

An Elizabethan Survey of North Leigh, Oxfordshire

By BERYL SCHUMER

THE manor of North Leigh, Oxfordshire, belonged to Netley Abbey, Hampshire,¹ from 1247 until the Abbey was dissolved in 1532, and in 1544² it was bought from the Crown by Sir Thomas Pope, Receiver of the Court of Augmentations, who also purchased the adjoining manors of Wilcote and Cogges and many other Oxfordshire manors which had previously been monastic property. After Sir Thomas' death North Leigh passed to his widow, who appointed as her Steward Simon Perrott, a Public Notary and formerly a Fellow of Magdalen who was related by marriage to the Pope family and had already taken up copyhold land in the manor.³ In 1581 Simon Perrott made a Survey of the manor, which has not survived, but about seventy years later extracts from the survey were copied into a small notebook by Simon Perrott's great-grandson, Robert Perrott, and this copy is now in the Bodleian Library.⁴

The greater part of the notebook is taken up by a Field Survey or description of the strips in the furlongs and fields, with the name of the owner in 1581, to which Robert Perrott added, for most of the Survey, that of the owner in 1655. This Field Survey, with the list of the tenants and their holdings and other explanatory notes by Robert Perrott, facilitates a reconstruction of the topography of the manor at the period, an analysis of the field system, a study of changes both in the size and in the ownership of the tenements during the period, and provides some insight into the pattern of settlement in the manor.

No accurate early maps of North Leigh are known, and there was no Tithe Award and probably no map to accompany the Inclosure Award in 1759.⁵ However the manor appears to have been conterminous with the ancient parish,⁶ and it is possible to correlate many of the allotments in the Award with surviving field boundaries and so to determine the extent of the Common Fields, of the Old Inclosures, and of North Leigh Heath at the time of the Inclosure. There is no evidence that the areas of these had been altered to any great extent between 1581 and 1759, so that boundaries as determined from the Inclosure Award can be used as a foundation for the study of the 1581 Survey.

Additional evidence is provided by a few of the 1581 place-names which survive to the present day, and a larger number which occur in the Inclosure Award or

¹ Ancient Deeds, D 153 302, quoted in V.C.H. *Hants*, Vol. 2, 147.

² *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, Vol. 9, pt. 1, 997 (p. 538) and 1053, 152 (p. 637).

³ Bodleian MS Trinity College B 83 (Simon Perrott's Register). Information about Simon Perrott is given in M. R. Toynbee, 'Charles I and the Perrotts of Northleigh', *Oxoniensia*, XI (1946), 132-144.

⁴ Bodleian MS Top. Oxon. f. 36, afterwards called Perrott's Notebook. A transcript and further study of the notebook by the present writer is Bodleian MS Top. Oxon. d 669. For the identification of the author of the notebook, see M. R. Toynbee, *op. cit.* note 3, 144.

⁵ Oxfordshire County Record Office F 17.

⁶ The civil parish now includes the former parish of Wilcote, Osney Hill (formerly extra-parochial) and some land previously in Eynsham parish.

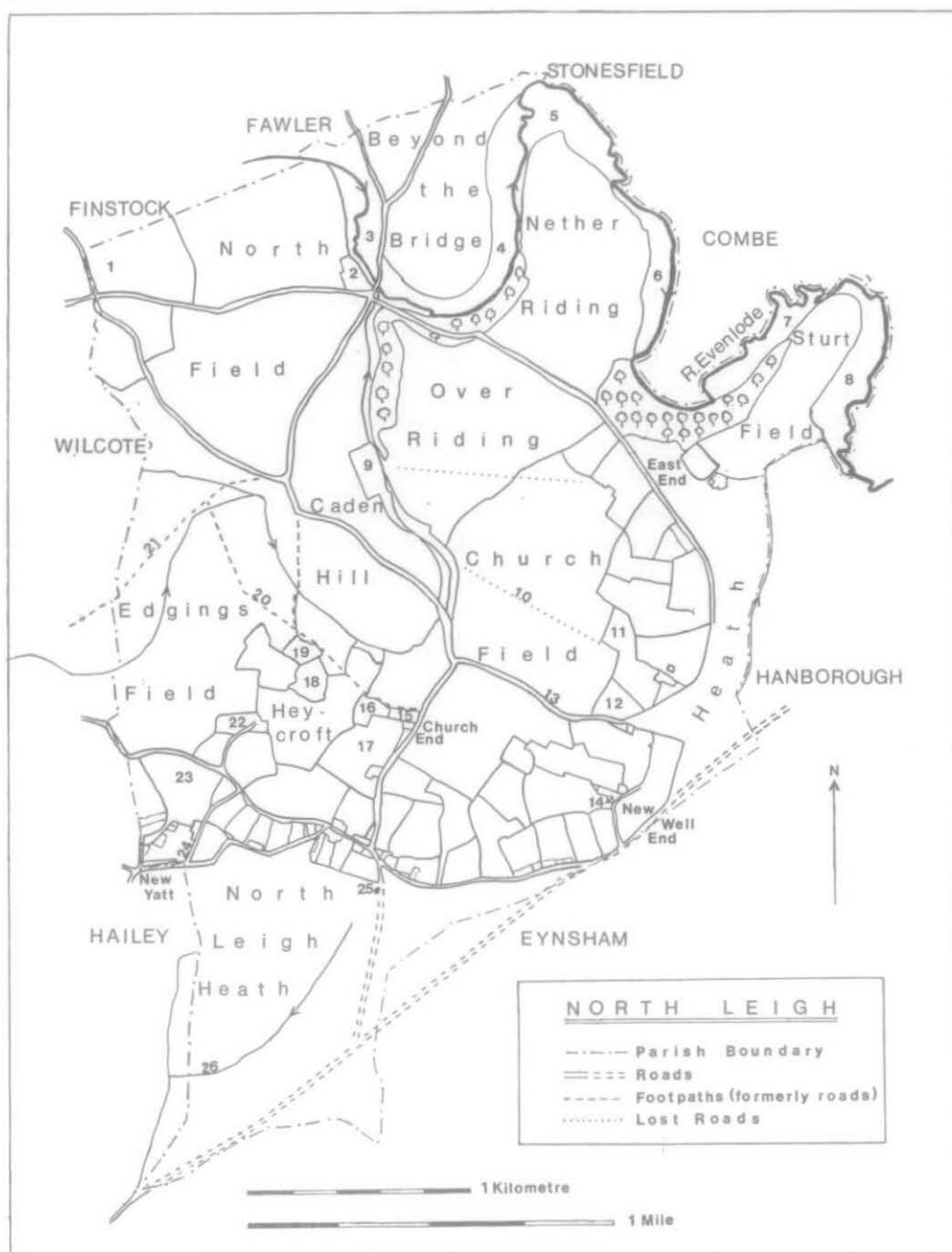


FIG. 1

KEY

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. 'Wilcote' (house) | 10. Postreet Way | 19. Bunges (Field Farm) |
| 2. Ashford Mill | 11. Brown's Close | 20. Procession Way |
| 3. Close Meade | 12. Calcott's Close | 21. Burford Way |
| 4. Langham | 13. Bond Hatchway (Boddington Lane) | 22. Puddle End Farm |
| 5. Stunsham | 14. Perrotthill Farm | 23. Bampton (close) |
| 6. Simersham | 15. Church | 24. Kite Lane |
| 7. Clayham | 16. King's House | 25. Pond—Madlewelle |
| 8. Spratsham | 17. Broad Close | 26. Madlebrok |
| 9. Holy Court Farm | 18. Cooke's Close | |

in the Quality Book prepared for the Inclosure commissioners.⁷ The 1581 Survey appears to have been carried out in a logical sequence and it is possible to obtain an idea of the relative position of the furlongs, but it will probably never be possible to map them exactly.

Both the Inclosure Award and the 1581 Survey suggest that most of the roads of North Leigh already existed in 1581. In addition there were many other roads which have now been lost or which survive only as bridle paths or footpaths. Of these Kite Lane and 'Burford Way' have gone out of use as roads within living memory, and 'Procession Way', leading from the church towards the parish boundary, was still a public road in 1837.⁸ In 1581 there were three roads across Church Field, of which one survives (Boddington Lane, called Bond Hatchway in 1581), one is probably represented by the footpath from East End towards Holly Court Farm, and the third, 'Postret Way', must have gone out of use between 1581 and 1655, since Robert Perrott noted that 'Postret Way was crosse the Church Field'.⁹ Another road, 'Gammons Lane', crossed Heycroft, but its course is not certain.

North Leigh Heath, unenclosed 'waste' until 1759, occupied the whole of the southern part of the manor, merging into the heath belonging to Hanborough, Eynsham and Hailey. The Heath was common grazing ground for all the tenants of the manor and also for the 'bordeners', the tenants of adjoining manors.¹⁰

The manor was well provided with meadows along the banks of the Evenlode, and in addition it is probable that a small part of Edgings Field (Edgings Moore)¹¹ was also used as meadow since it was divided into 'plats' and 'lots' instead of 'yards' and 'lands' as the arable fields were.

There were numerous closes in the manor, and for the most part these stretched in an arc along the higher ground between the Heath and the arable fields, corresponding more or less to the areas of Oxford Clay which underlie part of North Leigh, while the arable fields were situated on limestones. There were nine arable fields in North Leigh, one of which (Sturt Field) was used in 1581 solely by the farmer of 'Holy Court' (now known as Holly Court), and this was probably never a common field. The relatively large number of fields is probably due mostly to geographical factors, since the land varies in height from about 250 feet to 446 feet, and is dissected by both the Evenlode and the small nameless tributary which flows through the centre of the manor.

North Leigh was without a resident lord of the manor both in 1581 and in 1655, when it belonged to Thomas Pope, 2nd Earl of Downe, great-grandson of Sir Thomas Pope's brother John; and the demesne farm, Holy Court, was held by a tenant. There were two freehold farms, and a few parcels of freehold land in the fields, but the rest was held by copyhold tenure, and these holdings are summarized in Table 1. This information is derived from the formal description of the holdings, and Robert Perrott did not state the acreage of arable land in all cases.

⁷ North Leigh Manorial Records, Blenheim.

⁸ Visitation, 1837. Bodleian MS Archdeaconry Pprs Oxon. c 41.

⁹ Perrott's Notebook, f. 11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 36 & 38. This right seems in practice to have been confined to Combe and Stonesfield, and was confirmed in a case before the Court of Augmentations in 1540 (E 321 37/8), and the North Leigh Inclosure Award, when two allotments were made in lieu of these rights.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, f. 48.

TABLE I

Tenant	Holding	Tenants' Holdings and Rent, 1581				Rent
		Arable	Closes	Meadow		
		yd	acres	loads of hay	' certain mead '	
' Farmer '	8	241	12	40	15 acres	£6.13.4
Perrott	2½	77	8	5	3 acres	62/-
Gilman	2½	90	9	—	1 ac. & 1 yd	38/10
P. Curtes	2	70½	5	4	5 yards	27/-
Sharpe	2	61	3½	4		28/8
Slatford	2	66½	6½	5	1 acre	35/10
Calcott	2	54½	6½	7	' a peece '	37/8
Wright	2	63½	5	4		30/10
W. Curtes	1	(79½)	2	2		14/-
' Mockmeres '	½	28½	1½	—		16/-
Shreive	1½		4½	3		21/6
Barfoot	1	40	3	2		14/4
Collins	1	28	1½ ⁺	2	6 yds	16/-
Franklin	1		3	2		18/6
Mason	1		1½	2		14/4
Cosins	1	52	2½	2		16/1
Kent	1		3½	2		14/4
Drinkwater	1		5	2		14/4
Brown	1		3½	2		14/4
Townsend	1		½ ac, 1 yd	2	3 yds	12/2
Phipps	1		1 ac, 1 yd	2	1 yd	12/2
Sutton	1		2	2		14/4
M. Barfoot	½		1½ ac, 1 yd	1		7/2
Breakspeare	½		2	1		7/2
J. Curtes	½		2	1		7/2
Rush	½		1 yd	1	2 yd	7/2

The basic unit for the manor appears to have been the half-yardland,¹² consisting of about 15 acres of arable land and 1 load of hay from the meadows, for a rent of 7s 2d, with the larger holdings as multiples of this. The amount of arable land belonging to a holding of stated size could however vary considerably, the most obvious example being the acreages of the one-yardland holdings of Cosins (52 acres), Barfoot (40) and Collins (28). Walter Curtes' one-yardland holding with 79½ acres is probably exceptionally large because a member of the family had been bailiff of the manor, and may have obtained special privileges.¹³ The yardland at that period was clearly a legal term conveying certain rights, rather than a fixed quantity of land.

The tenants' rights in the five meadows along the Evenlode are described in three different ways. Some had a definite area of meadow as part of their holding ('a peece of mead in Cleam called the Head Meade'), and others 'certain meade' ('1 acre of certain meade in Spratsham') which also appears to have been an area set aside; and all the tenants also had 'certain lotts of grass in the common meades to the quantity of . . . loads of hay'.¹⁴ Presumably the greater part of the meadow land was divided by lot as has been described for other Oxfordshire parishes,¹⁵ and

¹² *Ibid.*, ff. 68 & 83 where the manor is described as '5 yardlands and 51 half-yardlands'.

¹³ Particulars for Grants E 318/885. 'Robert Curtes, Ballivus domini Regis ibidem.'

¹⁴ Perrott's Notebook, ff. 76-82.

¹⁵ W. E. Tate, *The English Village Community and the Enclosure Movements* (1967), 33; J. A. Giles, *History of Bampton* (1847), 76-82; and R. W. Gretton, 'Historical Notes on the Lot-Meadow Customs at Yarnnton, Oxfordshire', *Economic Journal*, xxi (1912), 53.

Robert Perrott described some of the lot markers used in this annual allocation, the 'plaine ladle', the 'barell a bound', the 'shuttle', the 'four holes' and the 'sithe smede'. There was another 3-acre meadow, Close meade, which in 1581 was leased by Simon Perrott for 26s 8d, which, compared with the rent of 31s 4d for his 2½ yardland holding, may give an indication of the value of the meadow land.

The size both of the eight common fields and of the furlongs within the fields varied considerably, probably because of the broken nature of the ground. In addition the strips within the furlongs varied in size, and they are described as 'yards', 'lands', or 'acres'. Robert Perrott states that 4 'yards' or 2 'lands' were equivalent to the 'acre' (making it clear that this was not the statute acre),¹⁶ and it is probable that these names refer to selions which were one pole, two poles, or four poles in width.¹⁷ Strips of these varying sizes have been found in other manors and so far no explanation for the variation has been found,¹⁸ nor does the North Leigh Survey reveal any distinct pattern. Sometimes there is a group of 'yards' or 'lands' (or even, in Edgings Field, a small group of 'half-yards'), but usually both 'yards' and 'lands', and often 'acres' as well, are to be found distributed apparently at random in the same furlong. Since there is no ridge and furrow visible today it will probably never be possible to determine whether these sizes arose for practical topographical reasons or from accidents of tenurial history, but the 'acre' strip occurs as the usual selion form in the three largest holdings. Holy Court had 93% of its land as 'acres', and the freeholdings of 'Wilcote' and Edmund King had 90% and 61% respectively. Both these freeholdings were already in existence in 1279,¹⁹ and there is reason to think that Edmund King's freeholding was the original demesne of the manor. 'Wilcote' too was a farm of some importance since its land extends over the parish boundary into Finstock, taking in the site of the deserted village of Tapwell.²⁰

According to Robert Perrott²¹ the eight common fields were grouped in a three year course of crop rotation, but these three 'seasons' seem to have been very unequal in area. In Table 2 acreages as deduced from the Inclosure Award are shown as well as the number of 'yards' as calculated from Robert Perrott's statement that 4 'yards' or 2 'lands' equalled an 'acre'. This of course cannot give accurate figures since, apart from slight variations in width, the strips were probably not of equal length throughout the manor, and one has to ignore some 'peece' of unspecified size in the description; but the figures obtained represent at least an approximation to the true values, and can be used to study the distribution of the land of the different holdings throughout the fields.

As the Table shows, the third 'season' was much smaller than the others.

¹⁶ Perrott's Notebook, f. 64.

¹⁷ Bodleian MS. Eng. Misc. c 143 f. 307, quoted in D. M. Barratt, *Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire Parishes*, Dugdale Soc. XXII (1952), lvi-ii. Yard, land and acre are used in the Warwickshire Terriers with the same meaning as at North Leigh.

¹⁸ J. E. G. Sutton, 'Ridge and Furrow in Berkshire and Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, xxix/xxx (1964/5), 99; H. M. Clare, 'Selion Size and Soil Type', *Ag. Hist. Rev.*, 8-9 (1960-1), 91.

¹⁹ *Rotuli Hundredorum*, (Rec. Comm.) ii, 868-870.

²⁰ K. J. Allison, M. W. Beresford, J. G. Hurst, *The Deserted Villages of Oxfordshire* (1966), 44-5; in 1422 the land was held by Elizabeth Wyllicotes and was described as 'in Northlye, Fynstoke and Tapwell'. Charles Trice Martin (ed.), *Archives of All Souls College*, 395.

²¹ Perrott's Notebook, f. i.

TABLE 2

Field	Area of the Fields			
	Acreage 1759	'yards' 1581	% of total area	
North Field	*	1374	23.8	Season I
Beyond the Bridge	133	503	8.7	2364 'yards'
Over Riding	128	487	8.4	40.9% of total
Nether Riding	164	750	13.0	Season II
Edgings Field	*	902	15.6	2157 'yards'
Caden Hill	108	505	8.8	37.4% of total
Church Field	221	1064	18.5	Season III
Heycroft	42	184	3.2	1248 'yards'
				21.7% of total

* One large allotment extended into both fields, impossible to calculate exact acreage.

In the notebook it is stated that part of some strips in Church Field had been cut off by a new hedge and were now in Over Riding,²² and it is impossible to determine how much land had been taken away from Church Field in this way. It is also possible that part of Church Field had been enclosed at some time not long before 1555,²³ since some enclosures bordering Church Field were made at this time and it is not clear whether the land was enclosed from the arable fields or the Heath.

It is also possible that the inequality between the three seasons was because land assarted during the later medieval period has been added unevenly to a three field system which already existed. However, the only evidence so far found indicates that in 1277, when the Vicarage was ordained,²⁴ a two field system was being used, since the Vicar's glebe was to consist of 10 acres, 5 in one field and 5 in the other. In 1581 the glebe land was in North Field, Edgings Field, Caden Hill, Hey Croft and Church Field, with a few strips in Over Riding, but none in Nether Riding or Beyond the Bridge (suggesting that these two areas had not been assarted by 1277), and the distribution of the Vicar's strips suggests that the two fields consisted of North Field-Edgings Field-Caden Hill, and Church Field-Heycroft-Over Riding. It is not possible at present to determine when the other assarts were made, and the three field system instituted.

The distribution of the tenant's land between the different fields (and the seasons) is also very irregular, and a cursory examination of North Field and Nether Riding would give the impression that these fields belonged to two separate communities. However there is no evidence that there was ever a separate field system for the hamlet of East End, and most of the tenants have some land in all of the fields, even if only 1 or 2 strips. These irregularities in distribution may always have existed, or they may have arisen by the processes of exchange, amalgamation or

²² *Ibid.*, ff. 18, 19, 35, 36.

²³ Bodleian MS. Trinity College b. 83 (Simon Perrott's Register). In a court in 1555 Simon Perrott was given permission to enclose some land near the well at New Well end 'as the other tenants hathe'. Probably Calcot's Close and Brown's Close had been made at this time.

²⁴ *Rotulus Ricardi Gravesend*, Canterbury and York Society, xxxi (1925), 187.

TABLE 3
Distribution of Tenants' Land, expressed as a percentage of their total holding (1581)

Tenant	Field								
	North Field	Beyond the Bridge	Over Riding	Church Field	Heycroft	Edgins Field	Caden Hill	Nether Riding	Holding in 'yards'
The Bishop	100	—	—	—	—	*	—	—	102
King	47	—	3	10	1*	35	4	—	266
Vicar	43	—	7	34	3	3	10	—	59
Parson	28	—	4	47*	—	10	11	—	105
Franklin	36	7	8	14	8	24	2	1	183
Wright	35	19	—	6	—	22	14	4	294
Holy Court	33	25	2	7	—	7	26	*	488
Drinkwater	33	6	12	22	—	16	11	—	133½
Phipps	32	7	—	3	13	31	14	—	152
Shreive	31	5	4	7	11	33	7	2	194
Sharp	24	6	—	14	13	42	—	1	245
Sutton	23	3	10	16	—	22	25	1	147
Ph. Curtes	22	10	14	28	—	7	4	16	274½
Slatford	23	8	7	6	10	22	23	1	290
Collins	24	8	6	11	22	13	10	6	107
Townsend	20	15	1	2	18	36	6	2	145
J. Curtes	17	17	8	35	—	2	21	21	90
Barfoot	16	9	13	24	—	11	2	25	167½
Perrott	16	4	17	25	—	6	2	30	322½
Cosins	16	5	7	34	1	18	13	6	211½
Mason	16	16	10	22	—	—	1	35	148
Gilman	15	7	10	20	—	5	9	34	323
Kent	14	10	16	21	6	23	5	4	137
Calcott	13	7	8	27	1	7	7	30	240½
Magd. Barfoot	13	—	14	36	—	7	—	30	80
W. Curtes	13	2	16	25	—	10	6	28	357½
Brown	9	12	9	33	—	—	—	37	151
Breakspeare	3	10	5	39	5	31	1	6	79½
Rush	—	28	25	4	—	8	7	28	89
% of Total area	23.8	8.7	8.4	18.5	3.2	15.6	8.8	13.0	—

*A 'Peece', size unspecified.

fragmentation of holdings over the centuries. The notebook provides evidence that these processes were occurring between 1581 and 1655.

Robert Perrott gives what was probably the old legal definition of the manor, '5 whole yardlands and 51 half-yardlands appertaining to the lord',²⁵ and this agrees fairly well with the picture of the manor given by the Hundred Rolls of 1279,²⁶ when there were three villein tenants holding one virgate each, and 54 villein tenants holding a half-virgate each. By 1581 the number of half-yardland holdings had dropped to four, while the rest of the tenants held one yardland or more. The process of amalgamation can be seen continuing throughout the period covered by the notebook, as by 1655 five yardlands had been added to Simon Perrott's holding, Edward Calcott had also acquired Leonard Yates' land, and James Perrott held Gunne's land and Rush's half-yardland as well as King's 5 yardlands of free land.

²⁵ Perrott's Notebook, ff. 68, 83.

²⁶ *Rotuli Hundredorum*, ii, 868-870.

In the same period there seems to have been an exchange of strips which must have affected the whole manor, since strips which had belonged to one person in 1581 might belong to several different tenants in 1655. The only holdings which were not involved were Holy Court, 'Wilcote', Phipps, and Sharpe. Robert Perrott noted in one place that 'these [strips] were exchanged by licence of the lord by my grandfather Robert Perrott'. This Robert Perrott was Simon Perrott's son, and it is possible that the original Survey was made in preparation for an exchange which Simon Perrott did not live to accomplish. The main result of the exchange was the formation of several compact blocks of strips in Church Field, Over Riding, and Nether Riding, most of which belonged to Robert Perrott. The same process may have occurred before, because in 1581 there were already many compact blocks of strips in the fields. The farmer of Holy Court held a block of 40 'acres' in North Field, and other 6-'acre' and 12-'acre' blocks in Beyond the Bridge. Other compact blocks were held by the two freeholders—King held 20 'acres' and 5 'acres', while the land belonging to 'Wilcote' included '12 acres called Conning Peece' and '5 acres called Pibly Peece'. This consolidation of land was not confined to the greater tenants, as among the copyholders Phipps had '8 lands called Musley Peece', Wright '10 yards called Pidgin Peece', Phillip Curtes '6

TABLE 4

Changes in Tenants' holdings, 1581-1655

No Change: Phipps, Holy Court, Bishop of Oxford, Sharpe, and the small holdings of Rolfe, Harris & Crofte.

Exchange of Strips

Magd. Barfoot:	with Perrott, Brown, Calcott, Grainger & James Perrott
Collins:	with Perrott & Whitley
Mason:	with Perrott and Grainger
Vicar:	with Brown & Haynes
Breakspeare:	with Drinkwater & Perrott
Drinkwater:	with Harris
Townsend:	with Joan Curtes, Barfoot, T. Calcott & Perrott
Sutton:	with Hedges
Brown:	with Gilman, Perrott, Calcott, Rush, Vicar, White & James Perrott
Cosins:	with King, Curtes, Perrott, Calcott, Vicar, Barfoot, Hedges, & Wright
Gilman:	with Perrott, Barfoot, Madg. Barfoot, Mason, Brown & Calcott
Slatford:	with Shreive, Brown & Townsend

Exchange and Decrease in Size

Franklin:	Exchange with Perrott, land to T. Franklin
Kent:	Exchange with Barfoot, Perrott & Calcott; holding split to Clarke & Blackwell
Wright:	Exchange with Sutton, Cosins, Haynes & Perrott; small holdings to T. Hedges & Dean
Shreive:	Exchange with White & T. Ridley; land to W. Townsend

Exchange and Increase in Size

Calcott:	exchange with Perrott, Brown, Magd. Barfoot, Cosins, Kent & Gilman; Adds Leonard Yates' holding
Perrott:	Large number of exchanges, consolidation of strips especially in Over and Nether Ridings; Adds most of Philip Curtes, Walter Curtes, Joan Curtes and Barfoot

New Holdings

Thomas Calcott:	from Thomas Ridley, Philip Curtes & Joan Curtes
W. Townsend:	from Shreive
Jo. Townsend:	from King
Thomas Hedges:	from Wright & Sutton
Dean:	from Wright

acres called Ditchin Peece', and other blocks of varying sizes were to be found throughout the fields.

As well as the amalgamation and consolidation of holdings, the period of the notebook shows some fragmentation of holdings. Most of the land which belonged to the Curtes family in 1581 was later owned by Robert Perrott, but some was split off to form a holding for Thomas Calcott which did not correspond to any of the earlier Curtes holdings; Kent's yardland was evenly divided between Clark and Blackwell, some of Shreive's land was split off for William Townsend, and some of Wright's for Thomas Hedges and Dean.

Robert Perrott did not provide the name of the owner in 1655 for the strips in Edgings Field, Heycroft, and Caden Hill, so that it is not possible to compare accurately the distribution of each tenant's land in 1655 with the distribution in 1581, but the tenants do not seem to have tried to get a more even distribution of their land between the three 'seasons', although the fact that Robert Perrott noted down a three-year system suggests that it must have been in operation. Wills of the

TABLE 5

1581	Ownership of Holdings, 1581-1657			
	yd	1623	1655	1657
<i>No Change</i>				
Collins	1	Collins	Collins	Collins
Mason*	1	Mason	Mason	Mason
Phipps	1	Phipps	Phipps	Phipps@
Perrott	2½	Perrott	R. Perrott	Perrott@A
Barfoot	½	Barfoot	Barfoot	Wid. Barfoot
<i>One Change</i>				
Brown*	1	Whitley	Whitley	Whitley
Calcott	2	Calcott	Calcott	Haynes
Cosins	1	Haynes	Haynes	Haynes
Drinkwater	1	Taylor	Taylor	Taylor@A
Franklin	1	Barrett	Barrett	Barrett@
Kent	1	Kent	Blackwell	Blackwell
Bp. of Oxford	1	Martyn	Clarke	Clarke
Shreive	1½	Shreive 1	Martyn	Martyn@
		Townsend ½	Franklin	Franklin
Slatford	2	Slatford 1	Townsend	Townsend
		White 1		
Ph. Curtes*	2	Curtes	White	White
Walt. Curtes*	1½	Perrott	R. Perrott	Perrott
Joan Curtes*	½	R. Calcott ½	"	"
Barfoot	1	T. Calcott	"	"
			Calcott	Calcott@A
<i>Two Changes</i>				
Breakspeare*	½	? Miles ½	Harris	Harris@A
Gilman	2½	? Hart 2½	Grainger	Grainger
King	5	? Thorpe 4½	J. Perrott	Perrott@A
Rush	½	? Neale & Dawson	"	"
Sutton*	1	Bennett	Bennett	—
Sharp	2	Bond	Gardner	Gardner
Wright*	2	Broughton	Hedges	Hedges
Townsend*	1	—	Brookes	—

*Family name occurs in 1543 Subsidy (E 179 162/235)

@Family Name occurs in 1759 Inclosure Award

A Allotment in Inclosure Award

period provide instances of the use of the tenants' closes for crops, and of leasing of land within the manor,²⁷ and some of the tenants may have owned land outside the manor since inhabitants of North Leigh were fining for assart land in Hailey as early as 1315,²⁸ so that it is not possible to reach any definite conclusions as to the effect of the stated crop rotation on the economy of individual tenants or of the manor as a whole.

The Survey actually provides very little information as to the type of farming carried on in the manor. The closes which are described as paddocks must have been used for animals, probably cattle and horses, but the sheep which figure in the wills of many of the tenants are not mentioned, and were probably taken for granted as an integral part of the husbandry of the period.

The only change in agricultural practice which can be discerned between 1581 and 1655 is that a few of the strips were converted to leys.

Robert Perrott named the owners of the land both in 1581 and in 1655, and also transcribed two Church Rates, for 1623 and 1657, so that it is possible to follow changes in the ownership of the land over this period. Of the 26 tenements in 1581, only 5 were still owned by the same family in 1657; 14 tenements changed hands between 1581 and 1623, and 12 between 1623 and 1657. However, an even greater number must have changed hands between 1543 (Subsidy Roll) and 1581, since only 7 family names, representing 9 tenements, appear in the list for both dates.

The main change in the manor between 1543 and 1581 was its purchase in 1544 by Sir Thomas Pope, and it is possible that some of the new tenants were men who were already known to Sir Thomas, as was Simon Perrott.

Of the later changes, in four cases (Brown-Whitley, Calcott-Haynes, Shreive-Franklin, and Breakspear-Harris) the change of name is due to inheritance through a female,²⁹ but the other changes were probably due to families moving away or dying out. North Leigh thus provides another example of the rather surprising degree of mobility which is to be found among what might be expected to have been a stable section of the community.

The Survey can be used to try to reconstruct the pattern of settlement in the manor in 1581, although it specifies the exact location of messuages and cottages in very few instances. Church End, New Well End, and East End are named as the locations of dwellings, but it is possible that the area where many of the dwellings were was not named at all; and it is also obvious that the houses were dispersed in an arc from the western boundary of the manor (at New Yatt, though this is not named in the Survey) to East End, with no real nucleus.

One can divide the tenants of the manor into fairly distinct groups on the basis of the proportion of their land in the western half of the manor (Edgings Field, North Field, Caden Hill, and Heycroft), and it is apparent that those who have the greater part of their arable land in this half also have closes which can be identi-

²⁷ Will of Thomas Ridley, Bodleian MS. Wills Oxon. 181 f. 112; Will of Henry Barfoot, Bodleian MS Wills Oxon. 185 f. 369.

²⁸ Patricia Hyde, 'The Winchester Manors at Witney and Adderbury, Oxfordshire, in the later Middle Ages', Bodleian MS B. Litt. d. 473, p. 285 & 293. The land was in that part of Hailey adjoining the North Leigh boundary, at New Yatt.

²⁹ North Leigh Parish Registers; Wills of John Brown, Bodleian MS Wills Oxon. 194; James Shreive, Bodleian MS. Wills Oxon. 193, f. 295; Parnoll Breakspear, Bodleian MS Wills Oxon. 207; North Leigh Manorial Records, Blerheim, Court Roll 1657.

TABLE 6

Location of Tenants' Closes and Messuages			
	%	Closes	Messuages
Bishop	100		' Wilcote '
King	86½		Next Church
Phipps	89	Stonebridge, Maggots	? Puddle End
Shreive	83	Cole Close by Felstreete	
Sharpe	78	Broad Close, Wood Close	
Slatford	75	' by Townsende '	
Townsend	74	' In Egings field called Felstreete '	
Wright	73	at Hernes Corner	
Sutton	70	Bampton by Felstreete Yate, Caden Hill	
Franklin	70	Church Close, Coke's Close	
Collins	68	Hay Croft, Heath Close	
Drinkwater	68	Cooks Close, Maggins, Bonges	
Vicar	56		Next Church
Parson	47		Next to Vicarage
Cosins	49	Bonges & East End	
Kent	48	Heath Close	
Ph Curtes	36		
Breakspeare	36	Great Close	
Barfoot	33	' by Mason's house '	New Well End
Calcot	29	' & at East End '	
Gilman	28	Wilcot, Broad Close, Wetcroft, Long, Bushy closes	
Walt. Curtes	28	' & at New Well End '	Church End
Perrott	25		New Well End
Joan Curtes	20		
Mag. Barfoot	19		
Mason	16	' & at East End, New Well End '	
Brown	8		
Ridley	33		
Yates	24		
Gunn	20		

Jeffkins, Crofte, Harris, Hill & Rolfe had no land in the west of the manor, only small parcels in Over Riding, Nether Riding or Church Field.

' Mockmouse ' and ' Temples ', cottage at East End and ¼ yardland.

% = percentage of tenant's land in western half of manor.

fied with reasonable certainty as being in the same area; similarly those who have a small proportion of their arable land in the western half usually have their closes at New Well End or East End, and it seems reasonable to assume that the tenants' dwellings were in that part of the manor where their closes and most of their arable land lay. The group of tenants who had more than 65% of their arable land in the west of the manor includes the two freeholders, the Bishop of Oxford, whose messuage was ' Wilcote ', and Edmund King, whose house is described as adjoining Heycroft³⁰ and in a Survey of Wychwood Forest in 1609³¹ is described as ' near the church '. Since Edmund King's freehold was later owned by James Perrott, this house was most probably on the site of the Perrott Manor House which is known to

³⁰ Perrott's Notebook, f. 44.

³¹ LR 2/202, f. 29.

have stood immediately to the west of the church.³² There is reason to believe that this was the site of the original manor house of North Leigh—it is on a spur of land in the centre of the manor, adjoining the church, its freehold tenant in 1274 was John *de Aula* (John of the Hall),³³ and in a dispute before the Archdeacon's Court in 1618, evidence was given that only Holy Court and 'King's Farm' were exempt from providing malt for the Church Ale.³⁴ There are two other old farm sites in the same half of the manor, Field Farm and Puddle End, both of which have ancient inclosures around them and are situated among the arable fields. One of these was probably occupied by Phipps, since in the Inclosure Award, Phipps' Lane led from one to the other. Of the other tenants, Shreive, Townsend and Sutton all have closes in whose description the name Felstreete is mentioned. This has not been identified, but must be in the area between Puddle End and New Yatt, since it is related both to Edgings Field and to Bampton. Slatford's messuage was probably in the same area. The remaining tenants in this group had their closes near Field Farm ('Bonges') or the church, and it is probable that they lived either at Church End or at the top of the hill above the church, near the village pond.

A small group of tenants had their land more or less evenly divided between the two halves of the manor, and the chief of these were the Vicar and the Parson. The Vicarage is next to the church, presumably on the same site as in 1581. The 'Parson' was the owner of the Rectory, which had belonged to Hailes Abbey until the Dissolution, and then passed through various hands before becoming the property of Bridewell Hospital,³⁵ and Bridewell's 'Church Farm' was next to the Vicarage. It is not clear where Cosins and Kent, the remaining tenants in this group, were living.

The rest of the tenants had less than 40% of their land in the western half of the manor. Walter Curtes lived at Church End, and William Barfoot and Simon Perrott lived at New Well End, where Perrottshill Farm still stands. It is difficult to ascertain where the remaining tenants lived but only in two cases is East End mentioned as the site of a dwelling—'Mockmouse' (or 'Mokemoores'), belonging to Walter Curtes, and 'Temples', belonging to Simon Perrott, both consisted of a cottage at East End and a half-yardland. Phillip Curtes, Calcott and Mason had closes at East End, but these were obviously not adjacent to their houses. This group of tenants must have occupied dwellings scattered along the ridge towards East End, between the Heath and the arable fields.

There remains a group of tenants who had small parcels of land only, and also the cottagers. The land belonging to Ridley, Yates and Gunn was dispersed among the fields, although the greater part was in the east; but Jeffkins, Crofte, Rolfe, Harris and Hill had their few strips either in Over Riding or Nether Riding, and it seems probable that some at least of these lived at East End. Of the cottages mentioned in the Survey, two were at New Well End, and there were two newly built cottages in Kite Lane, but otherwise their location is not given.

³² The house was partly demolished and allowed to decay after the sale of the manor to the Duke of Marlborough in 1765. Its ruins are described in J. Skelton, *Antiquities of Oxfordshire* (1823).

³³ *Rotuli Hundredorum*, ii, 870.

³⁴ Bodleian MS. Archdeaconry Oxon. c 118, f. 188.

³⁵ *Rotulus Ricardi Gravesend*, 187. The Oxfordshire Report Book of Bridewell Hospital, in an entry for 19.8.1844 describes their 'Church Farm' as 'the ancient parsonage house of the rectory' and states that the Vicar had made a doorway from his house into the farm yard.



FIG. 2

The two remaining known dwelling places were Holy Court, tucked away in a valley between Caden Hill and Over Riding, and Ashford Mill; and there is no evidence that there were any dwellings in Over Riding, Nether Riding or Beyond the Bridge.

The topographical information gained from the notebook throws some light on the boundaries of Wychwood Forest in the North Leigh area, since the Survey of Wychwood of 1609³⁶ falls within its time span.

North Leigh was within the Forest until the Perambulation of Wychwood in 1298,³⁷ when part of it was disafforested. At that time the Forest split into three separate sections centred on Witney, Woodstock Park, and Cornbury, and the disafforested part of North Leigh lay between the Witney and Woodstock sections.

The relevant parts of the 1298 Perambulation are as follows:

Witney: . . . 'and thence to Madlebrok and by Madlebroke to the spring of Madlewelle and so through the middle of the town of Northlye and so by the way of Northlye to Grundesweleye and so thence along a certain hedge to Sullesley and then to the Forsakenhoke . . .'

Woodstock: 'and so through the middle of Roweleye to the spring where Leyhambrok begins, and so descending by Leyhambrok as far as Colnham and so thence to where Colnham falls into the water of Bladene and thence by the same water of Bladene to Stuntesford'

There seem to have been no alterations in the boundaries between 1298 and 1609, and the relevant parts of the 1609 Survey can be summarized as follows:

The Waste or Common of Northleigh

2 messuages owned by W. Kinge

The Parsonage

28 other cottages or messuages and 60 closes occupied by Widow Phipps, John Sheref, Widow Sheriffe, Widow Bond, Henry Slatford, Thomas Townsend, Thomas Franklyn, Widowe Collins, John Kent, Robert Curtes, Phillip Brakespere, Richard Brakespere, Thomas Ring, Richard Gardiner, John Smith, John Blackwell, Margaret Ridley, Widow Saunders, . . . Parett, Edward Harte, and others.

Town fields—Heycroft

Cadwell Hill 'between the Town Closes of Northlye and Mousley

Corner'

'One other common field thereunto adjoining.'

Mrs. Wickham Steed studied these boundaries³⁸ and suggested that the western half of North Leigh was excluded from the Forest in 1298, while the eastern part remained within the Forest, but the combined evidence of the 1609 Survey and Robert Perrott's Notebook shows that this cannot be so. The Parsonage, the King house, Heycroft, Cadwell (Caden) Hill and Mousley Corner are all in the western part of the manor, and the tenants named in the 1609 Survey are also those probably living in the west of the manor. The 'one other common field' mentioned in 1609

³⁶ LR 2/202, ff. 25-47.

³⁷ The 1298 Perambulation and comparable clauses from the Perambulation of 1300 are given in H. E. Salter (ed.) *Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham*, II, Oxf. Hist. Soc. LI, 92-94.

³⁸ V. Steed, 'The Bounds of Wychwood Forest', *Top. Oxon.*, 7, Autumn 1961.

is probably Edgings Field, since the Pleas of Wychwood Forest mention a poaching offence in Echenesfeld in 1366.³⁹

It is probable that the Wychwood boundary came from Witney up the Madley Brook to the 'Madleywelle', which was the North Leigh pond (now filled in), and then along the present Church Road, which was 'King's Street Waye' in 1581. It is still not possible to identify Grundesweleye and Sulllesley, but a 'long hedge' is mentioned in the 1581 Survey in connection with both Caden Hill and Edgings Field,⁴⁰ and it is possible to fix the position of Mousley Corner at the point where North Field and Caden Hill meet. The boundary probably followed more or less the line of the present roads as far as Mousley Corner and then turned along Burford Way towards Shakenoak. The location of this boundary point presents a slight problem as the present Shakenoak Farm is in Hailey, with a portion of the former parish of Wilcote intervening between it and North Leigh. There is no mention of any Wilcote land in the 1609 Survey, so that the Wychwood boundary must have gone around it. It seems possible that 'Shakenoak' in this description is a point on the North Leigh-Wilcote boundary, and it may refer to the site of the villa.⁴¹

The Woodstock boundary includes no North Leigh land at all, since none of the fields or tenants of the eastern half of the manor are named in 1609. The adjoining manors of Hanborough and Combe are included in the Forest, and the Wychwood boundary must therefore have followed the North Leigh parish boundary. 'Roweley' is probably a name for the Heath at the point where Eynsham, Hanborough and North Leigh meet, as Mrs. Steed suggested. From this point the North Leigh-Hanborough boundary goes directly to a small nameless stream which it then follows down to the Evenlode valley, and this stream must be the Leyhambrok. The 'Leyhambrok' joins another short stream before flowing into the Evenlode, which was formerly called the Bladen. The name Colnham has not survived in North Leigh, but it does occur in the 1609 description of Combe, as the name of a meadow by the river. From this point the Wychwood boundary would follow the Evenlode upstream as far as Stonesfield Ford.

The Perambulation of 1298 therefore put the whole of the eastern part of North Leigh out of the Forest and enabled the Abbot of Netley's tenants to clear any as yet un-assarted portions of his manor without supervision by the Forest officials, although possibly this was merely confirmation of a situation which already existed, as the Abbot had one wood and three groves 'out of regard' in 1294.

The area which remained within the Forest was the most densely settled part of the manor, and it seems possible that this represents the *leah* to which North Leigh owes its name—probably originally a scatter of dwellings on the edge of a clearing. How ancient this settlement was cannot of course be deduced from this survey, but the area contains a large number of small irregular fields which did not form part of the common field system, it adjoins the site of the Shakenoak villa which was occupied in the Roman period and again in the seventh and eighth

³⁹ Quoted by M. Gelling in A. C. Brodribb, A. R. Hands, and D. R. Walker, *Excavations at Shakenoak*, III (1972), 135.

⁴⁰ Perrott's Notebook, ff. 1, 46, 117.

⁴¹ 'Forsakenho' or 'Forsakenhok' occurs in two other places in the Wychwood area as a name for a deserted dwelling. H. E. Salter (ed.), *Eynsham Cartulary*, I, Oxf. Hist. Soc. XLIX, 363, footnote.

centuries,⁴² and the parish boundary has two right-angled bends (at New Yatt) implying some recognized boundaries already in existence in A.D. 969 the date of a charter of the adjoining manor of Witney.⁴³

⁴² A. C. Brodribb, A. R. Hands, and D. R. Walker, *Excavations at Shakenoak*, III (1972), 31-33. The excavators' interpretation of the continuity of occupation of the site has been criticized by P. D. C. Brown, *Britannia*, III (1972), 376-7, and by L. Alcock, *Medieval Archaeology*, xvii (1973), 189-90.

⁴³ BCS 1230. The boundaries have been discussed by M. Gelling, *Excavations at Shakenoak*, III (1972), 134-139.