously a cottager or farmer with a small amount of arable land could work on his land, rely on work from a larger tenant farmer and perhaps keep a few sheep on the heath. After inclosure the small awards were not large enough to support a family and were soon sold and the limited heath was restricted to the 52 named cottagers.

The parish was responsible for poor relief. In the 1770's about £130 a year was distributed to the poor but by 1814 poor relief had increased to a peak of £1109¹. Inclosure would have been one of the causes for the increase. In 1776 an agreement was reached between Thomas Brooks, a North Leigh shoemaker, that in return for £120 a year and the profits of the paupers labour, he was to find a suitable house and provide for the inmates¹. The inmates were chiefly employed in carding and spinning for Witney factories. It has been suggested that the workhouse was the present Mason Arms. In 1834 North Leigh became part of the Witney poor law union. Despite the agricultural prosperity of the larger tenant farmers, due to the increase in corn prices up until 1815 (the end of the Napoleonic war), there appears to have been little general prosperity in the village.

Inclosure of the cottagers common.

In 1813 the cottage owners, led by the duke of Marlborough agreed to inclose the remaining heath. An award was made⁴⁶ to 14 owners in 1814, 55 years after the 1759 award.

In the earlier award, cottagers who were holding their property as copyholders for life would have had the common rights in their name but these would have reverted to the owner when the cottager died. Those cottagers who rented their cottage for a period of less than 21 years would have had the award in the name of the owner. An owner occupier would have had the award in his own name, In a rental in 1763, James Leigh Perrott states he has 15 cottages with their share in the common held for one life. Thirteen of these were mentioned by name in the abstract of the title of the sale of the manor to the duke of Marlborough and presumably 2 tenants had died. In 1814 the duke was awarded land for 14 commons shares and all the cottages were described as freehold. Two cottages can be directly traced; in 1759 William Afflet of Ramsden and William Phipps were awarded shares in the common. In 1778 Richard Afflet baker from Ramsden (father William) sold a cottage with the share in the common to Henry Hutt. In 1798 William Phipps of North Leigh (father William) sold a cottage called Goodwife with a share of the common to Henry Hutt. These details appear in the title deeds of Harcourt House and Harcourt Cottage in Church Road⁴⁷. In 1814 Henry Hutt was awarded land for his three shares in the common land. None of the cottagers who had common shares in a family name remained as cottage owners with the same family name in 1814. What appears to have happened is that the lord of the manor has retained most of his 15 cottages originally held for 1 life. Thomas and Ann Bird have 15 (16?) cottages by 1814; there are 7 owners with between 2 and 4 cottages and five owners with one cottage.

There appears to be no record of anybody objecting to the 1814 award. In 1759 fifty two cottagers were awarded fifty four shares in the common of 146 acres. They objected because they had previously used about 400 acres. In 1814 fourteen owners were awarded their share of the inclosed land and provided the owners allowed their tenants to use the newly inclosed land nobody appeared to have lost anything. The cottagers would probably no longer expect to gather their fuel to keep a cow on the common but would now have to buy their fuel and milk.

Agricultural prosperity collapsed after the Napoleonic war (1815) and did not recover until the 1830 to 1840. North Leigh must have been in part sheltered from the migration of workers from the South to the new industries in the North of England because of the continued success of the Witney weaving industry and Woodstock glove making.

Information from census reports 1801 - 1871

What happened in North Leigh over the next 100 years can be traced and tied in with census records. The first census was held in 1801 and has been repeated every 10 years since, except for 1941. The information gathered and the way it was reported changed over time which makes direct comparison difficult. Initially only numbers within groups were reported, and details under names and occupation were not reported until 1841. The population of men and women was 517 in 1801 and had reached 725 in 1851. This number then varied between 578 and 738 over the next 100 years, only reaching 805 in 1951.

In North Leigh, as with the rest of the country, agricultural prosperity gradually improved in the period 1841 to 1871. After each census there were fewer farmers but more agricultural workers. In 1841 there were 74 agricultural workers but by 1871 this had doubled to 149. The wives of the agricultural labourers almost always worked as gloveresses, 9 in 1841 and 91 in 1871. They would have been outworkers for the Woodstock glovers. As prosperity increased even small tenant farmers began to employ domestic servants. The number of pubs increased from 3 to 5. There were 15 stone masons, 10 brick and pipe makers and 9 carpenter/joiners, showing a thriving local industry in 1861. Over the whole period there were the usual wheelwrights and blacksmiths but the number of shops appears to have increased dramatically. There were only bakers, shoemakers and tailors in 1841 but

by 1871 bakers, shoemakers, tailors, butchers, grocers, dressmakers, milliners, bonnet makers and shirt makers. It is by no means clear that all the workers worked in North Leigh but it is apparent that North Leigh had become a large and prosperous village.

In 1851 there were 4 rail labourers staying at the newly opened Harcourt Arms in Church Road and there was a haulage contractor and common carrier, showing that this was the time the railway was being built through North Leigh.

By 1861 it appears that Wilcote House was employing a cook, lady's maid and nurse maids and by 1871, after the house had been purchased by Charles Sartoris, it was employing a butler, footman, coachman, cook, lady's maid, nurse maids and kitchen staff.

The Rhymes map.

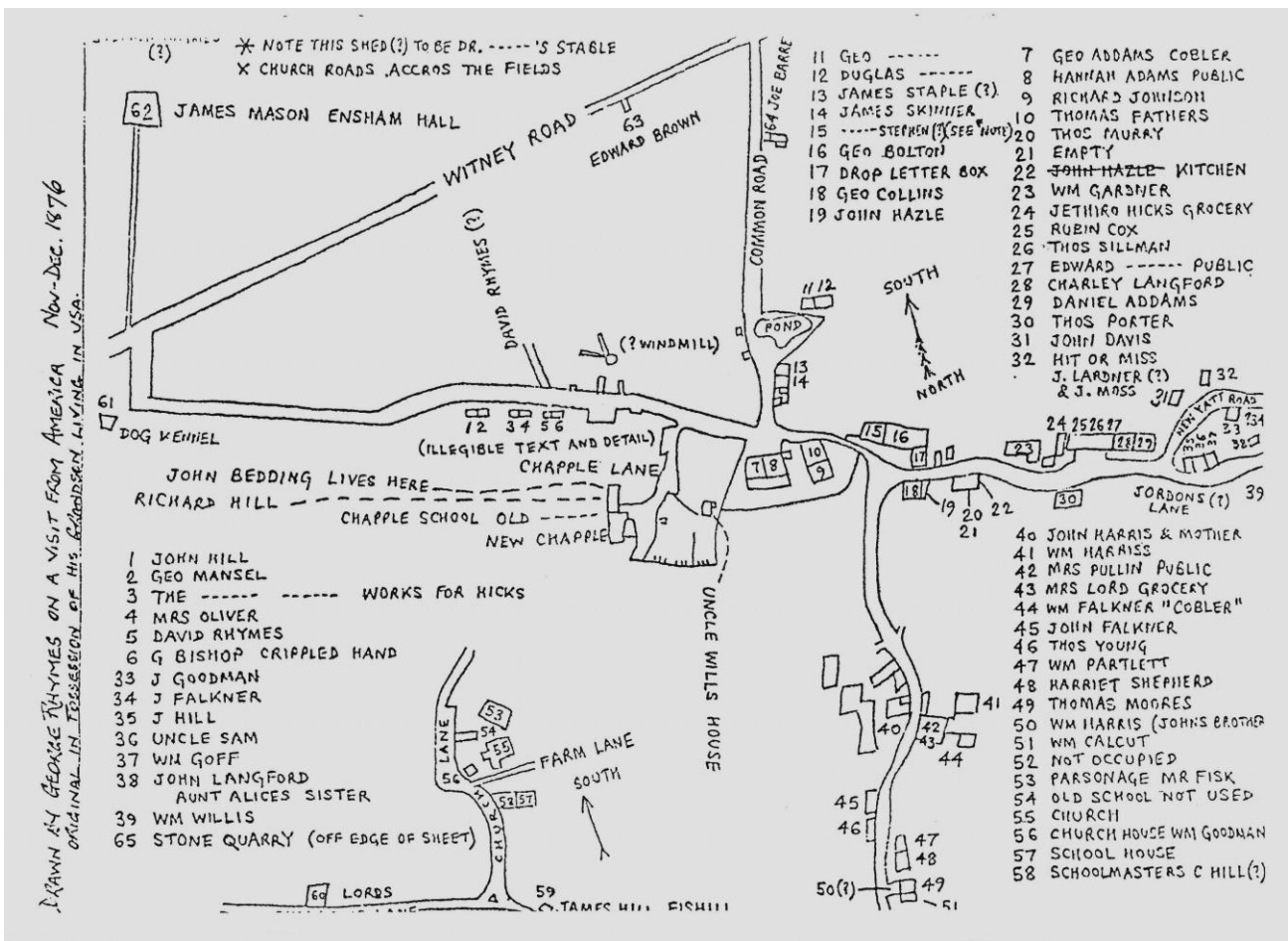


Figure 17 Drawn by George Rhymes on a visit from America Nov-Dec 1876.

One of the difficulties with the early census returns is that it is often not possible to correlate a person listed in the return with an actual house. There is a wonderful sketch map of much of the village made by George Rhymes in 1876. His family had emigrated to America and he was visiting. The map is shown in figure 17.

The map shows the National School with a house for the teacher built in 1838 just to the North of the church. The school had received a parliamentary building grant and was built on land provided by

the duke of Marlborough. The old school marked to the east of the old vicarage was probably a fee paying school in the 1830 s. The windmill appears on the map and was probably built¹ by Joseph Shepherd in about 1833 on land awarded to Thomas Shepherd at inclosure.

Eynsham Hall.

Eynsham manor or Eynsham Hall was built⁴⁸ on inclosed heath just to the south of the North Leigh boundary. When it was sold to Robert Langford in 1778 it was described as a newly built mansion. Although very close to North Leigh there was not much evidence of influence until Eynsham Hall was bought by James Mason in 1866. The family had obtained their money copper mining in Portugal. In 1759 Diogo Mason had been assigned⁴⁹ the permanent licence to the S. Dimingos mine and Mason and Barry Ltd built a town for the workers, and constructed a 15 mile long railway (the second in Portugal) to their new port of Pomrao where ore was exported to Swansea. An experimental process was developed using enclosed ovens to prevent the environmental damage that had recently occurred in the Rio Tinto mines. James Mason carried out extensive alterations to Eynsham Hall in the 1870 s and by 1881 was employing a large number of domestic servants. It seems probable that the laboratory labourer in 1881, the experimental works storeman in 1891 and the foreman and assistant experimentalist in 1901 all living in what is now Park Road were probably working at Eynsham Hall. This may also have been true for the stationary engine driver recorded in 1881, 1891 and 1901 and the traction engine driver in 1901. James Mason died in 1903 and was succeeded by his son James Francis Mason. In 1908 Eynsham Hall was reported to have its own water works, gas plant and generated it's own electricity. A telephone system had been installed connecting all the houses on the estate. The gas plant may account for the gas stokers recorded in 1891 and 1901.

Both James Mason and Charles Sartoris of Wilcote House acted as the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, James Mason in 1869 and Charles Sartoris in 1872.

The break-up of the manor farms.

After 1874 there was a severe agricultural depression until about 1884 and then another between 1891 – 1899. Industrial depression in 1874 was followed by three years of bleak springs followed by rainy summers which produced poor cereal crops, mould in hops, blight in potatoes, disease in cattle, foot rot in sheep. But this did not lead to an increase in prices as had occurred previously because imports were now readily available from the United States, Australia and New Zealand. Although the number of labourers only dropped from about 143 in 1871 to 118 in 1881, many now considered themselves to be labourers rather than agricultural labourers. Throughout the country tenant farmers were unable to pay rents and farms were left untenanted. In the 1881 North Leigh census the duke of Marlborough employed a bailiff to farm 500 acres out of about 1200 acres in North Leigh presumably because he could not find tenants. In 1884 Charles Sartoris of Wilcote house agreed to purchase much of the North Leigh land from the duke of Marlborough. Later in that year Charles Sartoris died but the sale was completed⁵⁰ by his executors in 1886, The sale included Hollycourt, Field Farm, Church Farm and Ashford Mill. All but Ashford Mill were resold almost at once. The sale by the duke of Marlborough did not include the manorial rights.

Final Note.

With the sale of many of the farms, the manor of North Leigh effectively ceased to exist. The present duke of Marlborough is still lord of the manor but no longer has any real function. The Mason family went on to become prominent North Leigh land owners, as did the owners of Wilcote House. The

village continued to exist as an agricultural village with a population which decreased from 738 in 1861 to a low of 578 in 1921 and rose again to 805 in 1951. The rise was due to the village becoming a dormitory suburb. This transition from an agricultural village to a dormitory village became even more pronounced after 1951. The advent of motorised transport meant that the village could no longer support local shops but 2 of the public houses still remain and a post office.

In summary the history of the village has been traced from its Iron age beginnings, through its growth and collapse in Roman Britain, followed by its regrowth during the Anglo Saxon period. The village emerged at the end Anglo Saxon period controlled by a lord of the manor, with a church and fields held in common. The Hundred Rolls showed how the unfree villeins worked on some of the land in return for working on the demesne land for the lord of the manor, how this work duty gradually became replaced by a higher rent, how some of the land was held by freetenants who owed no work duty but still paid money for the right to use the land and these holdings eventually became freehold. The manor was granted to Netley Abbey and the church and its tithes were given to Oseney and Hailes abbey. The manorial accounts give an insight into the way the tenants lived and how the tenants were controlled by the court baron and the view of frankpledge. After the dissolution of the monasteries the manor was owned by Sir Thomas Pope and later by his nephew who was created the first earl of Downe. The third earl of Downe was heavily fined by the parliamentarians during the civil war and was forced to sell or lease part of the land and eventually to sell the manor. The manor later came into the possession of James Perrott who was probably the first resident lord of the manor. Another branch of the Perrott family had lived in North Leigh for over a hundred years before James Perrott became the lord of the manor. In the Elizabethan period, Simon Perrott had been the steward for the widow of Sir Thomas Pope. Simon Perrott prepared a survey of the manor, showing how the common fields and strips in the field were organised. The notebook in which the survey was written provides an insight into the way the common field system was operated in North Leigh at that time and probably for many centuries earlier. The common fields were inclosed by act of parliament in 1758/59 which led to the sale of the manor to the Duke of Marlborough. James Mason of Eynsham Hall became an important landowner in the village in the early 20th century.

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Units used in text.

Money:

12 pence(symbol d) = 1 shilling(symbol s), 20 shillings = 1 pound(symbol £). 5s 4d means five shillings and four pence, can also be written as 5/4; 5/- means five shillings; ¼ d means a quarter of a penny; £1-2-10½ means one pound 2 shillings and ten and a half pence.

Distance:

12 inches = 1 foot, 3 feet = 1 yard (symbol yd), typically 16.5 feet = 1 perch, 22 yards = 1 chain, 220 yards = 1 furlong, 1 metre is about 1.1 yards

Area:

2 yeards (symbol y) = 1 land, (symbol l), 2 lands = 1 field acre, before standardisation in North Leigh 1.2 field acres was about 1 acre: 1 yardland was about 39 field acres (or about 25 acres), 120 field acres was about 1 hide or 1 ploughland. An area 1 furlong by 1 chain (or 220 yds by 22 yds) = 1 acre, 1 hectare is about 2.5 acres,

Volume:

2 pints = 1 quart, 4 quarts = 1 gallon, 8 gallons = 1 bushel(bu), 8 bushels = 1 quarter(qtr). 1 bushel is about 36.4 litres. A perch of masonry is the volume of a stone wall one perch (16.5 feet) long, 18 inches high, and 12 inches thick.

Glossary:

Most unusual terms are defined at least once in the text. Some of those which are repeated are listed below.

Terms:

court baron – or manor court held by the lord of the manor to ensure that the manor was run efficiently; decisions made by a presentation jury.

demesne – strictly land retained by the lord of the manor for his own use but used in this article as another term for the manor farm.

essoin – apology for not attending a court.

hide – about 120 acres nominally the land needed to support a (wealthy) family.

hundred – originally a group of 100 hides.

knight's fee – sometimes called scutage was the money or military service required by royalty in exchange for the grant of farming land.

land – abbreviated to l in the 1581 survey where it means an area of about ½ of an acre; typically a strip of arable of 11 by 220 yards; see also yeard.

leet court – see view of frankpledge.

perquisites – money received for holding the court.

tithing – originally a group of ten hides.

view of frankpledge – or leet court was the lowest royal court of jurisdiction usually for the tithing, vill or township; decisions made by a presentation jury.

villein – unfree tenant having a duty of work to the lord of the manor.

yardland – abbreviated to ydld area of arable land of about 25 to 30 acres.

yeard – abbreviated to y in the 1581 survey means an area of about ¼ of an acre; typically a strip

of arable of about 6 by 220 yards wide; see also land.

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