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These pieces were originally published in various places between 1976 and 1995, the earlier more jejune than the later. Thanks are owed to Cambridge University Press, the John Rylands University of Manchester Library, the Local Population Studies Society, and the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. The only changes effected have been to unify the conventions for references. The items are in one sense residual since other material has been republished elsewhere. On the other hand, they have a certain unity. One item (on Barkby) was first rehearsed as a talk to the Barkby Local History Society, which explains its format and content.

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May 2019

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1 Notions of the family, lordship and the evolution of naming processes in medieval English rural society: a regional example

The development of the main principles of modern English naming processes, consisting of forename and surname, occurred in the later middle ages.¹ Large sections of the population of early-twelfth-century England were known in the records by a single personal name (the *nomen*). As the single personal name became insufficient as an identifier, bynames (*cognomina*) were attributed which were particular to individuals. Subsequently, these second identifying names persisted within kinship groups as hereditary surnames or family names. That important transition has recently been investigated in France where, it has been shown, social and regional variables influenced the pace of change. In that country the formation of modern patterns of naming was a prime example of cultural conflation or downwards cultural diffusion, the nobility acquiring bynames and hereditary surnames, followed in descending order by other social groups, but marked by a continued instability associated with women's naming processes. Change proceeded at varying paces in different regions, again following a somewhat diffusionist model.²

Quite similar processes have been observed at work in England, in both social and regional terms. Broadly speaking, the families of baronial tenants-in-chief first acquired hereditary surnames, which extended then to mesne tenants and knightly families, then through the free peasantry to the unfree. Regionally, it has become clear that the naming processes of some social groups advanced more quickly, in some counties than others: for example, earlier in Oxfordshire, slightly later in East Anglia and considerably later in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire.³ That general development, however, was nuanced, especially socially, for the transition to new naming practices was not comprehensive within social groups. It is apparent that new practices were first adopted by or attributed to a core within any social group and only later extended to comprehend the whole of that group. Changes were thus uneven within as well as

¹For an overview, see C. Clark, 'Anthroponymy', in N. Blake ed., *The Cambridge history of the English language, vol. II: 1066-1476* (Cambridge, 1992), 551-87.

²M. Bourin and B. Chevalier eds., *Génèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*, vol. I (Tours, 1990); M. Bourin and P. Chareille eds., *Génèse médiévale de l'anthroponymie moderne*, vols. II-1 and II-2 (Tours, 1992). This consortium of research is continuing for medieval 'Germany' and 'Italy'. Volume I reports also on some regions of the Iberian peninsula. The discussion below omits naming processes in boroughs and towns. For a general counsel against cultural conflation as a resort of first instance, see M. Archer, *Culture and agency: the place of culture in social theory* (Cambridge, 1989).

³R. McKinley, *Norfolk and Suffolk surnames in the middle ages*, English Surnames Series (hereafter ESS) I (London, 1973); *The surnames of Oxfordshire*, ESS III (London, 1977); *The surnames of Lancashire*, ESS IV (London, 1981); *The surnames of Sussex*, ESS V (London, 1989); and G. Redmond, *The surnames of the West Riding*, ESS II (London, 1973). For some earlier regional differences in naming processes, reflecting different 'ethnic' compositions of the local populations, see J. Insley, 'Some aspects of regional variation in early Middle English personal nomenclature', *Leeds Studies in English* 18 (1987), 183-200.

between social ranks.

This article examines the pace and variety of that change for two counties, Leicestershire and Rutland. It principally investigates the pace of regional and social change in naming patterns, but also considers the significant nuances within this broad framework. In particular, strong differences existed within as well as between social groups, of which one important example, documented towards the end of this discussion, was the more advanced adoption and attribution of hereditary surnames amongst some core families of the unfree peasantry by comparison with their more protracted development amongst more ‘marginal’ unfree peasant families. Equally, the evidence of the manorial court rolls considered below shows that, because of special circumstances, instability of names might still persist even amongst those core families who had moved more rapidly and solidly to hereditary surnames. The nuances of these processes will become more evident later in this discussion. The earlier sections below reconsider some of the variables adduced to explain these changes in naming processes: demographic increase and bureaucratic developments in combination requiring greater precision in identifying individuals; cultural change and social agency; and changes in the perception of the family and inheritance.

Explanation of these changes, beginning really in the late Old English period and continuing through to the fourteenth and even fifteenth centuries, now emphasizes multiple causation.⁴ Overall demographic increase was one reason for the need to adopt or attribute *cognomina*. One commentator has more precisely indicated the increase of population within each community as an important variable.⁵ Additionally and relatedly, the refinement of bureaucratic procedures, at central levels (for taxation purposes) and particularly at local, manorial levels, precipitated the pace of change, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁶ Importantly interrelated to demographic change was the contraction and concentration of the active corpus of bynames, varying by social group, but almost universal by about 1200, as insular names were first eclipsed by Continental-Germanic and Christian names, which only slightly affected the stock, but followed by a further concentration within the use of Continental-Germanic and Christian names.⁷ A corpus of over 500 Continental-Germanic male forenames in the twelfth century was reduced to a very active stock of about 20 names of all derivations (Continental-Germanic and Christian) by the early thirteenth century. Finally, cultural imitation and assimilation, as implied above, was another reason for the diffusion of bynames and hereditary

⁴The eleventh century is mentioned here, since bynames were attributed to a small proportion of Old English dignitaries; see G. Tengvik, *Old English bynames*, Nomina Germanica, 4 (Uppsala, 1938).

⁵R. H. Britnell, *The commercialisation of English society 1000-1500* (Cambridge, 1993), 5-6

⁶See, for example, the statement made by J. A. Raftis about the need to adopt bynames for identification where commercial transactions were involved, in this case in a small town (*A small town in the later middle ages: Godmanchester 1278-1400* (Toronto, 1982), 153).

⁷The standard work on Continental-Germanic names in use, particularly in the twelfth century, is T. Forssner, *Continental-Germanic personal names in England in Old and Middle English times* (Uppsala, 1916).

surnames.⁸

Such explanations may account for the introduction of bynames (*cognomina*) rather than a single name (*nomen*), but they hardly explain the transition from unstable bynames, which were specific to one person or changed from generation to generation within a kinship group, to hereditary surnames. That process may have been informed by a wider tendency towards inheritance, reflected in the harder criteria of succession to and inheritance and heritability of land linked to changing notions of the family and patrimony. Furthermore, lineage could, hitherto, have been represented through the perpetuation of homonymous forenames between generations within the kinship and the change to hereditary surnames to express that sentiment must have been a deliberate one.⁹ The development of hereditary surnames within different social groups seems indeed to be closely related to recent suggestions (and controversies) about patrimony and inheritance. Differences of opinion still surround the genesis of hereditary tenures at higher social levels during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For some, heritability was established as a principle by the early twelfth century, for others as a practice, whilst another interpretation allows only succession de facto at the lord's discretion and heritability only in the late twelfth century.¹⁰

⁸For the process of concentration of forenames, see C. Clark, 'Willelmus Rex? vel alius Willelmus?', *Nomina* 11 (1987), 7-33, and 'English personal names ca. 650-1300', *Medieval Prosopography* 8 (1987), 31-60. For a diffusionist model which was not directly downwards, see G. Duby, 'The diffusion of cultural patterns in feudal society', *Past and Present* 39 (1968), 3-10, esp. pp. 6-7, and 'Structures de parenté et de noblesse: France du Nord, ix^e-xi^e siècles', in *Miscellanea mediaevalia in memoriam Jan Frederik Niermayer* (Groningen, 1967), 149-65.

⁹For such circumstances in different naming systems, see C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'The name "re-made": the transmission of given names in Florence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries', in Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, family and ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1985), 283-309; J. Dupâquier ed., *Le prénom: mode et histoire - entretiens de Malher 1980* (Paris, 1984); D. S. Smith, 'Child-naming practices, kinship ties and change in family attitudes in Hingham, Massachusetts, 1641-1880', *Journal of Social History* 18 (1985), 541-66; and A. Fines, 'L'héritage du nom de baptême', *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 42 (1987), 853-77. For different meanings of homonymous forenames in later medieval England, see M. J. Bennett, 'Spiritual kinship and the baptismal name in traditional European society', in L. O. Frappell ed., *Principalities, power and estates* (Adelaide, 1979), 1-13; P. Niles, 'Baptism and the naming of children in late medieval England', *Medieval Prosopography* 3 (1982), 95-107; and L. Haas, 'Social connections between parents and godparents in late medieval Yorkshire', *ibid.* 10 (1989), 1-21. L. Mair, *An introduction to social anthropology* (2nd edn, Oxford 1972; repr. 1988), 69-82 provides a précis of anthropological approaches to patrilinear naming; for a more recent study, see S. Harrison, *Stealing people's names: history and politics in a Sepik river cosmology* (Cambridge, 1990), where names were associated with the power of ancestors and cognition of the past.

¹⁰Compare the following: S. F. C. Milsom, *The legal framework of English feudalism* (Cambridge, 1976); R. Palmer, 'The feudal framework of English law', *Michigan Law Review* 79 (1981), 1130-64, and 'The origins of property in England', *Law and History Review* 3 (1985), 1-50; J. C. Holt, 'Feudal society and the family in early medieval England: notions of patrimony', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser., 33 (1983), 210-18, and 'Politics and property in early medieval England', in T. H. Aston ed., *Landlords, peasants and politics in medieval England* (Cambridge, 1987), 65-114; R. C. DeAragon, 'The growth of secure inheritance in Anglo-Norman England', *Journal of Medieval History* 8 (1982), 381-91; and J. Hudson, 'Life-grants of land and the development of inheritance in Anglo-Norman England', in M. Chibnall ed., *Anglo-Norman studies XII: proceedings of the Battle Conference 1989* (Woodbridge, 1990), 67-80, 'Legal aspects of seignorial control of land in the century after the

Recently, historians have observed a significant change in the relationship between customary tenants and their holdings—that is, peasants and their property within the manor—in the 1260s to 1280s, resulting in a cautionary change in the formula of changes of and succession to unfree tenements. Earlier phrases in the manorial court record relating to transactions in unfree land, because they were inchoate and included the words *sibi et heredibus suis* ('to him and his heirs'), were an implicit manumission of the unfree tenant. The introduction into the record of the formula for surrender and admission was a response to that problem.¹¹ Significant in this context is the recognition of the expectation of succession to customary tenements. In theory, customary tenants had no heir other than their lord.¹² In practice, succession within the peasant family had become a norm—custom—but there remained a strong element of discretionary lordship. Cases between siblings and kin about disputed inheritance were entertained in manorial courts, but it is possible to consider these as not affecting lords' rights. The count (plaintiff's plea) by which property claims were brought was usually framed in terms of plaintiff having a greater right (*maior ius*) than defendant, but that claim was good only against the party involved and not against the lord. De facto, the manorial court—the lord's court—accepted a tenant, but only against the claims of another party. A different perception might ensue from the description of inheritance customs in manorial customals, where they infrequently were written down, so that these definitions seem to be a claim against the lord. On the other hand, they can still be perceived as a question of lordship defining and controlling familial arrangements, which also seems to be involved in several other elements in customals. The issue of rights against the lord was forced, however, by inchoate formulae in court rolls for succession to customary lands combined with the phrase *sibi et heredibus suis*, which implied those formal rights of inheritance reserved to freemen and denied to the unfree (an implicit manumission). As a result, although the formula of surrender and admission modified that claim, by requiring the interposition of the lord, yet inheritance was secured by the retention of the words *ad opus X et heredum suorum*.¹³ Indeed, in the Leicestershire manors discussed below, that conces-

Norman Conquest' (unpublished D.Phil thesis, Oxford 1988), 27-175, and *Land, law and lordship in Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford, 1994), 65-156. Space does not permit reference to the vast French literature on changes in the nature of the family from the tenth to the twelfth centuries, but see S. D. White, *Custom, kinship and gifts to saints: the laudatio parentum in Western France* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1988).

¹¹J. S. Beckerman, 'Customary law in English manorial courts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London, 1972), 168-9; R. M. Smith, 'Some thoughts on "hereditary" and "proprietary" rights in land under customary law in thirteenth and early fourteenth century England', *Law and History Review* 1 (1983), 107-10, 114; R. M. Smith, 'Some issues concerning families and their property in rural England 1250-1800', in Smith ed., *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984), 62-4; and L. Slota, 'Law, land transfer and lordship on the estates of St Albans Abbey in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *Law and History Review* 6 (1988), 122-5.

¹²See, generally, P. R. Hyams, *King, lords and peasants in medieval England: the common law of villeinage in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries* (Oxford, 1980).

¹³For the practical implications of inheritance customs within the family, see R. J. Faith, 'Peasant families and inheritance customs in medieval England', *Agricultural History Review* 14 (1966), 77-95. This argument owes much to E. Searle, 'Seignorial control of women's

sion goes further, to the extent of a recognition of hereditary right in the term *hereditas*.¹⁴ These changes in notions of inheritance of customary land coincided with the development of hereditary surnames amongst the unfree population of Leicestershire and Rutland.

The following sections, moving through social groups, are designed to illustrate the general points made above. Before moving to that discussion, it should be made clear that the records, as written sources, provide only a somewhat formal representation of naming. Particularly is that so of centrally produced records, such as taxation returns stemming from lay subsidies, and of the records of the common law courts, which tend to use patronymic forms of naming to associate the plaintiff with the previous tenants of the land, especially in, for example, cases of *mort d'ancestor* or novel *disseisin*. In this latter case, the purpose of the record demands a particular form of nomenclature and identification probably considerably removed from 'normal' usage. It often seems almost impossible to get behind this formality, at least in the middle ages, to discover how people colloquially addressed each other. Such a problem is not, however, insurmountable; colloquial forms of naming are illustrated below, particularly from the court rolls of Kibworth Harcourt. Moreover, as early as the (late) twelfth century, diminutives and hypocoristics (pet-forms) of forenames and personal names occur in the records, particularly manorial surveys, and they proliferate further in the thirteenth century. The particular colloquialisms of Kibworth, especially *parvus*, are also occasionally encountered in records of other manors. It is thus not impossible to move behind the predominant formality of the records.

The nobility

In 1066, a few Old English thegns had been attributed a byname, *cognomen* or patronymic descriptor in the Leicestershire sections of Domesday Book: Alwin Pbochestan, who held Birstall, Edwin Alferd at Kibworth Beauchamp, Lefric *filius Lewuini* at Stathern and in the soke of Melton and Alric *filius Meriet* at Husbands Bosworth. Those who continued to hold as mesne tenants in 1086, however, were known in the record simply by a single name, such as Æthelelm at Hoby, Ælmar at Fenny Drayton, Alfred at 'Lilinge', or Alfsi at Swinford. In total, more than 30 tenants in 1086 were known by an insular personal name without a byname.¹⁵ The Old English comital tenants were identified in Domes-

marriage: the antecedents and function of merchet in England', *Past and Present* 82 (1979), 3-43, developing the ideas of Milsom, *Legal framework*. I owe much too to Professor Robert Palmer for discussion of analogous (but not direct) points on the Listserv discussion list Mediev-L and by private e-mail.

¹⁴Merton College, Oxford, Muniments (hereafter MM) 6565: 'Quia Radulphus filius Herberti costumarius dominorum est mortuus ideo terra et tenementa sua capiantur in manu dominorum et venit Roggerus filius et heres dicti Radulphi et petiebat hereditatem patris sui et Jus secundum consuetudinem manerii...'; MM 6568, 'Memorandum de ingressibus eorum Tempore Scolarum de Merton' Oxon", lists 15 entry fines since Merton acquired the lordship (Barkby) and in seven cases the term *hereditas* is mentioned to justify the level of payment: 'et non erat hereditas sua'; 'quia non herat hereditas sua'; 'et est hereditas sua' (four cases); and 'quia non est hereditas sua'.

¹⁵More importantly, bynames from nicknames and personal names more frequently reflect

day by their title and status: Countess Alveva (1066), Countess Godiva (1086), Earl Morcar (1066), Earl Waltheof (1086) and even Harold Godwinsone, who was identified as Earl Harold (1066). That pattern is replicated in Domesday Book for Rutland, in which the 19 principal tenants of 1066 were identified by a personal name or *nomen* only, without a byname, although three had a denomination of status.¹⁶

The new Anglo-Norman nobility of 1086 were not consistently attributed *cognomina*. It is, moreover, possible that the identification of substantial knights and mesne tenants was determined by tenorial relationships, so that *cognomina* were not required in this record, even if they existed at that social level at that time. The tenorial organization of Domesday Book sufficiently identified mesne tenants by their real name ('forename') and their relationship to their fees and superior lords. More detailed identification was unnecessary for the purposes of this record. Even in the case of some tenants-in-chief, no further identification was necessary, had it existed, since title and status were sufficient identifiers: thus Earl Aubrey (de Vere) at Knaptoft *et alibi* and Earl Hugh (Chester) for the soke of Barrow upon Soar, recently acquired from William II, and formerly the estate of Earl Harold.¹⁷ Comital status thus dispensed with a *cognomen* in this record at this time. Nevertheless, most other tenants-in-chief were accorded a byname in Domesday Book, such as Geoffrey Alselin, Drogo de Beurere (de la Beuvriere), Maino and Oger Brito, and, despite comital status, Earl Hugh de Graintemesnil. Thus, of 27 tenants-in-chief, 25 were attributed some form of *cognomen*, 14 of whom had toponymic *cognomina* derived from their continental fees. Similarly, in Rutland, 9 of the 11 tenants in chief were attributed bynames, the other two being identified by their comital status.¹⁸ Two important implications follow from this.

The first inference is that these toponymic *cognomina*, relating back to con-

these colloquial forms of naming. Here and elsewhere the general folios of Domesday Book (hereafter DB) for the two counties are I, fos. 223b, 230a-237b, 272d, 273b, 274b, 278a, and 293a-297b. The specific references for these thegns with bynames are: I, fos. 232b, 234a, 234d and 235d. Additionally, descriptions were attributed to Godwin *presbiter*, Ernebern *presbiter* and Aluric *presbiter* at Peatling Magna, Swinford and Wigston Parva (I, fo. 231b). Those mentioned here are at I, fos. 231a, 231c, 231d, 232c, 234b, 235d, 236a, 236c, 236d, and 237b. The others comprise: Ketelbern at Holwell (231a); Wulfbert at Cotesbach (232d); Swein at Syston (232d); Godric at Houghton (233b); Gleduin at Newton Burgoland (233c); Swan at Husbands Bosworth (234b); Ingold at Illston (231b, 234b); Godwin and Fran at Slawston (234b); Ingold at Rearsby (234c); Ansfrid at Great Dalby and Wymondham (234c); Thurstan at Hose and Long Clawson (235a, 237c); Saxfrid at Ashby Magna (235b); Grimbald at Owston and Allexton (236c); Osbern at Stonton Wyville (236c); Gundwin at Theddingworth (236c); Feggi at Gaddesby (236c); Godwin at Welby (236c); Thurkill at Sharnford (236d); Leofric and Godric at Burton on the Wolds (237a); and Ingenwulf at Ibstock (237b). For these names, see O. von Feilitzen, *The pre-Conquest personal names of Domesday Book*, Nomina Germanica, 3 (Uppsala, 1937).

¹⁶For the general tenorial changes c. 1066, see R. Fleming, *Kings and lords in Conquest England* (Cambridge, 1993).

¹⁷DB, I, fo. 237a; and see C. P. Lewis, 'The formation of the honor of Chester, 1066-1100', in A. T. Thacker ed., *The earldom of Chester and its charters: a tribute to Geoffrey Barraclough*, *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society* 71 (1991), 37-68.

¹⁸DB, I, 293a-297b.

tinental patrimonies, were already or were becoming hereditary before 1086; secondly, the imputation of these names may be that the Norman fees were still regarded as the patrimony, whilst the English possessions were considered lands of acquisition and of lesser importance.¹⁹ Only two tenants-in-chief assumed a *cognomen* from English holdings (one was Stafford; for the other, Chester, see below), whilst the generic *cognomen* ‘Brito’ represents the particular contribution of non-Norman adventurers. Representative of the continental toponyms is Graintemesnil, from Le Grand-Mesnil, the caput of the Norman honour in Calvados (in the *arrondissement* of Lisieux, *canton* of St.-Pierre-sur-Dives), although this particular name was short-lived in Leicestershire and indeed England. Similarly fleeting was ‘de Todenil’, from Tosny (Eure, *arr.* Louviers, *cant.* Gaillon), for the honour of Belvoir in the late eleventh century.²⁰ A small number of *cognomina* represented office: *camerarius*, *dispensator*, *hostiarius* and the metonymic *buenvalet*, whilst the residue consisted of nicknames, especially ‘Pevrel’, or appositional patronyms, though those last were a minority.²¹

Consideration must be given to those substantial tenants-in-chief in Leicestershire not represented by a *cognomen*, the earls of Chester, from the late eleventh century, and the earls of Leicester from the early twelfth. The *cognomen* of the earls of Chester, *le Meschin*, was not employed in either Domesday Book or, later, the earls’ charters; the comital style was sufficient. Moreover, although Earl Hugh was the hereditary *viscomite* of the Avranchin (*dept.* Manche), as also was the second earl, Richard, the earls, in the particular circumstances of the formation of the earldom of Chester, became known by their English title.²² The Graintemesnil lands passed to Robert Count of Meulan, then to one of his two sons, another Robert, and afterwards to his son, Robert. These new earls of Leicester, the first three Roberts, were known not by the family name of Beaumont, but rather by their style, as earls of Leicester, in formal records and in their own *acta*.²³ On the other hand, it is known that contemporaries and commentators in the later middle ages knew them informally by nickname *cognomina*. These nickname *cognomina* are, for example, related in the various rentals of Leicester Abbey, founded by Robert II.²⁴ The thirteenth-century

¹⁹J. C. Holt, *What’s in a name? Family nomenclature and the Norman Conquest* (Stenton Lecture, Reading University, 1982). For a different perception of the changes in kinship and inheritance, see A. F. Wareham, ‘The aristocracy of East Anglia c. 930-1154: a study of family, land and government’ (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Birmingham, 1992), esp. 198-225 and 360-4.

²⁰L. C. Loyd, *The origins of some Anglo-Norman families*, Harleian Society, 103 (1955), 47 and 104; I. J. Sanders, *English baronies: a study of their origins and descent* (Oxford, 1960), 12 and 61

²¹The late Cecily Clark had much to say about *pevrel* in a paper given to a conference on ‘Naming, society and regional identity’ at Leicester in 1991. ‘Metonymic’ in this case refers to an occupational nickname. Patronyms and metronyms in this paper comprise Latin forms with *filius*, such as *filius Johannis* or *filius Sibile* and vernacular forms with *-son*. Appositional patronyms or metronyms, sometimes called bynames or surnames from personal names, are those forms which are elided from the Latin forms, so that the form becomes such as ‘Sibile’.

²²Lewis, ‘Formation of the honor of Chester’.

²³D. Crouch, *The Beaumont twins: the roots and branches of power in the twelfth century* (Cambridge, 1986), xii.

²⁴D. Crouch, ‘The foundation of Leicester Abbey and other problems’, *Midland History* 12

rental (Pyn's) referred back to the founder as Robert *[le] Bossu* and to Robert III as Robert *filius Petronille*. More pertinently, Geryn's rental of 1341 enumerated all the nicknames of the successive earls: Robert *le Boczeu (Bossu)*, founder of the Abbey, was succeeded by his son, Robert *as Blanchesmeyns*, who married Petronilla, whose issue was three sons and two daughters, of whom the eldest son was called Robert *filius Petronille* to distinguish him from the earlier Roberts.²⁵

Mesne tenants and knights

In 1086, at least 42 mesne tenants in Leicestershire were described simply by their 'forename' and a tenurial relationship, whilst 18 were attributed some further description or *cognomen*. Of these 18, however, 6 were also tenants-in-chief holding other fees as mesne tenants. The remaining 12 mesne tenants mainly bore either patronymic *cognomina* (six) or appositional patronyms (four), although one had a toponymic *cognomen*. So also, in Rutland, only 4 of 14 mesne tenants were attributed bynames.²⁶ The territorial organization of the 'Leicestershire Survey' of 1130 required more definite identification than the tenurial relationship exhibited *ipso facto* in Domesday Book.²⁷ Virtually all mesne tenants, as well as tenants-in-chief, in the Survey were accorded a *cognomen*. In the Survey, 34 tenants had bynames or surnames, whereas only 5 others were identified simply by a 'forename': Ansketil at Husbands Bosworth and Kibworth Harcourt (the *antecessor* of the Harcourt family, discussed below); Eustace at Thorpe Langton; Thomas at Hoby and Thrussington; Walkelin at Donisthorpe; and William at Slawston. By 1166, in the *Carte Baronum* returning knights' fees in Leicestershire and Rutland, all 33 tenants of fees were attributed bynames, as also were the much larger number of tenants of full fees or parts of fees enumerated in the returns of 1235-1236 (there being no extant returns for the two counties in 1212).²⁸

The preponderance of *cognomina* of mesne tenants in the twelfth century, as well as tenants-in-chief, was toponymic, predominantly relating back to fees of origin in Normandy. Such *cognomina* were mainly hereditary, amongst tenants-in-chief *ab initio* in Leicestershire and Rutland, and amongst mesne tenants by the early twelfth century. Nevertheless, patronymic *cognomina* remained unstable until the middle of the twelfth century; examples of this include the

(1987), 4-5.

²⁵Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc 625, fo. iv v, fo. 186r: 'Ipse [sic] quoque Roberto defuncto successit ei Robertus le Boczeu filius et heres eiusdem [who founded the Abbey] ... Isto Roberto fundatore nostro defuncto successit ei in hereditatem Robertus filius eius et vocabatur Robertus as Blanchesmeyns qui Robertus accepit in uxorem Petronellam filiam Hugonis de Grantmeynil... Et ex dicta Petronilla genuit Tres filios et duas filias scilicet Robertum qui vocabatur Robertus filius Petronelle ad diferenciam predictorum...'

²⁶DB, I, 293a-297b.

²⁷Here, as elsewhere, the edition used is C. F. Slade, *The Leicestershire Survey (c. A.D. 1130)*, Leicester University Occasional Papers in English Local History, first series, 7 (1956).

²⁸H. Hall ed., *The Red Book of the Exchequer*, vol. I (Rolls Series, 1896), 328-9, 336, 506, 516-25; D. E. Greenway ed., *Charters of the honour of Mowbray, 1107-1191*, British Academy Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales, new series 1 (1972), 256-7 (no. 401).

antecessores of the Harcourt and Foxton families.

In about 1130, Ansketil (or Anshetil) held fees in Husbands Bosworth and Kibworth Harcourt; Ansketil (*fl.* 1138) was one of the eight sons of Robert *filius Ansketilli* (*ob.* 1118) and succeeded to the English lands. His brother, William, was mentioned in the Pipe Roll of 1130 as William *filius Roberti filii Anshetili* and Ansketil was singularly known in that record too as Anshetil *de Herolcurt*. On Ansketil's death, without issue, Ivo de Harcourt acceded to the English lands, assuming the surname given to the Leicestershire manor, which thenceforth became the hereditary family name associated with this lordship and honorial baronage of the earldom of Leicester.²⁹

Also of knightly status, the lordship of Foxton (actually described as a *baronia* in charters of the early thirteenth century) had a similar instability of associated byname through the early twelfth century.³⁰ Charters relating to the advowson of five churches in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, granted to Daventry Priory, allow a reconstruction of the naming of the family. Robert *filius Vitalis alias filius Violi* had issue two sons, Simon *filius Roberti* (*c.* 1148-1166) and Jordan *filius Roberti filii Violi*; Simon had issue Richard *filius Simonis de Foxtona* (*c.* 1160-1189), who had a son Richard *filius Ricardi de Foxton* (*c.* 1210). The patronymic *cognomen* associated with this lordship thus remained unstable throughout the first half of the twelfth century.

A case study: the Bassets of Weldon

An important illustration of the development of hereditary surnames amongst the nobility is provided by the Basset family, though complicated by its elevation from relative (but not total) obscurity to prominence in the reign of Henry I, when the barony of Weldon, with extensive lands in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, was fully established. That barony had been held in 1086 by Robert *de Bucii*, but escheated to the King and was subsequently (after 1122) awarded by Henry I to the Bassets in return for their service.³¹ The precise origin of the Bassets is obscure: Loyd suggested the region of Montreuil-au-Houlme (Orme, *arrondissement* of Argentan, *canton* of Briouze), where Ralph, father of Richard I and Henry I's justiciar, was lord of Doumfront in the reign of William II; W. T. Reedy noted the relationship of the Bassets to a superior lord, the d'Oilly family, particularly in the placename OUILLY-le-BASSET.³²

Orderic Vitalis referred disparagingly to the inferiority of the Basset fee in Normandy, but more instructively mentioned also the nature of the Basset name at that time: *Ricardus enim cognomento Bassetus*, a description confirmed by the Abingdon chronicler on the death of Ralph.³³ The French nickname was

²⁹Crouch, *Beaumont twins*, 220 (Appendix II, Table II); J. Hunter ed., *Magnum rotulum scaccarii vel magnum rotulum pipae* (Record Commission, 1833), 87 and 98; Slade, *Leicestershire survey*.

³⁰The following is from M. J. Franklin ed., *The cartulary of Daventry Priory*, Northamptonshire Record Society, 35 (1988), 290-6 (nos. 884-96).

³¹Slade, *Leicestershire survey*; Sanders, *English baronies*, 49-50

³²Loyd, *Origins*, 12; W. T. Reedy, 'The first two Bassets of Weldon', *Northamptonshire Past and Present* 4 (1966-1972), 241-5 and 295-8.

³³M. Chibnall ed., *The ecclesiastical history of Orderic Vitalis*, Book VI (Oxford, 1980), 468;

thus implicitly of recent origin. Nor was it distinctive of this particular family, as it became attributed through all social groups, and had widespread distribution in 'France'.³⁴

The fortunes of the Bassets were established by the service of Ralph to Henry I, as one of the *novi homines* or *curiales* 'raised from the dust'.³⁵ In particular their position was sealed by the marriage, promoted by Henry I, of Maud Ridel to Richard Basset about 1123. Maud's father, Geoffrey Ridel, another of the *curiales* of Henry I, not a magnate and thus a peer of Basset, had died in the White Ship in 1120. Geva, Maud's mother, however, was the daughter of Hugh, late earl of Chester, and the marriage of 1123 was seemingly arranged at the instigation of Maud's first cousin, Ranulph, earl of Chester.³⁶ The union was consequently hypergamy (a marriage of a male from a lesser lineage with a woman from a higher one). The writ-charter of Henry I (January-April 1123) which gave notification of the marriage referred to the Bassets by their *cognomen*: Richard Basset, his late father Ralph Basset and (Richard's sons) Robert Basset, Osmund Basset and Turstin Basset.³⁷ By this date, therefore, the *cognomen* had become an hereditary surname. Furthermore, in the Leicestershire Survey of 1130, Richard was known as Richard Basset, holding the original Basset fees, although his wife, Maud, was known as Maud Ridel, responding for the Ridel fees. The Pipe Roll of 1130 also confirms the use of the *cognomen* Basset, as Richard Basset accounted for Leicestershire and Northamptonshire and for the Ridel lands in his custody, whilst Nicholas Basset was also mentioned in that roll.³⁸ Further members of the family were listed as Bassets in Pipe Rolls after 1161.³⁹

Maud's continued use of her patrimonial surname, Ridel, resulted from her association with the Ridel fees, as well as the hypergamy of the match. The terms of the marriage alliance, moreover, included the provision that Robert Ridel (to whom the Ridel lands were destined) should marry a granddaughter of Ralph Basset but, should Robert die without issue, the lands would remain

J. Stephenson ed., *Chronicon monasterii de Abingdon* 2 (Rolls Series, 1858), 170 (*Radulphus etiam cognomento Basset*).

³⁴See, for example, M.-Th. Morlet, *Etude d'anthroponymie Picard: les noms de personne en Haute Picardie au xiii^e, xiv^e, xve siècles* (Amiens, 1967), 184, and 'Les noms de personne à Eu du xiii^e au xve siècle', *Revue Internationale d'Onomastique* 12 (1960), 205 (Basset, found in Eu, 'ajoute une nuance à l'idée de petitesse, il designe un individu à courtes jambes').

³⁵Chibnall, *Ecclesiastical history of Orderic Vitalis*, Book VI, 468; J. Green, *The government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge, 1986), 231-2.

³⁶Ragna C. DeAragon, 'In pursuit of aristocratic women: a key to success in Anglo-Norman England', *Albion* 14 (1982), 263. I differ from DeAragon on the circumstances of the marriage, since it seems to me that the integration of the Ridel lands with the Basset was entirely fortuitous, since every effort was made in the writ-charter, whether at the instigation of Henry I or the Chester affinity, to preserve the integrity of the Ridel lands. The other implication would be that the Chester affinity was attempting to flank the territorial power and challenge of the earl of Leicester in Leicestershire at this stage, a theme which I hope to develop further.

³⁷C. Johnson and H. A. Cronne eds, *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154*, vol. II: *Regesta Henrici Primi 1100-1135* (Oxford, 1956), 184 (no. 1389).

³⁸Hunter, *Magnum rotulum*, 31; Slade, *Leicestershire survey*.

³⁹*Pipe Roll 7 Henry II*, Pipe Roll Society, 4 (1885), and subsequent volumes.

to Richard Basset.⁴⁰ In the event, the Ridel lands passed to Geoffrey (*ob.* 1180) the eldest son of the union of Richard (*ob. c.* 1135-1146) and Maud, and he assumed the surname Ridel; accordingly in the *Carte Baronum* of 1166, Geoffrey Ridel accounted for the honour of Great Weldon which had been held in 1135 by his father, Ralph Basset.⁴¹

Although fully hereditary from at least the early twelfth century, the Basset surname still exhibited some circumstantial instability, caused by events of marriage and inheritance. Another such inconsistency occurred in the late twelfth century. In about 1200, Reginald Basset granted to his nephew, Robert Basset, a virgate in Diseworth. By a further contemporary charter, the same Reginald confirmed to another nephew, Peter *de Dena*, another virgate. These two virgates had been received by Reginald from Richard *filius Ricardi Basset*. About the same time, two acres were transferred by William *filius Bertrami de Dhiteswrde* to Robert Basset *filius Simonis de Dena*, whilst another virgate was passed by the same Reginald Basset *filius Roberti Basset* to Robert Basset *filius Simonis de Dene*. In *c.* 1224-1229, moreover, Ivo de Dene confirmed to Stephen de Segrave all his land in Diseworth which he held by gift of Reginald Basset, whilst in about 1241 Reginald Basset exchanged with Stephen de Segrave four virgates in Diseworth for land in Woolsthorpe. Subsequently, Robert de Leicestria confirmed to de Segrave all his lands in Diseworth which he too held by gift of his uncle, Ralph Basset. This incidence of instability seems to be associated with the particular circumstances in which land was passed between collateral relatives, especially between uncle (Basset) and nephew (de Dene *alias* Basset *alias* de Leicestria).⁴²

Despite these particular circumstances, the *cognomen* Basset had developed into an hereditary surname by about 1123, at that stage still associated with the lesser nobility and *curiales*, but at the point of transition to baronial status. Its conversion to hereditary status reflects the wider development of hereditary surnames amongst these social groups.

The peasantry

Although the processes were protracted, the attribution of both bynames and hereditary surnames to the peasantry of Leicestershire and Rutland was clearly established, in the former case extensively by the end of the twelfth century, and in the case of hereditary surnames during the late thirteenth century. Nevertheless, development within social and legal groups was uneven, disregarding differences of gender for the moment. In particular, hereditary surnames were first assumed by a core or nucleus of kinship groups and only later imitated by the larger proportion of other kinship groups. Although it seems evident that hereditary surnames developed amongst the free tenantry earlier than the unfree, the sources are not always sufficiently explicit about legal status to give precise quantitative evidence. As a consequence of this lack

⁴⁰ *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, vol. II, 184 (no. 1389).

⁴¹ *Red Book of the Exchequer*, vol. I, 329 (Northants.).

⁴² I. H. Jeayes ed., *A descriptive catalogue of the charters and muniments... at Berkeley Castle* (Bristol, 1892), 30-1, 45, 53, 62 (nos. 72, 116-17, 149 and 177).

of specificity about status, this discussion proceeds first with general remarks about the peasantry as a whole, followed by comments on the evidence for the free peasantry and finally a similar examination of specific evidence for the unfree peasantry. For example, since charters were legally restricted to freemen, both as parties and witnesses, that source can be employed exclusively for the development of hereditary surnames amongst the free peasantry, and similarly litigation in the common law courts. By contrast, some (but not all) manorial surveys designate the customary tenants.

The development of bynames amongst the peasantry as a whole is most graphically illustrated by patterns exhibited in manorial surveys in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Two of the earliest extant manorial surveys, those of the Burton Abbey estates (Surveys A and B, c. 1114-1115 and 1126), included one manor in north-west Leicestershire, on the county boundary: Appleby Magna.⁴³ The earlier of the two surveys enumerated 25 tenants and an indeterminate number of *fili Alurici*, of whom eight tenants were *censarii*, 14 villeins and 3 cotsets. Twelve held the standard holding, a virgate, whilst others held 2.5 virgates (one), two virgates (one), two bovates (perhaps the equivalent of a virgate) (one), one bovat (two), three acres (three), and unspecified amounts of land. Of all these tenants, only Godwin *prepositus*, the tenant of 2.5 virgates and a *censarius*, was attributed a description other than a 'forename'. In the second survey, the seven tenants listed, holding one to four virgates and all described as *molmen* (the Middle English equivalent of Latin *censarius*), had no *cognomen* or further description, except for Roger *presbyter*, a special vocation. Quite significantly, one of the two Richards was identified as *alter Ricardus*, the usual form of differentiation in these surveys of Burton Abbey's manors.⁴⁴ That form of differentiation confirms that bynames or *cognomina* were not culturally developed amongst peasant society in early-twelfth-century Leicestershire.⁴⁵

One influence against the use of bynames in the Burton Abbey surveys was the continued wide stock of active personal names, broadened in particular by the persistence of insular forms alongside newly introduced Continental-Germanic ones. For example, tenants in the earlier survey of Appleby bore insular names such as Almar, Alwin and Godric alongside new forms such as Walter, Ranulf, Gerard, Blancard, Richard and Roger. Nevertheless, duplication did occur, as in the case of two Almars, two Alurics, two Godrics and two Richards (although some might be attributable to multiple holdings of some tenants).

In the Templars' Inquest of 1185, which included lands in the two counties, the corpus of personal names still remained quite extensive, as Continental-Germanic and Christian forms gained wider acceptance, yet insular forms still persisted. In the description of the tenantry on Templar lands, alongside forms

⁴³C. G. O. Bridgman ed., 'The Burton Abbey twelfth-century surveys', in *Collections for a History of Staffordshire* (London, 1918 for 1916), 244-6. B is the earlier of the two surveys.

⁴⁴Bridgman, 'Burton Abbey twelfth-century surveys', 212-47.

⁴⁵For an analysis of the patterns of forenames, see C. Clark, 'Women's names in post-Conquest England: observations and speculations', *Speculum* 53 (1978), 238.

such as Simon, Richard, Pain, Philip, William, Walter, Thomas, Simon, Hugh and Maurice, others were still in use such as Gode (twice), Alured (twice), Wlwiet and Godwin. The lands of the Templars were less consolidated and more disparate and consequently so was their tenantry: in Tickencote (one tenant), Empingham (11), Greetham (3), Wymondham (1) and Sewstern (4), 11 of whom held standard holdings of one bovate, one a half bovate, one two bovates, another half a carucate and one four bovates (perhaps the equivalent of a half carucate).⁴⁶ These 20 peasants were of indeterminate status, although many, tenants of standard holdings, may have been unfree. Only 3 bore a *cognomen*, in each case descriptive of exceptional status, and so all were possibly free: Ascelin *sacerdos*, who held a bovate as the solitary Templar tenant at Tickencote; Odo *diaconus* (a bovate at Empingham); and the eponymous Richard *de Sewsterne*, who held half a carucate in Sewstern. The other 17 were not attributed a byname or *cognomen*. In 1185, such evidence, predominantly from Rutland, firmly suggests that bynames were not yet the norm for the peasantry.

By 1212, that situation may have altered quite radically, for record of some tenants in Worthington and Newbold, in north-west Leicestershire, presents a quite different picture.⁴⁷ All 11 tenants were afforded bynames, although their legal status is not specified. They held a variety of lands, from half a toft, a croft and toft, a bovate, a virgate, a bovate and 12 acres, to a carucate. This pattern is confirmed by slightly later evidence, not from a survey, but from the lay subsidy which is extant for the vill of Stathern in north-east Leicestershire, for 1232. All 26 contributors to the subsidy in that vill were attributed bynames by the collectors; although one or two were related to lordship, the remainder appear, from the amounts for which they were assessed, to have been exclusively peasants (although they probably belonged to the upper echelon of peasant society, since those below the taxable threshold were excluded).⁴⁸

The difficulty of that particular source is its imposition by central government, which may have affected naming and identification. Taken together with the listing at Worthington-Newbold and with the manorial surveys of the early thirteenth century, it does, however, provide conclusive evidence of the wider use of bynames amongst the peasantry by that time. Those manorial surveys, discussed below, comprehended a much larger peasant population and comprise mainly the Lincoln episcopal estates, the soke of Rothley (Templars) and some lands of Owston Abbey. They relate to a consolidated area of the two counties: the Lincoln material to east Leicestershire and Rutland, the soke to the north-east of Leicestershire and Owston Abbey to disparate lands in the east of Leicestershire.

The survey of the Lincoln episcopal estate, compiled between 1225 and 1258,

⁴⁶B. A. Lees ed., *Records of the Templars in England in the twelfth century*, British Academy Records of the Social and Economic History of England, 9 (1935), 112-13.

⁴⁷*Associated Architectural Society Reports* (hereafter AASR), 34 (1917-18), 170 (no. 157).

⁴⁸E. Niemeyer, 'An assessment for the fortieth of 1232', *English Historical Review* 24 (1909), 733-5. Mean tax was 8.8d. with standard deviation of 4.708, with a median of 7.4d., entirely modest levels of assessment.

included some large manors in Leicestershire and Rutland.⁴⁹ At Lyddington, 49 tenants were listed and an additional 2 at Caldecote; although their status was not clearly described, 14 appear to have been customary tenants, 5 free, whilst 30 were specifically designated cottars. Of the 14 surmised customary tenants, only two were without a byname, presumably because their forenames (Norman and Alexander), although not unusual in a wider context, were nonetheless unusual within the community. All 5 freemen were known by a byname and of the 30 cottars only one, who bore an insular (Old English) forename (Alured), was recorded without a byname.⁵⁰ Status was equally ambivalent at ‘Rington’, to the north of the Borough of Leicester, where the Bishop had 54 tenants who held miscellaneous holdings ranging from a toft and croft to a virgate; 24 who held a virgate may have been customaries. All bore bynames.⁵¹ Slightly further north, at Thurmaston, all 26 tenants of the Bishop, holding tenements ranging from a toft to a virgate plus a bovate, had bynames, except for Langefer (who held a virgate and toft) and Ailnoht (a bovate and toft). These exceptions again are explicable by unusual forenames.⁵² In the Wreake Valley, at Asfordby near Melton, 49 tenants, also of undefined status, held land from the Bishop, and 34 of them held half a virgate and may have been customaries. Only 6 appeared without a byname, 5 of whom held half a virgate (Humfrey, Gamel, Thengo, Silvester and Roger) and one a virgate and a quarter (Colmus [*sic*]).⁵³ With the exception of Roger, the pattern is confirmed of normative use of bynames except when a forename was sufficiently distinctive within the community.

Such a pattern is generally confirmed by the ‘custumal’ of the soke of Rothley, compiled in about 1245, although, because of territorial organization and social structure, it is more complex.⁵⁴ Comprehending lands in about a dozen vills in north-east Leicestershire with a *caput* at Rothley, the soke was held by the Templars, but was ancient demesne.⁵⁵ Its tenantry was therefore predominantly privileged villeins or villein sokemen, whose inheritance custom was partibility. That custom has a profound effect on naming patterns in the custumal. Of the total of 559 tenants, 465 had a recognizable form of byname; but the position of the remaining 94 was complicated by the nature of inheritance, since many were joint tenants of land who were described by their relationship to that land and their other coparceners, principally brothers.

The complexity of this arrangement needs illustration, because of the vari-

⁴⁹For other commentaries on naming patterns in this document as a whole, see G. Fellows-Jensen, ‘The surnames of the tenants of the Bishop of Lincoln in nine English counties’, in T. Anderson ed., *NORNA-Rapporteur* 8 (1975), 39-60, and ‘The names of the Lincolnshire tenants of the Bishop of Lincoln c. 1225’, in F. Sandgren ed., *Otium et negotium: studies in onomatology and library science presented to Olof von Feilitzen* (1973), 86-95.

⁵⁰Queen’s College, Oxford, MS 366, fos. 16r -17r

⁵¹Ibid., fos. 18r-v .

⁵²Ibid., fos. 18v-19r.

⁵³Ibid., fo. 19r.

⁵⁴G. T. Clark, ‘The customary of the manor and soke of Rothley in the county of Leicestershire’, *Archaeologia* 47 (1882), 89-130; dated by comparison with The National Archives (hereafter TNA) C260/86.

⁵⁵R. S. Hoyt, *The royal demesne in English constitutional history, 1066 to 1272* (Ithaca, New York, 1950), 192-207.

ety of its forms. An excellent example is ‘Galfridus Walterus Henricus fratres tenent j bovatom cum tofto’.⁵⁶ In this case, the need to identify tenants by bynames was mitigated by their description in relation to each other and the land. Although that example is reasonably straightforward, others are less so: ‘Thomas et Ricardus pro una acra terre et dimidia’ or ‘Will[elmus] de Cayham et Jordan[us] tenent j bovatom et dimidiam’.⁵⁷ One assumption may be that these too were implicitly male siblings. That interpretation seems to be certain in some cases: ‘Ricardus filius Rogeri Nigellus et Rogerus tenent unam virgatom’.⁵⁸ A substantial number of entries conform to this pattern.

The residual number of single tenants without a byname is thus quite small, such as Ivo at Rothley who held two virgates, Alexander who held half a toft, Ranulph (two thirds of a virgate), Matthew (a half bovate at Barsby), and Jere, Malbe and Bate (each a half bovate at Barsby).⁵⁹ Fewer than 20 tenants were thus known in the custumal, a seignorial document, by a forename and no further description; in most cases, the forename was an unusual one within the community.

Compiled in about 1200-1240, the first rental of the lands of Owston Abbey presents many difficulties, although fewer than the second one of 1259.⁶⁰ The lands of the Abbey, dispersed through east Leicestershire, were disparate, so that the rentals comprise tenants scattered in several vills. There is nominal evidence for only 29 tenants, of unspecified status. Only a single tenant, with the less usual forename Hamund, was not attributed a byname, and he held at an earlier time, the former tenant of two bovates now held by Sarah Abouetoun.

Firm evidence is thus contained in the survey-type material, fragmentary though it is, that naming processes changed only protractedly amongst the peasantry of Leicestershire and Rutland. In the early twelfth century, bynames had not developed and that still appears so in about 1185. By the early thirteenth century, however, bynames had become the norm in peasant society—or at least in those formal documents imposed on it from above. Through the thirteenth century, a small residual number of peasants were not accorded a byname, but in most cases their position is explicable by their less usual forenames. Thus, as late as the lay subsidy of 1296 for Rutland, ten contributors, apparently from the nature of the document from the upper echelon of peasant society, were listed without a byname: Alexander (Oakham); Alwin (Langham); Aubrey (Ketton); Bartholomew (Whitwell); Gervase (Wardley); Hamund (Oakham); Ingred (Oakham); Lucy (Lindon); Remund (Greetham); and Wolewin (Essendine). Excluding the case of the two female taxpayers, the consistent feature is a less usual forename.⁶¹ Even in the survey of Oakham in 1305, five tenants (comprising one villein, three cottagers and a female tenant) were not accorded bynames, including the villein Hamond, who held a virgate

⁵⁶Clark, ‘Customary’, 103.

⁵⁷Ibid., 100 and 102.

⁵⁸Ibid., 100.

⁵⁹Ibid., 99, 102-3, 105, 108-10, 112, 115, 120.

⁶⁰*AASR* 23 (1895-1896), 413-17.

⁶¹TNA E179/165/1.

and was probably the same Hamund who contributed 22.5d to the lay subsidy of 1296. That taxation, however, comprised 1,630 taxpayers. Furthermore, the legible taxpayers (3,871) assessed in the Leicestershire lay subsidy of 1327 all had bynames.⁶²

This cumulative evidence strongly implies that bynames, although more widely in use and the norm by about 1200, were necessary only with a common forename. Identification by an unusual forename did not require a supplementary byname, a situation which persisted in a minor way into the late thirteenth century. Nevertheless, by about 1200, the majority of peasants were indeed accorded a byname in the formal documentation.

By the middle of the century, it was becoming increasingly common for some free kinship groups to develop hereditary surnames. That process is illustrated, but not quantitatively established, by references in charters. Early in the thirteenth century, Mael *de Kerebi* attested a charter, as also one in which Mael *filius Ambrosii* received a virgate, whilst slightly later William *filius Mael'* attested another. Five charters of the late thirteenth century (two of which are dated 1283 and 1299) were witnessed by Simon Mael (twice specified as 'of Kirby'), and that of 1283 was also attested by Mr Robert Mael. In 1303, Lucy *relictā Simonis Mael* alienated land in Kirby Muxloe. Since all these charters related to Kirby Muxloe, visible here is the development from unstable patronymic byname to hereditary appositional patronymic surname.⁶³

At Kirby Muxloe also, to the west of the borough of Leicester, the byname (*le*) *Levere alias Lepor(e)* became hereditary in the mid thirteenth century. Early in that century, Warin *filius Iuonis le Levere* was a witness, whilst his father, Ivo Lepore, held a half virgate there and acquired another virgate. Warin later occurred in eight other charters as Warin (once Warner) *le Levere*, one of which was dated 1253, another no later than 1262 and a further one dated 1283. In six he was a witness, but in the other two a grantor. Simon *filius Warini le Levere* attested some of these charters, witnessing that of 1253 as Simon *le Levere*. In the late thirteenth century, Simon attested four more as Simon *le Levere* and was mentioned in two later ones as Simon *filius Warini Le Levere*. Warin had a brother, Richard, who held a virgate and was referred to in a mid-thirteenth-century charter as Richard *le Levere frater Warini le Levere*. Warin had died by 1297, when his widow, Agnes, alienated land. Two charters of the mid thirteenth century were further attested by Ralph *le Levere*. Charters of 1300 involved William *le Levere* as donor and attestor and as beneficiary of 2.5 virgates, whilst another of about that date was witnessed by Walter *le Levere*. William was a grantor in 1303 and witness in 1316. Later, John *le Levere* was grantor and beneficiary in charters of 1339-1354; his son, William, was a grantor in 1361, by which time John had died. This byname seems then to have become hereditary in Kirby Muxloe around the middle of the thirteenth

⁶²TNA E179/165/1; G. Chinnery et al, *The Oakham Survey of 1305*, Rutland Record Society (1989), 23 (Hamond) and passim; W. G. D. Fletcher, 'The earliest Leicestershire lay subsidy roll, 1327', *AASR* 19 (1888-1889), 130-78 and 209-312.

⁶³*Historical Manuscripts Report on the MSS of the late Reginald Rawdon Hastings, Esq.*, vol. I (1928) (hereafter HMC Hastings), 12-19.

century, a pattern seemingly replicated there in the byname *le Venur* {*Venator*) at the same time, especially in charters of 1253 to 1292.⁶⁴

The most conclusive evidence of the development of an hereditary surname amongst a free kinship group, that of the Pakeman family, also derives from Kirby Muxloe, but is complicated by the inexorable rise of that family from freemen to gentry status through service in the honour of Leicester.⁶⁵ In the early thirteenth century, Simon Pakeman *alias Simon filius Simonis Pakeman* was a grantor and recipient of two virgates and grantor of another. His daughter, Maud, designated as *filia Simonis Pakeman*, alienated another 1.5 virgates in mid century. Contemporaneously, Gilbert Pakeman attested a charter and was mentioned as formerly holding three acres. Simon had a son, called variously Richard *filius Simonis Pakeman* and Richard Pakeman, whilst Robert Pakeman, who attested charters and acquired lands, was described once as Robert *filius Roberti Pakeman*, but in eleven other cases in the later thirteenth century (undated and 1277-1300) as Robert Pakeman. His father, as Robert Pakeman, had attested a charter of the early thirteenth century. Simon, son of Robert II, was grantor and beneficiary in numerous charters after 1277 relating to Kirby and was described as Simon Pakeman *filius Roberti Pakeman* to differentiate him from Simon son of Simon Pakeman, the latter being designated contemporaneously and through the early fourteenth century as Simon *filius Simonis Pakeman* and Simon Pakeman *filius Simonis Pakeman*.⁶⁶

An interesting example of the genesis of hereditary surnames is the transition from unstable patronyms to appositional patronyms. In Melton Mowbray, Robert *filius Herberti* was simultaneously (1272) designated Robert Herbert in half a dozen charters.⁶⁷ A proliferation of names of this kind happened in Gaddesby during the thirteenth century.⁶⁸ Thirty-nine charters involved the acquisitive Henry *filius Jordani*, who was buying up piecemeal lands in selions and roods, but in those of 1275 and no date he was styled simply Henry Jordan. His daughter, also acquiring property, occurred as Edith *filia Henrici Jordan*, dependent on her relationship to him, whilst his son, Ralph, was styled (1275 and no date) Ralph *filius Henrici Jordan*, Ralph Jordan *filius Henrici Jordan* and simply Ralph Jordan. There too Ralph *filius Willelmi de Kayham* was equally known as Ralph *de Kayam* (*manens in Gaddesby*). Similarly in Gaddesby, Roger *filius Palke* became elided to Roger Palk de Gaddesby, as Ralph *filius Roberti de Rerisby* occurred regularly in other charters as Ralph *de Rerisby*, whilst his father was consistently Robert *de Rerisby*. Although occurring over only two generations, these elided patronyms reflect an incipient heritability of surnames; indeed, the surname Jordan persisted much later in Gaddesby.

The converse of this development is the persistent instability of some bynames, but that contrast seems to have been so minimal as to confirm the

⁶⁴ *HMC Hastings*, 12-15 and 64.

⁶⁵ G. G. Astill, 'The medieval gentry: a study in Leicestershire society, 1350-1399' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Birmingham, 1977), 325.

⁶⁶ *HMC Hastings*, 12-21.

⁶⁷ Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Wood empt 7, fos. 29 v-30r .

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fos. 107v-140r .

general trend towards heritability. The specific case of Henry *capellanus filius Johannis Geroud* at Gaddesby in the thirteenth century is probably explicable by a real vocation.⁶⁹ Thomas *de aula filius Thome de Disewrth*, grantor of four selions at Diseworth from about 1241 to 1255, is one of the few other examples of instability.⁷⁰ The relatively infrequent incidence of such exceptions tends to confirm the general trend towards hereditary bynames. By the middle of the thirteenth century, therefore, hereditary surnames seem to have been developing, if only incipiently, amongst the free tenantry and peasantry of Leicestershire and Rutland. Although some of the customary tenantry had probably also been attributed bynames from the early thirteenth century, the transition to hereditary surnames can only be documented for the unfree peasantry from a later time, after the beginning of extant manorial court rolls. That evidence, discussed below, seems to suggest that hereditary surnames developed amongst core kinship groups of the unfree peasantry before extending more widely throughout that social group. The former development may have happened by the 1270s and 1280s, whilst the more general trend only occurred by about 1300.

The unfree peasantry

By the end of the thirteenth century, hereditary surnames were developing amongst the unfree peasantry, as documented in manorial records, more particularly manorial court rolls supplemented by rentals. These developments can be evidenced most clearly in the records of the two manors in Leicestershire of Merton College, Barkby and Kibworth Harcourt.⁷¹ However, whilst core kinship groups within these two manors became recognized by hereditary surnames, other kinship groups continued for a longer time to have unstable, flexible bynames. In view of the difficulties both of estimating populations and of comprehensively reconstructing kinship groups from manorial court rolls, much of the evidence presented here is necessarily not quantitative and is rather impressionistic.⁷² Those problems are compounded by *lacunae* in the sequence of court rolls.⁷³

The rentals illuminate the extent to which bynames had become necessary amongst the unfree tenantry by the late thirteenth century. In the rental of 1311 for Barkby, all 27 unfree male customary tenants bore bynames, whilst in

⁶⁹Ibid., fos. 120r-v.

⁷⁰Jeayes, *Descriptive catalogue*, 103 (no. 313).

⁷¹MM 6367-6405 and 6563-6575 (the material for Kibworth is supplemented by the manorial accounts, MM 6196-6244); for the background for Kibworth, see C. Howell, *Land, family and inheritance in transition: Kibworth Harcourt 1280-1700* (Cambridge, 1983).

⁷²See L. R. Poos and R. M. Smith, "'Legal windows onto historical populations'?: Recent research on demography and the manor court in medieval England', *Law and History Review* 2 (1984), 128-52, and "'Shades still on the window": a reply to Zvi Razi', *Law and History Review* 3 (1985), 409-29; J. M. Bennett, 'Spouses, siblings and surnames: reconstructing families from medieval village court rolls', *Journal of British Studies* 23 (1983), 26-46; and Z. Razi, 'The Toronto School's reconstitution of medieval peasant society', *Past and Present* 85 (1979), 149-57, and 'The use of manorial court rolls in demographic analysis: a reconsideration' and 'The demographic transparency of manorial court rolls', *Law and History Review* 3 (1985), 191-200 and 5 (1987), 523-36.

⁷³The gaps are: Barkby, 1296-1345 and Kibworth, 1298-1320; but they are compensated for Kibworth by the manorial accounts and for Barkby by the rentals.

1312 all 29 were described in this way, except for Hakeman who held the mill. Similarly, the rental of 1315 recorded all 28 tenants by bynames.⁷⁴ At Kibworth, in two rentals of about 1300, 26 customary tenants and 8 cottars in the first and 29 *customarii* and 5 cottars in the second rental, were attributed bynames; in both lists the only exception was the widow *Scolacia alias Scholac' vidua*.⁷⁵

Exceptional to these general trends were the marginals, women and relative 'outsiders', and the persistent instability of patronymic and metronymic descriptions.⁷⁶ At Barkby, two of these elements combined to delay consistency of naming of some tenants. Through the early fourteenth century, a female customary tenant was known simply as Pelle or, occasionally, *Pelle de Thorp*.⁷⁷ In 1348, her son, Ralph (*sic, recte* Richard) Pellesone was admitted to her messuage and bovate, either through her death or through an *inter vivos* maintenance agreement.⁷⁸ This Richard Pellesone, under that description, acted as a pledge, was involved in cases of trespass and debt, and finally surrendered his tenement in 1354, not to recur in the court rolls.⁷⁹

The fluidity of naming at the social margins is well represented in the Kibworth rolls, where considerable volatility of population is evident. Those recently or fleetingly settled in the lordship were frequently known simply as *extranei* without precise naming.⁸⁰ The community had little interest in recording their names in any detail. Those who obtained a longer-term residence still only required a lesser identification if they bore unusual forenames, epitomized by the case of Luke (*Lucas*). Luke first appeared in the court rolls of 1283, when he found pledges to perform fealty on entering the lordship.⁸¹ Luke's fairly continuous residence is evident, represented by the presentment of Ivo *filius Henrici* for receiving him in 1291.⁸² Without doubt, Luke's elementary identification was enabled by his forename, which was unusual within the community, but also influenced by his social position.

Whilst a tendency towards hereditary surnames was evolving within core un-

⁷⁴MM 6568.

⁷⁵MM 6367, 6370.

⁷⁶For patronyms and metronyms, see generally J. K. Sørensen, *Patronyms in Denmark and England* (London, 1983). For patronyms and metronyms in Leicestershire and Rutland, see D. Postles, 'At Sørensen's request: the formation and development of patronyms and metronyms in late medieval Leicestershire and Rutland', *Nomina* (forthcoming).

⁷⁷MM 6570, in particular: 'Pelle de Thorp' dimisit iij Rodas et dimidiam Willelmo filio Mariar' ad terminum quatuor cropporum' (1348).

⁷⁸MM 6569: 'Radulphus Pellesone de Thorp' venit in plena Curia et de licencia domini petit se admitteri ad tenenciam unius mesuagii et unius bouate terre cum pertinenciis post decessum Pelle matris sue...'

⁷⁹MM 6570: 'Et predictus Ricardus Pellesone venit ad eandem Curiam et sursum reddidit in manus domini predicta terram et tenementa...'

⁸⁰For example, MM 6395 (1327): 'Robertus quidem extraneus... [hit] quemdem alium extraneum'; Nicholas Wylimot 'hospitavit contra assisam quosdam extraneos'. In these cases, it may be that the names were genuinely not known by the court, but no effort was expended to discover them.

⁸¹MM 6376: 'Lucas inueniet plegios de fidelitate'. John Finger had illicitly received him: 'quia hospitavit contra assisam scilicet Lucam'.

⁸²MM 6385: 'Ivo filius Henrici in misericordia quia recettavit Lucam'. The hue was raised against Luke in the same year, when he was described as 'Lucas extraneus'.

free kinship groups, it was nevertheless possible for continued identification without a forename and related instability even within core families. The changes within these complex groups do, however, reflect the general formation of hereditary surnaming, for, by taking the most intractable cases, the overall trend is illustrated. The Sibille kinship group at Kibworth Harcourt was one such difficult case. It is certain that this kinship group belonged to the principal customary tenantry, both in terms of landholding and the ‘concentration of responsibility’ or office-holding.⁸³ Despite the *lacunae* of the court rolls, the membership of the group can be reasonably reconstructed within its several branches in the community. The eponymous widow, Sybil, antedated the earliest surviving court rolls, but she is represented in the earliest rental and memoranda (of recent entry fines) in the metronymic descriptions Ivo *filius Sybille*, who, as a *nativus*, held half a virgate for which he had paid an entry fine of half a mark.⁸⁴ Similarly, in the court roll of 1280 Nicholas Polle was presented for battery against John *filius Sibille*.⁸⁵ The repetition of forenames within the kinship prevents an exact genealogy. Ivo Sibille recurred in the court rolls between 1280 and 1292, was elected a chief pledge in 1291, as well as aletaster in 1291-1292, and in the contemporary rental held half a virgate by unfree tenure.⁸⁶ In 1280, however, the rolls mentioned Ivo Sibille senior and, in 1280-1284, Ivo *filius Ivonis Sibille*, who was also a *nativus*.⁸⁷ A tithing list of about 1280, which enumerated some 140 males over the age of twelve in the whole vill (not just the College’s manor), listed Robert Sibille, Roger *filius suus*, Ivo Sibille, William Sibille, Alexander Sibille and William *filius Roberti Sibille*.⁸⁸ Robert Sibille, reflecting the core position of the family, occurred frequently in the court rolls between 1279 and 1291, held a virgate in unfree tenure and had been reeve in at least 1287 as well as affeeror (assessor of the level of amercements).⁸⁹ Ivo Sibille had a daughter about this time, Matilda, who was a constant brewer between 1281 and 1298; on three occasions she was described as Matilda *filia Ivonis Sibille*, but otherwise was Matilda Sibille.⁹⁰

Nevertheless, the individual status of some Sibilles, combined with the repetition of some forenames, induced deviation from the hereditary surname, somewhat influenced also by colloquial naming. In the late thirteenth century, two Roberts co-existed in the community, of whom the elder was identified as either Robert Sibille or Robert Sibille senior. Thus, in 1279, Robert Sibille senior was one of the *custodes aule et curie* and he was similarly differentiated by the affix

⁸³See, comparatively, J. A. Raftis, ‘The concentration of responsibility in five villages’, *Mediaeval Studies* 28 (1966), 92-118; S. Olson, ‘Jurors of the village court: local leadership before and after the plague in Ellington, Huntingdonshire’, *Journal of British Studies* 30 (1991), 237-56; and E. B. DeWindt, *Land and people in Holywell-cum-Needlingworth: structures of tenure and patterns of social organisation in an East Midlands village 1252-1457* (Toronto, 1972).

⁸⁴MM 6367.

⁸⁵MM 6376. John had held a half a virgate as well.

⁸⁶MM 6367-6389.

⁸⁷MM 6370, 6376.

⁸⁸MM 6376.

⁸⁹MM 6276-6389; see also further below.

⁹⁰MM 6376-6396. Other contemporary rentals enumerated Reginald Sibille, Beatrice Sibille, William Sibille and John *filius Reginaldi Sibille* as tenants or erstwhile holders of half-virgates.

in court rolls of 1286-1287, 1289 and 1291.⁹¹ The younger Robert, by contrast, was designated by a plurality of different names, of which the more formal, Robert Sibile junior, was assigned to him in, for example, cases in the manorial court roll in 1279, 1281, 1286-1287, 1290-1291 and 1296, as well as when, in 1290, he was a pledge for Matilda Sibile. Under that form, he was a chief pledge in 1280 and recorded as holding a virgate in a contemporary rental.⁹² Equally, however, he was known by less formal and direct forms of name, as, for example, when he acted as a pledge in 1283 under the soubriquet Robert *le June Sibile*, and, in the same year, affected by colloquialism, as Robert *paruus Sibile*. Indeed, he was consistently known by an even more colloquial form, without a byname, simply as Robert junior.⁹³ An alternative Latin form was thus partly formal and partly colloquial—Robert *Iuuenis*; as such, he was recorded in the court rolls in 1277 and 1291.⁹⁴ Less formal was the French soubriquet—Robert *le Jeune, le iouene* and *le June*, without any byname—by which he was known as a chief pledge in 1291, as tenant of half a virgate in one of the several undated rentals and as a pledge in 1298, as well as in a case of debt in that year.⁹⁵ More interestingly, on very many occasions, he was known in the record by the Latin equivalent of a very informal Middle English colloquialism, as *paruus Robertus*, as when he raised the hue against William Parsun in 1277 and when it was raised against him by Matilda Schep in the same year, as well as in other cases in 1280 and 1282.⁹⁶ In that last year, the *plegii inuenti* for a litigant comprised Robert Sibile and *Robertus paruus*.⁹⁷

That colloquial name was probably not ironic, but simply reflected his status vis-a-vis the elder Robert Sibile, and it is quite clear that he was known by that name in adulthood. For example, his daughter, Alice *filia parui Roberti* brewed five times in 1277, whilst he was listed as *Robertus paruus* as one of the lessees of the manorial buildings and *curia* in 1283.⁹⁸ Revealingly, the debtors of William de Muntfort in 1280 found as their pledges Robert Sibile and *paruus Robertus*.⁹⁹

During the early fourteenth century many incidental references reveal the extent of the kinship group within the community: Constance Sibile (1333-1345); Agnes Sibile (1324-1326); Henry Sibile (1334); Alexander Sibile (1334); Alice Sibile (1344); Emma Sibile (1331); William *filius Alexandri Sibile* (1326-1334),

⁹¹MM 6382 (*custos...*); MM 6376-6383.

⁹²MM 6376-6384. The two are contrasted within the same entry in the court roll of 1284: 'Hec sunt Nomina hominum Qui fecerunt terciam partem domine Agnetis de Harecort', including Robert Sibile and Robert Sibile junior.

⁹³As a pledge and affeorer (*taxator amerciamentorum*) in 1288, chief pledge in 1288-1292, pledge in 1298 and customary tenant of a half-virgate (MM 6379, 6382, 6384-6385, 6388-6389 and 6392). See, in particular, the entry in the court roll for 1283: 'Robertus Sibile junior dat pro inquisicione habenda utrum Beatrix soror sua habet Jus in tribus rodis terre uel non...et dicunt per sacramentum suum quod dicta Beatrix habet Jus donec habet j marcam de Roberto paruo Sibile...'

⁹⁴MM 6376 and 6385.

⁹⁵MM 6376, 6386, 6388 and 6392.

⁹⁶MM 6376.

⁹⁷MM 6376.

⁹⁸MM 6376: 'Nomina eorum qui ceperunt domos de manerio in Custodia'.

⁹⁹MM 6376

who was probably the William Sibile who committed hamsoken (housebreaking) in 1349 and battery in 1352; John *filius Rogeri Sibile* (1330-1335), also known as John Sibile (1330-1332); and Joan Sibile (1349).¹⁰⁰ The most frequently cited member was Adam Sibile (*fl.* 1320-1348), who represented both the core position of the family within the community and manor and the *esneey* (eldest line). Adam Sibile held a virgate but, equally significantly, was a chief pledge in at least 1320, 1324-1325, 1329, 1331 and 1333-1334 and aletaster in at least 1320, 1324-1326, 1331-1332 and 1333-1334.¹⁰¹ Within this family, then, the hereditary surname had become consolidated.

Despite the stability of the surname in the elder branch, variation in the cadet line persisted as a consequence of the earlier bifurcation. The continuation of the line from Robert Sibile junior assumed a different, and often unstable, naming pattern. For example, Robert junior's son, Nicholas, was consistently designated Nicholas *filius Roberti le yonge*, as a chief pledge in 1320, as a pledge in 1331 and for a nuisance in 1337, plaintiff in a case of trespass in 1334 and executor of a will in 1343.¹⁰² Indeed, he may have been the Nicholas Yonge Robin on whose death a heriot was exacted in 1349.¹⁰³ Nicholas's siblings were known correspondingly as William *filius Roberti le yonge* (1331); John *filius Roberti le yonge*, who held a half virgate; Robert *filius Roberti le yonge*, who received an outsider into the lordship; and Scholastica *filia Roberti le yonge*, whose merchet in 1333 was assessed at 2s.¹⁰⁴ The instability extended further, however, for Robert Cibillesone *alias* Silleson was elected a chief pledge in 1349 and aletaster in 1352, having been a pledge in 1343, and in 1346 and 1348 John Youngerobyneson was involved in cases of debt, perhaps the Robert Robyneson who also appeared in 1349.¹⁰⁵

The genealogy of the Sibiles thus reveals several significant developments in the naming processes of the unfree peasantry. First, the visible trend towards hereditary surnames in the late thirteenth century affected even the most intractable of forms of naming, those derived from women's (widows') forenames. The tendency towards heritability was thus clear. Even so, instability might be induced when the pattern of naming was complicated by repetitive forenames and the consequent use of affixes. The same direction to heritability is evident in another problematical surname at Kibworth—Scolas, intrinsically difficult because again derived from a widow's forename. In this instance, the eponymous Scolasse or *Scolacia* is visible in the records, variously described as simply *Scolasse* or, occasionally, *Scolacia vidua* or, as once in 1291, *Scolace le vediwe*.¹⁰⁶ In 1296, when she was fined 1s. 6d., the account rendered her as *Scolastica vidua*, but in an undated rental she was designated simply *Scolasse*, a *nativa*.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰MM 6395-6402.

¹⁰¹MM 6392-6400.

¹⁰²MM 6393, 6397 and 6401

¹⁰³MM 6243.

¹⁰⁴MM 6393, 6397 and 6400

¹⁰⁵MM 6400-6402.

¹⁰⁶MM 6376, especially when, in 1282, she impleaded John *filius Roberti carpentarii*: 'Scolasse queritur...', MM 6385. See also MM 6386.

¹⁰⁷MM 6204, 6385.

In 1294, two entries described her as *Scolasse vidua* and simply *Scolasse*, in the latter case when she paid merchet of 1s. 6d. for her daughter.¹⁰⁸ In her widowhood, she was thus usually known by her forename only, unusual within the community, or by her status as a widow, but without a byname or referent to her late husband. She was easily identified by the simplest criteria, because of her status as widow and tenant with an unusual forename.

Her son, John, occurred in the court rolls during her lifetime both as John *filius Scolace* and John Scolace. In 1277, for example, he was recorded as a chief pledge as John *filius Scolace*, but in contemporary litigation by the elided form, John Scolace.¹⁰⁹ When, in 1299, he paid an entry fine of 16s. 8d. for the land of his mother, he was recorded as John *filius Scolac'* in accordance with his title to the familial holding, but even on his own death and after that of his mother, the heriot due was from John *filius Scolastice*.¹¹⁰ Her other son, Hugh, was also more frequently known by the metronymic form, Hugh *filius Scolasse alias filius Scolast'*.¹¹¹ This surname stabilized in its elided form in the early fourteenth century, particularly in the person of Robert Scola(s)ce, who was a chief pledge in 1334-1335, as well as his brother, John Scolace, who was executor of Robert's will in 1349.¹¹²

The formation of these hereditary surnames from difficult metronymic origins is an indicator of the strength of the tendency towards hereditary surnames amongst the unfree peasantry by the end of the thirteenth century. In such cases, these surnames at Kibworth were associated with core kinship groups, contrasting with continued instability of bynames at the social margins.¹¹³ The other principal unfree tenant families in Kibworth also developed hereditary surnames—the Harcourts (an unfree family despite the surname), Godwynes, Heyns and *filius Alexandri alias* Alisaundre *alias* Saunder kinships.¹¹⁴

Those same general developments can be perceived in the court rolls and rentals of the College's other manor in Leicestershire, Barkby. Again, the best illustration of the trend is what happened to the most intractable name, that for which the *antecessor* was the customary tenant known usually only as Sampson without a byname. Paradoxically, although Sampson was a principal customary tenant in the manor, the hereditary surname appeared as the kinship experienced a relative decline in status in the community. Contemporary identification of Sampson required only his less common forename without a byname. By such a designation was he known in the rental of about 1300, in which he held in customary tenure a messuage and bovate (the standard holding there) with an additional four acres and half a rood.¹¹⁵ References to him in the first extant

¹⁰⁸MM 6390.

¹⁰⁹MM 6376.

¹¹⁰MM 6208: 'pro terra matris habenda'; MM 6218.

¹¹¹MM 6376

¹¹²MM 6401-6403.

¹¹³It might thus be suspected that the occupational bynames of those who occur sporadically for entering the lordship are also unstable, such as *triturator* and *textor*.

¹¹⁴The status of the Harcourts is clear from the rentals, as also from the unlicensed tonsuring of one of the siblings in 1331.

¹¹⁵MM 6556.

court roll, that for 1279, reflect the idiosyncrasy of his position, for, whilst all the other tenants are recorded with a byname, Sampson was identified by that moniker alone.¹¹⁶ In two instances, however, he was attributed a byname, although different ones. When Ralph Franceys found two pledges, one was Sampson *filius Ricardi*, and when Sampson impleaded Hugh *faber*, the court rolls described him as Sampson *de Bark*.¹¹⁷

Sampson's son, Henry, was initially attributed a more usual patronymic description, contrasting with Sampson's style.¹¹⁸ That Latin patronymic form quickly became elided to an appositional patronym, Henry Sampson, certainly by 1294, within Sampson's lifetime.¹¹⁹ Rentals of 1311 and 1312 included Henry Sampson as the tenant of his father's land, increased now to a messuage, bovate and six acres, whilst that of 1315 recorded Amice *uxor Henrici Samsoun* as holding the same land except for the additional two acres.¹²⁰ Subsequently, from 1346, Robert Sampson appeared extremely frequently in the court rolls, usually in cases of debt, detinue or trespass, and most often as the defendant. He continued to hold the familial holding *in bondagio*, but was persistently presented in court for unlicensed leases of small amounts of land. Richard Sampson, his successor, sporadically appeared in the rolls in 1363-1365.¹²¹ Other bynames in Barkby stabilized more precociously as hereditary surnames, particularly amongst the principal customary tenantry, such as Ernald or Arnold, Holand, Fraunceys, Playtur and de Dalby.¹²²

Conclusion

The genesis of hereditary surnames in Leicestershire and Rutland followed closely the pattern established in other areas in the middle of the country, Oxford and Norfolk and Suffolk. The process was partly informed by cultural conflation or diffusion, since hereditary surnames, assumed first by the Anglo-Norman nobility, extended downwards over time through social groups, attributed to and acquired by the unfree peasantry before the end of the thirteenth century. The process, however, was very protracted, for throughout the twelfth century both free and unfree peasantry were identified by the simple *nomen* or personal name, without a byname. Whilst cultural conflation was an influence, it seems likely therefore that other variables were involved. Interrelated influence was brought

¹¹⁶MM 6564: 'Robertus le pleytur queritur super Samsonem quod ipse iniuste recetauit cepem suam iacet dictus Samson in misericordia'; 'Samson invenit plegios...'; 'plegii Samson et Robertus de Holand'; 'De Sampson pro redditu retento'; 'Electus est Sampson prepositus scolarium quia meliore et maximo potente et sciente omnium per tenencium'.

¹¹⁷MM 6564-6565 (1296-1297).

¹¹⁸MM 6565: 'Quia Henricus filius Sampsonis se maritavit in feodo dominorum sine licencia Sampson pater eius manucepit faciendi [sic] inde emendas'.

¹¹⁹MM 6567: 'Henricus Sampson dat domino pro ingressu in ij acras terre et unam placeam' (5s.). Sampson is last mentioned in a court roll of 1296 (MM 6565).

¹²⁰MM 6568.

¹²¹MM 6575.

¹²²The Holands, for example, inhabited the manor in the late thirteenth century and the transmission of the surname is illustrated by this example from 1349: 'Ad istam Curiam venit Alicia Holand et petit se admitteri tamquam heres proxima ad tenendum j messuagium et x acras terre natiue que fuerunt Willelmi Holand patris sui et concessum est ei in bondagio iuxta consuetudinem maneril.'

to bear by demographic change and the concentration of *nomina* in active use, requiring the adoption or attribution of bynames or *cognomina* amongst the peasantry. That cultural conflation was not direct and immediate may be inferred from the process of change: fashionable forenames were adopted amongst the peasantry before bynames became necessary and bynames before hereditary surnames developed. Had cultural conflation been the sole influence, the peasantry might have assumed hereditary surnames more immediately. Instead, more traditional naming processes were replaced more slowly and, more importantly, incrementally.

The uneven nature of change is further reflected by differences within as well as between social groups. Amongst the unfree peasantry, hereditary surnames were accorded to core, influential families before the wider adoption of those family names amongst the rest of the unfree tenantry. That change by stages may reflect both a relative slowness to adapt fully the cultural processes of a superior social group and also the effect of superior lordship as an agency or institutional force. The extent to which lordship controlled notions of inheritance of unfree land until the middle of the thirteenth century, when a normative right of inheritance was implicitly conceded empirically, may have acted as a brake on peasant notions of lineage and patrimony. Only when the interrelationship of lordship, tenure and inheritance was propitious did hereditary surnames ensue amongst the unfree peasantry. Such an explanation, however, does not fully explain regional differences in the pace of change, unless that interrelationship was also regionally variable.

2 Personal pledging in manorial courts in the later middle ages

Research into social relationships and networks within historical communities in England has, over the last decade, been advanced by research in the early-modern period and, to a lesser extent (because of the problems of documentation) by medievalists. Comparisons have been made between the values attached to kinship and neighbourliness. A further change has been perceived from a ‘corporate’ or communal village community in the middle ages to a fragmented village in the early-modern period, where individualism was the predominant interest—although Macfarlane suggested that individualism developed at a much earlier time.¹²³ The study of social networks in medieval rural society has largely involved analysis of personal pledging in manorial courts, since few other acts or institutions provide the same quality and quantity of evidence for peasant society at that time.

Personal pledging provided sureties for litigants or those placed in mercy (that is, fined) in manorial courts. Unfree tenants were required to prosecute their suits—debt, trespass, covenant et al.—in the manorial court. Pledges had to be found to ensure that plaintiffs would proceed (*plegii de prosequendo*), that a defendant would answer the plaintiff (*plegii de respondendo*), that a litigant placed in mercy—that is found guilty—would both appear in court or pay damages, debts and fines (*plegii de misericordia*). In the later Middle Ages, those taking up land would need to provide pledges for the proper maintenance of the land and buildings and for the payment of entry fines and rents. Personal pledges thus combined the functions of baillees and sureties, and pledging in many cases involved a personal commitment between peasants.

It has been suggested that a perceived decline in personal pledging during the later middle ages, after the decimation of the plagues from 1348, reflected a change in the nature of social relations in the medieval villages from ‘solidarity’ amongst villagers to latent individualism.¹²⁴ Studies which have been made subsequent to this suggestion have tended to concentrate on the period before the Black Death, in order to assess the nature of inter-personal relations amongst the peasantry before the posited decline of the institution of personal pledging. In particular, research has been directed to the question of whether pledges were usually intra- or extra-familial, kin or neighbours, and the nature

¹²³For a recent review of the previous literature see R.M. Smith, ‘“Modernisation” and the corporate medieval village community in England: some sceptical reflections’, in A. R. H. Baker and D. Gregory eds, *Explorations in historical geography: interpretive essays* (Cambridge, 1984), 140-245, esp. 156-8

¹²⁴E. B. DeWindt, *Land and people in Holywell-cum-Needingworth: structures of tenure and patterns of social organisation in an East Midlands village* (Toronto, 1972), 242-50, esp. 249; M. Pimsler, ‘Solidarity in the medieval village? The evidence of personal pledging at Elton, Huntingdonshire,’ *Journal of British Studies*, 17 (1977), 1-11. The potential financial consequences of being a pledge are illustrated by a case at Uplyme in 1408: ‘Et petit ab eo .xiiij.s. de debito Johannis Dorsete unde deuenit plegium detencionis per ix annos ad dampna sua .xl.s.’ (Longleat MS 10659, m. 38d). Many other pleas of pledge occur in these rolls, either for failed pledges or pledges recovering damages from pledges.

of social networks. Razi, however, extended his analysis of pledging at Halesowen to 1400 and maintained that pledging revealed no change in notions of kinship before the fifteenth century.¹²⁵ The intention of this paper is to have a further look at the nature of pledging and pledges during the later middle ages, principally concentrating on three manors which were contrasting in both institutional organization and their region or *pays*. The analysis is concentrated on those pledgings in which a real commitment was involved—that is, in acting as pledges in inter-peasant litigation such as debt, trespass and covenant, and for newly admitted tenants.

Barkby was located in Leicestershire, just five miles or so north-east of the borough of Leicester, but at the junction of river and wold. The village was nucleated, but with divided lordship. The principal manor, which is the object of this study, was held from its acquisition in the 1270s by Merton College. Smaller properties were held by Leicester Abbey and Langley Priory. From the later Middle Ages, the Pochin family increasingly accumulated a large estate in the village. Although nucleated in essence, the parish did comprise small settlements which were dispersed from the nucleated village: Barkby Thorpe, Hamilton and North Thurmaston. During the later middle ages, however, Hamilton became increasingly depopulated. Kibworth Harcourt was another manor of Merton College in Leicestershire, although much larger than its manor in Barkby. This manor was located in the pastoral *pays* of the county, some ten miles south of Leicester. Werrington, by contrast, was located in the far west of Devon. Until the late twelfth century, it had been part of Stratton Hundred in Cornwall, but was transferred to Black Torrington Hundred in Devon until 1966, when it was restored to Cornwall. Manor and parish were coterminous, but situated in a region of highly dispersed settlement. The manor thus consisted of dispersed hamlets and tenements.¹²⁶

¹²⁵R.M. Smith, 'Kin and neighbors in a thirteenth century Suffolk community,' *Journal of Family History*, 4 (1979), 223-5; Pimsler, 'Solidarity in the medieval village?'; Z. Razi, 'Was the medieval English peasant family small and ego-focused?' paper presented at Norwich 1986, 4-6 and 8-9. Razi curtailed his analysis of pledging in 1400, as there was a drastic decline in the institution of pledging after that date at Halesowen. He found a high degree of kin-related pledging there before 1400. He is, however, highly critical of the use of pledging as an indicator without more precise reconstitution of families. See more recently, J. M. Bennett, *Women in the medieval English countryside: gender and household in Brigstock before the plague* (Oxford, 1987), 24-5, 37-8, 154-5, 193-5. Bennett explores in particular the nature of pledging on behalf of women and, especially, how that reflected on their kinship ties before and after marriage and in widowhood. Pledging by women was abnormal, since women had only a minor public role in medieval rural society. Some few examples of female pledges can be found. At Kibworth Harcourt (Leicestershire), in c. 1326, the pledge of Robert Godeyer was Agnes Godeyer and that of Joan Marram was Emma Marram (Merton College, Oxford, MM 6395). Such instances are rare, since the pledges for women were almost invariably men.

¹²⁶For Barkby, Merton College, MM 6556-6629 (hereafter MM); for Kibworth Harcourt MM 6404-6439; for Werrington, Devon Record Office Bedford MSS Werrington Court Rolls. There is a long break in the court rolls of Werrington between 1396 and 1462. For the location of Barkby, see S. Postles, 'Barkby: the anatomy of a closed township, 1535-1780,' unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Leicester, 1979. The general development of Kibworth is discussed by C. Howell, *Land, family and inheritance in transition: Kibworth Harcourt, 1280-1700* (Cambridge, 1983).

Pledging is considered on these three manors between 1354 and 1540 (Barkby), from 1365 to 1498 (Werrington), and in the fifteenth century for Kibworth Harcourt. Additional evidence for pledging is also presented for some other manors in late-medieval Devon. The *terminus a quo* at Barkby is related to the shake-out of tenures after the effects of the Black Death, that at Werrington determined by the court rolls not being extant before that date. Pledging as an institution declined during the later Middle Ages. The chronology of its decline varied from manor to manor and estate to estate. Whereas on the estates of Ramsey Abbey the decline was perceptible from the second quarter of the fourteenth century and apparent after the Black Death, on some manors of the Bishop of Worcester pledging persisted longer, but was virtually defunct by c. 1440.¹²⁷ On the manors of Werrington and Stoke Fleming in Devon, pledging persisted into the late fifteenth century. There are no extant court rolls for Werrington between 1396 and 1462, but when they recommence in the late fifteenth century pledging was still active, and pledges were still required in inter-peasant litigation as late as 1498. The court rolls of Stoke Fleming reveal pledging continuing there through the early fifteenth century and into the later part of that century. Pledging persisted also on some other manors in Devon. At Uplyme, in east Devon, pledges were still required in the early fifteenth century (1407-8), and possibly later, but there is a large hiatus in the court rolls until the early sixteenth century. At Yarcombe, close to Uplyme, pledges were equally required in the early fifteenth century. In 1433-44, pledges acted there in seven cases of trespass, one of merchet, two of debt, two of covenant, one after a presentment on a hue and cry, and three for newly admitted tenants. In 1463, John Bokett waged his law *se sexta manu* on the same manor in a case of debt against Robert Yearty, with Peter Bras as pledge. At Stoke Canon, also in east Devon, two cases of debt in 1455-6 involved pledges; at Dawlish, in the same region, pledges were necessary in two cases of debt in 1514-15. In Devon, therefore, pledging lingered into the late fifteenth century on several manors.¹²⁸

The institution of pledging ended abruptly in Barkby in 1448; by the next court rolls in 1449-50, pledges were no longer entered, not even for newly admitted tenants. Superficially, pledging seems to have declined at Kibworth during the late fourteenth century. At that time, pledges seem to have become predominantly institutional—that is officers of the lord, court or community acted as pledges—a pattern which continued into the fifteenth century. For example, in the early fifteenth century, all those presented by the chief pledges for offences against the King's peace (wrongly using the hue and cry and for battery) had one of the chief pledges of the tithings as their pledge. Only occasionally did such offenders acquire a personal pledge. Most pleas between peasants

¹²⁷J.A. Raftis, *Tenure and mobility* (Toronto, 1964), 101-4; C. Dyer, *Lords and peasants in a changing society: the estates of the bishopric of Worcester 680-1540* (Cambridge, 1980), 267.

¹²⁸For Uplyme see note 1 above; for Stoke Fleming, see note 7 below; for Yarcombe, Devon Record Office CR 1429-1438, 1441-1450 and Devon Record Office 1262M/M19, and specifically CR 1441 and 1262M/M19; for Dawlish and Stoke Canon, Dean and Chapter Exeter MSS 4786, 5009, and 5009A.

(debt, detinue, trespass, covenant) did not seem to require pledges. Nevertheless, pledges were occasionally stated in these pleas. In the 1420s, Robert Polle acted as a *plegius de prosequendo*, as did John Peeke; about the same time, John Chapman, William Parker and Simon Carter were offered as personal pledges in inter-peasant pleas. Simon Carter did so again on several occasions in the 1430s. Pledges were occasionally noted in other inter-peasant pleas in the 1430s to 1450s. Thomas Bloxham and John Langton were pledges for Robert Broun in two pleas of debt against William Judde; John Sander was pledge for Richard Swan in his suit against Thomas Blokesham for debt. The last pledging in these kinds of cases was in the 1450s. Pledging for newly admitted tenants continued, however, to *c.* 1473.

The nature of pledging on these manors took a different course of development in the later Middle Ages. At Werrington, pledges had been required in inter-peasant litigation only at the later stage of proceedings, when suits went to law or to inquisition, that is after the pleading (*narratio*), when cases went to judgement. Pledges of this type continued to be needed through the later Middle Ages, in cases of trespass, covenant (contract) debt and detinue. In the late fourteenth century, pledges had been required for those prosecuted (such as for assault) by presentment after the hue and cry. It seems, however, that pledges in this latter case were no longer needed in the fifteenth century, or were not recorded in the court rolls. In the late fourteenth century, two pledges were needed by those going to law or inquisition, but in the fifteenth century one pledge sufficed. This pattern is replicated on some other manors in Devon. Inter-peasant disputes continued to be the main content of the business of the court of Stoke Fleming into the late fifteenth century. Until *c.* 1438, two pledges were required as surety for litigants, but thereafter one sufficed. By the 1470s, however, the single pledge had to be reinforced or corroborated, such as *se vijta manu*, *se iijta manu*. On another manor in Devon, Uplyme, two pledges were normal until *c.* 1374, but for a short time thereafter no more than one was customary, except for tenants newly admitted to land, for which the lord required two pledges. In 1407, however, the requirement for two pledges was restored for inter-peasant litigation as well. By contrast with the norms at Werrington and Stoke Fleming, a *plegius de prosequendo*—at the initiation of proceedings—was needed at Uplyme.¹²⁹ In the inter-peasant litigation at Barkby, pledges were required from this earlier stage of the process—both pledges for prosecution and for the defendant’s answer (*plegi de prosequendo*, *plegi de respondendo*). These pledges continued to act as surety in inter-peasant litigation for trespass, debt or detinue, and covenant through the late Middle Ages.

¹²⁹For example, Robert Opi at law *versus* William Bribb senior ‘. . . quod non interfecit vaccam suam precii .x.s. nec aliquam transgressionem ei fecit per plegium Johannis Louye et Johannis Notte’ (1368). Compare Robert Morchese at law against John Whyte in a plea of trespass in 1463, with a single pledge, William Bate. For Stoke Fleming, Devon Record Office 902M/M3-24 (*c.* 1384-*c.* 1476); the transition from two pledges to one in 902M/M15; the phrase *se . . . manu* occurs in 902M/M21 and 24. For Uplyme, for example, Longleat MS 10646, m.10d (two pledges for John Gerueys admitted to a cottage and curtilage and three acres in 1371) and Longleat MS 11221, mm. 22d and 45d, 10659, mm. 19d and 38d (1374-75 and 1407-8).

The most marked contrast with developments at Werrington was a change in the nature of the business in the court rolls of Barkby. Before the 1390s, the principal business of the rolls had comprised inter-peasant litigation, but thereafter, the rolls became dominated by the relationship of lord and customary tenants. Inter-peasant litigation appeared only sporadically on the rolls. The last occasion on which a pledge was involved in inter-peasant litigation seems to have been in 1424, when there was a *plegius de prosequendo* in a case of trespass and William Poley was attached by his pledge, William Grene, to answer the plaint of trespass brought by Thomas Piper.¹³⁰ Instead, the business of the court consisted almost exclusively of surrenders and admissions of land and presentments of the wasting of tenements (principally the disrepair of buildings). Virtually all instances of pledging therefore involved two pledges for new tenants of land or for other tenants who were ordered to effect repairs. In the case of new tenants of land, the admission included a covenant for proper maintenance of the messuage and buildings, for the payment of the entry fine, and for the acquittance of the rent. The two pledges were made responsible for the performance of these covenants. In the case of sureties for tenants who were ordered to make repairs, the pledges were equally responsible.¹³¹

The pattern of pledging at Kibworth followed that at Barkby. Although some pledges were involved in inter-peasant litigation, the main occasion for personal pledges was at the admission of tenants. Until 1473, two pledges were needed for incoming tenants, although (rarely) one sufficed (as in two admissions in the early fifteenth century). In 1473, only one pledge was required for the two admissions in that year. Thereafter, pledges do not seem to have been needed for incoming tenants. Between 1400 and 1473, there were sixty-seven admissions of tenants to land requiring pledges.

Whilst at Werrington pledging remained a relationship between peasants in inter-peasant litigation, at Barkby and Kibworth pledging was basically required at the instance of the lord. Pledging on these two manors in the later Middle Ages was thus strongly informed and influenced by seignorial interest. To some

¹³⁰This begs the question in which courts the customary tenants of Barkby prosecuted their suits. In 1448 the College issued an ordinance that its tenants of Barkby should only plead in manorial court: 'Item Ordinatum est in plena Curia per Avisamentum Senescalli quod si Aliquis Tenens infra dominium predictum prosecutus fuerit Aliquem visinorum suorum nisi in ista predicta Curia quod soluet seu supportabit dominis istius domini tocians quociens sic prosecutus fuerit .vj.s. viij.d.' (MM 6605, 6611). Only two tenants seem to have been placed in mercy for pleading in other courts: Robert Heryng in the court of the Earldom of Winchester (probably at Leicester) in 1372 and John Hichebon in London in 1445 (MM 6579, 6607). Several tenants of Werrington were fined in the manorial court for pursuing claims in other courts, such as the portmoot at Launceston and Courts Christian.

¹³¹For example, MM 6579: 'Et sustentabit et manutenebit dictum mesuagium et dictam bouatam terre per manucapcionem Ricardi Sampson et Willelmi Souter'; MM 6581: 'Et dictum mesuagium manutenebit sustentare per plegium Willelmi Aleyn et Roberti Power, MM 6598 (1421): 'Et preceptum est balliuo quod leuare faciet de bonis et catallis Johannis Mason et Willelmi Grene .xvj.s. taxatos pro defectu reparacionis tenementorum nuper Rogeri Symmes Shepard pro quibus predicti Johannes et Willelmus deuenerunt plegios ad opus domini'; MM 6573: Robert Power demolished a grange, and his pledges, as well as Robert, were ordered to rebuild it: 'Ideo preceptum est distringere predictos Robertum Johannem et Willelmum ad reedificandum dictam grangiam'.

Table 1: Personal pledging at Barkby and Werrington

Periods	Barkby	Werrington
before 1399	N = 88 % = 30	N = 245 % = 71
after 1400	N = 197 % = 70	N = 99 % = 29
Totals	N = 285 % = 100	N = 344 % = 100

Notes to Table 1: no data at Werrington 1396-1462; N = number of pledgings; % = percentage of pledgings on the manor; officials are excluded (e.g. ‘plegius prepositus’).

Table 2: Pledgings per pledge at Barkby and Werrington

Places	NP	N1	mean	sd	median
Barkby	285	65	4.4	5.6	3
Werrington	344	140	2.5	5.5	1

Notes to Table 2: NP = number of pledgings; N1 = number of pledges; mean = mean number of pledgings per pledge; sd = standard deviation; median = median of the same.

extent, pledging had always involved this element of seignorial coercion, since the lord had a fiscal interest. The failure of pledges usually meant that the lord received a fine, as both litigant and pledges were placed in mercy. For example, in 1289 the rolls for Barkby referred to a *plegius de misericordia* and in 1369 to a *plegius de pena*. Nevertheless, pledges in Barkby and Kibworth in the later Middle Ages, with few exceptions, were acting as sureties for other peasants only vis-à-vis the lord, not in relation to other peasants. Throughout the later Middle Ages, the lord insisted on two pledges for this kind of surety. This change in the nature of pledges at Barkby may be reflected in the terminology used in the rolls. In the late thirteenth century, the party in the case ‘found’ (*inveniet*) his or her pledge, suggesting some element of choice both by litigant and pledge. In the later Middle Ages, when seignorial interest was involved, the rolls state only that A and B became (*euenerunt or deuenerunt*) pledges of C. At the earlier time, there is also the implication that pledges were paid by the litigants, as suggested by two poor tenants in Barkby not needing to find pledges in 1289 (*plegius se ipse quia pauper*).

Despite this difference in the nature of pledging, the actual status of the pledges was remarkably similar at both Barkby and Werrington. The pledges were predominantly drawn from the larger tenants and from those most active in holding office.

The number of pledgings by individual pledges is presented in the graphs for both manors (Figs 1-2, below). The curve is very similar for both, positively skewed to the left. A large number of individuals pledged only once, twice or three times. A smaller number of tenants, however, pledged considerably more frequently. This concentration of pledging was equally marked on both manors.

Table 3: Concentration of pledging at Barkby and Werrington

Place	NP	%i	NP1	%ii	mean	median
Barkby	201	41	17	26	12	10
Werrington	140	41	10	7	14	8

Table 4: Relationship between pledges, core families and office-holding at Werrington

Office	N	Louya	Canon	Colman	Tommas
Jurors	177	30	41	16	16
Beadles	41	6	10	2	0
Reeves	25	2	4	0	1
Chief pledges	64	8	9	6	6
Rent collectors	20	6	7	1	2
Pledgings	344	73	15	15	8

Note to Table 4: N = total number.

Notes to Table 3: NP= number of pledgings by principal pledges; %i = pledgings by principal pledges as a percentage of all pledges; NP1 = number of principal pledges; %ii = principal pledges as a percentage of all pledges; mean = mean number of pledgings by principal pledges; median = median number of pledgings by principal pledges.

A small number of pledges therefore accounted for a large proportion of the pledgings on these two manors in the later Middle Ages. All of these principal pledges belonged to that group of customary tenants which held at least standard holdings, and, more often, multiple holdings. Many had also held a multiplicity of offices on the manors, which may have been influenced by seignorial interest. Although tenants were nominally elected to offices by the homage, this method was probably only a strategy by the lord so that the homage would become accountable for any deficiencies of the official. Both lord and homage thus had an interest in ensuring that the most substantial tenants became office-holders. The characteristics of this group can be illustrated very well from the data for Werrington.

The extreme of concentration is represented in John Louya, a customary tenant at Werrington, from the commencement of the court rolls in 1365 to his demise in 1393. Louya was beadle in at least six years, affeelor in at least three, and, when he died in 1393, held four ferlings (one ferling being the standard holding on this manor). Few other tenants before 1400 had accumulated multiple holdings, and none as many as four. Louya pledged almost sixty times in these thirty years; the next highest number of pledgings (by John Cotel between 1365 and 1395) was twenty. The degree of concentration was not quite so pronounced at Barkby, where three tenants pledged more than twenty times (twenty-four, twenty-three and twenty-one) and another seven between ten and

seventeen times. All these pledges held at least the standard holding on the manor, a bovate. John Jonson, however, held one and a half bovates, and William Kyng a virgate (the equivalent of two bovates). Most had additionally served as reeve or affeeror.

The periods of activity of principal pledges is represented on the graph (Fig. 3). At Werrington, the principal pledges were most active before 1400, although a few existed in the late fifteenth century. These data suggest a decline—but no more than a relative one—in the activity of pledging in Werrington. The principal pledges at Barkby were active throughout the later Middle Ages, with no chronological concentration. The reasons for this distribution of activity would seem to lie in the nature of business in the courts. During the later Middle Ages, there was a relative decline in inter-peasant litigation at Werrington, perhaps because of a relative demographic decline. Moreover, there was an institutional change, in that only one pledge was required, rather than two. At Barkby, the need for pledges was maintained by the lord's interest, requiring two pledges for tenants admitted to lands and for repairs of tenements. Seigneurial interest would necessarily demand secure pledges of some social and economic standing to ensure no loss or damage to the lord. Seigneurial pressure may thus help to account for the concentration of pledging in Barkby in the later Middle Ages.

The graph (Fig. 3) further reveals that in any one generation or cohort of tenants at Barkby, fewer than five tenants were engaged as principal pledges. Between 1354 and 1400, these pledges comprised Aleyn (ten pledges), Chapman (ten), and Sampson (twenty-one); from 1400 to 1420, Grene, John and William Kyng, Jonson and Power (pledging from eleven to twenty-four times); from 1420 to 1440, only Hichebon and Mason pledged consistently (respectively twelve and seventeen times), although Bocher also pledged on nine occasions. Principal pledges thus consisted of a very small core of customary tenants.

The pattern of pledging at Kibworth was different. In the sixty-seven admissions, there were fifty-two different pledges. The mean number of pledgings by one pledge was 2.5, the median 1.00. The first and third quartiles of pledgings per pledge were as low as 1.00 and 3.75. Indeed, thirty of the fifty-two pledges pledged only once; ten gave pledge on more than five occasions. The highest number of pledgings by one individual was ten. Kibworth was a more populous manor than Barkby or Werrington. By contrast with those manors, pledges at Kibworth were drawn more widely from the community; pledging there was not monopolized by any small number of individuals. All the pledges were, however, tenants of standard holdings.

On all three manors, pledging was not normally related to kinship. Most pledges were found from other families within the community. For example, of 150 pledgings in Werrington between 1365 and 1395, only eighteen pledges had the same surname as the pledged, such as John Cotel senior, who was a pledge for John Cotel in 1393, and John Kyea who pledged for Alice Kyea in 1369. Of his innumerable pledgings, John Louya pledged for kin on only four occasions. Pledging by officials *qua* officials (such as *plegius prepositus*) existed in all three

Table 5: The pattern of personal pledging at Kibworth Harcourt, 1400-73: pledgings per pledge

N1	N2	mean	sd	median	minimum	maximum	Q1	Q3
52	67	2.5	2.236	1	1	10	1	3.75

Notes to Table 5: N1 = number of different pledges; N2 = number of occasions for pledges (admissions of tenants); sd = standard deviation; Q1 = first quartile; Q3 = third quartile.

communities from at least the middle of the fourteenth century, but the total incidence was insignificant. Its incidence was also sporadic; for example, in ten out of twelve cases of inter-peasant litigation in Barkby in Lent 1347, the *plegius de prosequendo* was the bailiff, but this level was entirely abnormal. Pledges thus continued to be found predominantly amongst neighbours, usually the most substantial tenants, rather than from kin.

Personal pledging on these three manors thus persisted into the later Middle Ages, but for different reasons. On all three manors, personal pledging in inter-peasant litigation persisted until *c.* 1400. Thereafter, pledging and inter-peasant disputes remained a considerable proportion of the business of the court at Werrington to the end of the fifteenth century, as also on some other manors in Devon, such as at Stoke Fleming.¹³² Whilst personal pledging thus continued to be associated with inter-peasant litigation on these manors in Devon, on the manors in Leicestershire, by contrast, the prime interest in the continuation of pledging was seignorial. On all three manors, pledging was concentrated in the hands of the principal tenants, but at Barkby this concentration may have ensued from seignorial pressure, since pledging there was essentially to maintain the lord's interests. During the later Middle Ages, principal pledges acted for their life-cycle only; they did not continue to come from the same families. This pattern derived from the nature of the tenure of customary land in the later Middle Ages, in which life-cycle became more important than inheritance and family.¹³³

Does personal pledging in the fifteenth century therefore allow some window on inter-peasant relationships and the nature of community? To some extent it does. The principal tenants continued to be the principal pledges. This concentration of responsibility, however, need not necessarily have been freely

¹³²Compare the more pessimistic view of Beckerman about the nature of business in manorial courts after 1400, which sees a decline both in inter-peasant cases brought before manorial courts and the inability of this formal justice to resolve those disputes: J.S. Beckerman, 'Customary law in English manorial courts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries' (University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1972), 110-11.

¹³³R. Faith, 'Berkshire: fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,' in P. D. A. Harvey ed., *The peasant land market in medieval England* (Oxford, 1984), (for example) 155-7; R. M. Smith, 'Some issues concerning families and their property in rural England 1250-1800', in Smith ed., *Land, kinship and life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984), 58. The same pattern of transactions in land existed in Barkby in the later Middle Ages, but inheritance played a much larger role in Werrington from the late fourteenth century, after a relative recovery from the immediate effects of the plagues.

negotiated between peasants. In this respect, personal pledging does not indicate voluntary relationships between peasants. At Barkby and Kibworth in the later Middle Ages, the selection of pledges—for newly admitted tenants—was informed by seignorial interest. The lord required pledges of stable social and economic condition. Perhaps that too was the predominant interest at Werrington in inter-peasant litigation. The lord had a fiscal interest in litigation in the manorial court. One of the parties, whatever the outcome of the case, would be placed in mercy and fined by the lord. The sureties thus acted as much to guarantee the lord's fiscal interest as for the parties to the case. The decline of the institution of pledging during the later Middle Ages, moreover, did not necessarily ensue from the decline of solidarity or corporatism of the community. Institutional changes were also causes. The increasing tendency towards initiating litigation by presentment may have been one influence.¹³⁴ The decline of population during the later Middle Ages may have reduced the need for pledges. Demographic decline was one cause of the rapid decline of business in the manorial court during the later Middle Ages. At Barkby, the number of tenants enumerated in rentals fell from twenty-eight in 1354 to twenty in 1450 and nineteen in 1475 (bearing in mind that the number of tenants is only an approximate indicator of demographic change).¹³⁵ Kibworth Harcourt experienced a decline of 40 per cent in 1349, from a mean of eighty males over twelve before 1348 to only forty-five. Despite some recovery in the 1360s and 1370s (after a further setback in 1361), the population of the late fourteenth century was still 25 per cent below the level before 1348. By the early fifteenth century, a further decline had occurred, so that the population may have stood at 50 per cent of the pre-1348 level.¹³⁶ This collapse of business may have induced seignorial lack of interest in the workings of the court, as potential income from the perquisites of court evaporated. Personal pledging may thus have disappeared in inter-peasant litigation since lords no longer required it. Conversely, pledging may have continued to be required in those issues where seignorial interest was paramount: for newly admitted tenants, as a warranty or surety for the payment of the entry fine and the maintenance of the tenement.

Changes in social relationships in the later medieval English village undoubtedly occurred, as population declined and a peasant aristocracy accumulated life-cycle multiple holdings. Social stratification existed before 1348, however, and the changes of the later Middle Ages simply exacerbated those divisions. Whereas concentrations of wealth and local power were monopolised by peasant lineages and families before 1348, they were held by life-cycle peasant individuals in the later Middle Ages, if the evidence of persisting personal pledging can be trusted. The change may have been less one from solidarity to atomistic social relationships as an intensification of existing social and economic differences.¹³⁷

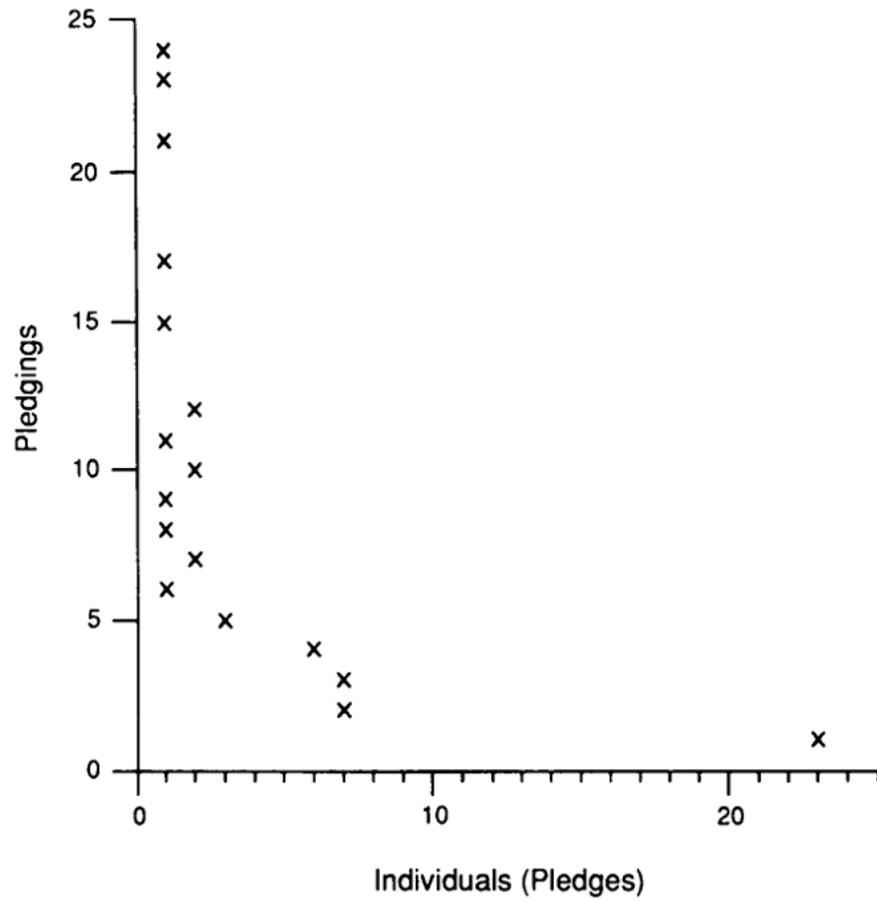
¹³⁴Beckerman, thesis, 103-10.

¹³⁵Barkby rentals are MM 6556-6559.

¹³⁶D. Postles, 'Demographic change at Kibworth Harcourt, Leics., c. 1280-1450', *Local Population Studies* (forthcoming, 1992; see below), based on tithing-penny evidence and (for the early fifteenth century) appearances in court

¹³⁷See also S. Olson, 'Jurors of the village court: local leadership before and after the plague

Figure 1: Personal Pledgings: Barkby, 1354-1540 (Pledgings per Pledge)



in Ellington, Huntingdonshire', *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (1991), 237-56.

Figure 2: Personal Pledgings: Werrington, 1365-1488 (Pledgings per Pledge)

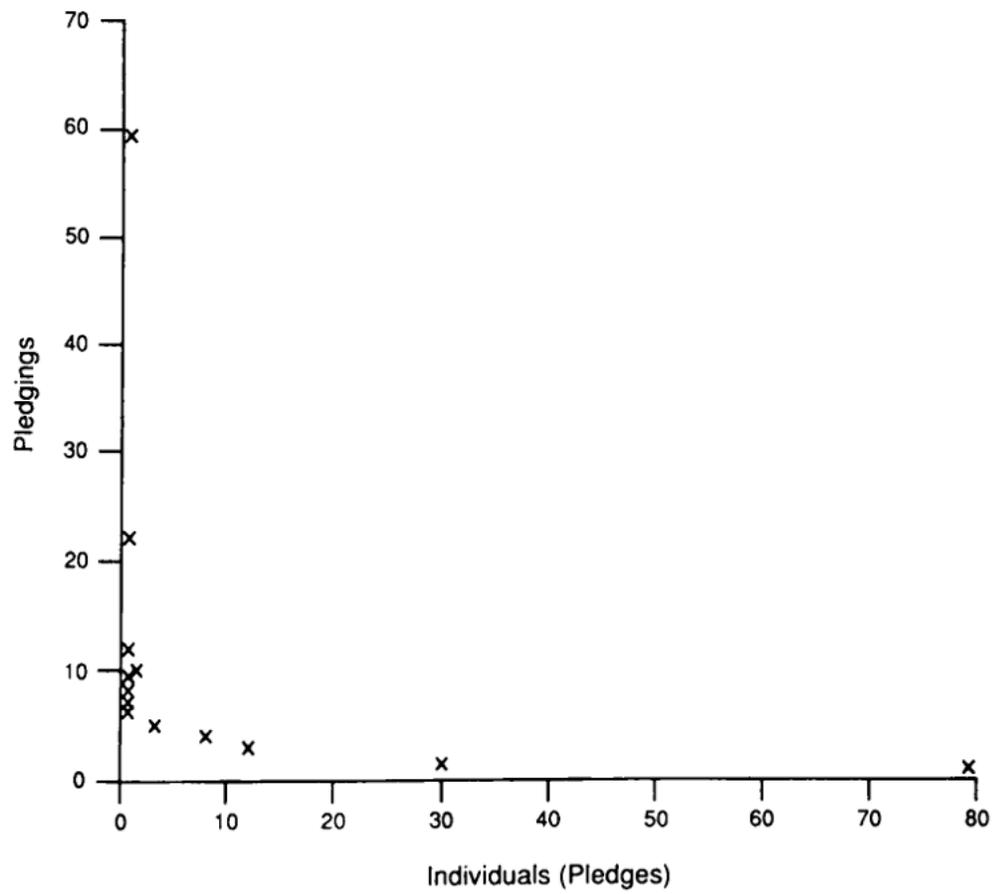
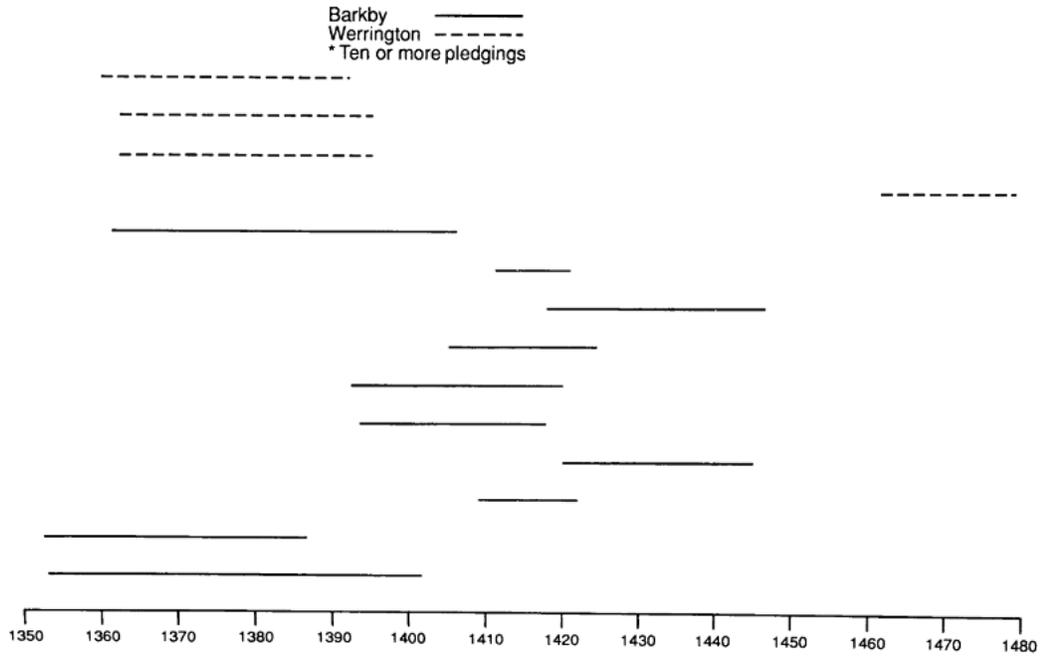


Figure 3: Periods of pledging by principal pledges



3 Demographic change at Kibworth Harcourt in the later middle ages

Demographic trends in the later middle ages still defy confident explanation. Earlier analyses employed non-demographic indicators, such as the price of land, to reflect assumed trends. Those using directly demographic data have made estimates at two levels: the national and the local or regional. Estimates of the global population of England have been based precariously on reflatting figures in sources such as Domesday Book and the Poll Taxes of 1377-81, using a putative multiplier, since such sources comprehended only part of the population. Studies at the micro-level have considered data from manorial court rolls, mainly related to adult males. The 'Toronto School' (the group of historians mainly at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, who, over the past thirty years, have conducted detailed research into the estates of Ramsey Abbey), Razi and, more recently, Judith Bennett, have reconstituted the adult male population from appearances in and suit of court respectively from some manors of Ramsey Abbey, Halesowen and Brigstock. Possibly more accurate data and trends have been produced by Titow for Taunton and Poos for six manors in north Essex. Their data have been derived from tithing- or hundred-penny payments, where it was still levied flexibly at a rate per head, rather than becoming a fixed sum for the whole 'community'. Data from this latter source are likely to be the

most reliable.¹³⁸

The potential problem of micro-studies is that they may be subject to wide 'stochastic variation'. The data for Taunton relate to a particular type of federated manor with an urban centre. The data for north Essex are genuinely regional, covering six manors, but the quality of the data is variable by manor. On the other hand, the importance of localized studies is that not only do they present relatively more accurate data, but demographic change may also have been variable regionally. Particularly is this so in the case of the demographic response to 1315-17 and the level of recovery after the plague of 1348-9. A truly accurate reflection of overall demographic change may, in the end, only be perceived through an accumulation of studies at the micro-level. Long-run demographic change in the later middle ages had important implications for agrarian change, the relationship between social groups, and the condition of the peasantry.

Tithing-penny payments at Kibworth Harcourt

Demographic change at Kibworth Harcourt in the later middle ages exhibits important regional variation from other places studied to date. Kibworth is located a short distance south of Leicester in a *pays* or region which is now predominantly grassland.¹³⁹

The largest manor in the vill was held by Merton College, to which also pertained the liberty or franchise of view of frankpledge. All males over 12 in the vill, on all the manors not just Merton's, were required to be in one of the four tithing groups of Merton, each under a chief pledge. It seems quite clear that all these males over 12 contributed tithing-penny flexibly at the rate of 1d. per head, but with a complication described below, and it is these data which are employed here to reconstruct the demographic trend at Kibworth between c.1280 and c.1450. Payment of the tithing-penny thus acts as an index of the adult male population over 12 and thus, by and large, demographic trends.

The nature of the payment must first be established. The designation of the payment changed over the later middle ages and this can cause some confusion. Tithing-penny payments were often alluded to as the common fine. On some manors, this common fine became levied as a fixed sum for the whole

¹³⁸Much of this research is encapsulated in R. M. Smith, 'Demographic developments in rural England, 1300-48: a survey', in B. M. S. Campbell ed., *Before the Black Death: studies in the 'crisis' of the early fourteenth century* (Manchester, 1991), 25-77; Smith, 'Human resources', in G. Astill and A. Grant eds, *The countryside of medieval England* (Oxford, 1988), 188-212. For the use of tithing-penny data, L. R. Poos, 'The rural population of Essex in the later middle ages', *Economic History Review* 2nd series XXXVIII (1985), 515-31. For the most recent counts of the appearances in court, J. M. Bennett, *Women in the medieval English countryside: gender and household at Brigstock before the Plague* (Oxford, 1987), 13 (Table 1.1).

¹³⁹C. Howell, *Land, family and inheritance in transition: Kibworth Harcourt 1280-1700* (Cambridge, 1983); R. H. Hilton, 'Kibworth Harcourt—a Merton College manor in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', in Hilton, *Class conflict and the crisis of feudalism: essays in medieval social history* (London, 1985), 1-17. The data here comprehend all the court rolls (Oxford, Merton College, MM 6351-6447) as well as account rolls between 1287 and 1350 (MM 6196-6244). The arrangement of the court rolls is somewhat confusing, so that dates instead of membrane references are provided.

‘community’. The common fine was exacted at Kibworth, but was only part of the contribution of tithing-penny. The common fine was levied here (*communis finis; de communi fine*) at the equivalent of the Easter (Hockday) view, although this court was often not held until early summer. The fine was fixed initially at 20s., but later reduced to 9s. 1d. Another payment was, however, exacted in association with frankpledge and tithing, but this amount was known by various appellations during the later middle ages, although its nature was consistent. This payment was received at the equivalent of the Michaelmas view of frankpledge (although often not collected until winter). Tithing-penny payments thus consisted of two parts: a fixed levy at Easter and a flexible one at Michaelmas. It is the latter which can be employed to reflect changes in population at Kibworth.

The different character of these payments can be established from some sporadic, but specific, entries on the court rolls.

‘quod dant de communi fine nichil ad presens. Item quod dant de cap’ ad presens iij.s. viij.d.’ (October 1352) (that they give at the moment nothing for the common fine. Item that they give now for head-money 3s. 8d.);

‘quod dant de capit’ iij.s. viij.d. Et nichil de communi fine ad presens quia ad visum post Pascha’ (November 1363) (that they give 3s. 8d. for head-money. And nothing for the common fine now because [it is collected] at the view after Easter).

These entries, amongst several others, illustrate that the two sums were collected at the two different views of frankpledge (the two views equivalent to the two dates of the sheriff’s tourn).

For much of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the levy at Michaelmas was designated *capitales denarii*. During the later fourteenth century, however, the terminology became confused. Whilst the term *capit’ denar’* was still employed in the 1360s and even as late as 1378, the more frequent term from the 1350s was *de capit’*. There seems little doubt that the later term was simply a confusion of the earlier *capitales denarii* and had no relationship to payments of chevage, the licence to leave the manor. More confusingly, from c.1379, the common fine (the fixed sum) became known as the *certum (de certo)* (reflecting its fixed nature) and from the 1390s the flexible levy at Michaelmas was also referred to as *certum*. It is evident, nevertheless, that the payment at Michaelmas was still received on the basis of 1d. per male over twelve in tithing, not least because the sum varied from year to year.¹⁴⁰ This use of the term *certum* for both exactions was, however, transient. In the early fifteenth century, the court rolls again referred to the levies respectively as *communis finis* and *de capitalibus denariis*.

The real nature of the flexible levy can be illuminated by specific memoranda on the court rolls and the earlier designation of the levy. The earliest references in the rolls allude to the payments as: ‘De hominibus qui sunt in francplegagio’

¹⁴⁰Compare Howell, *Land, family and inheritance*, 31-2.

(from the men who are in frankpledge) (1286) and ‘De capitibus dicene’ (1288 and 1289). The earliest account rolls provide the same explanation: ‘Fines Curie. Et de vj.s. de receptis de capitibus dicene’ (Fines of court: And 6s. from receipts from the heads in tithing) (1289); ‘de capitibus dicene’ (1287, 1292). These receipts are quite evidently the equivalent of what are subsequently known as *capitales denarii*. Observing designations in account rolls to c.1330, the payment was specified as *de capitalibus denar’* (eight years), *de capital’ den’* (three years), and *de capitalibus den’* (eight years). Thereafter, the variant forms comprised *de capit’ denar’* and *de capital’ denar’*. The same terminology persisted in the court rolls.

Other memoranda reveal the flexible nature of the levy, based on 1d. per head in tithing. In 1295, an inquisition was held whether Osbert *sutor* should contribute to the payment: ‘Osbertus sutor dat pro inquisicione habenda utrum debet dare argentum francplegagii uel non’ (Osbert *sutor* gives [a fine] to have an inquest whether he should give frankpledge money or not). Another inquisition exonerated a tenant from all payments except tithing-penny at the rate of 1d. per head: ‘Unde inquisicio dicit quod nichil dedit nec aliquid exigunt nisi j.d pro capite suo’ (Whereby the inquest says that he gave nothing nor did they [Merton College] exact anything except 1d. for his head-money). In 1284, there was no receipt from the payment since it was not certain how many men there were: ‘De capitibus [sic] denariis [nichil] quia nescuntur quantum de hominibus’. In 1298, the account roll reflected that the sum received should be based on the number in tithing: ‘Preterea de capitalibus denariis secundum numerum hominum in decena existencium’ (Moreover from headmoney according to the number of men being in tithing). In 1378, the payment was qualified in the court rolls as 1d. per head: ‘de den’ capit’ prouenientibus de numero totium capitium quilibet ad j.d.’ (From headmoney coming from the total number of heads each at 1d.). Between 1379 to 1417 (in thirteen years), the level was explained in the court rolls because there were no more heads: ‘et non plus quia non [sunt] pluria capita.’ These memoranda confirm that the payment at the Michaelmas view was based flexibly on 1d. from each male over twelve in tithing.

The receipts from this payment can be accumulated for 102 of the years between c.1280 and c.1450. After 1450, the court rolls no longer recorded the payment. Most of the data have initially been collected from the court rolls. Before 1350, however, there is a large *lacuna* in the series of extant court rolls between c.1290 and the early 1340s. Some of the missing data can be restored from the account rolls, which record the payment separately to c.1350, but thereafter the payment was subsumed into the *perquisita* (fines and proceeds of the court). From these two sources, it has thus been possible to aggregate data for a significant proportion of the years.

Administration and collection

There remain some questions which must be addressed about the data. First, there is the problem of how comprehensive are the data; second, and relatedly, is that of the efficiency of the administration and collection of the money, with

possible changes over time. It is known that some males were exempt from being in tithing, especially those not resident for a year (possibly including some servants). There is also the issue of those newly admitted into tithing and those presented for not entering a tithing. Poos compensated by adding these to the figure for tithing-penny.¹⁴¹ At Kibworth, it is not clear whether these males had not contributed tithing-penny; the amount may have been exacted at the end of the proceedings. Very probably these males were included in the succeeding year, so that the trend can be observed.

Until the fifteenth century, the administration appears to have been fairly effective. This efficiency may be paradoxically implicit in the presentment of males for not entering tithing and the level of new admissions. In 1278, for example, eleven males were presented for being out of tithing, all sons (*fili*); in 1280, another seven; in 1292 five. In 1276, two men were excused being in tithing because of their age.

Towards the middle of the fifteenth century, the effectiveness suffered perceptibly. The failure can be illustrated by comparing the level of receipt of the sum with the number of males who appeared in court. Data for two sample courts will suffice. In October 1436, the receipt amounted to merely 16d., but 28 males made court appearances. In November 1441 thirty males were recorded on the court roll, but only 18d. accrued. It is obvious that the sums could not represent all the males on the manor. With these figures, there would have been insufficient males to fill the multiple manorial offices: reeve; two affeerors; four chief pledges; two aletasters; six *supervisores terrarum et tenementorum*; and, when convened, the jury of presentment (*Inquisicio*) composed of a dozen jurors. A great concentration of office-holding would have been necessary, but was not evident. In 1436, twelve offices were held by ten different men; in 1441, twelve offices were distributed among eleven men. The collection of the tithing-penny had thus become laconic. Data after c.1430, although included on the histogram (Fig. 4), have therefore been discounted as inaccurate.

The reliability of the payments before this date can be established by two independent controls. A tithing list and a count of those in the four tithings were both composed in c.1280-90. The listing suggests about 120 males in tithings, accounting for cancellations of names.¹⁴² The count provides 112 or 115 in tithings (there was some confusion whether there were 31 or 28 in one tithing). The corresponding *capitales denarii* indicate a number of 106 males in 1281, 116 in 1287, and 126 in 1288. The Poll Taxes of 1377-9 enumerated 64 males liable to tax (over the age of 14).¹⁴³ Additionally, there were ten male servants, but some may not have been required to be in tithing. The contemporary receipts *de capit'* suggest an adult male population of about sixty. There is therefore a degree of consistency between these independent controls and the receipt of money.

There remains one further ambiguity. Merton possessed the view of frankpledge for the whole village, which, however, consisted of more than one lordship. Col-

¹⁴¹Poos, 'The rural population of Essex', 521.

¹⁴²Compare Howell, *Land, family and inheritance*, 29.

¹⁴³Howell, *Land, family and inheritance*, 217-20 (Table 22)

Table 6: Average adult male population c.1280 to c.1320

N of yrs with data	Mean	sd	Median	Min	Max	Q1	Q3
39	85	14.62	80	60	126	75	88

lection of tithing-penny from the other lordships fluctuated. In some years the pence were collected, but in others exonerated, and permanently condoned after 1315. In 1304-5, the court omitted the Earl's men ('sine hominibus domini Comitibus') and in 1306-7 the pence were relaxed ('et relaxantur de hominibus domini Comitibus'), leaving 7s. 4d. to be contributed by the College's own males. There is then a distinction between the adult male population of the entire village (about 126) and the College's manor (80 to 85 at this time). The fluctuations before 1315 are then susceptible to changes in the collection from other manors.

The demographic profile at Kibworth Harcourt

The demographic trend at Kibworth can thus be described. From c.1280 to c.1320, despite some sharp variations, there was an underlying stable trend. The vicissitudes may owe more to the problems of collection than demographic fluctuations. The check on the validity of Table 6 is that in the 1340s the payments represented about eighty males.

The stable trend was interrupted by the 'agrarian crisis' of 1315-17.¹⁴⁴ Taking into account the variation in collection noted above, the impact in 1315-17 might have affected at least 25 percent of the population. Population on the College's manor recovered to a fairly stable level through to 1348. The visitation of 1349 occasioned mortality which reduced the adult male population by 40 percent. This population then remained at this new low, but stable, level through the 1350s. Further recovery happened in the 1360s and 1370s. By 1377, the adult male cohort stood at about 25 percent higher than in 1349-50. This recovery was, however, only relative since the level in 1377 was still 25 percent below that of the late 1340s before the plague. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, another decline can be perceived, although it might have been compounded by variable efficiency in administration.

The data do not explain the causes of demographic change, endogamous or exogamous. The unknown variable is the quantity of in- and out-migration. Some information can be extracted from the court rolls, but it would be no more than anecdotal and episodic. For example, the court rolls before 1350 tended to record immigration into the manor, but thereafter the emphasis was directed to villein *fugitivi* who quit the manor without the lord's permission.¹⁴⁵ It is apparent from changes in the corpus of bynames and surnames that there was considerable immigration during the fourteenth century.

With these allowances, the data present some local variation of demographic

¹⁴⁴I. Kershaw, 'The great famine and agrarian crisis in England 1315-1322', reprinted in R. H. Hilton ed., *Peasants, knights and heretics: studies in medieval English social history* (Cambridge, 1976), 85-132; Poos, 'The rural population of Essex', 521.

¹⁴⁵See also Howell, *Land, family and inheritance*, 44-7.

Table 7: Inferred adult male population at Kibworth Beauchamp

Year	N of adult males	Mean populations	Percentage change
1346	96		
1347	108		
1348	122	1346-48 109	
1349	40		mean of 1346/8 to 1349 = -63%
1350	72		
1351	84		
1354	96	1350-54	1349 to mean 1350/54 = +110%

change. The impact of 1315-17 appears to have been limited in time. The population of the early fourteenth century exhibited some stability rather than decline. The first drastic downturn occurred in 1349, succeeded by a stable, but lower, level. The recovery in the 1360s and 1370s was substantial by comparison with the level immediately after the plague, but still remained at a level significantly below the late 1340s before the pestilence. The trend at Kibworth must, nonetheless, be considered alongside comparative data from other villis.

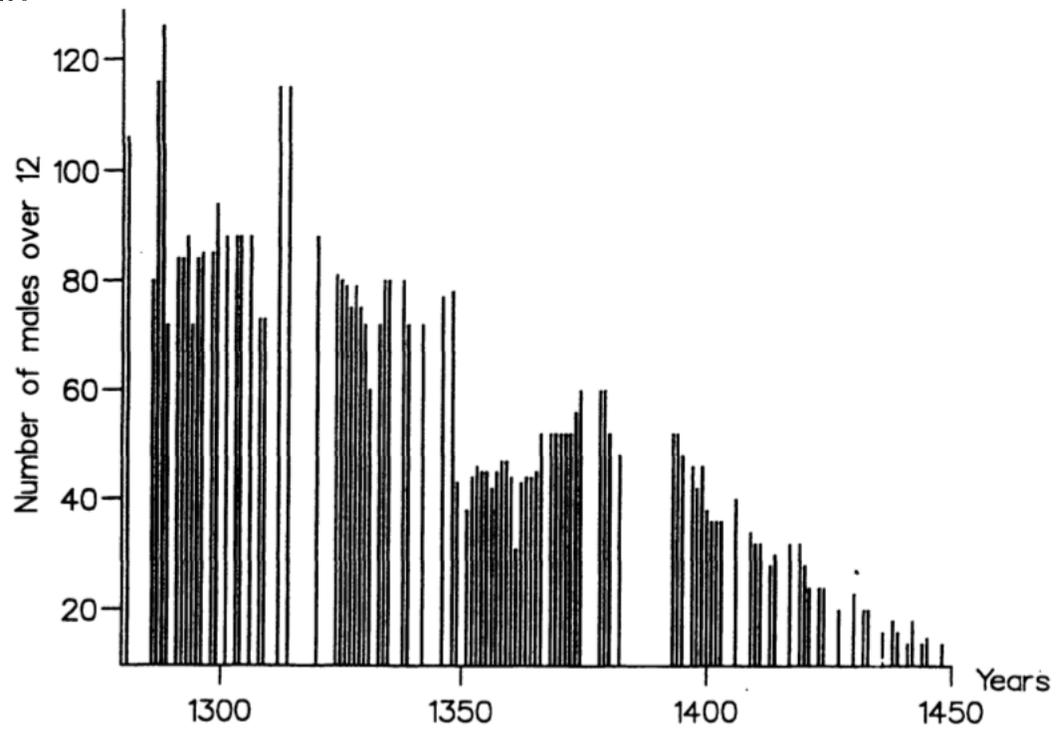
Some data from Kibworth Beauchamp

Some similar data can be extracted from the views of frankpledge of the adjacent manor of Kibworth Beauchamp. Here, it seems that a single view was convened, equivalent to the Michaelmas sheriff's tourn. Although termed the common fine (*communis finis*), the collection seems to have continued to be flexible. (A separate figure for the appurtenant manor of Mowsley in 1348 was designated *capitales denarii*). Data for this Kibworth are available for 1346-51 and 1354, tabulated in Table 7.¹⁴⁶

The putative extent of recovery immediately after the plague, according to these figures, casts a shadow of doubt over their reliability after 1349. Before 1349, the payments do seem to reflect actual numbers of adult males. Although the payments consisted of rounded numbers in 1346-7, in 1348 10s. 2d. was exacted. In 1347, the payment was qualified as this time (*hac vice*). In 1349, the drastic decline was explained: 'Et non plus propter pestilenciam' (and no more because of plague). Some of the diminution might be assigned to the administrative disruption too. After 1349, the amounts are all conveyed in rounded shillings, indeed seemingly at increments of 1s. over the initial years. In 1350-1, moreover, the contributions were offered *de gracia* (by favour) which implies some sort of negotiation between lord and 'community'. One implication might be that the lord, in response to the decline of proceeds from the flexible common fine, negotiated a payment which, although lower than prior to the plague, yet was higher than if still collected per head. In the years 1350-4, the fine was defined as so much *ad presens* (at this time), but that qualification may merely indicate annual reviews of the level by discussion between lord and tenants rather than any persistent real flexibility. The figures for Kibworth may

¹⁴⁶The National Archives SC2/183/76-77.

Figure 4: Inferred population of males over 12: Kibworth Harcourt, c.1280-
c.1450



thus be fairly accurate demographically initially, but from 1350 reflect no more than some demographic recovery but only indicatively.

4 Barkby 1086-1524

The earliest description of Barkby, as of most English villages, occurs in Domesday Book, compiled in 1086, but referring back also to 1066.¹⁴⁷ There is still some dispute as to why Domesday Book was produced—was it a fiscal record, the sequel to the earlier geld rolls, a basis for taxation? Or was it rather a feudatory, a description of tenures?¹⁴⁸ The interpretation of the entries depends in some cases on the intent behind its production. When we read that there are 18 carucates in Barkby, do we take this to be an artificial tax assessment or a real measurement of land? Some historians have argued that the teamland entry is more significant—there is land for 16 ploughs.¹⁴⁹ This is probably true for places with an intensive arable husbandry. It is probably reliable for Barkby, although Barkby had non-arable resources in the Soar Valley meadows.

What we do know is that Barkby was situated in the richest and most densely populated part of Leicestershire, in 1086. This is shown well in Holly's section on Leicestershire in *The Domesday geography of Midland England*.¹⁵⁰ There were in the Middle and Upper Soar Valleys 10-12 people per square mile; 2-3 plough-teams per square mile; and meadow. Barkby was also in that area of Leicestershire which had come under Scandinavian influence. The place-name itself reflects this. This is the area of carucates and bovates, not hides and virgates. The familiar Scandinavian duodecimal reckoning occurs here, particularly in the computation of small local hundreds in the Leicestershire Survey of 1124-9.¹⁵¹ It is also the area of sokes and sokemen. There were four sokes in Leicestershire: based upon Barrow, Rothley, Melton Mowbray and Great Bowden. Three of the four were in North-east Leicestershire. Sokes and sokemen reflected the influence of the Scandinavians in North-east Leicestershire.¹⁵²

If we turn to the Domesday entry for Barkby we read that William holds of Robert de Toden 18 carucates of land in Barkby. There is land for 16 ploughs. In demesne there are three ploughs and three serfs. Seven villeins and three bordars and ten sokemen and four Frenchmen have ten ploughs. We find that Barkby was slightly undercultivated. There were 13 ploughs, but land for 16 ploughs. There were three serfs who were tied to the lord's demesne land. Serfs (*servi*) were completely unfree. The seven villeins were the customary tenants, although there is still some dispute as to the legal status of villeins in the eleventh century.¹⁵³ The three bordars are a problem. *Bordier* was a French word; it

¹⁴⁷ *Victoria County History of Leicestershire*, I, (London, 1907), 322.

¹⁴⁸ V. H. Galbraith, *The making of Domesday Book* (Oxford, 1961)

¹⁴⁹ J. S. Moore, 'The Domesday teamland in Leicestershire', *English Historical Review* LXXVIII (1963), 696-703

¹⁵⁰ D. J. Holly, 'Leicestershire', in H. C. Darby & I. B. Terrett (eds.), *The Domesday geography of Midland England*, (Cambridge, 1954), 352 ff.

¹⁵¹ J. H. Round, *Feudal England* (London, 1895), 80; F. M. Stenton in the *Victoria County History, Leicestershire*, I, 280

¹⁵² Holly, 'Leicestershire', 311-312

¹⁵³ R. H. Hilton, 'Freedom and villeinage in England', repr. in Hilton ed., *Peasants, knights and heretics: studies in medieval English social history* (Cambridge, 1976), 177

probably was the equivalent of a cottar with less than five acres of land.¹⁵⁴ There were significantly 10 sokemen, the semi-free men of the Scandinavian areas. There were four Frenchmen or *francigeni*, presumably freemen, but with smallholdings. The four Frenchmen were memorialised in the family name le Fraunceys which persisted in Barkby throughout the Middle Ages. There were two le Fraunceys families who were Merton tenants later on.

Barkby in 1086 was held by a lay mesne tenant, a knight, William. He held the manor of Barkby from the honor of Belvoir. This will explain the frequent references to trips to Belvoir in the section on mobility later on. Barkby in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries was a lay estate. The vill was mainly encompassed by a single manor in 1086. In the following 200 years, this situation changed drastically. A single lay estate was replaced by several estates, some religious or quasi-religious. The village also became divided into several lordships, rather than one.

The structure of landholding in Barkby was completely altered in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It has been shown that there was some sort of 'crisis' for lay landholders in this period, particularly for the knightly class.¹⁵⁵ Usually, the religious expanded their estates at the expense of the laity. In the late twelfth century, the le Poer family alienated the advowson of the church and the appropriated glebe to Leicester Abbey, and later added six bovates.¹⁵⁶ This was probably simply an act of piety, for the salvation of the donor, his predecessors and family. Leicester Abbey belonged to the new Order of Austin Canons, which spread rapidly in the twelfth century; houses of this Order came to hold appropriated advowsons and glebes as a familiar type of property.¹⁵⁷ Before 1237, Peter de Lincoln endowed Langley Priory with land in Barkby.¹⁵⁸ In 1271, Robert de Percy alienated all his lands and tenements in Barkby and Leicester to Merton College.¹⁵⁹ Robert had become indebted to Cok' Hagin, a Jew of London. Jews could take mortgages on land, but were not allowed to hold land. Walter de Merton paid off the debt by a consideration of 160 marks to Robert. This was one of the customary ways in which Walter de Merton obtained land for the college which he founded at Oxford. By 1271 therefore, the nature of landholding in Barkby had changed radically. The major estates were now held by two religious houses and a college of scholars, a quasi-religious institution.

The estate of Leicester Abbey was based around the appropriated glebe of

¹⁵⁴For a new interpretation of the significance of some clusters of *bordarii*; see Sally Harvey, 'Evidence for settlement study: Domesday Book', in P. Sawyer ed., *Medieval settlement* (London, 1976), 197-9.

¹⁵⁵E. King, 'Large and small landowners in the thirteenth century: the case of Peterborough Abbey', *Past and Present* 47, (1970), 26-50

¹⁵⁶R. H. Hilton, *The economic development of Some Leicestershire estates in the XIV and XV centuries* (Oxford, 1947), 36

¹⁵⁷T. A. M. Bishop, 'Monastic granges in Yorkshire', *English Historical Review* LI (1936), 193-214; I. Kershaw, *Bolton Priory: the economy of a northern monastery, 1286-1325* (Oxford, 1973), 22 ff.; Hilton, *Economic development of some Leicestershire estates*, 36.

¹⁵⁸Farnham, *Leicestershire medieval village notes*, I, pp.105-7

¹⁵⁹M(erton College) M(uniments) 1146 (hereafter MM)

the parish church. This was consolidated by the acquisition of small parcels of land from the free peasantry, by as many as 25 to 30 transactions, mainly in roods and acres. The process is described by Hilton and in the transcription of charters in the *Novum Rentale* of Leicester Abbey.¹⁶⁰ The glebe-demesne was a fairly familiar type of property of the Austin Canons. In the rental of 1341, the glebe-demesne is described as 156a. 3½r., with four villeins and 13 free tenants. Again, in the *Liber de Terris Dominicalibus* of the late fifteenth century, it is described as 156a. 3½r. divided in the three fields of Barkby. In the early sixteenth century, Langley Priory held a large estate; Leicester Abbey 7¾ virgates (156a. approximately); Merton 14½ virgates, and Pochin 240a. (8 virgates).¹⁶¹ The accretion of the Pochin estate was a phenomenon of the later middle ages. It was the successor of the Willoughby estate, which was the surviving lay fee in Barkby. In a rental of c. 1311/12, the Merton estate is described as 385a. ½r. arable land and 16½a. ½r. of meadow.¹⁶²

The estates of the religious and the college were administered in different ways. Barkby was fairly close to Leicester Abbey, and was therefore used as a home farm by the Abbey. There was a demesne which was directly cultivated. Little is known of the way in which Langley Priory exploited its lands in Barkby before the early sixteenth century. The College, however, did not have any demesne land at Barkby. The Leicestershire estates of Merton College, Barkby and Kibworth Harcourt, were fairly remote from the College. A more local estate, such as Cuxham in Oxfordshire, was farmed directly by the College, until it was leased out to a *firmarius* in 1359.¹⁶³ This was never the case with Barkby. It is probable, in any case, that when the land was acquired from Robert de Percy in 1271, there was no demesne, and that all the land was held by customary tenants. All the College's land in Barkby was thus always held by tenants, none of it farmed directly by the College.

We know more about the College's administration of its land in Barkby, simply because the College's estate records have survived more completely than those of Leicester Abbey. For Leicester Abbey, we have to rely on the essentially rentals and cartularies of the *Novum Rentale* and the *Liber de Terris Dominicalibus* and two treasurers' accounts of the late thirteenth century. For Merton College's lands in Barkby, there are manorial court rolls from 1278/9, in a broken series; manorial accounts from 1285/6 in an almost continuous sequence; and rentals for c.1300, c.1311/12, 1354/5, 1450, 1452, 1475 and 1484. Unfortunately, the earliest rental (c.1300) is very fragmentary indeed (See Appendix 1).

The Merton College estate was administered by the reeve.¹⁶⁴ The reeve

¹⁶⁰Hilton, *Economic development of some Leicestershire estates*, 44; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. MS 625, fo. 202v.

¹⁶¹S. Postles, 'Barkby: the anatomy of a closed township, 1535-1780', unpublished M. A. thesis, Leicester University, 1978, 57.

¹⁶²MM 6568

¹⁶³P. D. A. Harvey, *A medieval Oxfordshire village: CUXHAM, 1240-1400* (Oxford, 1965), 73

¹⁶⁴For the office of reeve generally, see J. S. Drew, 'The manorial accounts of Swithun's Priory, Winchester', *English Historical Review* LXII (1947), 20-41, repr. in E. M. Cams-

was one of the customary tenants of the college. The reeves were drawn from the larger landholders. This was partially as a guarantee to the lord. William le Playtour, for example, held 21a arable and 3r. meadow; William de Dalby held 19a. lr. arable and 3r. meadow; Henry Milisant held a messuage and a virgate.¹⁶⁵ The main responsibility of the reeve was to collect the rents from the tenants in Barkby, Thurmaston and Leicester, and the fines and perquisites of court. At Cuxham in Oxfordshire, where the College farmed the demesne itself, the reeve also had to supervise agriculture, but there was no need to do so at Barkby. The job of reeve was still fairly arduous. The collection of rents from Leicester constantly proved difficult.¹⁶⁶ The collection of fines and customary rents could also be difficult. An incident in 1289 illustrates the potential unpleasantness of the job. The customary tenants broke into the lord's park to rescue their 25 beasts. They were all placed in mercy. Richard de Hamilton, the reeve, was fined $\frac{1}{2}$ mark (6s. 8d.) for not distraining against the tenants for the offence as he was ordered to do by the Chapter at Cuxham.¹⁶⁷ The Chapter was the gathering of the Warden and auditors each year to check the accounts of the reeves. The reeve of Barkby had to attend these Chapters, often held at Oxford, but also held at Maldon (1288), Cuxham (1289, 1296 and 1297) and Farley (1290).¹⁶⁸ The reeve also had to travel to Oxford each year with the cash from the rents. He had to visit Leicester to collect the rents from the tenants there.¹⁶⁹ In 1320/1, he had to appear for the College before the J.P.s at Leicester and Loughborough; in 1299/1300, he had to go on College business to Hinckley, Prestwold, Syston, Beeby, Maldon and Leicester.¹⁷⁰ Occasionally, therefore, one of the tenants would pay a fine to be relieved of the office. In 1294, William son of Richard de Hamelton gave $\frac{1}{2}$ mark to be excused the office of reeve.¹⁷¹ William was the son of a former reeve, and perhaps had gained from his father's experience. When William was excused, William Playtur was elected by the homage in the manorial court in his place.¹⁷² The process of election is significant. In effect, the lord told the tenants to choose a reeve; by this way, he could hold the tenants responsible for any misdemeanours of the reeve. The aspect is explained by Walter de Henley, a contemporary writer on estate management.¹⁷³

Wilson ed., *Essays in economic history, vol.ii*, (London, 1962), 12-30, and also the earlier, but less balanced, description by H. S. Bennett, *Life on the English manor* (London, 1937, repr. 1974), 166 ff.

¹⁶⁵MM 6568, 6571

¹⁶⁶e.g. MM 6524 (1347/8) arrears of £1 13s 9d owing from eight tenants, varying from arrears of one term to 'four years and more'. The reeve had to ask for the arrears to be condoned ('unde Henricus Milisaunt petit gracionem et allocationem de domino').

¹⁶⁷MM 6566 ('ut prius habuit preceptum ad capitulum de Cuxham')

¹⁶⁸MM 6485, 6486, 6490, 6493.

¹⁶⁹e.g. 'In expensis prepositi uersus Oxon' cum Redditu ad Winculam (sic) sancti petri xii d.' (MM 6483, 1285/6); 'In expensis ipsius Henrici Milisaunt cum equo suo portantis Redditem de termino Pentecostes apud Mertonehalle in eundo et redeundo iii s.' (MM 6523, 1346/7).

¹⁷⁰MM 6506, 6495

¹⁷¹MM 6567

¹⁷²MM 6567

¹⁷³D. Oschinsky ed., *Walter of Henley and other treatises on estate management and ac-*

Of course, the reeve also stood in a handy position. A good reeve might find favours from the Lord. In 1279, Richard the reeve was excused a fine called *merchet* (2s. in this case), ‘and is condoned because he is the reeve of the scholars of Merton’.¹⁷⁴ He might also be in a good position to oppress the other tenants. The College had developed a quite stringent audit. The balances of the reeve’s accounts which ran from July (from the feast of St. Kenelm or St. Margaret the Virgin), were almost exclusively ‘*arreragia*’ or ‘*et debet*’ balances—the reeve was indebted to the college. This balance was common in charge-discharge accounts. The initial ‘*et debet*’ balance was often quite large. The explanation is that although the reeve had been able to deliver the Martinmas rents to Oxford, the account was struck before the rents from the second rent day (Nativity of St. John the Baptist, June 24) could be delivered to the Warden. Quite often the balance is then qualified by a sum sent after the account (*super comptum*), this sum representing the rents of the second rent day:

‘Summa totius expense simul cum liberationibus viii li. iis. id.
Et debet viii li. xiiis. ix. De quibus soluit super comptum v li. Et
sic debet Lxxiis. ix.’¹⁷⁵

Sometimes, not all the rents from the second term could be collected even after the account:

‘Summa omnium expensarum x li. xiiis. x. ob. Et sic debet
(interlined) v li. xviii. ob. qua. De quibus solvit super comptum
Ls. Et sic debet de claro Lis. vid. ob. qua;’ ‘Summa totalis xxxviis.
iiii. Et debet xiii li. xv. id. de quibus soluit super comptum
xxiiis. Et debet de claro xii li. xiiis. id.’ (i.e. the rents of both terms
were outstanding).¹⁷⁶

The ‘*et debet*’ balance was carried over to the next year’s account as arrears (*arreragia*) as the first item in the charge of the new account (see table). The reeve’s account was audited at the Chapter by the Warden and Fellows of the College. Some of the accounts have indented schedules of the audit sewn to the foot, with a precept for the payment of the outstanding balance:

‘tenetur de claro dominis suis in v li. xs. vd. Et iniunctum est
sibi quod soluat dictam pecuniam citra festum omnium sanctorum
(Nov. 1) sub pena i marcam’.¹⁷⁷

The incoming reeve also inherited the arrears of his predecessor: thus the arrears of William de Dalby included a sum ‘*de debito playtur*’ (*sc.* William le

counting (Oxford, 1971), 316-317 (Walter, c.33)

¹⁷⁴MM 6563. (‘Et condonatur quia est ballivus scholarium de Merton’). The term ‘ballivus’ was technically inaccurate and an aberration; elsewhere ‘prepositus’ is used consistently

¹⁷⁵MM 6494 (1297/8)

¹⁷⁶MM 6495 (1299-1300); MM 6496 (1301/2)

¹⁷⁷MM 6488 (?1283/4)

Playtur).¹⁷⁸ Henry Milicent jnr. took over the debts of his father, the previous reeve: 'Et oneratur de arreragiis patris sui de ultimo compoto suo Ls. xd. qua'.¹⁷⁹

Good reeves, from the lord's point of view, were often retained in office for years on end. All the reeves of Barkby served for a long term. Henry Milisant I and II served as reeve for thirty years from 1318-48, the father for 10 years and the son for 20. The latter and probably the former also, died in office. Richard de Hamilton served for over ten years before his death in 1286. Between 1279 and 1349, only five tenants served as reeve: Richard de Hamelton, William Playtur, William de Dalby and Henry Milisant I-II. The reeve was the most important man on the spot in the College's administration of its Barkby estate.

In recent years, a great deal has been learnt about the movement of the peasantry in the Middle Ages. The tenants of the College in Barkby were not confined to their village; they did manage to see some of the outside world. Some of this travelling was at the College's instance on College business. The reeve is a case in point. I have described his travels on behalf of the College above. Other tenants were sent on College business. If we take the expenses in the reeve's account for 1287/8, for example, we read:

In expenses of the reeve at the Chapter at Maldon 2s. In expenses of William Savage at Oxford at Martinmas 10d. In expenses of a groom to Belvoir with letters 3d. In expenses of John le Pleydur to Welford 3d. In expenses of the same John with a document to Belvoir 3d. In expenses of the same John to London to carry letters from the Lady Isabella de Ros 12d. In expenses of the same John at the summons of Lady Isabella de Ros to the court of the Earldom of Winchester twice 8d. In expenses of Walter Samson at Belvoir 3d. In expenses of John Arnold and William son of Robert to Oxford at the Feast of St. John 6d.¹⁸⁰

In 1284, we read again:

In expenses of Richard the reeve to Oxford for the last account for 4 days 16d. For the same going to carry letters of the Priory of St. Catherine, collector of the tenth (a tax) 12d. For the same going to Lincoln twice for 8 days for the tenth (a tax) 3s. For a groom

¹⁷⁸MM 6502 (1314/5)

¹⁷⁹MM 6511 (1328/9)

¹⁸⁰MM 6485: 'In expensis prepositi apud Maldon ad capitulum ii s. In expensis W Sauuage apud Oxon' ad festum sancti martini xd. In expensis cuiusdam garcionis versus Beuver cum literis iii d. In expensis Johannis le pleydur apud Welleford iiid. In expensis eiusdem Johannis cum transcriptis apud Beuver iiid. In expensis eiusdem Johannis apud Lond'* ad gendum literas de domina Isabella de Ros xiid. In expensis dicti Johannis apud Hunffurton' ad somonicionem domine Isabelle de Ros ad curiam Winton' bis* viiid. In expensis Walteri Samson apud Beuver iiid. In expensis Johannis Ernold Willelmi filii Roberti ad festum sancti Johannis apud Oxon' vid.' All those mentioned are identifiable as Merton tenants. * 'Lond' was interlined and 'Oxon' cancelled, 'bis' was interlined.

sent to take the rents to Oxford 12d. For the reeves of Barkby and Kibworth going to Glenfield 3d.¹⁸¹

Or again in 1283:

Expenses of the reeve at the last Chapter at Oxford; expenses of the reeve with a groom and horse taking rents to Oxford at Martinmas 2s.; expenses of the reeves of Barkby and Kibworth twice going to Glenfield to collect a debt of 40s. from Sir John FitzPeter 3d.; for a certain groom taking letters from the Warden of the College to Normanton 3d.; the expenses of men going to Belvoir to see the Lady Isabella de Ros about a distraint at the Court of Leicester 6d.; in the expenses of the reeve going to Leicester to the court there with 6 horses and 4 other men 6d.; in expenses of the reeve to Lincoln to carry letters of the priory of St. Catherine 18d.¹⁸²

Tenants regularly went to and from Oxford with rents. Tenants went to Belvoir to the Lady Isabella de Ros, as the manor of Barkby was held feudally of her. Tenants went to Lincoln to the Priory of St. Catherine without Lincoln, which was appointed a royal tax-collector.

Technically and legally, the customary tenants were not allowed to leave the manor of Barkby without the lord's permission, nor to marry outside the manor without the lord's licence. Some customary tenants still absconded. In 1287, William son of Roger de Syston ('*custumarius*') fled without licence. Ralph Franceys abducted a horse from Robert Styward in 1286 and took it to Newton. Several women were fined in court for marrying outside the lordship. There is the curious case of Matilda Carpenter who went so far as to flee to St. Andrews in Scotland to get married in 1289.¹⁸³ The life of some of the peasantry of Barkby was not entirely static. One wonders also how many made regular trips into Leicester to sell off surplus produce.

When the College first took over the estates after 1271, especially in the 1280s, there was a battle over services owed by the tenants both collectively and

¹⁸¹MM 6488: 'Item in expensis Ricardi prepositi versus Oxon' eundo et redeundo ad ultimum comptum per iiii dies xvid. Item in eodem xiid. in expensis suis cum equo suo versus Linc' in eundo et redeundo ad impetrandum literam prioris sancte Caterine et Collectoris decime super sederent de exaccione dicte decime. Idem computat iiii. in expensis in eundo et Redeundo apud Linc' bis* per viii dies pro decima. Idem computat xiid. pro uno garcione allocato portar' Redditum apud Oxon' . . . Idem computat iiii. in expensis prepositi de Kibworth et prepositi de Barkeby versus Glenefeld cum predicto breve' . *'bis' interlined.

¹⁸²MM 6489: 'In expensis prepositi cum garcione suo et cum Equo suo apud Oxon' ad festum sancti martini cum redditibus. In expensis duorum prepositorum (*sc.* Barkby and Kibworth) bis apud Glenefeld pro xis. de debito domini Johannis filii Petri iiii. Item cuidam garcioni qui iuit cum literis Custodis apud Normanton' iiii. In expensis ii hominum apud Beuer ad colloquendum cum domina Isabella de Ros propter distraccionem Curie de Leyc' vid. In expensis apud Leyc' ad Curiam cum sex Equis et iiii hominibus vid. cum feno ad Equos. In expensis prepositi apud Lincoln' ad inpetrand' literas prioris same Katerine xviiiid.'

¹⁸³MM 6565 (1287); MM 6564 (1286); MM 6565 (1287) (Alice dau. of Ralph fined for marrying outside the village, as was Matilda Bryt); MM 6566 (1289; Matilda Carpenter: 'Inquisitio facta de catallis et bonis que Matillis Carpenter habuit die quo perexit apud sanctum andream in scocia quia maritatur dudum extra libertatem dominorum sine licencia.').

individually to the lords of the manor.¹⁸⁴ The College was obviously trying to tighten up the services. Perhaps Robert de Percy had been a poor administrator, or perhaps the College was over-zealous. There was considerable discord over the precise nature of the marriage fine—merchet: should it be paid if tenants married inside the lordship, or only if they married outside the lordship?¹⁸⁵ In the case of Matilda Bryt, the whole of the customary tenants were placed in mercy for giving false information about whether she should pay merchet, their defence seemingly that they were all freemen in this respect.¹⁸⁶ The College also took to assessing the size of the merchet fine by precise reference to the wealth of the individual.¹⁸⁷ The College also came down heavily on individual tenants in the 1280s. The land of Robert Boland was confiscated in 1282 because he was in arrears of rent of 5s. Iveta widow of Walter Bond had to find pledges that she would cultivate her land as her neighbours do in 1282. Either she had neglected to do so, or the College was suspicious of the ability of a widow to do so. Henry Bonde was admitted to the holding lately held by his father, but he, had to find pledges that he would acquit the arrears of rent of his father.¹⁸⁸

This clampdown only seems to have been a transient episode. It may have been instigated by the College's estate steward, Richard de St. John. On the other hand, the College never really charged excessive entry fines. The rents of the customary tenants were fixed; but when the land changed hands, the College could charge an entry fine. The entry fine was not fixed, but negotiable. The entry fines charged by the College were never excessive; the general level was low. Some scholars finding high entry fines in some manors in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, have assumed that there was great pressure on the land—demand for land exceeding supply.¹⁸⁹ Entry fines in

¹⁸⁴R. H. Hilton, 'Peasant movements in England before 1381', *Economic History Review* 2nd series II (1949), 117-30.

¹⁸⁵MM 6565 (1287): Inquisition concerning Alice dau. of Walter Bonde who married without licence 'utrum idem (sic) mulier aliquid daret pro se maritanda vel non quia idem mulier cum tota curia dicunt quod nichil daret pro se maritanda super feodum dominorum'. MM 6565 (1287) 'Tenentes de Bark' inplorant senescallum ut iustineantur in eodem statu ut scolares ipsos emerunt et senescallus Rogavit eis consuetudinem eorum et dicunt super sacramentum suum quod nullus costumarius daret pro filia sua maritanda super feodum dominorum nisi esset extra villam ad hominem extraneum et hoc semper utentur et ducentur .. .'

¹⁸⁶MM 6565 (1287): 'Omnes costumarii quia indespectu dominorum clamant esse de libero sanguine et quia nichil dabunt pro filiis (sic) suis maritandis set sine licencia dominorum facient ipsas maritare ideo omnes costumarii misericordia et ponuntur ad voluntatem domini dimidiam marcam exceptis preposito et Johanne playtur'.

¹⁸⁷MM 6565 (1287): 'Quia inquiratur per senescallum quod Alicia filia Radulphi habet xviii oves et sex agnos et unam vaccam. Ideo ponatur ad unam marcam pro licencia maritandi et prepositus habet in custodia sua per senescallum predictos xviii oves et vii (sic) agnos et unam vaccam unde est resp' de proficuo'. Generally, however, merchet was usually about 1s. or 2s.

¹⁸⁸All in MM 6563 (1282): 'ad terram suam colendam bene sicut vicini sui faciunt' (Iveta); 'et aquietabit uersus dominum [in] omnis arreragiis de redditu suo pertinentibus ad dictam terram unde dictus H. inueniet plegios et ad solvendum ad festum sancti michaelis anno xii sine dilacione. Et si non habeat certos plegios ad festum sancti Johannis Anno regis xii statim postea dictam terram in manu domini sicut prius'. (Henry Bonde).

¹⁸⁹J. Z. Titow, 'Some differences between manors and their effects on the condition of the peasant in the thirteenth century'. *Agricultural History Review* X, (1962), 1-13, repr. in W. E.

Barkby on the College's estate were not of this nature. We have a series of 44 entry fines extracted from the court rolls between 1279 and 1349. Few entry fines exceeded a mark (13s 4d) for a bovate. One exceptional entry occurred in 1346, when William Arnold paid an entry fine of 40s. This higher fine is explained by the transaction being a settlement *inter vivos*; William was being allowed the remainder in the land if and when his wife, Cecilia, died. The land would apparently have been Cecilia's.¹⁹⁰

The lord's attitude to entry fines is revealed in a memorandum on a membrane of parchment sewn to the reeve's account for the manor in 1311/12: 'Memoracio (sic) de ingressibus eorum Tempore Scolariū de Merton Oxon'.¹⁹¹ The memorandum lists fifteen entry fines during the Wardenships of Richard de Werplesden and Peter de Habyndone and, perhaps significantly, the sole estate steward throughout was Richard de St. John. The memorandum records the name of the newly-admitted tenant, the size of the holding, the entry fine, and, most importantly, the circumstances behind the entry fine. In the case of Ralph *Bercarius*, who acceded to a messuage and six acres for an entry fine of four marks, for example, the memorandum explains 'et non natus erat super terram dominorum' (*sc.* the Scholars of Merton College.) The same information is given about two others and also about John Wysman ('et non natus erat ibi'). In two other instances, it is recorded that the new tenant had not 'inherited' the land ('et non erat hereditas sua'); and in another case this is put more forcefully 'quia non herat (sic) hereditas sua'. Conversely, it was always recorded when the land was 'inherited': 'et est hereditas sua'. This memorandum strongly suggests that the Warden and Scholars—or their estate steward—used the nature of admission to the land as a bargaining point in determining the size of the entry fine.

Entry fines were higher where the land was not inherited or the new tenant had not been born on the lord's land. In *c.*1311/12, according to the rental, there were 28 holdings; the list of 15 entry fines thus represents a fair proportion. After the Black Death, a change occurred in the description of the tenants. In the rental of *c.*1311/12, the tenants are simply described as 'customarii'. The court rolls are neutral, simply recording the tenants' names. In 1347, however, the newly admitted tenants hold 'ad voluntatem domini', and in 1349 'in bondagio'—perhaps an initial rearguard action as the effects of the Black Death became evident. In 1354, the description of the terms of admission are even more precise: 'native et faciendo sicut alii nativi faciunt'. No such attempt had been made in earlier court rolls to emphasise the servile condition of newly admitted tenants. By 1450-52, the tenants in the rentals are described as 'Tenentes ad voluntatem'.¹⁹²

Minchinton ed., *Essays in agrarian history*, I, (London, 1968), 39-51, and Titow, *English rural society 1200-1350* (London, 1969), 74-7; for a different view, B. F. Harvey, 'The population trend in England between 1300 and 1348', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th series, XVI (1966), 23-42

¹⁹⁰MM 6570

¹⁹¹MM 6568.

¹⁹²MM 6568 (1311/2), MM 6571 (1347, 1349 and 1354), MM 6560-MM6561 (1450 and 1452).

Table 8: Entry fines

Size of holding	Entry fine	Comment
$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$	10s	None
$\frac{1}{2}v$	10s	None
$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$	6s 8d	None
cottage + 2a	2s 5d	None
6a	53s 4d	Not born on lord's land
$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$	20s	Not inherited
$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$	20s	Not inherited
cottage	2s	Not born on lord's land
$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$	20s	Not born on lord's land
$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$	6s 8d	Inherited
$\frac{1}{2}v + 2a$	6s 8d	Inherited
2a	6s 8d	Inherited
cottage + croft	4s	Inherited
$\frac{1}{2}v + \frac{1}{4}v$	24s	Inherited
$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$	13s 4d	Not born there

It is always difficult to estimate population levels and movements in the Middle Ages. An attempt will be made to use the framework, laid down by others, for Barkby.¹⁹³ In 1086, there were three serfs, seven villeins, three bordars, ten sokemen and four Frenchmen. The prevailing wisdom is that serfs were probably single people tied to the demesne, not heads of households. The rest can be taken to be heads of households. This leaves then 24 heads of households plus three single persons. Another conventional wisdom is that the mean household in the Middle Ages was about five. The aberrant voice is that of J.C. Russell, who argued for 3.5, but research by H.E. Hallam on some more detailed lists for manors of Spalding Priory have shown a mean of 4.68 or so—near enough to five. So in Barkby there existed $24 \times 5 + 3 = 123$ persons. An incumbent of the church should be added, although he was not enumerated in Domesday Book, giving a total of 124 persons in 1086. The next available enumeration of people is the poll tax of 1377.¹⁹⁴ The Poll Tax was a tax of 4d. (a groat) on all persons over 14. 131 adults (over 14) were taxed. To convert these people over 14 to a total population figure, Russell suggested adding a third for those under 14, and add a further 5% for tax evasion. Postan and Titow recommended adding 40-50% for under-fourteens and a further 25% for under-enumeration.

¹⁹³The following taken into account J. C. Russell, *British medieval population* (Albuquerque, NM, 1948), 6-14, 34-54; Titow, *English Rural Society*, 66-73; M. M. Postan, 'Medieval agrarian society in its prime', *The Cambridge economic history of Europe, vol.1: agrarian life in the middle ages* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1960), 560-70; J. T. Krause, 'The medieval household: large or small', *Economic History Review* 2nd series, IX (1957), 430-32; H. E. Hallam, 'Some thirteenth century censuses', *Economic History Review* 2nd series, X (1958), 340-361; M. M. Postan, *The medieval economy and society: an economic history of Britain in the middle ages* (Cambridge, 1975), 30-44.

¹⁹⁴Farnham, *Leicestershire medieval village notes*, I, 118-119

It can be seen how speculative all of this is. The lists for 1086 and 1377 have different constituents—one is heads of households with special exceptions (the *servi*) in 1086; the other (1377) is people over 14. On balance, it seems plausible to use a multiplier of 40% to compensate for under-fourteens and 5% for under-enumeration to adjust the 1377 list. It is necessary first to examine the 131 people taxed in 1377. The list comprised 51 married couples (husband and wife were listed as such as they were taxed as one), six single adult males, three single males listed as sons over 14, seven single adult females, 11 servants of both sexes, two male labourers, and no single females listed as daughters over 14. How many of these should be multiplied by 40% to find the total population including under-fourteens? Some must be discounted as they would not have children under 14. We shall exclude the six single males (adults), 11 servants, the two male labourers, and possibly all the seven single females. The servants were probably single with no children; so also the two male labourers; the seven single females were probably widows or spinsters. Some of these seven single females may have had children under 14, possibly widows, for example, but by and large it is probably better to exclude them all. There remain 51 married couples and three single males qualified as sons over 14—a total of 105 people. If we add to these 40% for under 14s, we arrive at 145 people in households, and to these should now be added the six single males, seven single females (adults), 11 servants and two labourers to give a total population of 171 people. Compensation of 5% for evasion or under-assessment provides an additional nine people. The grand total is thus 180.

To recapitulate, there were in 1086, 124 people in Barkby, in 1377, 180. Outbreaks of plague occurred in 1348/9, again in 1361/2 and in the 1370s, the most virulent in 1348/9. The population before the plague—i.e. in 1348—was probably higher than in 1377. Russell professes that it was probably 40% higher; Postan and Titow argue that it was very much higher—at least 50% higher in 1348 than in 1377. We would therefore have a population in 1348 in Barkby of about 250 to 270. These figures are hypothetical to a large degree.

Glimpses of the effects of the Plague occur in the court rolls for the period 1348-52 and in a rental of 20 January 1354/5 for the Merton College estates. In the court rolls it is recorded that at least three couples (husbands and wives) died simultaneously in 1348/9; and at least 11 heads of households died in the same two years. In the court rolls, there were at least 15 changes of tenants of holdings. Some holdings changed hands more than once. At this time, there were 28 tenements held of Merton. The rental of 1354/5 was probably compiled as a result of the mortality and changes of tenants. There are in fact two copies of this rental. The rental gives the names of the present tenant and the former tenant. It is a safe assumption that the former tenant was the tenant before the Plague. The rental shows that 14 out of 28 holdings had changed hands. In the period of the Plague, about half of Merton's tenants died.

One of the consequences of the Plague was the movement of holdings out of the family for lack of heir. A good example is the de Roland family holding. Robert de Roland held a messuage and 10 acres; when he died in 1294, his son William was admitted to the holding. William died in 1349, and his daughter,

Alice, was admitted as tenant. Alice died in 1354, only five years later, and Robert Power was admitted to the holding.

For the distribution and size of holdings, reliance is placed on the rentals and court rolls of Merton College and the rental of Langley Priory's lands *temp.* Henry VIII.¹⁹⁵ The material is therefore rather sketchy. Merton rentals are extant for c.1300, c.1311/12, 1354/5, 1450, 1452, 1475 and 1484.¹⁹⁶ Unfortunately, the rental for c. 1300 is extremely fragmentary, to the point of being uninformative. A memorandum at the foot of the 1452 rental causes some circumspection; 'Examinatur istud Rentale cum aliis Rentalibus quia creditur quod notabiliter deficit'. What was the meaning of this comment? Perhaps it merely signified the difficulty of all rentals that they only record a static situation. There is indeed little evidence of revision of the Merton rentals by cancellation and interlineation. There are two informative rentals of c. 1311/12. One describes the holdings of the customary tenants in terms of bovates and acres. The other describes these holdings in terms of half-virgates (equivalent to the bovate) and acres, and then converts the total into acreage. Thus, the first holding listed, that of Henry Milisaunt, is first described as a messuage, toft, half virgate, quarter virgate and six acres, and then as in toto 30a. 1½r. arable and 5r. meadow. In 1311-12, 28 Merton holdings were described. The largest holdings were 32a. arable with la. 1½r. of meadow (1), 30a. 1½r. arable and 5r. meadow (1), 21a. arable and 3r. meadow (1), and 20a. arable 3r. meadow(1). Six holdings comprised 15a. to 18½a. Below this level, there were holdings of 14a. arable 3r. meadow (1), 10a. lr. arable 1½r meadow (2), 9a. 1½r. arable 2r. meadow (1), 8a. arable 2½r. meadow (1), 6a. arable lr. meadow (1), a cottage and 2a. arable (3), a cottage (2), a toft and croft (1). There was a wide stratification of peasant holdings on the Merton College estate in 1311/12. There was a strong implication in the two rentals that the mean size of holdings was about a half-virgate (or bovate) plus a few acres. A second implication of the two rentals is that the half virgate or bovate had been originally the standard holding.¹⁹⁷ Sixteen of the 28 holdings are initially described in the rentals as a messuage and half virgate plus a few additional acres. Two of these 16 were described as a messuage, half-virgate and quarter of a virgate plus a few additional acres. Two other holdings were described as a messuage, a quarter of a virgate and a few additional acres. One or two other holdings are suspiciously close to half-virgates (bovates) or quarter-virgates: the messuage and 14a. of Ralph Halleman, the *placea* and 8a. of Matilda le Brytte. The distinct impression is that at some earlier date, the standard holding of Merton's customary tenants had been a half-virgate or bovate, but by c.1311/12, these holdings had been augmented by a few additional acres. Of the sixteen holdings described with a nucleus of a half-virgate, three had an additional 6a., eight had an additional 4a., two had an additional 2a., whilst three had no addition. The two holdings

¹⁹⁵Farnham, *Leicestershire medieval village notes*, I, 123

¹⁹⁶MM 6556 (c. 1300), 6568 (c.1311-12), 6557-6558 (1354/5), 6560 (1450), 6561 (1452), 6562 (1475), 1373 (1484).

¹⁹⁷For some interesting comments on the standard holding, B. F. Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1977), 208-9.

Table 9: Changes in land tenure

Size of holding	1311-55	1450-2
Tenants holding >20a	N = 4; %land = 27.7	N = 7; %land = 59.7
Tenants holding 14-20a	N = 13; %land = 61.8	N = 7; %land = 32.2
Tenants holding less than 14a	N = 11; %land = 10.5	N = 7; %land = 8.1

with a nucleus of a quarter-virgate had both been augmented by 2a. The total of these additional acres was 58a. Do these additional acres represent assarting, the addition of a few acres (2, 4 or 6) to the standard holding by colonisation of the waste?

The rental of 1354/5 presents a similar picture. The size and distribution of holdings has more or less the same as in *c.* 1311/12, although 14 holdings had recently (since the Black Death) changed hands. The Black Death had not caused any immediate redistribution of land as opposed to more changes of tenancy. A century later, change was quite evident, depicted in the rentals of 1450 and 1452. Whereas there had been 28 Merton tenants in *c.* 1311/12 and 1354/5, there were only 19 in 1450 and 1452. Furthermore, there had been some significant concentration of holdings. Robert Johnson had accumulated a messuage and virgate, a messuage and half virgate and a messuage and two acres. William Stewyn held two messuages and a virgate, John Canter three messuages and a virgate, and William Deye three messuages and a virgate. The distribution of Merton land in 1450/1452 was as follows:

- 5 tenants each held a virgate (30a. approximately)
- 2 tenants held $\frac{3}{4}$ virgate (22 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. approximately)
- 7 tenants each held $\frac{1}{2}$ virgate (15a. approximately)
- 1 tenant held 8a., 2 tenants each held $\frac{1}{4}$ virgate (7 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. approximately)
- 1 tenant held 2a.
- 1 tenant held 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ a.
- 2 tenants held only a messuage each.

There was a tendency towards the concentration of land. This same concentration of land is equally evident amongst the tenants at will of Langley Priory *temp.* Henry VIII. Thomas Mason had accumulated three holdings formerly held separately by Richard Querndon, Richard Shirlok and Robert Legynton: a messuage and yardland, toft and croft and half oxgang, toft and croft and oxgang. Robert Berege held a messuage, two tofts, two crofts and 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oxgangs (or bovates), and also a messuage and oxgang formerly held by William Grene. John Wynneby accumulated a messuage and yardland formerly held by Robert Vyker and two crofts, two tofts, and an oxgang formerly held by Robert Shirlok. The only other customary tenant of Langley was John Warren, who held a messuage and oxgang. The size of holdings may have been adjusted slightly by the peasant land market.¹⁹⁸ It is remarkable, however, that the court rolls show

¹⁹⁸See in general, C. N. L. Brooke & M. M. Postan eds, *Carte nativorum* (Northants. Record Society, XX, 1960), passim; P. R. Hyams, 'The origins of a peasant land market in England',

little evidence of inter-peasant transactions in land—even by strict surrender and admission—before 1340. A single entry in 1287 revealed illicit transactions by which Hugh Faber took 3½r. from William Kole and 3r. from Henry Bonde without the lord’s licence.¹⁹⁹ In the 1340s, however, short-term leases suddenly appear on the court rolls. The terms of the leases were normally described as for so many crops:

Dominus Reginaldus capellanus venit in curia et de licencia domini cepit de Roberto Samsun vii rodas terre per loca diversa in campis de Barkeby ad terminum quatuor cropporum et dat domino pro licencia habenda xii d. (1345);

Robertus Power cepit unam dimidiam acram in Neudikis de Roberto Sansun donec receperit duos croppos. Et unam Rodam iuxta Neudikegate donec receperit tres croppos per licenciam domini (1341);

Reginaldus capellanus venit in curia et de licencia domini cepit medietatem unius acre terre abuttantem usque Saltergate iuxta Thomam ... de terra Roberti Samsun et pro licencia habenda dat domino iii d. (1341);

Roger le Smyth also took 1 lr. from Robert Samsun ‘ad terminum quatuor cropporum’;

Robertus Bate venit in curia de licencia domini cepit unam Rodam tertiam partem unius Rode de Willelmo Rose in campis de Barkeby ad terminum trium cropporum. Et dat domino pro licencia habenda iii d. (1345)²⁰⁰

As soon as these transactions came into view, the usual features of the peasant land market are evident: small parcels of land (a few roods) and natural adjustment (several leases by one tenant, Robert Sansun). The occasional illicit transaction trying to by-pass the manorial court also occurred:

Item presentant quod Johannes Hichebon dimisit Johanni Arland iii rodas terre apud Quenibourgh hulle sine licencia. Et postea de licencia curie concordatum est quod dictus Johannes Arland habebit et tenebit dictas iii rodas ad terminum vite dicti Johannis Hichebon et dat domino pro ingresso xii d.²⁰¹

Evidence of the land market therefore appeared on the court rolls from 1341. It is probable that the land market continued to operate, perhaps more vigorously, after the Black Death, but the court rolls after the Black Death have yet to be searched.

A different way to assess the distribution of wealth is analysis of the lay subsidy assessments, although there are numerous caveats. The lay subsidies before 1334 were assessed on individuals, but thereafter villages negotiated for a quota.²⁰² The lay subsidies were taxes on ‘personal’ or ‘movable’ wealth,

Economic History Review 2nd series XXIII, (1970), 18-31

¹⁹⁹MM 6565.

²⁰⁰MM 6570.

²⁰¹MM 6570 (1341)

²⁰²R. E. Glasscock, (ed.), *The lay subsidy of 1334* (Cambridge, 1975)

subject to varying levels of under-assessment and evasion which have been estimated. The 'taxable minimum' or threshold in 1327 and 1332—for which we have particular accounts—was 10s.—i.e. those assessed as owning movable goods worth less than 10s. were exempt from the tax. Both taxes—as far as rural settlements were concerned—were fifteenths. The minimum tax payable was 6d. in 1327 and 8d. in 1332.²⁰³ In both 1327 and 1332, 20 heads of households in Barkby paid tax—less than half the total of households perhaps. We can assume, therefore, that perhaps more than half the households in Barkby had movable wealth worth less than 10s. Analysis of the list of those who paid tax shows that 16 of the 20 in 1327 paid between 2s. and 4s. tax (representing movable wealth of perhaps £1 10s. to £3), two paid 1s. 6d. and two paid 1s. 8d. (representing movable wealth of perhaps 22s. 6d. or more). There was a wide stratification of wealth: half the households having upwards of £1 movable wealth, up to £3, yet the other half having less than 10s. movable wealth. If anything, the distribution by 1332 had become more uneven since two households were then assessed to 6s. tax and two to 5s. tax. Another angle on the discrepancy is cast by identifying the Merton tenants in the tax lists. In the lists for 1327 and 1332, we can safely identify only six to eight Merton tenants out of 20 taxpayers. From the rental of c. 1311/12, however, it is known that Merton had about 28 tenants in Barkby. The conclusion is inescapable that about two thirds of the Merton tenants had movable wealth valued at less than 10s. in 1327-32. To place this amount in perspective, an ox in 1325 would be valued at 15s. and a cow at 10s.; sheep fetched 1s.; the sale price of wheat was 5s 1¾d., barley 3s. 9d., oats 2s. 4½d.²⁰⁴

The 1524 lay subsidy was assessed on personalty, including wages, above a taxable minimum of 20s.²⁰⁵ the assessment recorded the valuation as well as the assessed tax, and listed 26 taxpayers. In 1564, there were 44 families in Barkby—probably a higher number, therefore, of taxable adults.²⁰⁶ Despite the discrepancy of 40 years, it can probably be assumed, then, that at least a third of the taxable adult population fell below the 20s. threshold—i.e. a third of the population had movable wealth or wages worth less than £1. At the other end of the spectrum, 12 taxed persons were assessed for movables worth between £8 and £26 13s. 4d. Seven male adults were assessed on wages worth 20s.; seven other male adults were assessed on goods worth between £2 and £5. The taxation list can thus be analysed as in Table 10.

This table does not take into account those under the taxable minimum of £1. If these people were taken into consideration, then it would be a fair assumption that about a third of the population held about three quarters of

²⁰³C. Johnson, 'The collectors of lay taxes', in W. A. Morris & T. R. Strayer eds, *The English government at work (1327-36)*, vol.II (Cambridge, MA, 1947), 208. The lists for 1327 and 1332 are printed by Farnham, *Leicestershire medieval village notes*, I, 115-116.

²⁰⁴D. L. Farmer, 'Some grain price movements in thirteenth-century England', *Economic History Review* 2nd series X (1957), 212; M. M. Postan, 'Village livestock in the thirteenth century', *Economic History Review* 2nd series XV (1962), 223.

²⁰⁵The text is printed by Farnham, *Leicestershire medieval village notes*, I, 124-5

²⁰⁶Postles, 'Barkby: the anatomy of a closed township', 91

Table 10: Assessed wealth

Range	Sub-total	No.	% all taxpayers	% all assessed wealth
<i>L8-L26</i> 13s 4d	<i>L147</i> 6s 8d	12	46.2	81.7
<i>L2-L5</i>	<i>L26</i>	7	26.9	14.4
<i>L1</i>	<i>L7</i>	7	26.9	3.9

movable wealth in Barkby.

Appendix on sources The original material for the economic and social development of medieval Barkby is rather uneven. By far the richest material relates to the Merton College estates and manor. The Merton material comprises over 70 reeve's accounts, nine rentals and over 60 court rolls. The reeve's accounts commence in 1285/6, the court rolls from 1278/9.

MM 6483-6548: accounts, 1285/6-1486;

MM 6550-6553: accounts, 1513/14, 1517/18, 1519/20, 1522/45.

MM 6563-6627: court rolls (broken series), 1278/9-1505;

MM 6439c, 6440: court rolls, 1509 and 1511;

MM 1373, 6556-6558, 6560-6562, 6568: rentals, c. 1300 (very fragmentary), c.1311/12, 1354/5, 1450, 1452, 1475, 1484.

I have yet to search the court rolls and accounts after 1354. The material from the Leicester Abbey estate was drawn on extensively by R. H. Hilton, *The economic development of some Leicestershire estates in the XIV and XV centuries* (Oxford, 1947). The Barkby property and its accumulation are described in the *Novum Rentale* (Bodleian Laud Misc. 625, fo. 202v; Hilton, 44) and in the *Liber de Terris Dominicalibus* (British Library Cotton MS. Galba E III, fos. 83ff.). Little relating to Barkby can be gleaned from the two treasurers' accounts noted by Hilton (TNA SC 1257/11-12—copies in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland). I explored the records in G.E. Farnham, *Leicestershire medieval village notes*, I, (Leicester). The most useful material in his Barkby sections are the Lay Subsidies of 1327, 1332 and 1524; the Poll Tax of 1377 and the rental *temp.* Henry VIII of the Langley Priory estate (pp. 115-16, 118-19, 123-25). Little is otherwise known of the Langley Priory estate, nor, for that matter, of the principal lay estate, that of the Willoughby (later Pochin) family. My wife explored some of the earlier development and sources in her M.A. thesis, although her main consideration was the later development of Barkby (Suella Postles, 'Barkby: the Anatomy of a closed township, 1535-1780', M.A. thesis, Leicester University, 1978).

Table 11: Admissions on deaths of Merton tenants, 1348-54

Date	Decd tenant	New tenant	Holding	In/out
1347	Hugh Franceys	Ralph, H's s(on)	1bovate	Inside
1348	Henry Milysant	Agnes, H's widow	1b	Inside
1348	John son of Henry*	Juliana, John's widow	1b	Inside
1348	John Henreysone *	William, John's s	1b	Inside
1348	William de Dalby	Margery, W's widow	1b	Inside
1348	Richard de Hamelton	Thomas Bernard	1b	Outside
1349	William Hoyland	Alice, W's dau.	10a	Inside
1349	Henry de Rotby	John Kay	1b	Outside
1349	William Dawy	Richard de Hamelton	mess, land	Outside
1349	Hugh Franceys	John Succhit	1b	Outside
1349	John Hichebond	Henry son of J.H.	1b	Inside
1349	Henry de Rodeby	Walter, s of Hugh Alexander	1b	Outside
1349	William Hoyland	Christine, W's dau.	$\frac{1}{2}$ b	Inside
1349	John Stuart	Henry Gerold	1b	Outside
1349	William Playtur	Agnes, W's widow.	1b	Inside
1349	John Dande	Agnes, J's widow	cott, 2a	Inside
1354	Alice de Holand	Robert Pouwer	10a	Outside
1354	Robert Bate	William s of John Chapman	1b	Outside

* + his wife (? Juliana); Juliana must have died soon after John; m = messuage;

cott = cottage;

In/Out = inside or outside the family.

Table 12: Merton College tenants, 1354/5 (MM6557)

Current tenant	Previous tenant	Size
William Faber	William son of Robert	$\frac{1}{2}v$
William Aleyn		$\frac{3}{4} + 6a$
Henry son of Richard Arnold		$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$
Henry Gorold	Ralph Hellaman	14a
Thomas Bernard	William Balby	$\frac{1}{2} + 4a$
John Arnold		$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$
Robert Sampson		$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$
William Hamelton		$\frac{1}{2}v + 8\frac{1}{4}a$
Roger Playtour		$\frac{1}{2}v + 6a$
Henry son of John		$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$
William Arnold	William de Onelep	$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$
John Kaynis		$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$
Agnes widow of John Turtur		cottage + 2a
Robert le Smyth	Alice Wysman	$\frac{1}{2}v + 2a$
William Hamelton	Ralph Berkar	<i>placea</i> + 6a
Miles Savage	Christina Savage	cottage
Robert Smith	William Ythelton	$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$
Nicholas Togod		cottage + 2a
Robert Power	William Holand	$\frac{1}{2}v$
William Anysse	Thomas Franceys	cottage
Robert Power	William Syston	$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$
William Herreysone	Hugh Franceys	$\frac{1}{2}v + 2a$
Alice, widow of John Bond		$\frac{1}{2}v + 2a$
John Ricardessone		<i>placea</i> + 2a
Beatrice widow of Henry Styward		$\frac{1}{4}v + 2a$
William Chapman	Roger Bate	$\frac{1}{2}v + 4a$
Thomas Alysandre	Robert Heryng	cottage + croft
William Bright		cottage + 8a

*(e.g. *quondam Willelmi filii Roberti*)

Table 13: The reeves of Merton College

Reeve	Dates	Comment
Richard (de Hamelton)	c.1279-1294	Probably died in office in 1294/5*
?Sampson	?1286-7	
William le Playtur	1285-6 and 1295*- 1302**	
William de Daleby	1305**-1318	
Henry Milisaunt I	1318-1328	Succeeded by his son
Henry Milisaunt II	1328-1348	Died in office.***
William de Hamelton	1348-	

Table 14: Major constituents of Merton reeve's accounts (£-s-d)

Date	Rent arrears	Rents	Court/fines	Total charge	To bursar
1285/6	1-16-7 $\frac{1}{4}$	11-7-4	2-2-8	14-6-7 $\frac{1}{4}$	7-6-0
1295/6	2-9-0 $\frac{1}{4}$	11-7-4	1-10-10	16-2-2 $\frac{1}{4}$	10-3-7
1305/6	1-13-2 $\frac{3}{4}$	11-10-6 $\frac{3}{4}$	2-3-4	16-3-1 $\frac{1}{2}$	6-10-0
1314/15	4-15-4	12-11-10 $\frac{3}{4}$	0-12-0	18-17-6	6-0-0
1326/7	3-0-3 $\frac{3}{4}$	12-12-4 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	15-12-8	5-10-8
1335/6	1-16-10	12-17-10 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	15-3-3 $\frac{1}{4}$	5-10-0
1346/7	3-12-8 $\frac{1}{2}$	12-11-10 $\frac{1}{4}$	2-4-1	18-9-1 $\frac{3}{4}$	12-7-11 $\frac{1}{2}$

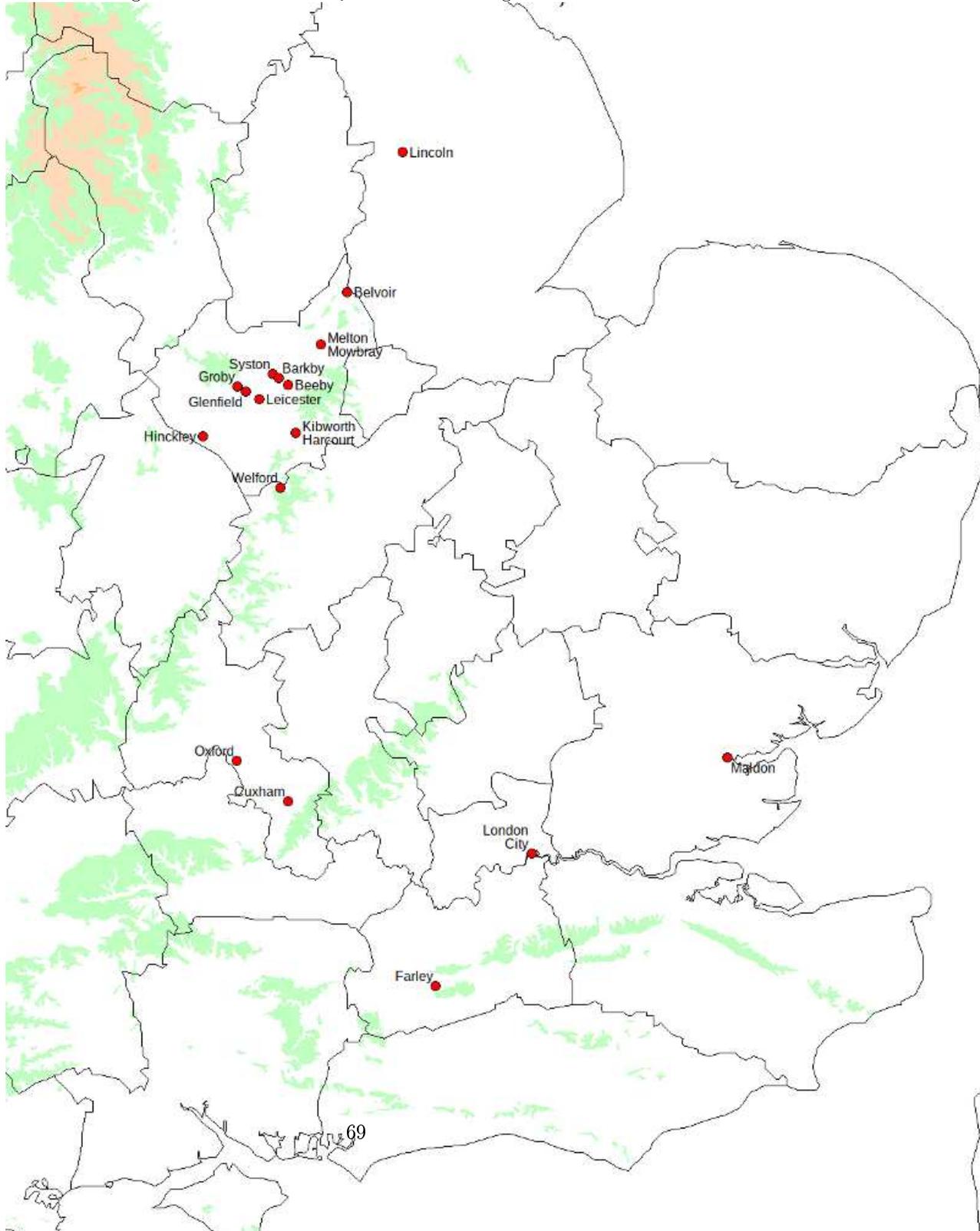
Notes to table: * First account by William le Playtur 1295-6 in which is recorded an entry fine paid by William son of Richard de Hamelton and the arrears of Richard de Hamelton (£6 18s. 6d.) (MM 6490). Last extant account rendered by Richard is 1293/4 (MM 6489). ** There are no extant accounts between 30 Edw. I (MM 6497) and 33 Edw. I (MM 6498). *** Described as Henry Milisaunt junior at the head of the roll for 2-3 Edw. III, which includes the statement in the balance at the foot 'Et oneratur de arreragiis patris sui de ultimo compoto suo Ls. xd. qua.' (MM 6511).

Table 15: Maxima and minima in Merton accounts (£-s-d)

Element	Max	Date	Min	Date
Arrears	6-18-10 $\frac{1}{2}$	1293/4	0	1288/9
Rents	12-17-10 $\frac{1}{4}$	1332-44	11-6-8	1293/4
Court/fines	3-9-9	1347/8	0	several yrs
Total charge	21-2-8	1347/8	12-2-4	1288/9
To bursar	14-15-0	1347/8	4-18-0	1343/4*

* No payment *super compotum* is recorded.

Figure 5: Places visited by tenants on College business



5 A note on the seignorial economy in N. W. Leicestershire in 1277-8

Little has been written of the rural economy of Leicestershire in the thirteenth century, and even less of the contribution of the lay estate.²⁰⁷ This was, however, the seminal period for the direct exploitation of seignorial demesnes.²⁰⁸ Some evidence of the conditions on estates here can be deduced from two ministers' accounts now deposited in local archive offices.

A pipe roll of the dispersed estates of the earl of Lincoln includes an enrolled account for the manor of (Castle) Donington, for the accounting year Michaelmas 1277 to Michaelmas 1278.²⁰⁹ This account was not, in fact, audited until 15 October 1278, presumably because the auditors travelled from manor to manor to audit the ministers' accounts, rather than bringing the ministers to a central audit.²¹⁰ The accounting officials were the constable of the Castle, Hugh de Brin', John the reeve, and, unusually, the clerk who wrote the account, Richard Leuine. The constable was probably implicated in the return for the borough and castle. Despite its burghal character, however, Donington also comprised extensive demesne arable. In 1278, 284 acres were sown for harvesting in Autumn 1279. It is also worth noting that the private chase made a substantial contribution to the seignorial economy, for the sale of 1600 oaks from *Astwode* brought £61 9s. 10d.

For the same financial year, there is extant an account roll for the manor of Beaumanor.²¹¹ This is the original roll presented by the bailiff, Thomas Hemeri, to the auditors. It is consequently littered with amendments and cancellations in the auditors' hands. Moreover, all the *summe* of each paragraph were left vacant by the bailiff, and are filled in by the auditors. This is a contrast with the Donington roll, which is a fair engrossment of the account after the auditors' increase of the charge, decrease of the discharge, and disallowances. The Beaumanor roll also includes the auditors' *vendiciones super comptum*, which were fictitious sales charged against the accounting official for deficiencies in his account. The auditors also made marginal notes on the seed-yield ratios in the grange account. More will be said of this below, but it confirms the progressive practice at Beaumanor. This *responsio* or target accountancy was adopted on some larger estates only at a later date. One further indicator of administrative advance at Beaumanor is the inclusion of a *proficuum* calculation. The function of the medieval charge-discharge account was to assess the obligations of the accounting official to prevent fraud. From the middle of the thirteenth century, some lords began to calculate from the accounts how well their property was paying or how efficient their husbandry was. This usually necessitated a calcu-

²⁰⁷R. H. Hilton, *The economic development of some Leicestershire estates in the XIVth and XVth centuries* (Oxford, 1947); Hilton, 'Medieval agrarian history' *Victoria County History of Leicestershire* II (London, 1954), 145-198.

²⁰⁸N. Denholm-Young, *Seignorial administration in England* (Oxford, 1937), passim

²⁰⁹Nottinghamshire Archives, Foljambe MSS. VI.I. (i).iii.3

²¹⁰Denholm-Young, *Seignorial administration*

²¹¹Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland DG9/1954

lation at the end of the charge-discharge account. The Beaumanor roll merely contains the statement: *Proficuum manerii hoe anno xliiii. li. vii.s. iii.d.*, without any explanation of how the auditors arrived at this figure of how well the property was paying. What can certainly be deduced from these extraneous memoranda is that administrative practice at Beaumanor in 1278 was amongst the most progressive in England.²¹²

Demesne husbandry at Beaumanor was performed within a very traditional framework. The demesne—140 acres were sown for harvesting in 1279—had been consolidated into severalty, lying in furlongs distinct from the selions of the tenantry. The different furlongs were named and each sown with a single grain. Wheat was sown in the furlong called two faltr' (8a.) and in the furlong lying towards Quorndon (43a.), and also in le lyng (24a.). Legumes were sown in the close in the park (*infra clausum parci*) over 52a. 3r., and *super campum quondam Johannis Herny* (4½a.). In 1277, an entirely new sheep flock was purchased and introduced to Beaumanor. No sheep were remaining from the previous accounting year, but 540 wethers were now bought for £60 12s. 6½d. at 2s. 3d. each *minus in toto* 2s. 5½d.²¹³ A new bercary was also constructed of timber and stone. The result of the investment was 540 fleeces with a total weight of two sacks and 23 stone. The average fleece weight would therefore have been about 2 lb.; this is a figure comparable with other fleece weights from Leicestershire, although Leicestershire fleece weights were generally heavier than those of the rest of England.²¹⁴

The earl of Lincoln was also making improvements to his demesne, usually by marling. The cost of marling included a new cart (*una karecta ad marlam*), the employment of six marlers at a total wage bill of 16s. (*in stipendiis sex marliatorium per vices*), and 17 qtrs. of oats for the four affers carting the marl. A new mill was also built at a cost of £4 2s. 10d.

The resultant arable régime at Beaumanor was the equal division of the demesne between winter and spring grain, over 75 and 66 acres respectively. Wheat was the solitary winter or hard corn, produced preeminently as a cash crop. Oats were sown over 52 acres of the land sown under spring grain for harvest in 1279. Oats, of course, were produced mainly for the consumption of the livestock. Of the other land allotted to spring grain for harvest in 1279, only 14 acres were laid down to beans and peas, and none to barley in this year. The issues of the grange from the previous harvest (tabulated below) confirm this picture.

A similar arrangement obtained at Donington. Winter grain was sown over

²¹²For such practices, see J. S. Drew, 'Manorial accounts of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester', *English Historical Review* LXII (1947), 20-41; Eric Stone, '"Profit-and-loss accountancy" at Norwich Cathedral Priory', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th Series XII (1962), 25-48.

²¹³The price makes it certain that the short hundred (100), and not the long hundred (120), was being used: see I. Kershaw, *Bolton Priory: the economy of a northern monastery, 1286-1325* (Oxford, 1973), xiii, and R. V. Lennard, 'Statistics of sheep in medieval England', *Agricultural History Review* VII (1959), 75-81.

²¹⁴See the statistics of fleece weights collected by R. Trow-Smith, *A history of British livestock husbandry to 1700* (London, 1957), 167-8.

129 acres for the 1279 harvest, and spring grain over 155 acres. Oats were here again the principal spring grain, barley and legumes being fairly insignificant. Of the winter grain, wheat was sown over 73 acres, but rye was also sown over 56 acres. Whilst wheat was produced mainly for 'domestic' consumption, rye here featured as the grain produced for sale. The contribution to the economy of sales of grain should not, however, be exaggerated. If the income from grain sales is calculated as a percentage of the total charge, then grain sales brought in 9% at Donington and 16% at Beaumanor. This is an admittedly crude indicator, since not all the items in the charge of the accounts were real income—for example, £38 in the Donington charge was arrears of rent not necessarily collected in.

The livestock, apart from the sheepflock at Beaumanor, merely complemented the arable husbandry. The main purpose was to replenish the plough-team, although even this was inefficiently maintained. Given medieval reproduction ratios, the expectation that at best each cow would have only one calf each year if sterility and abortion and murrain did not intervene, there were insufficient cows on both manors to maintain a full team of oxen. The number of demesne ploughs is revealed by the enumeration of ploughmen in the *famuli* paragraph. It is evident that there were four ploughs at Donington drawn by a mixed team of oxen and affers, and two demesne ploughs at Beaumanor each drawn by eight oxen. Demesne farming on these two manors continued on traditional lines, although some perceptible improvements were being made. As technological change was achieved on a piecemeal basis in the middle ages, this is not an unprogressive picture.

Table 16: Grain production and consumption

Grain	Issue	Sown	Sold	Household	To <i>Famuli</i>	To stock
BEAUMANOR						
Wheat	126a	19	89		11	
Legumes	25b	14	13		11	
Barley	12½		12½			
Oats	70c	32½	18			15
CASTLE DONINGTON						
Wheat	78½d	18	9½	38½	7	
Rye	104e	14	43½		48½	
Barley	25	10½	14			
Legumes	14	10			4	
Dredge	21		7½		5	7½
Oats	172f	77½	7		5	167½

Table 17: Grain sown

Grain	Quantity sown	Acreage sown	Rate of sowing (bushels per acre)
BEAUMANOR			
Wheat	19 qtrs	75	2a
Legumes	5 qtrs 1 bs	14	3b
Oats	27 qtrs	53	4c
CASTLE DONINGTON			
Wheat	18 qtrs 2 bs	73	2
Rye	14 qtrs	56	2
Barley	10 qtrs 3 bs	20½	4
Legumes	10 qtrs	20	4
Oats	77 qtrs 5 bs	114	5½

Notes to Table 16: all amounts to the nearest half quarter; a = includes 4 qtrs by estimation in sheaves and 2 qtrs bought for seed; b = also 4 qtrs from another manor; c = includes 5 qtrs by estimation in sheaves; d = includes 6 qtrs from the mill and 11½ qtrs bought; e = also 22 qtrs from the mill; f = also 80 qtrs bought.

Notes to Table 17: a 2 bs additional broadcast; b 1 bs ditto; c 5 bs ditto.

Table 18: Auditors' estimates of grain yields: Beaumanor

Grain	<i>Responsio</i>	Yield (-fold)
Wheat	<i>Respondet de iij qr dimidio bus' plus se septimo</i>	7
Legumes	<i>Respondet de i qr ii bus' minus se quinto</i>	5
Barley	<i>Respondet de iii bus' plus se sexto</i>	6
Oats	<i>Respondet de ii bus' minus se tercio</i>	3

Table 19: Livestock numbers

	Rem	Added	Lost	Left
BEAUMANOR				
Horses	2	0	0	2
Oxen	18	5 b(ought)	2 s(old)	21
Wethers	0	540 b	16 d(ied)	524
C DONINGTON				
Affers	6	14 marshall; 3 in;1 b	5 s;4 d8 elsewhere	7
Oxen	31	6 b;10 from Kneesall	7 d;10 larder;6 s	24
Cows	1	0	1 s	0
2-yr-old cows	1	0	0	1
Yearling cows	1	1	0	2
Pigs	41	22 piglets;25 in	9 d;25 elsewhere;26 s	29
Piglets		14 issue	0	14