

An Early Eighteenth-Century Cartographic Record of an Oxfordshire Manor

By WILLIAM RAVENHILL

JOEL GASCOYNE, a pioneer of large-scale county mapping and a notable estate-surveyor,¹ compiled in 1701 *A Scheme of the Manor of GREAT HASELEY and LATCHFORD in the Parish of Haseley in the County of Oxford*.² In its present form this estate map covers three pieces of vellum stuck and stitched together so as to make up a continuous sheet which measures 131.5 cm. west to east and 78.5 cm. south to north. It gives the impression of having been well-used, for the vellum is stained in places, much of the lettering has been rubbed off, while the colours, by their lack of freshness, bear witness to the friction of handling over the centuries. Nevertheless, for a flat map which was housed on the manor from 1701 to the 1930s it is remarkably well-preserved and provides an interesting surviving example of Joel Gascoyne's work. The circumstances which brought him to Oxfordshire are of interest, and once again demonstrate the importance to the study of cartography of the interplay of personalities at a national and local level. Much of the surveying career of Joel Gascoyne is already known and so it is necessary to outline only the main events in his life in order that this episode can be given its appropriate place.³

Joel Gascoyne was born in Kingston-upon-Hull, in 1650, the son of Thomas Gaskin (Gascoyne) a sailor.⁴ In 1668, Joel Gascoyne was apprenticed to John Thornton, citizen and draper of London, from whom he acquired the skills of chart-making and surveying.⁵ In 1675, Joel Gascoyne set himself up in business on Thames-side as a chart-maker,⁶ but after 1689 he practised mainly as an estate and land surveyor. He became known to those eminent in the state and made surveys for distinguished land-holders such as James, 3rd Earl of Salisbury,⁷ for John Evelyn,⁸ and for Samuel Travers, Surveyor General of Land Revenue to their Majesties William and Mary.⁹ Samuel Travers had close family ties with the influential Robartes family of Cornwall who lived at Lanhydrock near Bodmin.¹⁰ From 1693 to 1699 Charles Bodville Robartes employed Joel Gascoyne to survey his

¹ William Ravenhill, 'Joel Gascoyne: a pioneer of large-scale county mapping', *Imago Mundi*, 26 (1972), 60-70.

² The original is in private hands but a photostat, on a reduced scale, is in the Bodleian Library, (E) C 17: 49 (58).

³ See above, note 1.

⁴ F. W. Brooks, (ed.), *The First Order Book of the Hull Trinity House 1632-1665*, Yorks. Arch. Soc. (Record Series), CV (1942), 130 and 136.

⁵ Drapers Company, Bindings Book 1655-1689, +290, not paginated.

⁶ Drapers Company, Stamped Freedoms Book 1665-1749, +280, not paginated. Quarterage Book 1676-1689, +263, not paginated.

⁷ Hatfield House, CP 354, Broxbourne Manors.

⁸ British Museum, K XVIII 18. o, 18. p.

⁹ Public Record Office, MR 329, and CREST 260/1642.

¹⁰ W. P. Courtney, *The Parliamentary History of Cornwall*, (London, 1889), 329.

scattered estates in Cornwall.¹¹ When the work was complete it filled four vellum volumes of estate maps which have become known as the *Lanhydrock Atlas*.¹²

As far as is known at present, Joel Gascoyne's land-survey work was confined to that of large land-owners in the London area, the Home Counties and in Cornwall. The survey of Great Haseley and Latchford is therefore somewhat exceptional in terms of location, and also in size, for this estate is a relatively small one. Land ownership and land conveyancing, loans and mortgage, untimely deaths, family ties and inheritance all played their part in bringing Joel Gascoyne to Oxfordshire. These complicated legal formalities began in or about the year 1682 when Great Haseley and Latchford were owned by one William Lenthall about whom a near contemporary remarked :¹³

But what through the Passion that his Lady had for Dress and Play, and his own Profuseness and still more ruinous vices and debaucheries ; he went through, not only his own Estates here and elsewhere, but even his hereditary Patrimony of the King's Bench.

William Lenthall was thus forced into the clutches of money-lenders and with Great Haseley and Latchford as security he borrowed £7,000 from Sir John Cutler, an eminent and rich member of the Grocers' Company of London. The foreclosure date passed without repayment and the debt increased over the years.¹⁴ On 15 April 1693 Sir John Cutler died, but a few days before his death, as he lay critically ill, he sent for his daughter and patched up a four-year-old quarrel. Elizabeth Cutler had alienated her father's affections by marrying, against his wishes, Charles Bodville Robartes. The reconciliation was complete and absolute and its extent can be measured by the fact that Sir John on his deathbed told his daughter and son-in-law that he 'freely forgave them and had settled his estate to their satisfaction'.¹⁵ The debt owed by William Lenthall on Great Haseley and Latchford passed into the hands of Charles Bodville Robartes and by 26 June 1700 William Lenthall admitted that the debt then owing had accumulated to '£20438 10s. 6d.¹'. Not only did this figure exceed the estimated value of Great Haseley and Latchford but also the yearly interest on this sum could not even be met by the annual income from the manor. This being so, Robartes submitted a Bill into the High Court of Chancery, praying that William Lenthall be compelled to pay what was due and in default thereof the manor of Great Haseley and Latchford should be sold.¹⁶

William Lenthall agreed to the sale but before anything further could be done, he died without issue and intestate ; the winding-up of his affairs was complicated and the legal wrangling dragged on for years, the eventual settlement requiring a Bill to the House of Lords long after what is relevant to the present context.¹⁷ The

¹¹ Charles Edward Lond, (ed.), *Diary of the Marches of the Royal Army during the Great Civil War kept by Richard Symonds*, (Camden Soc., 1889), 55. Davies Gilbert, *The Parochial History of Cornwall*, (London, 1838), 378-83.

¹² Now the property of the National Trust.

¹³ Thomas Delafield, *Notitia Haseleiana or Some Memorials of the Antiquities of the Parish of Haseley in the County of Oxford*, Bodleian Library, Gough MSS. Oxon. 19, 183.

¹⁴ Bodleian Library, G.A. Oxon. C 247 (6), 1.

¹⁵ Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714*, III, (Oxford, 1857), 76.

¹⁶ Bodleian Library, G.A. Oxon. C 247 (6), 2.

¹⁷ Bodleian Library, G.A. Oxon. C 247 (6), 3. This Bill received the Royal Assent, 1 April, 1708.

circumstances already outlined, however, provide the background and indicate the need for the mapping of Great Haseley and Latchford. There is no doubt that Robartes was a cartographically-minded land-owner who liked to have not only a pictorial representation of his estates but also an accompanying dossier of land-holders' names and the acreages they held; his land-holding was a highly sophisticated and documented business.¹⁸ It would seem that in order to estimate the value of Great Haseley and Latchford, either before submitting the Bill to the Court of Chancery or as a preliminary to the sale, he required detailed knowledge of the property and to this end employed Joel Gascoyne to carry out the work, since he was a surveyor whose employment by him was by then of long-standing and well-trying.

The land of the two manors occupied about a quarter of the ecclesiastical parish of Great Haseley,¹⁹ which lies some eight and a half miles east-south-east of Oxford in the central plain of the county. In all probability, Joel Gascoyne first viewed what was to be the area of his forthcoming activities when he reached the crest of the Chalk scarp as he travelled north-west along the old road from 'London to Aberistwith' via Oxford.²⁰ The view over to the west would have been one to bring some satisfaction to the surveyor, in so far as there were no great amplitudes of relief in sight to pose serious problems of intervisibility and of mapping in the third dimension (FIG. 1). In truth, the plain of low relief conforms closely with the geological pattern, for central Oxfordshire presents a broad vale of clays, much modelled by the action of the river Thames and its many tributaries.²¹ On this, the more easterly side of the plain, the Thame, a left-hand tributary of the Thames, has cut its way down on to the Kimmeridge Clay. The Haseley Brook, a tributary of the Thame, has not proceeded so far in its denudational role and still flows over rocks higher in the geological sequence than the Kimmeridge Clay. The farmland of Great Haseley therefore extends across the outlier of the creamy limestones and sands of the Upper Portland Beds of Jurassic age and its higher fields spread over the ferruginous Shotover Sands of the Wealden Lower Cretaceous which rest upon the irregular surfaces of the Portland Stone, heavily gullied and piped by solution. The fault tract to the south of the village brings again the Shotover Sands to the surface, but here they consist almost entirely of buttery clays with subordinate seams of sand. Between the settlement on Great Haseley and the farmstead of Latchford another significant geological boundary is crossed, and most of the fields of this farm are on Gault Clay.

These geological terms would have been unfamiliar to Joel Gascoyne but the agricultural significance of the varied deposits they label would have impinged upon him as he turned left off the London road and made his way, 'along Butt's Way lane'.²² Decades of trial and error in working the land, generations of hard-won experience with crops and stock had produced a land-use pattern which endorsed the geological lineaments, for the soils hereabouts are closely allied to their parent

¹⁸ No survey books have been found for the Lanhydrock estates but their former existence is indicated by a note on the map of Several Tenements near Penryn, 'You are referred to the survey book for the quantity of these small tenements'. The Maps of the Broxbourne Manors are interleaved in the Survey Book. See above, note 7.

¹⁹ National Grid Reference SP 6402.

²⁰ John Ogilby, *Britannia*, (London, 1675).

²¹ T. I. Price et al., *The Geology of the County around Oxford: Memoir of the Geological Survey of England*, Explanation of Special Oxford Sheet, (Southampton, 1926), 87, 94-6. W. J. Arkell, *The Geology of Oxford*, (Oxford, 1947).

²² Delafield, *Notitia Haseleiana*, Bodleian Library, Gough MSS. Oxon, 22, 67.

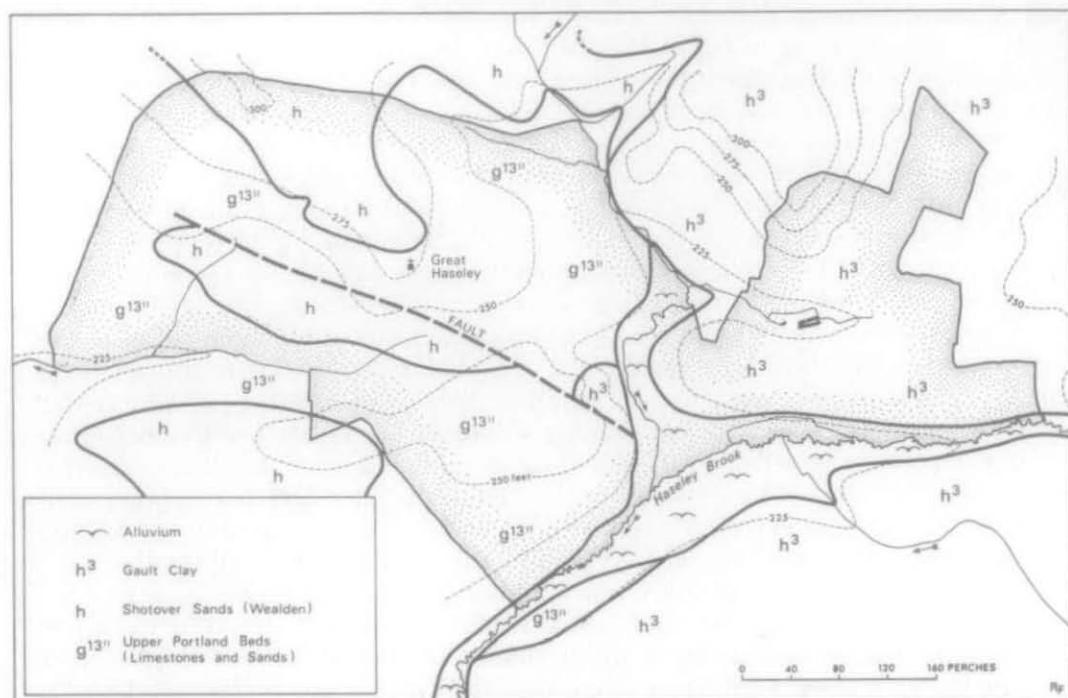


FIG. 1

The bounds of the manor of Great Haseley and Latchford illustrated against the background of its geology, relief and drainage. Based upon Ordnance Survey 1 : 10, 560 map of 1902, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, Crown Copyright reserved.

material (FIG. 2). From Butt's Way lane Joel Gascoyne would have looked out upon as typical a piece of traditional rural England as could be imagined, and one whose land-use can be traced back to at least medieval times. Domesday Book discloses that Queen Edith held the manor before the Conquest, and she, in common with other members of the Saxon Royal Household, usually acquired land of good quality. *Haselie* was no exception, it held its value through the vicissitudes of the change from Saxon to Norman monarch when 'there was land for 18 ploughs. Now in demesne there are 3 ploughs and 5 serfs and 15 villeins with 13 bordars have 15 ploughs'. In addition there were '60 acres of meadow' and 'wood(land) 2 furlongs in length and 2 furlongs in breadth'.²³ The arable there then was almost certainly located in the same fields many years later when King Henry VIII presented the rectory of *Haselie* to John Leland on 3 April 1542;²⁴ this act of favour marked the King's high opinion of the talents and industry of this Tudor antiquary and topographer who notes that 'from Ewelme to Hasely a v miles by chaumpaine ground sumwhat plentiful of corne but most layid to Pasturage'.²⁵

²³ L. F. Salzman (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, I, (London, 1939), 417b.

²⁴ Joseph Skelton, *Skelton's Engraved Illustrations of the Principal Antiquities of Oxfordshire from Original Drawings by F. Mackenzie*, (Oxford, 1823), 8b.

²⁵ Lucy Toulmin Smith, *The Itinerary of John Leland 1535-1543*, (London, 1907), Part II, 113.

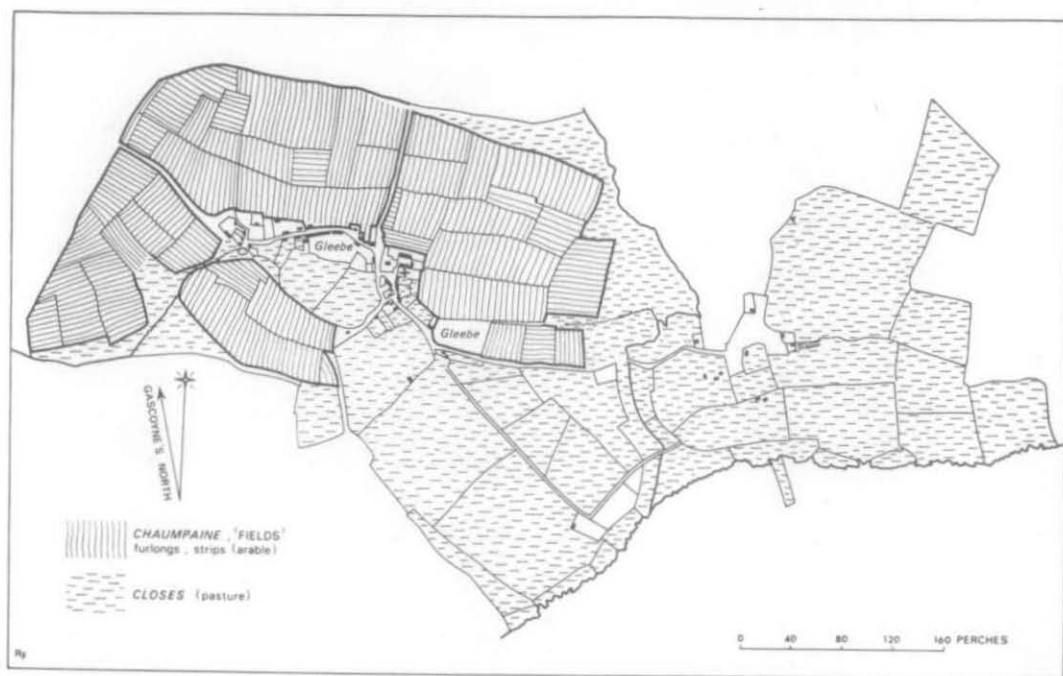


FIG. 2

A reduced version of Joel Gascoyne's *A Scheme of the Manor of Great Haseley and Latchford*. The alignment of the strips has been maintained but their number has, of necessity, been decreased in the reduction of scale from the original.

By way of preparation for the taking of the actual survey and in keeping with the good advice given in contemporary text-books on the subject, Joel Gascoyne would have made a preliminary reconnaissance, perhaps even made an 'eye draught' of the whole ground.²⁶ It would doubtless have been the combination of *chaumpaine* and *closes* which would have made a deep impression on Joel Gascoyne. Except on the south and south-east side, the manor house and village are surrounded by the *chaumpaine* of 'Fields' sub-divided into furlongs and strips with aratal curves, which occupy the south-facing higher ground and the medium-textured soils derived from the Portland Beds and the Shotover Sands. These brown, sandy limestones, clays and ferruginous sands provided a loamy soil on which the arable fields were created, but, once over the fault, as the ground sloped down to the brook which rose in three springs, one at the village, the land-use noted by Joel Gascoyne changed to grass. He found the same land-use on the clayey soils to the south-east of the village, where the land falls again to the Haseley Brook, but here there were larger areas of more intractable soils and the land had been enclosed, a fact reflected in the field names—Great Taylors Close, the Middle Closes (FIG. 3). Alongside the micro-meandering Haseley Brook, diligently followed by the parish boundary, the *closes* become very small in size and a continuous riparian repetition of the names *mead* and *meadow* with differentiating epithets discloses the subtle and ancient response of land-use to

²⁶ William Leybourn, *The Compleat Surveyor*, (London, 1679), 286.

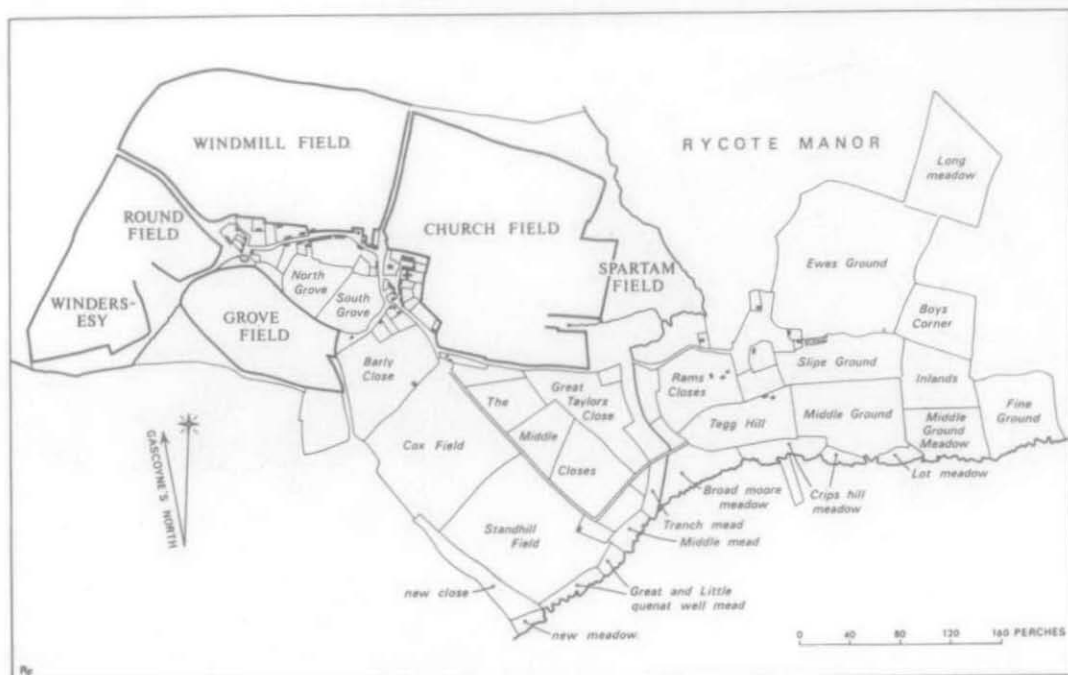


FIG. 3

Joel Gascoyne's field-names for the common-arable fields and closes.

physiography, for here must have lain the water meadow of Domesday Book,²⁷ as well as the practical and common-sense partition of the land into parishes, so that a variety of terrains was available for corn, pasture, and hay. To attain the same variety on the manors that made up the parish, their boundaries often inter-digitated and so the high ground between the headwaters of the Haseley Brook tributaries formed part of Rycote manor to the north. Joel Gascoyne mapped the swing of the parish boundary to the north and the southerly protruding tongue of high land which belonged to Rycote. In addition, there was the clear-cut eastern termination of the *champaine* fields as the Shotover Sands disappeared beneath the alluvium of the tributary valley floors and, more particularly, beneath the Gault. Just west of Latchford the Gault has weathered to form a stiff bluish-gray soil, and the scenery reflects this change in so far as the whole of the area is marsh or *closes* for grass: not only are the place-names again eloquent of the land-use—Spartam Field, Ewes Ground, Rams Close, Adams Close—but also is the contemporary description by Delafield:²⁸

It is known, that Spartum (even in the remembrance of the Generation last past) continued to be a Bog, and that there was a Turvery, from whence great quantities of Turfs were yearly cut for the service of the Lenthalls, and other Inhabitants of this place.

²⁷ Delafield, *Notitia Haseleiana*, Bodleian Library, Gough MSS. Oxon, 22, 124.

²⁸ Delafield, *Notitia Haseleiana*, Bodleian Library, Gough MSS. Oxon, 19, 33-4 and 24, 289, 90.

This Village of Lachford differs from the Two Haselys in this that its Lands are all enclosed, and it does not admit of any ploughed common fields. Its enclosures are chiefly Pasture or Meadow : Its soil deep, rich, and abundant in Grass, and excellently fitted for the Nourishment of Milched Kine, and the fattening of small, or greater cattle for the Shambles. There is in it one particular rich Pasture, at every season of the Year to be distinguished from the rest, by the lively Verdure of its Carpet : from whence it hath got, besides its proper, the Additional Name of the Green Mead.

Near Latchford, at a low-point, water remained on the surface to form a small pond and, not unexpectedly, the field adjoining was named Slipe Ground, an early 18th century word for 'a slippery sort of clay always wet'.²⁹

Instruments and surveying technique in c. 1700 were sufficiently advanced for Joel Gascoyne to capture ichnographically, that is in plan form, the contemporary land-use pattern, but to enhance the panorama of rural life much was added scenographically (PL. VIII, A). For example, in profile were drawn the gates showing the entry points to the *closes*, the avenues of trees and the houses, these latter contributing a somewhat primitive element to what is otherwise a quite sophisticated map. This criticism should not be applied to the inset in the top right-hand corner of the map where the church and manor house are drawn in profile. The facades, which, for the most part still survive, provide an interesting architectural record as indeed does the drawing of the manor house portrayed with its gardens, bowling green, brew-house, stables and coach-house ; a complex of buildings sufficiently important to require a separate legend, 'A Scheme of the Mansi[on] House wi[th] the Gardens, orchards . . .'

No map is complete without title, scale and orientation and in the treatment of these essentials Joel Gascoyne combined the functional with the artistic. To deal with them in reverse order there is firstly the compass rose with maritime-chart overtones, a decorative feature that has come to be regarded as Joel Gascoyne's trade-mark.³⁰ It consists of a thirty-two-point rose coloured and decorated in a manner similar to those in his Lanhydrock Atlas. This pattern was gold for the cardinals, deep blue for the half-cardinals, green for the quarter-cardinals and red for the eighth-cardinals. As a centre-piece a rose-bud was drawn in profile and the north point was indicated by a fleur-de-lys with quilled 'flower-buds', curls and curlicues. The title was enclosed within a medallion which has winged *amorini* heads above and below, while at the sides two *putti* standing on scrolls decorated with a quincunx of dots, held aloft a surveyor's chain. Cornucopiae with fruit and foliage complete this title-cartouche, the whole resting on a plinth which contains a linear scale with primary and secondary divisions. Both of these embellishments are typical of Joel Gascoyne's cartographic style.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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²⁹ *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1971).

³⁰ William Ravenhill, 'Joel Gascoyne : a Cartographer with Style', *Geographical Magazine*, 44, no. 5, (February 1972), 335-41.



A. Joel Gascoyne's method of illustrating settlements, common-arable FIELDS, furlongs and strips. *Ph.: W.R.*

AN EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CARTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF AN OXFORDSHIRE MANOR



B

B. Gold ring from near Oxford. 2.5/1.



C

C. Seal in Muniment Room, Exeter College. 2/1.
Ph.: M.H.