

# The Deserted Medieval Village of Thomley, Oxfordshire

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## SUMMARY

*This study of a hamlet on the Oxon-Bucks border tries to reconstruct its medieval topography and society, and to explain its eventual desertion. The records of one major landowner, Oseney Abbey, provide much of the evidence. Topics covered are: the fragmented manorial structure; the village plan and the siting of the manor-houses; a 12th-century windmill nearby; the field-system, with evidence for its development and reapportionment; byelaws; ploughing arrangements; cropping and harvesting; sheep-farming; meadow and pasture; the 13th-century decline of resident gentry and freeholding families; land-acquisitions by freeholders; the early decline of villeinage; production and living-standards. Factors are identified which help to explain the post-Black Death decline of Thomley: the marginal character of the settlement between two villages; the lack of a church, a market, a fair or a mill; the lack of unifying lordship; and a tendency for land to be bought up by outsiders, undermining the village community.*

## INTRODUCTION

This study of Thomley (SP 631090) covers the period 1086-1349, with emphasis on the 13th and early 14th centuries. Its main purpose is to explain the eventual desertion of the settlement through an examination of land-tenure and local society. While there are indications that smallholders, even those with half a yardland or less, were not badly off, it is equally clear that the village was declining in this period: between 1279 and 1377 the recorded population dropped by at least a third. Thomley's final extinction lay in the 16th-century enclosures, but its decay can probably be traced back to earlier circumstances: its marginal position between two larger villages, the lack of any focus such as a church or market, and a tendency for holdings to pass into the hands of outside proprietors.

The main sources are the cartularies of Oseney Abbey and St. Frideswide's Priory, Oseney account-rolls for 1279/80 and 1328-49 (Bodleian MS Dep. Deeds Ch. Ch. 44-61), deeds at Magdalen College, and central records. The account-rolls are usually cited by date in the text; their Bodleian references can be obtained from the table printed below on p. 238. One Magdalen deed is printed as an appendix (below, p. 238) because of the information that it provides about tenants and field-names.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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#### THE MANOR: DESCENT AND FRAGMENTATION

Thomley was a hamlet of Waterperry (Oxon), although a small portion lay in Buckinghamshire, in the parish of Worminghall. As its name implies, it was probably established in an area of light woodland or in a clearing of Bernwood Forest. Ekwall translates Thomley as 'wood or meadow haunted by dwarfs or fairies', equating the first element with *thuma* (dwarf).<sup>1</sup> M. Gelling suggests, more prosaically, that 'Thuma' or 'Thoma' could have been a personal name.<sup>2</sup> In c. 1200 a piece of arable was called 'Thomesacre' which, it is tempting to assume, relates to the original 'Thoma'.<sup>3</sup> One hundred Oxfordshire *leahs* were recorded in the place-name survey of 1953, and Thomley is among the 28 mentioned in or before 1086.<sup>4</sup>

Thomley appears in Domesday Book as 4 hides held by Hervey of the Bishop of Bayeux, and half a hide held by Roger of Miles Crispin.<sup>5</sup> These five hides stretched across the Roman road which divided Buckinghamshire from Oxfordshire. The manor's north-west boundary lay where today is a minor road called Smith's Lane, bordering Waterperry common. Most of its western boundary was a stream, the Harse (*Harese*),<sup>6</sup> today called the Worminghall Brook, while the extreme south-west was bounded by the Thame. On the south-east Thomley was divided from Worminghall by the county boundary, also the western boundary of Bernwood Forest.<sup>7</sup> The whole area slopes gently from just over 200 feet in the north to 100 feet in the barely perceptible valley of the Harse leading down to the Thame.

Miles Crispin seems to have received his half-hide from Robert d'Oilli, whose daughter he married,<sup>8</sup> but by c. 1124 Robert d'Oilli II granted it to St. Frideswide's Priory, Oxford.<sup>9</sup> Henry d'Oilli confirmed his father's gift in c. 1130, and Ralph, son of Roger, who had previously held the land,<sup>10</sup> witnessed this deed. Earlier, in c. 1124, this gift had been included in a confirmation by Pope Honorius II.<sup>11</sup>

In the late 12th century Juliana, daughter of Hugh son of Lancelin, claimed half a hide of land in Thomley, evidently the half-hide in question. She successfully established her claim in 1187/8, and thereafter held it of St. Frideswide for half a mark yearly.<sup>12</sup> Shortly afterwards she married Henry Beaufiz;<sup>13</sup> this land, which passed to him, was mentioned in a tithe agreement between Oseney and St. Frideswide's as 'the half-hide of the Prior [of St. Frideswide] which used to belong to Henry Beaufiz in Thomley'.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, (4th ed., 1960), 466.

<sup>2</sup> M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, i (E.P.N.S. xxiii, 1971), 11, 189.

<sup>3</sup> *The Cartulary of the Monastery of St. Frideswide*, ed. S.P. Wigram, ii (O.H.S. xxi, 1896), 157.

<sup>4</sup> H.E. Hallam, *Rural England 1066-1348* (1981), 150.

<sup>5</sup> *Domesday Book*, xiv, *Oxfordshire*, (ed. J. Morris, Phillimore, 1978), 7, 31; 35, 15.

<sup>6</sup> *The Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, ed. H.E. Salter, iv (O.H.S. xcvi, 1934), 394, 402.

<sup>7</sup> *The Boarstall Cartulary*, ed. H.E. Salter, (O.H.S. lxxxviii, 1930), 181.

<sup>8</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* i, 383.

<sup>9</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 208.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

<sup>11</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i, 14 (see also 22, 28, 47).

<sup>12</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 156.

<sup>13</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 157.

<sup>14</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 31.

The Beaufiz sold much of their land in Thomley to St. Frideswide's over the next twenty years, their daughters Lucy and Matilda inheriting what was left (a third of half a hide each).<sup>15</sup> By 1220 Juliana's half-hide had all been re-possessed by the Priory.<sup>16</sup> St. Frideswide's held Worminghall church, to which part of this half-hide became attached.<sup>17</sup> The Tithe Map of 1841 marks the Worminghall glebe lands as 'Thomley in Worminghall'. By the time of the Hundred Rolls (1279), Thomley had lost half a hide and was returned as consisting of 4 hides only.<sup>18</sup>

Domesday Book records Thomley as having 12 households and enough arable land for 4 ploughs, with 20 acres of meadow and a large wooded area 7 furlongs by 3. The overlordship of this main manor, the 4 hides held in 1086 by Hervey, one of the King's officers, had come by the late 12th century into the possession of the Scalebroc family; they held of the Constable of Chester, the estate belonging to the honour of Pontefract held by the earls of Lincoln.<sup>19</sup> In turn the de Brug (Brugges/Bruilli/Bruly) family held of the Scalebrocs, to whom they became related when William de Brug married Oliver de Scalebroc's daughter Olive.<sup>20</sup>

The local tenant of the 4 hides was one Godfrey,<sup>21</sup> whose sons Jordan and Ruald had inherited it by 1180.<sup>22</sup> By 1242 Jordan's grandson Robert was known as Robert de Sthumel<sup>23</sup> (Thomley); his descendants remained the leading family in Thomley until the 14th century, retaining lordship over the 4 hides.<sup>24</sup> In c. 1180 Jordan and Ruald gave a hide to the monks of Stratford Langthorne (Sussex), confirmed by Jordan's son Henry, which the latter immediately conveyed to St. Frideswide's.<sup>25</sup> Thus by the end of the 12th century St. Frideswide's held 1½ hides in Thomley, which they kept until the Dissolution.

St. Frideswide's kept one yardland in demesne, but the rest was in the hands of three tenants by the 13th century.<sup>26</sup> In c. 1230 a resale of 3 of these yardlands by the sons or grandsons of the original tenants<sup>27</sup> may perhaps be seen as an effort on the part of St. Frideswide's to enlarge their demesne. This policy may have been helped by the difficulties of local tenants: one states that he is selling *ad ardua negocia mea expedienda*.<sup>28</sup> Henry son of Jordan was dead by 1205;<sup>29</sup> his son Robert disposed of much of the property left to him: half a hide to Goring nunnery which eventually went to Oseney,<sup>30</sup> and other land and woodland which were bought by Oseney<sup>31</sup> and St. Frideswide's.<sup>32</sup>

By 1279 the land was largely fragmented between religious houses and several smallholders. A grant of 1230, which describes half a yardland half-acre by half-acre, implies that a yardland in Thomley consisted of 23 acres,<sup>33</sup> though documents specify the

<sup>15</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 160.

<sup>16</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 157-161.

<sup>17</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i, 29.

<sup>18</sup> *Rotuli Hundredorum temp. Hen III et Edw. I*, (Rec. Comm.), ii, 714 ff.

<sup>19</sup> *Calendar of Inq. P.M.* v, 156; *Book of Fees*, i, 449, ii, 826, 838.

<sup>20</sup> *Curia Regis Rolls*, iii, 267; iv, 245.

<sup>21</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 155.

<sup>22</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 154.

<sup>23</sup> *Book of Fees*, ii, 826, 838.

<sup>24</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 173.

<sup>25</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 154-5.

<sup>26</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 162, 142.

<sup>27</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 161 (Wigram's date is doubtful), 163.

<sup>28</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 164.

<sup>29</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 392.

<sup>30</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 392, 393.

<sup>31</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 396.

<sup>32</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 165.

<sup>33</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 163-4.

formal 120-acre hide which would give 30 acres to the yardland.<sup>34</sup> Whatever the acreage, Oseney Abbey held 2 yardlands of the nuns of Goring and another yardland plus 26 acres of Robert of Thomley and his son Ellis. Two tenants of Oseney held in villeinage, one a yardland, the other a half-yardland and three cottages, paying 5s. 9d. rent for the latter. The rest of the Oseney land was held in demesne.

Dorchester Abbey held 2 acres of meadow, 2s. rent, 8 messuages, and 4 yardlands, which probably had originally been 8 half-yardland holdings each with a messuage. Two sitting tenants held roughly half a yardland each for a money rent; one of them, Reginald Kute, held his half-yardland for the life of his wife, and the other 3 yardlands at the will of the lord.<sup>35</sup>

St. Frideswide's Priory held 4 yardlands; the two obtained from the Beaufiz do not appear in the Hundred Rolls, but other evidence shows that they held this half-hide until the Dissolution.<sup>36</sup> John FitzNigel of Boarstall, whose sister had married into the FitzEllis family, had been buying land towards the latter part of the 13th century,<sup>37</sup> and by 1279 had acquired 2 yardlands free of all service except scutage. He also held a third of the court curtilage, which the lord of the manor rented back from him, and he was also Dorchester's other sitting tenant. Geoffrey le Frank, perhaps a descendant of John Franklyn mentioned in the 1220s, held a yardland of Robert de Thomele for a pound of cumin yearly and scutage. A Robert Toluse held a yardland of the Preceptor of Cowley for 13d. yearly and scutage; he also held 4 cottages freely. Two other smallholders, Robert Pesewombe and Robert Geri, held for money rent only. The former held a curtilage from John FitzNigel for 2s. rent, the latter held 7 acres of the widow of William Oliver for 1d. The number of freeholders is unusual, and suggests that a land-market was already developing to the detriment of manorial tenure.<sup>38</sup>

By 1284 Oseney Abbey held 138 acres of arable, with meadow and wood, of Robert son of Ellis of Thomley.<sup>39</sup> Oseney's purchases clearly show a policy of consolidation. In the first quarter of the century, they bought a grove, a holding of 7 acres and another of 5 acres all near one another (the 12 acres of the Hundred Rolls). The grove was cleared immediately and permission obtained from Robert to ditch around the cleared land and the 7 acres adjoining it.<sup>40</sup> A half-acre running the length of their ditch was bought,<sup>41</sup> and after some years the canons were able to buy 2 acres, previously held by Robert's grandmother Basilia, which lay scattered among their 5 acres.<sup>42</sup> This gave them a large holding to the north-east of Thomley. They obtained another piece of land to the south described in Robert's charter as 'my breche',<sup>43</sup> and later, in c. 1260, Ellis the earlier Robert's son sold them a gore next the river and near this 'breche', giving them permission to enclose the whole with either a ditch, a hedge, or wall and to shut it off at any time from any outside use as pasture.<sup>44</sup> This 'breche' eventually became part of Waterperry property;<sup>45</sup> the ditch was kept up and was still to be seen in the 19th century.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 168.

<sup>35</sup> *Rot. Hund.* ii, 714.

<sup>36</sup> Magdalen College Deeds, Thomley 133.

<sup>37</sup> *Boarstall Cart.*, 97, 98, 99, 100.

<sup>38</sup> *Rot. Hund.* ii, 714 ff.

<sup>39</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 403.

<sup>40</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 396.

<sup>41</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 401.

<sup>42</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 398.

<sup>43</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 396.

<sup>44</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 401-2.

<sup>45</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 302-3.

<sup>46</sup> *Mag. Coll.*, Estate Memoranda: 148/38: memorandum of Edward Nicholas.

St. Frideswide's too tried to consolidate their holdings. Over a period of ten years (1230 to 1240) Robert sold them 13½ acres in the demesne furlong called Shorteland (Sortelande).<sup>47</sup> They already had one butt in Shortelande sold them by Lucy Beaufiz,<sup>48</sup> and finally they bought another 16 butts in the same furlong.<sup>49</sup>

By 1279 the lords of Thomley had alienated all their land except one yardland held in demesne, though retaining overlordship of the whole 4 hides.<sup>50</sup> Robert FitzEllis of Thomley was dead by 1316, when the lordship of Thomley was divided between John de Thomley (his son), the Abbot of Oseney and the Abbot of Dorchester.<sup>51</sup> Later events are confused. The first John left a son, a minor, also called John, who ratified his charter of 1332/3 on his coming of age in 1344.<sup>52</sup> In the earlier charter he had relinquished all his manorial rights over the land held by St. Frideswide's. Apparently he also surrendered his rights over any land held by Oseney, for Oseney's account-roll of 1338/9 records the payment of 8s. for the 'relief' of the tenants or tenancy (*tenent*) of John de Thomley. This would explain why he styled himself in the 1344 charter as *quondam dominus de Thomley*.

A terrier of 1535 lists as lords of Thomley: the Abbot of Oseney, the Abbot of Dorchester, the Prior of St. Frideswide's, a Mr. Tirrell, a Mr. Dormer, Magdalen College, the Prioress of Studley and the Vicar of Worminghall. It also shows that although there was considerable consolidation of land on the part of Oseney and Dorchester Abbeys and St. Frideswide's Priory, much land still lay in scattered strips. Further examination of the document is outside the scope of this article.<sup>53</sup>

The documents give a strong overall impression that already by the late 13th century the tenurial structure of Thomley was, for Oxfordshire, exceptionally complex and fluid. This fact may go a long way towards explaining its later decline as a village community.

#### THE MANOR-HOUSES AND VILLAGE

A survey of the deserted village earthworks was carried out in April 1979 (Fig. 1). Ridge and furrow, boundary ditches, two ponds and house platforms were recorded, though some of the latter seem to post-date the ridge and furrow. Most of the village site has been ploughed out, but the north-western portion is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The village site was oblong, sloping from the north-west to the south-east with a large central pond near the northern end. Walking the site, it is noticeable how steeply the village sloped to the south-east. At its northern end are ditches defining a roughly rectilinear area (Fig. 2); it may be suggested that the main manor-house was at this end, with Oseney's hall and outbuildings at the opposing end where Thomley Hall Farm now stands. Documentary sources show that the manor-house was substantial, with a gate-house and a garden attached.<sup>54</sup> In c. 1220 Henry de Thomley's widow was provided by her step-son with her own house at the gates of the manor;<sup>55</sup> a mention of a green place separating the manor from its neighbour may indicate a village green.<sup>56</sup> The back road to one of the fields passed right

<sup>47</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 164.

<sup>48</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 159.

<sup>49</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 164.

<sup>50</sup> *Rot. Hund.* ii, 714 ff; *Cart. St. Frid.*, ii, 168-9.

<sup>51</sup> *Feudal Aids*, iv, 168.

<sup>52</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 173.

<sup>53</sup> *Mag. Coll.*, Deeds Thomley 133.

<sup>54</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 397, 399; *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 158.

<sup>55</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 397.

<sup>56</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 398.

# Thomley, Oxon.

Deserted village and field system

P.R.N. 1,077

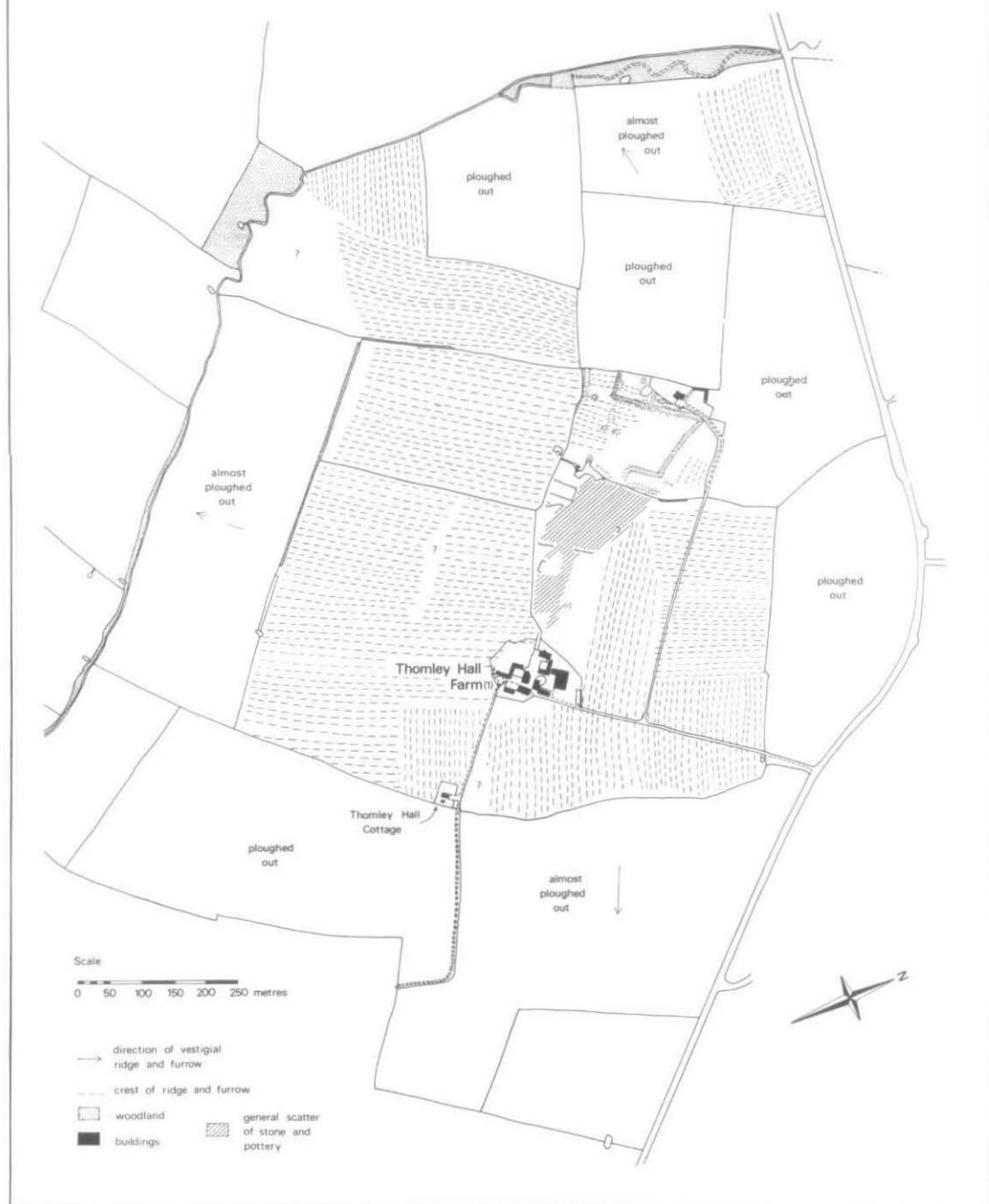


Fig. 1 Thomley deserted village in 1979, with the standing buildings and the surrounding ridge and furrow. (Survey by John Moore and Heather Bird under the supervision of R.A. Chambers of the Oxford Archaeological Unit).

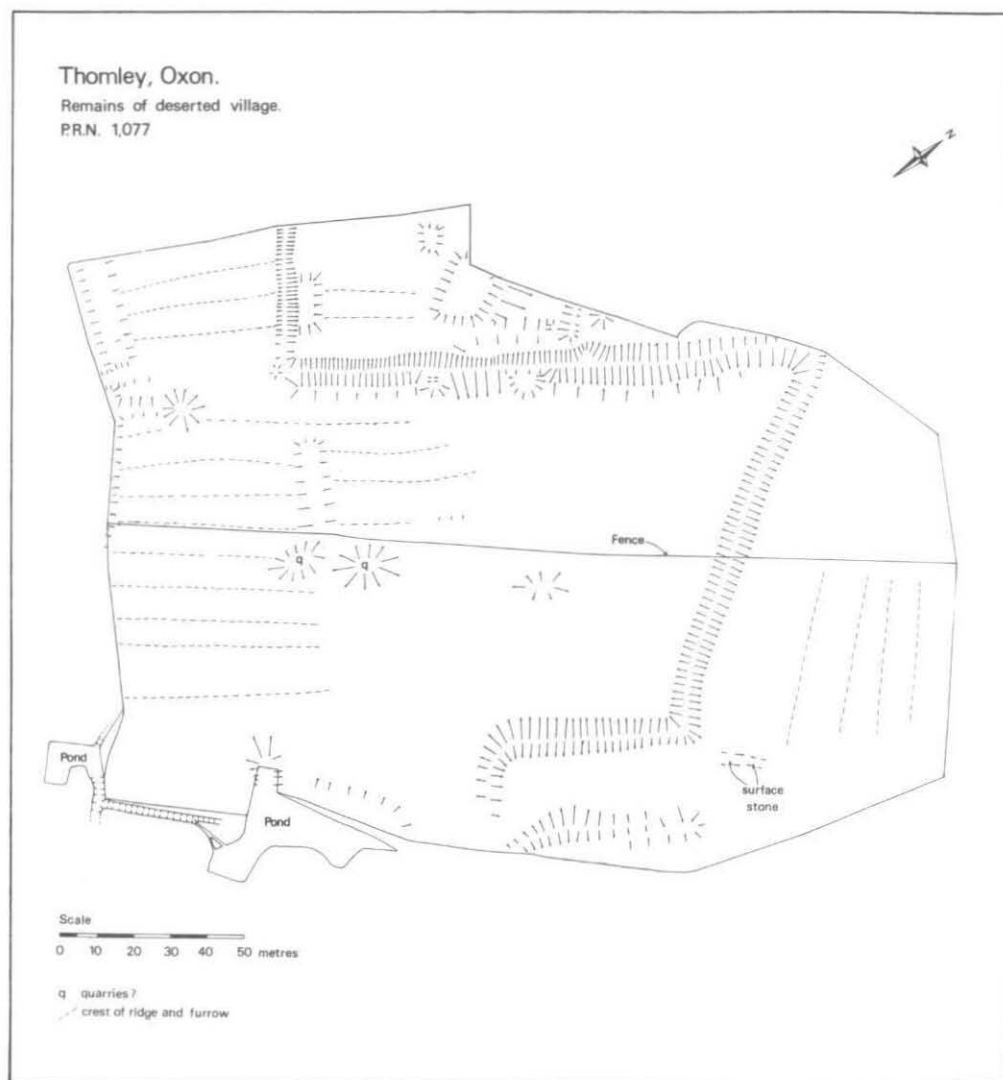


Fig. 2 Boundary ditches at the northern end of Thomley village site. (Survey by John Moore, Heather Bird and R.A. Chambers).

by the manor, as a concessionary clause in a charter of 1220 indicates. In it, free passage (*liberum introitum et exitum et transitum cum rebus*) is granted to the Canons of Oseney along this track, which passes right by the gates of the manor, whenever this track is open to the field.<sup>57</sup>

Oseney's hall was also a substantial building with a cellar, a kitchen with a bread-oven and several outbuildings including a malt-house and brew-house.<sup>58</sup> The old Thomley Hall Farm, enlarged and rebuilt in the 19th century, has a 17th-century core. The cellar, which

<sup>57</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 402.

<sup>58</sup> Account Rolls 47, 51, 52, 53, 57, 58, 60.



has one wall of dressed stone and the other of coursed rubble, seems to be older than the rest. A grant to Sir John Brome in 1543 of 'the chief messuage and lands called 'les demesne lands' in Thomley . . . which belonged to Oseney monastery', may refer to the original building here.<sup>59</sup>

We can gather that there were at least 30 other dwellings by 1279,<sup>60</sup> some are also mentioned in 13th-century charters which throw light on their relative positions.<sup>61</sup> There is no indication of the type of buildings; the normal term for a house with land was 'messuage', though *curia* and *edificium* are also used.<sup>62</sup> Some buildings had yards attached, and one or two a garden. Entries in the account-rolls give us some information on Oseney's outbuildings. Many were thatched:<sup>63</sup> there are numerous references to women sorting straw for the thatcher and to the buying or making of pins from withies to hold the thatch. By 1345, however, one of the Oseney granges was roofed with slate or stone, though other buildings continued to be thatched. A whole building was not necessarily thatched at once, and parts of buildings could be renewed in a fairly piecemeal manner. The bread-oven undergoing one of its many repairs in 1347 was already over 60 years old by that date;<sup>64</sup> a gable would be built in the sheep-house, a couple of perches in the wall of the ox-house, a new door inserted here or there, walls repaired or lengthened. Constant references to the employment of masons and other workers<sup>65</sup> give a sense of continual change, and emphasise the flimsy nature of many structures.

Two wells exist, one at each end of the village site. A Chyueles well (Chenerswelle) is mentioned in the 13th and 14th centuries<sup>66</sup> and a Suanewelle in the 14th (appendix), but which is which is now unknown.<sup>67</sup>

Exceptionally, there was no mill in Thomley. Probably the nearest was a windmill just over the county boundary, on the road to Worminghall called the Portway.<sup>68</sup> This is one of the earliest windmills known in the area. In c. 1160 Henry son of Goce of Worminghall granted land in the field of Worminghall to St. Frideswide's, 1½ acres of which lay 'against the windmill'.<sup>69</sup> In the same period Juliana, daughter of Walter the blacksmith of Waterperry, gave 1 acre of land in Worminghall of which half an acre lay in White forlong 'next the windmill towards Oakley'.<sup>70</sup> In c. 1210 Lucy Beaufiz also transferred land to St. Frideswide's, some of which, in her 5-acre piece 'nearest the village of Worminghall', was 'near the windmill'.<sup>71</sup> Finally, in 1290, Joan widow of Thomas FitzEllis granted to her brother, John FitzNigel, a plot of land in Worminghall called 'Windmille Stubbe', 'where once was a windmill in the time of William FitzEllis, by the road which runs from Worminghall to la Brodeway towards the forest'.<sup>72</sup> William FitzEllis was dead by 1225, which suggests that the mill fell into disuse in the early 13th century: John was to repair it for the use of the village of Worminghall, while Joan was to keep her right of multure.<sup>73</sup> There

<sup>59</sup> *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic*, 35 Hen. VIII, 623.

<sup>60</sup> *Rot. Hund.* ii, 714 ff.

<sup>61</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 392, 396, 398, 399; *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 171.

<sup>62</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 157, 162, 169; *Oseney Cart.* iv, 395 ff.

<sup>63</sup> Account rolls 51, 52, 53, 57, 58, 60.

<sup>64</sup> Account rolls 60, 44 etc.

<sup>65</sup> Account rolls e.g. 51, 52, 53, 56, 58, 60.

<sup>66</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 400; *Mag. Coll.*, MS 132.

<sup>67</sup> *Mag. Coll.*, MS 132.

<sup>68</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 159.

<sup>69</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 142-3.

<sup>70</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 143.

<sup>71</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 160.

<sup>72</sup> *Boarstall Cart.* 96.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. cit.



seems to have been another mill near Ledhall on the other side of Thomley; a field there was called 'Mill Field' from at least the 16th century.<sup>74</sup> The only other mill recorded in the vicinity was a watermill on the Thame attached to Waterstock.<sup>75</sup> Oseney may have sent their corn to Forest Hill, where they had a mill in 1337/8; the account rolls show that they had one full-time carter and employed four or five others at harvest-time for several weeks.

The other great lack in Thomley was a church. As Thomley was a hamlet of Waterperry it was to its church that the villagers had to go, at least on Sundays, feast-days and for the most important rituals of their lives. From the establishment of parish registers Thomley villagers were baptised, married and buried at Waterperry, and in the 18th century pews were allocated to the different families with a bench 'for the poor of Thomley'.<sup>76</sup>

There were orchards, gardens and various enclosures around the village.<sup>77</sup> In 1332/3 Oseney bought three cartloads of brushwood '... for the enclosing of the garden and curtilage'. In 1341 two men were engaged to make an enclosure around the Thomley sheepcote, 5 perches in length. There are numerous 14th-century references to the renewing of the fencing of enclosures with hurdles or brushwood, and in the making of doors for access.<sup>78</sup> As well as temporary brushwood hedges there were also quickset hedges; an entry in the 1346/7 account mentions a sickle bought 'to prune the hedge'. There were larger enclosures too, and in at least one close, shared by Ellis de Thomley and John FitzNigel in 1265, a three-course rotation was followed: two consecutive sowings and then a fallow year.<sup>79</sup>

#### THE FIELDS AND ARABLE FARMING (Fig. 3)

Three-field villages in Oxfordshire were rarely documented before the 14th century. Gray, in *English Field Systems*, names 46 villages in Oxfordshire with two-field systems but only 9 villages with early three-field systems; Thomley was one of these.<sup>80</sup> There are several references to the fields of Thomley, but the plainest is one in c. 1220 where the fields are described respectively as facing Oakley, Ledhale and the meadows.<sup>81</sup> Another charter of c. 1210 describes this last field as facing Worminghall, while other entries place the main meadow-land in the narrow neck of Thomley reaching down to the Thame.<sup>82</sup> This means that the third field was to the south-west of the village. Oakley lies north-east of Thomley while Ledhale is to the west. Possibly this south-west field was carved out of the other two, and perhaps out of assarted land in the same area as Robert's 'breche'. That this field was later than the other two is suggested by the fact that there seem to be two Langehull furlongs and two Harsefurlongs; a Langehull in the north-east field and also in the south-west field, one Harsefurlong in the west field and again in the south-west. Lucy Beaufiz's grant to St. Frideswide's in c. 1210 mentions Langehull furlong 'in the field facing the grove', indicating that the grove in question is to the north-east.<sup>83</sup> In c. 1220 Robert de

<sup>74</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 304.

<sup>75</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 305.

<sup>76</sup> O.R.O. Waterperry parish chest, d. i. 55.

<sup>77</sup> Account Rolls 48, 50, 52, 53, 60; *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 157, 158; *Oseney Cart.* iv, 397-8.

<sup>78</sup> Account Rolls 48, 53, 60.

<sup>79</sup> *Boarstall Cart.* 99.

<sup>80</sup> H.L. Gray, *English Field Systems* (Harvard Hist. Studies xxii, 1915), App. 2, 490-1.

<sup>81</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 396.

<sup>82</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 394.

<sup>83</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 158-9.

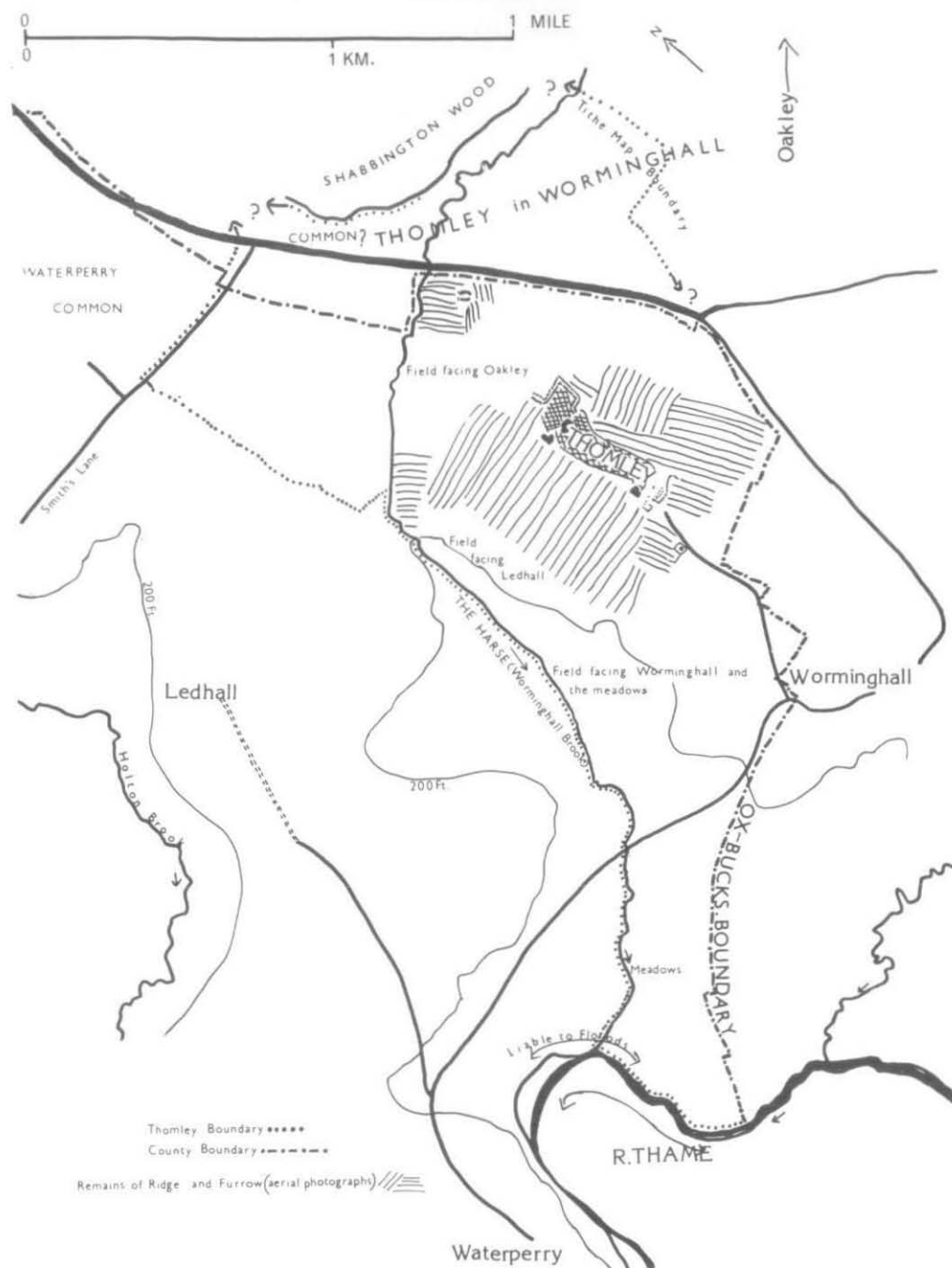


Fig. 3 Sketch-map of Thomley and its environs in the middle ages.

Thomley describes this grove as being next to the 5 acres which he is selling to Oseney and which are beside 'the road that divides Buckinghamshire from Oxfordshire'.<sup>84</sup> Lucy also mentions that she has some land 'beyond the grove near the Portway to Worminghall'. This field was clearly the one facing Oakley. Langehull furlong is also said to be 'in the other field facing Worminghall' or the south-west field. In her charter of c. 1210 Lucy Beaufiz speaks of an acre of land in Harsefurlong, and later of an acre 'in the other field in Harsefurlong'.<sup>85</sup> From the course of the Harse, these two fields must be the west field and the south-west field. It is a possible inference that these two furlongs existed in an earlier two-field system or even pre-existed any field system, and were divided at the creation of a third field perhaps in the 12th century. In c. 1220 Robert sold to Oseney 11 acres previously held by one tenant. The land is divided between the three fields fairly evenly but with the largest portion (4 acres) in the south-west field.<sup>86</sup> The division suggests a three-course rotation; this is borne out by a reference to 'the fallow field' in c. 1230.<sup>87</sup>

This situation may have changed by the 14th century. Oseney accounts show that four other crops as well as wheat were sown fairly regularly, but the annual tithe returns show that although the villagers of Waterperry, Thomley and Ledhale always sowed wheat, they occasionally missed out either barley, drage or oats. No longer, perhaps, is an entire field left fallow, and the rotation pattern has become more complicated. Here then we are witnessing a change in the three-field system, itself the culmination of a long evolution which left some traces despite reorganisation.

One such trace is perceptible in the charters of Thomley. Subsequent to the original piecemeal cultivation, a stage may have arisen at which land was re-distributed according to some unit of measurement and some method of allowing each villager a fair portion of land of varying quality.<sup>88</sup> In Europe and in the north of Britain there is frequent mention of land 'facing the sun' or 'facing the shade'. In a land of mountains and valleys this was an important factor in land-division, but surprisingly we come across the same definition in Thomley where the land on all sides is open to the sun. In c. 1230 William FitzOliver reconveyed half a yardland to St. Frideswide's and described one of his half-acre strips as being *versus solem* while others are *versus aquilonem* or again *versus solem*.<sup>89</sup> He also surrendered that half of the meadow belonging to the yardland which was *versus solem*.<sup>90</sup> Robert de Thomley gave the Knights Templars one yardland of two previously held by his father; it lay *versus umbram* implying that the other was *versus solem*.<sup>91</sup> We know from other charters that this yardland would have been scattered among the three fields, and evidently lay in acre or half-acre strips in the same relative position in each furlong, either facing the sun or the shade, and that Robert was giving the Knights Templars what might be termed the least advantageous of the two. In the first quarter of the 13th century John FitzAlan, referring to half a hide which he held of Oseney, speaks of one yardland as lying *ad occidentem* and the other *ad orientem*, which would give the same orientation as 'facing the shade' and 'facing the sun'.<sup>92</sup> These references show that traces of a system of regular apportionment of holdings survived into the 13th century.

<sup>84</sup> Oseney Cart. iv, 396.

<sup>85</sup> Cart. St. Frid. ii, 159.

<sup>86</sup> Oseney Cart. iv, 396.

<sup>87</sup> Cart. St. Frid. ii, 164-5.

<sup>88</sup> On shareholding and open field-systems see R.A. Dodgshon. *The Origin of British Field-Systems* (1980).

<sup>89</sup> Cart. St. Frid. ii, 163.

<sup>90</sup> Cart. St. Frid. ii, 164.

<sup>91</sup> Sandford Cartulary, i (O.R.S. 19, 1937), 111.

<sup>92</sup> Oseney Cart. iv, 393.

## ORGANISATION AND BYELAWS

Evidence is scanty for the existence of customary or common rules for Thomley and the other villages in the vicinity. A phrase in the account-roll for 1338/9 implies written rules for Waterperry and its hamlets. In that year the Abbot of Oseney, through his men, was amerced for breaking the 'harvest articles' regarding the carrying of corn. The 'articles' were perhaps a series of regulations like those to be found in the court rolls of Great Horwood and Newton Longville, (Bucks).<sup>93</sup> Other fines recorded for four different courts regarding the infringement of regulations connected with the hay harvest or the pasturing of animals bear out the assumption that the local communities had some common rules.<sup>94</sup> On the other hand, there are several charters of the preceding century concerning Thomley, Waterstock and Waterperry in which there are concessionary clauses guaranteeing access to arable or meadow or qualifying that right, indicating that some paths between the villages and the fields were closed at certain times and also that there were variable dates for the opening and closing of meadows and common.<sup>95</sup> These clauses suggest an absence of rules; the articles may have been a 14th-century innovation, or perhaps applied to only part of the township.

Matters that affected a village community were usually decided at the manor court, but in Thomley, at least by 1316, there was a tripartite division of the manor between John de Thomley, the Abbot of Oseney and the Abbot of Dorchester, each of whom would have held his own court.<sup>96</sup> It seems likely that there were supra-manorial village assemblies for determining farming procedure and an individual's rights. There also seem to have been certain customs on the Oseney manor at least. Issues of corn were made to the poor at Easter,<sup>97</sup> the shepherd received his 'customary' due of one fleece (as for example in 1335/6 and 1338/9), the servants had their 'ripagos', and gloves were issued to the servants for the weeding;<sup>98</sup> in those years when these were not given, their value in money was given instead.<sup>99</sup> The reapers received a 'customary' bushel of corn, and grain and money wages followed a set scale.

## THE ARABLE ECONOMY

The only evidence for the possible number of draught animals owned by any one villager in the Thomley area lies in three documents: one for the 13th century, the other two for the 16th. The 13th-century document refers to the stinting of beasts and sheep in Thomley and allows 4 beasts to the yardland.<sup>100</sup> A terrier of 1530 gives the same stint, and in an Oseney court held in 1358 for Forest Hill, Ledhale, Thomley and Draycote, 3 villagers were amerced, two for having 3 cows each in their lord's corn and the other 4 cows.<sup>101</sup> It may be presumed that villagers would have had to share their beasts in order to form the plough-teams needed to plough their land, and to perform either their labour dues or the

<sup>93</sup> W.O. Ault, *Open Field Farming in Medieval England* (1972), 98-101.

<sup>94</sup> Account Rolls 52, 53.

<sup>95</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 381, 383, 387, 402.

<sup>96</sup> *Feudal Aids*, iv, 168.

<sup>97</sup> Account Rolls 51, 52, 53, 59, 60, 61.

<sup>98</sup> Account Rolls 47, 50, 52, 53, 61.

<sup>99</sup> Account Rolls 52, 53.

<sup>100</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 142; *Rot. Hugonis de Welles*, ii (Linc. Rec. Soc. 6), 75.

<sup>101</sup> Mag. Coll., Deeds Thomley 133; Bodl. MS Ch. 351.

ploughing for which they were hired. Oseney had several ploughs and two teams in demesne and regularly employed two more ploughs each autumn and spring, but on at least one occasion (in 1337) the bailiff engaged 14 ploughs and 24 men to prepare the ground for the spring sowing. The accounts for that year specify that the spring sowing was only on demesne land in Waterperry and Thomley, so the ploughs must have come from these two villages. Waterperry was the larger village, but by far the greater part of Oseney's land lay in Thomley; it is not possible to know in what ratio the ploughs were supplied. At Oseney's usual 3 bushels per acre for barley, pulses and oats, the amount of grain set aside for sowing indicates that approximately 80 acres had to be ploughed. At two-thirds to three-quarters of an acre per day, this represents 8 to 10 days work for the 14 ploughs;<sup>102</sup> the villagers had also to prepare their own ground to be ready for the same sowing time.

The ploughs used on the Oseney estate were made of wood with iron-tipped shares and protective iron plates; they do not seem to have had wheels.<sup>103</sup> These ploughs were not sturdy enough to stand up to constant use; repairs to them are prominent in the accounts. An average of 12 to 14 oxen were kept, but several times one or more milk-cows had to be used to complete the teams. The account for 1337/8 records '... 8 stone of cheese and 3 gallons of butter from the dairy and not more because the cows were continually working at the plough for lack of oxen', and an annexe sewn to this account notes that one cow had lost her calf while working at the plough. During the preceding year 7 oxen had died; the bailiff had managed to muster 9 oxen with the help of Oseney and Great Barton, but needed another 3 to complete his teams. In 1338/9 once again 2 cows were constantly working at the plough; the villagers must often have been in a like situation, and would have had to forgo their calf, their milk and butter or run the risk of a cow or its calf dying when calving.

For the six-ox teams the bailiff bought yokes and 6 or 12 ox-bows at a time;<sup>104</sup> the accompanying collar and easements were stuffed with hair and wool and were made on the estate.<sup>105</sup> Traces and other parts used with the plough or harrow were also home-made, of hemp usually grown on the estate though occasionally bought for this purpose.

Wheat, barley or drage, oats, peas and beans, and sometimes vetch were the invariable crops sown in the open fields in the period covered by the 14th-century account-rolls. In the one extant account-roll from the late 13th-century (1279/80) is a reference to 'myxtil received, 126 qrs. 5 bz'. The word *myxtil* (*mixture*) refers to mixed corn, usually wheat and rye, but the later accounts make it abundantly clear that a mixture of wheat, barley or drage is meant here. Mixed peas and beans were also used in the *mixture* on occasion, perhaps when barley or wheat was in short supply. Occasionally the grain liveries seem to have been kept separate, as in 1335/6 when the liveries were recorded as 12 qrs. 1 bz. wheat; 21 qrs. 2 bz. barley; 2 qrs. 1 bz. drage; 1 qr. 5 bz. pulse. The yield was never very large, varying between three- and five-fold; it was measured with the levelled strike, but often too the yield would be estimated for sales made while the corn was still standing in the field.<sup>106</sup>

From 1335 to 1349 the tithes were entered for the three villages; hence we know that other cultivators' crops matched Oseney's, though they sometimes alternated between barley and drage or grew a mixture of the two recorded as barley-drage. Several times, too, they do not seem to have grown oats; even when they did, their tithes of oats often only

<sup>102</sup> C.S. Orwin, *The Open Fields* (1967), 36 note.

<sup>103</sup> Account Rolls, 50, 56, 60, etc.

<sup>104</sup> Account Rolls, 52, 56, 58, 60.

<sup>105</sup> Account Rolls, 58, 59, 60.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. D. Postles, 'Grain Issues from some Properties of Oseney Abbey', *Oxoniensia*, xlv (1979).

amounted to 3 qrs. Assuming that the amount entered represented a tenth of the villagers' yield it would seem that pulses, averaging 206 qrs., and barley, averaging 205 qrs., gave the best yield or were more widely sown.

Wheat, barley and sometimes drage were used by Oseney for first-grade ale (for example in 1337/8), but that brewed for servants and workers was always made from drage (a mixture of oats and barley, or perhaps a different species of barley). Thirty or so quarters of grain would be malted each year and the draft (malt dregs) and sometimes small amounts of the malted grain would be fed to animals (for example in 1330/1).

Grain was not only the staple food but also saleable, and most of Thomley's villagers would have grown their wheat as a cash crop. Over a period of nine years Oseney's wheat acreage had a pattern of a rise and fall between 30 acres and 66 acres. The villagers' tithes of wheat averaged 17 qrs. a year, but varied from 27 qrs. in 1335 to only 10 qrs. in 1337.

The spring crops usually, though not always, took up twice as much land as the wheat. Most of the rolls just give the acreage to be sown or the amount of grain to be used, but occasionally they are more specific. In 1330/1 pulses were sown on 14 acres in Thomley, 3 acres in Ledhale and 2 acres in Waterperry. Oats were sown on 30 acres 2 roods in Thomley and on 7 acres in Ledhale. Barley and drage were mentioned together and were sown on 18 acres in the fields of the three villages. It would seem that Thomley grew the major portion of Oseney's crops.

People could grow what they liked in their own tofts, crofts and closes. Oseney occasionally grew hemp for making halters and ropes; the bailiff was also careful to make use of odd corners of land; in 1337/8 8 qrs. 6 bz. of vetches were garnered from the oat-field. In 1345/6 19d. was paid in wages for the sowing of beans after the main sowing, and in 1340 2 acres of land near the sheepcote were planted with peas.

Oseney sowed wheat at the rate of 2 bz. an acre; the other crops were generally sown at the rate of 3 bz. an acre, though in 1339 the rate for pulses was increased to 3 bz. and that for oats to 4 bz. The subsequent yield remained very low but in 1345/6 they had a large return on all their crops. The tithe returns reflect this bumper harvest: 100 qrs. in tithes as against 47 qrs. in 1339/40. The return on the seed sown depended not only on the weather and the quality of the seed but also on the fertility of the soil. In Thomley, two methods seem to have been used to improve the soil: folding of sheep on the fallow (1332/3) and manuring. Dung-carts, forks, sieves and riddles were bought for manuring, and men were hired for four or five weeks at a time to spread manure on the field before the spring sowing (e.g. in 1330/1 and 1337/8). This was followed by harrowing, for which horses were always used; the fallow must have been harrowed also, as the boy harrowing was employed for 10 to 12 weeks.

Sheep were folded on the fallow, where they were led from the pastures every evening, and kept on Oseney's acres by the placing of hurdles.<sup>107</sup> It is usually impossible to determine whether the villagers' sheep were also folded on demesne land, whether that of Robert de Thomley, St. Frideswide's, Dorchester or Oseney, but in 1329/30 a shepherd was paid 10d. and 3 qrs. 3 bz. of 'hard grain' for folding sheep on the Abbot's land for 15 weeks. During this period no sheep were recorded as belonging to the Abbot; either sheep were brought in from another of Oseney's estates or the villagers' sheep were used. There is, however, no record of any payment made for this service other than the shepherd's fee.

There seem to have been between 6 and 8 full-time servants on the Oseney manor, which nearly all lay in Thomley. In addition, outside labourers from the area were engaged according to the season. The bailiff often had to make quick sales of corn, both standing

<sup>107</sup> Account Rolls, e.g. 48.



and freshly harvested, in order to pay his workers. In 1338/9 he defaulted in his payments both of grain and money, and the following year the whole wheat harvest had to be used to pay off his debts.

To allow full growth, the springing corn had to be weeded. Gloves were provided each year for the servants for this job, but the occasional workers had to bring their own. Weeding in the three fields cost Oseney between 14*d.* and 8*s.*, depending on how many outside workers were brought in. In 1339 the cost of weeding Thomley field alone was 18*d.*, and for Ledhale and Waterperry fields together 2*s.* In 1335, a wet year, 30 people were engaged to do a full day's weeding at 1*d.* each for the day.

The harvest varied from 3 to 8 weeks, and the number of helpers engaged varied too. On several occasions between 1329 and 1349 the men owing service to the Prior of St. Frideswide's and to the lords of Waterperry, Ledhale, Thomley and Worminghall turned out to reap Oseney's acres; presumably the weather had been bad and the harvest had to be got in quickly. Each group of men worked under their own reeve, and besides their normal payment they were given varying sums of money in the field, as well as *ex gratia* gifts of grain; their lords too were offered gifts (for example in 1339/40). Normally reapers were hired to work alongside the *famuli*. They were usually paid with every twentieth sheaf. There was a departure from this custom in 1349, when the entry for the autumn expenses includes a payment of 59*s.* 10*d.* for reaping the corn. Food was also provided by the Abbot. Bread, usually 2 gallons of butter and 6 to 7 stone of cheese and fish was supplemented by cooked dishes of various meats, geese, beef, pork and usually plenty of mutton, up to 7 sheep being killed. A hundred or so eggs were usually eaten and quantities of ale provided, but in 1348/9 there was a drastic reduction in dairy products: only 70 eggs, 2½ stone of cheese and 1¼ potels of butter were provided.

Oseney appointed one man from each village to collect the tithes in the fields; for several years one of the Gamel family, named Thomas, was tithe-collector for Thomley. On an average they each received 2*s.* wages and a bushel of wheat per week for the four to six weeks it took to collect the sheaves. In 1348/9 the villages are entered separately; Ledhale's tithes took 7 weeks to collect, Thomley's 6 weeks and Waterperry's 5 weeks, but in most years they were entered collectively as taking five or six weeks altogether.

The threshing and storing of grain (and chaff, which was not wasted but used in animal feed) took up to 5 weeks; work was evidently continued well into dusk as candles were bought or made for the autumn works. Pease, beans and oats destined to be fed to animals 'in the sheaf' were stacked in the open, and it took up to 4 days to put a thatch covering over them. These ricks had to be repaired from time to time as they were open to depredation. A harvest festival ended the season. One or 2 geese were regularly provided for the servants' 'ripgos' and 2 to 4 geese for the other workers.

#### THE PASTORAL ECONOMY

Oseney kept between 80 and 130 pigs, feeding them varying amounts of grain and pulses depending on whether they had just been weaned, were penned up for fattening, were feeding in the woods or were running in the fields. Most families in the village would have kept or shared a pig; Thomas Nelot of Thomley and his sons were exceptional with their herd of twelve or so. The Nelots normally paid Oseney 12*d.* a year for pannage of their pigs but they were the only villagers to do so.<sup>108</sup> We know that in 1332/3 there were another 17

<sup>108</sup> Account Rolls, e.g. 47, 48.



pigs in the village, as the swineherd who came from Thomley was paid '... 7d. and not more because he kept 17 pigs of the village also, for which he received 17d. . .'. Evidently Oseney's wood did not satisfy all their pannage needs, for the 1337/8 account records the payment of 3s. 4d. to Robert FitzEllis for the pannage of pigs in his wood.

Sheep farming on Oseney's manor in Thomley was general until at least the autumn of 1333.<sup>109</sup> The rolls are missing for the next two years, but by the autumn of 1335 it seems that a decision had been made to specialise in the rearing of sheep for their fleeces only. The accounts mention 177 castrated hogs in that year; for the next few years yearling sheep and lambs were sent to Thomley in large numbers from the other Oseney manors for the purpose of shearing, and their fleeces were sent to Water Eton. However, this enterprise broke down, for by 1338/9 Oseney was again rearing sheep for multiple purposes.

The ground of Thomley is rather too waterlogged to be ideal for the rearing of sheep, and it is evident from the amount of ointment and tar bought every year that the sheep suffered from trouble such as foot-rot and scab. In most years sheep and other animals were lost through murrain and kindred epidemics. In some years 45 or more animals died. The worst year was when bubonic plague hit Oxfordshire. Ninety animals were reported dead in the account for 1348/9, some dying and left in the fields.

The young lambs had an unnecessarily poor start to life. Instead of their mothers' milk they were fed with less rich cow's milk, either from the farm or especially bought for them.<sup>110</sup> The Augustinian Priory at Bicester had the same practice and so too had the reeve of Cuxham,<sup>111</sup> the higher protein of the ewe's milk being used or sold for quality cheese. In the account for 1348/9 a worker is paid a bushel of wheat 'for milking and minding the sheep' and there are other occasional references to 'ewes' milk' in the entries on the dorsos of accounts (e.g. 58, 61).

The shepherd or boy hired to look after the lambs for a period extending from 12 to 18 weeks fed them the cow's milk which he first warmed;<sup>112</sup> when they were old enough he fed them grain in small quantities (1332/3); he also wove wattles in and out of the hurdles to protect them from the wind (1346/7). In spite of his care lambs died every year, the worst year being 1330 when 68 lambs died in one season.

In Thomley the meadows lay along the banks of the Harse and the Thame, much of which Oseney and St. Frideswide's bought from the lords of Thomley.<sup>113</sup> Meadow exchanged hands in small amounts varying from 1 acre to 1 perch.<sup>114</sup> The wording of charters implies that the sale of a yardland included a certain amount of meadow, pasture and customary rights to brushwood etc., but in only one charter is the amount of meadow given. In c. 1230 a half-yardland was sold and with it 'half a meadow belonging to the half-yardland, viz. 3 roods facing the sun'.<sup>115</sup> By 1300 St. Frideswide's held 14 acres of meadow, some of it taken from the village meadow, and 120 acres of arable.<sup>116</sup> The 1530 terrier states that of Oseney's 6 yardlands, 2 were grass and bracken;<sup>117</sup> Oseney had sufficient meadow to be able to sell up to 36s. worth of hay a year while keeping enough for her own stock.

<sup>109</sup> On Oseney's sheep policy see D. Postles, 'The Oseney Abbey Flock', *Oxoniensia*, xlix (1984).

<sup>110</sup> Account Rolls 53, 58, 60, 61.

<sup>111</sup> J.C. Blomfield, *History of the Deanery of Bicester* (1882), ii, 100; *Manorial Records of Cuxham*, ed. P.D.A. Harvey (O.R.S., 1974), 396, 433, 450.

<sup>112</sup> Account Rolls 47, 59, 60, 61.

<sup>113</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 159, 164, 167; *Oseney Cart.* iv, 394–396, 401.

<sup>114</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 157–159; *Oseney Cart.* iv, 395, 401.

<sup>115</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 163–164.

<sup>116</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 168.

<sup>117</sup> *Mag. Coll.*, Deeds Thomley 133.

Most years there were two crops of hay, and any aftermath (*ruwayin*, *reweyūm*) on Oseney's meadows was sold to villagers. The account for 1334/5 mentions that the hay harvest only took three days 'because of the flooding of the river' but this seems to have been uncommon.

Access to pasture was vital in animal husbandry. The serious encroachment of Oseney on Thomley's land, with subsequent ditching and hedging of large areas, diminished the villagers' ability to keep cattle. Oseney frequently rented extra pasture: in 1334/5 they bought the grass 'in the *narowe* orchard of William FitzEllis'. In other years Oseney's animals were sent to Holton Park or Forest Hill to be fattened or to improve their stamina. The villagers depended on every foot of grass on the roadside verges and on headlands, and bought rights of herbage from Oseney. Much of the pasture would have been semi-woodland as these villages lay on the edge of Bernwood. In 1334/5 Oseney rented 10 selions of 'frith' (woodland pasture) from William FitzEllis for 20*d.*, as pasture for oxen. The use of the word 'selion' suggests that assarting was in progress, and that one of Waterperry's fields was being enlarged but had not yet been properly brought under the plough. Before the fields were thrown open to general grazing preliminary pasturing of tethered animals was allowed, as there are references in the accounts to the buying of ropes to tether horses and other animals in the pastures.

Animals were stinted in the Thomley area. A 13th-century deed for a St. Frideswide's yardland in Thomley states that the vicar of Worminghall may keep 4 beasts and 24 sheep on the pasture in Thomley belonging to it.<sup>118</sup> The 1535 terrier confirms this allowance of 4 beasts and 24 sheep per yardland.<sup>119</sup> However, this only refers to the stint on common pasture, and it is not known how much pasture was available to any one villager. In 1358, at a court held by Oseney for the area at Forest Hill, two villagers were amerced for having 100 sheep each in the lord's corn.<sup>120</sup> As few villagers would have had more than a yardland, it seems that they were not limited to the official stint. Oseney's flock averaged 200 and evidently mixed with the villagers' sheep during the year, for the bailiff bought 'redyingston' each year to brand the sheep.

Thomley was just on the wrong side of Bernwood Forest to benefit from rights of common there, but Oseney certainly pastured their sheep in the forest, perhaps inviting a blind eye by numerous gifts of grain to the forester.<sup>121</sup> On one occasion at least the bailiff paid a fine for pasturing Oseney's sheep in the forest during the closed season (1340) and on another the bailiff had to give the forester a gift to release the sheep which had 'strayed' into the forest (1336); whether the villagers trespassed in the forest is not known, but pannage in the local woods was common.

A 13th-century perambulation of the western edge of Bernwood Forest places its boundary between the fields of Thomley and Worminghall and mentions, among other local woods, the wood of Thomley as having been afforested in the reign of Henry II.<sup>122</sup> Both the FitzEllis and the Beaufiz families had woods in the area in the early 13th century, but Robert de Thomley disposed of his, one to St. Frideswide's and the other to Oseney Abbey.<sup>123</sup>

There must have been rough land on the edges of the assarted fields. A lease of 1768 refers to the common on Thomley Hill, and another of 1729 refers to the common land as land

<sup>118</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 142; *Rot. Hugonis de Welles*, ii, 75.

<sup>119</sup> *Mag. Coll.*, Deeds Thomley 133.

<sup>120</sup> *Bodl. MS Ch.* 351.

<sup>121</sup> *Account Rolls* e.g. 50, 51, 60.

<sup>122</sup> *The Boarstall Cart.* 181-182.

<sup>123</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 166; *Oseney Cart.* iv, 396, 398.

to the north-east of Thomley.<sup>124</sup> The 1840 Tithe Map for Worminghall shows this area just below Shabbington Wood as 'The Common', and 'South Common', and as this area was once part of Thomley, it can probably be identified with Thomley's common pasture.<sup>125</sup>

#### THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY AND THE LAND-MARKET

It was a frequent consequence of the growth of the 13th-century land-market that, as new estates expanded, old-established gentry families declined.<sup>126</sup> In Thomley, the leading families found it hard to survive without borrowing money and selling land. In c. 1200 Henry Beaufiz sold some land to St. Frideswide's to raise money to free land mortgaged to the Jews of Oxford and to maintain his wife and children.<sup>127</sup> Lucy, a daughter, sold her inheritance shortly after,<sup>128</sup> and her sister Matilda took the extreme step of selling her third of half a hide to raise money to go on pilgrimage.<sup>129</sup> In c. 1230 Robert de Thomley sold some of his land to St. Frideswide's in order to free the rest from the Jews.<sup>130</sup> He and his children continued to sell land from time to time, and seem to have been continually in financial difficulties. The same Robert had unwisely sold some of his land to Oseney free of all service, which laid a heavy financial burden on his grandson Robert who in 1280 was summoned to court to answer for the scutage and relief of tenants due to his over-lord Henry de Bruly for this land. Robert, through his attorney, admitted liability for the 138 acres of arable and 12 acres of meadow that had been sold Oseney 'in frankalmoign'. On top of this Henry de Bruly claimed that 100s. was due because of the state of the land. The court found that Robert was to pay what was due and that he was to be distrained until he had cleared this debt.<sup>131</sup> Robert's grandson John is mentioned at least once in the accounts (1332) as borrowing a quarter of drage. The family was clearly on the way down, and by the time he had come of age in 1344 John had relinquished all claim to the manor.<sup>132</sup>

During the 13th and 14th centuries the lords made efforts to put land back into demesne, while at the same time freeholders were trying to enlarge their holdings. In c. 1180 St. Frideswide's held a hide in Thomley, three-quarters of which they rented out. By 1230 they were taking this land back into demesne. They repossessed two yardlands, but the holder of the third was only willing to relinquish half of his.<sup>133</sup> About the same time Robert de Thomley recovered one yardland of two held in villeinage, but in the process lost the heavy labour dues belonging to the half-hide.<sup>134</sup> His son Ellis de Thomley shared an enclosed portion of land with a John FitzNigel, a rising member of the community. Ellis contravened their agreement as to the management of the land; John FitzNigel saw this as an attempt on the lord's part to assume rights over the whole inclosure, and litigation ensued which ended in a reconciliation in June 1265.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>124</sup> Bucks Record Office, Deeds Worminghall D. 87.

<sup>125</sup> O.R.O., Worminghall Tithe Map.

<sup>126</sup> For this process in general see E. Miller and J. Hatcher, *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change* (1978), Ch. 7. For a local example (the Chenduits of Cuxham) see P.D.A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village* (1965), 4-8.

<sup>127</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 157.

<sup>128</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 158-160.

<sup>129</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 160-161.

<sup>130</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 164-165.

<sup>131</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 403.

<sup>132</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 173 (and cf. above, p. 219).

<sup>133</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 144 (incorrect dating), 161, 163.

<sup>134</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 393.

<sup>135</sup> *Boarstall Cart.*, 99.

Dorchester's right to a hide and 8 messuages was confirmed by a final concord, settling a probably fictitious plea of warrantry against William le Sage and his wife Rose, in 1272; William and Rose conceded the property to Dorchester.<sup>136</sup> In 1300 the Beaufiz brothers Roger and Thomas brought an action of novel disseisin for 120 acres of arable, 14 acres of meadow and 11s. rent held by St. Frideswide's. Judgement was against them, and the brothers were committed to jail.<sup>137</sup> During this time Oseney was making sure of its right to land in Thomley by obtaining permission (in 1332/3) from the lords of Thomley to ditch, fence and shut off its land from common grazing rights.

Evidence is lacking for any exercise of manorial rights by the lords of Thomley, but the FitzEllis, de Bruly and Beaufiz lords held courts at Waterperry, Waterstock and Worminghall respectively. Oseney held courts for her customary tenants of Thomley, Draycote and Ledhale at Forest Hill.<sup>138</sup> The one surviving court roll (1358), though badly mutilated, is legible enough to see that Oseney's court followed the normal pattern. Villagers were amerced for the usual offences, such as their animals being found in the lord's corn, for breaking the assise of ale, for selling milk short in quantity, etc., while two persons each paid an entry-fine to a cottage and 1 acre of land to be held in villeinage.<sup>139</sup> As holder of Waterperry church Oseney also demanded mortuary rights and, from its own tenants, heriots.<sup>140</sup> In 1337/8, either in a bid for autonomy or through neglect, the Abbot of Oseney failed to do fealty to his overlords of Lincoln. The Lincoln bailiff had, according to the Abbot's men, suddenly appeared in Thomley's fields with the intent of distraining the ploughs and oxen; however, the matter was resolved without going to this extreme and the bailiff was given 6d. for his forbearance.<sup>141</sup>

The FitzEllis were evidently held in esteem, for the Abbot of Oseney came in person on the occasion of Robert FitzEllis's death in 1332. He brought with him his choir-boys to sing at the funeral service and he came again for the 'month's mind' or thirty days' anniversary of Robert's death.<sup>142</sup>

There is some evidence for the selling of land among the villagers, and for the buying of land in Thomley by people from other villages in the area. A charter of c. 1250 and another of 1324/5 point to attempts by some landholders to curtail the fragmentation of land on the one hand and engrossment on the other. The 1250 charter bound the Vicar of Worminghall not to alienate the land he held in Thomley from the Knights Templars of Sandford;<sup>143</sup> in 1324/5 the Gamel family sold their land to St. Frideswide's in exchange for a corrody, which was itself conditional on the Gamels not alienating their land to a named villager, Hugh North, or to anyone else.<sup>144</sup> Hugh North is mentioned several times in the account rolls, and seems to have held positions of responsibility on the Oseney manor. His family were important enough for his son and grandson to have been appointed in turn receiver of the rents and profits of property held by the Crown on the death of Margaret FitzEllis (widow of Robert) in 1375.<sup>145</sup>

The Gamels, who held a third of half a hide in 1279, had increased their holding to two-thirds of half a hide by 1320. In a complicated exchange of land covering ten years,

<sup>136</sup> *Oxon Fines* (O.R.S. xii, 1930), 202.

<sup>137</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 168.

<sup>138</sup> Account Rolls 45, 52, 59, 61.

<sup>139</sup> Bodl. MS Ch. 351.

<sup>140</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 385-387; Account Roll 48.

<sup>141</sup> Account Roll, 52.

<sup>142</sup> Account Roll, 48.

<sup>143</sup> *Sandford Cart.* 112.

<sup>144</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 170.

<sup>145</sup> *Cal. Inq. P.M.* xix, 127; Ministers' Accounts 1375/81.

Robert FitzEllis of Thomley quitclaimed to John Gamel a yardland and messuage in Thomley, while John sold a messuage, 14 acres of arable with 1 acre of meadow and the reversion of 1½ acres of arable (altogether ⅔ of a yardland) to a William of Draycote. Then in 1324/5 John Gamel enfeoffed St. Frideswide's with this property. Finally, in 1329, William son of William of Draycote sold this land to St. Frideswide's.<sup>146</sup>

Before 1260 a William of Haseley held half a yardland of Thomas of Ickford, who himself held of Robert of Thomley 18 acres in Thomley. In c. 1260 Thomas of Ickford sold this land to John FitzNigel of Boarstall with the services of William of Haseley as well as William's 2s. rent.<sup>147</sup>

Widows were often lessors or even quitclaimed their dowries in exchange for money or goods or both. In 1220 the widow of Henry son of Jordan sold the rent of a croft and a yardland in Thomley to the FitzEllis of Worminghall for 2s. rent and a quarter of wheat each autumn, freeing the land of all service except for foreign service and receiving 1 mark in gersum.<sup>148</sup> In c. 1255 Rose de Rupella relinquished all service due from a tenement that she sold to John FitzNigel for a rent of 2s.<sup>149</sup> In 1285 Alice, widow of Thomas of Ickford, quitclaimed all her right by way of dowry in Thomley, as did Isabella widow of John FitzNigel in 1305.<sup>150</sup>

The lay subsidy of 1327 does not distinguish between Waterperry, Ledhall and Thomley, but it is possible to pick out several Thomley names, which shows that there was a body of well-off families in Thomley.<sup>151</sup> The Thomley names mentioned are all corroborated by references in earlier documents or by a charter soon after 1332 (appendix); new names are mentioned in this last document too, showing that in the 14th century there was much inter-village buying and selling of land. This charter also offers evidence for the dispersal of a Thomley family of some consequence. The Franklyn family first mentioned in c. 1220 and again in the Hundred Rolls, provided all the witnesses to this deed, a sign of their local standing. Simon Franklyn lived in Thomley but the other three Franklyns lived elsewhere, one in Holton, one in Stanton St. John and one in Cowley.<sup>152</sup>

A John Beche paid a levy of 3s. 10d. in 1327; 18 years later he is recorded as holding the manor of Thomley and 10 acres in Ickford for life.<sup>153</sup> One can presume that the William Beche who farmed the Oseney estate in Thomley for 40s. yearly in 1509 was a descendant of John Beche, prosperous enough to pay this heavy rent.

Already by the 13th century, unusually early for Oxfordshire, the Thomley economy was mainly one of paid rather than villein labour. The services due from unfree land were almost always commuted to a money rent in those transactions of which there is a record. This was evidently a fairly recent development as there are references in the documents to land formerly held in villeinage by labour service, as for example a document of c. 1270 which mentions a half yardland 'formerly held in villeinage by William the Carter'.<sup>154</sup> In c. 1220 one villein was sold by Robert de Thomley, with his family, goods and the yardland he cultivated, to Oseney Abbey,<sup>155</sup> but it was not until 1330 that Nelot of Thomley was able to buy the manumission of his son.<sup>156</sup> In two out of three yardlands sold by St. Frideswide's in

<sup>146</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 172.

<sup>147</sup> *Boarstall Cart.* 98.

<sup>148</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 397.

<sup>149</sup> *Boarstall Cart.* 99.

<sup>150</sup> *Boarstall Cart.* 98.

<sup>151</sup> Lay Subsidy 1327 (P.R.O., E179/161/9).

<sup>152</sup> *Mag. Coll.*, Deeds Thomley 133.

<sup>153</sup> *Boarstall Cart.* 113-114.

<sup>154</sup> *Oseney Cart.* vi, 235.

<sup>155</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 396-7.

<sup>156</sup> Account Roll 47.

c. 1210 all labour was commuted to a paid rent; for the third yardland three boon works were made a condition of purchase, and consequently the rent was less than that of the other two.<sup>157</sup> In another transaction (c. 1205–1225), a tenant who held two yardlands for the very heavy service of being at the lord's disposition wherever and whenever he chose, released one yardland to the lord in return for remission of all service from the other except 1 lb. cumin a year.<sup>158</sup>

Labour service was rapidly dying out and even Oseney's full-time servants, who were paid a yearly wage in grain, would also be paid money at certain times of the year for specific work. Many jobs were available on short-term contracts for both the men and women of the three villages. Local carters were engaged for five or six days or even a fortnight at hay-making and harvest time; extra mowers and tossers of hay, sometimes women, were engaged; reapers and pitchers were always needed to supplement Oseney's work-force. Manure spreaders and ploughmen were hired seasonally. Up to 12 women were needed to wash and shear the sheep while men packed the fleeces in rolls for transport to Water Eton, the collecting centre. Thatching was done by men, while the sorting of the straw for the thatch was invariably done by women. The harrowing seems to have been done by youths: the term *garcio* is nearly always used, in contrast to *homines* or *famuli* for other entries. Other jobs for young people were overseeing the grazing geese and new-born lambs.<sup>159</sup>

The general impression is of a community in which, perhaps through the relative weakness of lordship, services were commuted early and the land-market was well-developed. One consequence was that outsiders were free to buy up holdings in Thomley: already by 1279 the Hundred Roll entry mentions tenants whose names are unfamiliar and who may have been non-resident. Hence it may be that, in helping to destroy the economic basis of the village community, this freedom was ultimately fatal.

#### PRODUCTION AND LIVING-STANDARDS

Views differ on the amount of grain needed for subsistence in medieval England, but it has been suggested that a labourer would eat between 4 lbs. and 5 lbs. of bread daily:<sup>160</sup> in other words 4 qrs. of mixed grain a year per person. Each family would also need 2 or 3 qrs. of malting corn. In addition to this was the need for animal feed. Oseney fed its beasts and fowl considerable quantities of grain in a year: over 17 qrs. in 1336/7, for instance, the pulses being reckoned at 20 sheaves to the bushel and the oats at 16 sheaves to the bushel. Twenty years later the grain used for animals had risen to 24 qrs., the oats being reckoned at 20 sheaves per bushel. The number of sheaves to a bushel varied considerably from year to year, presumably reflecting the quality of the harvest. At Cuxham, for example, the reeve reckoned 15 sheaves to two bushels in 1329, but 30 in 1346.<sup>161</sup> The villager would only keep a fraction of the number of animals kept by Oseney or Cuxham but would need proportionally 1 to 2 qrs. of grain for animal feed. For his family he would need at least 16 qrs. of grain; as well as this he would need to put aside his ale-corn, his seed-corn and subtract 1/16 for multure. Altogether he would need at least 18 to 20 qrs. to manage.

<sup>157</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 161, 162, 163.

<sup>158</sup> *Oseney Cart.* iv, 393–394.

<sup>159</sup> Account Rolls 47, 50, 53, 50, etc.

<sup>160</sup> Miller and Hatcher op. cit. note 126, 160.

<sup>161</sup> *Manorial Records of Cuxham*, 402, 421.



Evidence from the Oseney accounts and from one charter indicates that half a bushel a week, or just over 3 qrs. of grain a year, was considered a reasonable livery for one person. In the corrody drawn up for the Gamels, the provision for John's wife Denise included half a bushel of wheat a week.<sup>162</sup> In the accounts the entries show that full-time workers and servants received a bushel every ten days or fortnight during 44 to 48 weeks of the year, food being provided by the Abbot for the remaining weeks. Those working for shorter periods received a minimum of half a bushel for 7 days, rising to half a bushel every 5 days, and to 1 bushel a week. The grain given was wheat, barley, drage and pulses. These were sometimes given separately, at other times mixed. A bushel of mixed grain would make 3 peck loaves of 16 lbs. weight,<sup>163</sup> which, unless supplemented by grain from other sources, would not suffice for a family of 4 or 5 persons for a week's rations.

Ale was drunk in large quantities: a gallon a day of good ale and another gallon of weak ale was not considered extravagant as a monk's daily ration. These quantities would not be available in Thomley households; two or three quarters of grain might be set aside for malting, the same amount that Oseney's bailiff used for the brewing of ale for the harvest workers in autumn.

The villager's garden-plot, the only well-manured piece of land he owned, would be sown intensively with vegetables and, if he had room, with extra peas and beans because they were second to wheat in nutritive value. He would depend too on his cow, his pig and his fowl. If the cow were used for the plough, that meant no calf and no milk. According to Walter of Henley a cow on good pasture would produce milk for 7 stone of cheese and 1 stone (2 gallons) of butter between May and Michaelmas and in the winter at least one stone of cheese. On average one of Oseney's cows produced only a third to a half of this amount. Likewise a hen was supposed to produce over 100 eggs a year and 6 or 7 chicks,<sup>164</sup> but Oseney's hen and duck run did not produce anything like this. One must assume that the villagers' cows and hens did no better.

The Gamels' corrody throws an unexpected light on living conditions and expectations in a small village like Thomley. John the father was to have living/sleeping accommodation in the Priory of St. Frideswide, in a room with lock and bolt. He was to be given every year on the feast of St. Frideswide (19 October) winter clothing and a pair of boots. His wife was to remain all of her working life either at Cutteslowe or Worminghall as dairy-maid, receiving a half-bushel of wheat a week; when she was too old to work she was to have also the produce of one cow. The son William was also bound to life service to the Prior as a carter or ploughman or in any other capacity the Prior wished; he was to have a ploughman's livery and stipend as long as he could work, and thereafter was to be maintained by the Prior.<sup>165</sup>

The rapid expansion in the late 13th century and early 14th century of the use of purveyance, both for supplying the king's army in Scotland and royal retinues on their journeys, fell heavily on the peasantry and especially on the poor, who were not exempt on that account from having their corn, beasts and foodstuff seized by the king's officials. One of the royal routes came though Thame, only 9 miles from Thomley, and the accounts note numerous visits of the king's purveyors or captains of the horse, or of the queen's men, to the area on their way to Woodstock.<sup>166</sup> There is evidence that the purveyors paid for some of the oats and fodder required but there is also evidence of appropriation of crops, although

<sup>162</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 169-70.

<sup>163</sup> H.E. Hallam, *Rural England 1066-1348*, 67.

<sup>164</sup> D. Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 431, 425.

<sup>165</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* ii, 169-70.

<sup>166</sup> Account Rolls e.g. 46, 47, 59, 60, 61.



Oseney's bailiff made gifts of money and ale to ensure that too much should not be taken.<sup>167</sup> We do not know how these visits affected the villagers, but they were hardly likely to have been free of demands on their property.<sup>168</sup>

There are occasional glimpses of villagers who broke the law, sometimes to supplement their incomes. Early in the 14th century Stephen Byrtele of Thomley and his companion William Pauw were caught trapping the king's beasts in nets as they foraged in the fields of Thomley.<sup>169</sup> Two brothers, John and William of Thomley (in the 14th century) persisted in selling under-weight bread in Oxford, and eventually John was put in the stocks for this. As he did not amend his ways he was forbidden to bake bread for a year and a day; his brother continued to bake bread and was himself fined for the same fault.<sup>170</sup> Later in the century one Joan de Thomley, living in Oxford, was excommunicated and the letter referring to her survives, one of only four surviving for Oxford for that period.<sup>171</sup>

## CONCLUSION

By re-creating a few generations of this once thriving community, some factors can be perceived which contributed towards its decline long before 16th-century inclosure for sheep-farming administered the *coup de grace*. Focal points were missing in this assarted village: no church, no market, no fair, no mill. Neither was there one lord to bind the community together and restrain solvent economic forces. As land changed hands, more and more of the assets of Thomley passed to outsiders. Most of all, perhaps, the seed of destruction was in its very creation as an outlying hamlet flanked by two prosperous villages, Waterperry and Worminghall. A few miles away was another outlying hamlet, *Ledhale* (Ledhall), which also disappeared.

In spite of the apparent prosperity of many of the inhabitants in the 13th and early 14th centuries, this village of about 30 homesteads in the 13th century, with an approximate population of 120–150, had shrunk by the time of the 1377 Poll Tax to 30 people over the age of 14.<sup>172</sup> Plague would have been a contributory factor in this decline in population. Empty cottages and untilled land are mentioned for the first time in the account-roll for 1349, the year the plague reached Oxfordshire.

By 1509 Oseney was farming its Thomley manor to one William Beche.<sup>173</sup> He no doubt needed to employ labourers, but after the Dissolution the land-use changed with consequent lack of employment and destruction of houses.<sup>174</sup> Developments in the 15th and 16th centuries must be examined before any conclusion can be reached on the final extinction of Thomley.

<sup>167</sup> Account Rolls c.g. 47, 61.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. J.R. Maddicott, *The English Peasantry and the Demands of the Crown*, Past and Present Suppl. i.

<sup>169</sup> V. Wickam Steed, *Wychwood Forest: History and Management with its Boundaries* (MS at Oxon County Museum), 440.

<sup>170</sup> *Medieval Archives of the University of Oxford*, ii (O.H.S. lxxiii), 143ff.

<sup>171</sup> *Snappes Formulary* (O.H.S. lxxx), significations of excommunication No. 56; *Munimenta Acad.* 795.

<sup>172</sup> M. Beresford, *The Lost Villages of England* (1983), 382.

<sup>173</sup> *Oseney Cart.* vi, 235.

<sup>174</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 302ff.

APPENDIX: GRANT BY THOMAS DE HASELE TO SIMON THOLUS OF LAND IN THOMLEY  
(Magd. Coll. Deeds Thomley 132)

Probably soon after 1332, the year in which Margaret FitzEllis's husband died (Account Roll 48)

Sciant presentes et futuri quod ego Thomas de Hasele, filius et heres Johannis de Hasele, dedi, concessi et hac presenti carta mea confirmavi Simone Tholus, heredibus et assignatis suis: unum mesuagium cum crofto adiacente quod scitum est inter mesuagium Thome Nelot ex una parte et Johannem Cok'; et undecim acras terre arrabilis et unam acram dimidiam et dimidiam rodam prati in campis et pratis de Thomele discontinue iacentibus, quarum una dimidia acra iacet in Chergweyforlong' iuxta Margaretam Fizeles ex una parte, et alia dimidia acra iacet in Waterylonde iuxta terram Johannis de Hale ex una parte, et alia dimidia acra iacet apud Scortgorstilonde iuxta terram Thome Nelot ex una parte, et alia dimidia acra iacet super Blakehul iuxta terram Johannis Hale ex una parte, et una dimidia acra iacet super Longegorstilonde iuxta terram abbatis de Osene, et una dimidia acra iacet in Harsecrouch' iuxta terram domine Margarete Fizeles ex una parte, et una dimidia acra iacet super Hocstobbe iuxta terram Hugonis Nor3 ex una parte, et una dimidia acra iacet in Harseforlong' iuxta terram priorisse de Stodde, et una roda iacet in Layen' in Ne3erforlong' iuxta [terram] domine Margarete Fizele, et una roda iacet in alio forlongo in le Layen' iuxta priorem Sancte Fredeswyde, et una roda iacet super Dounstowe iuxta terram priorisse de Stodde, et una roda iacet apud Bssophegh iuxta terram abbatis de Osene, et una roda iacet apud Brodelonde iuxta terram domine Margarete Fizeles, et una dimidia acra iacet apud Brodelonde iuxta terram abbatis de Osene ex una parte, et una roda iacet in Hemeleforlong' iuxta terram Johannis Cok', et una dimidia acra iacet in Harsforlong' iuxta Cesil' Bracy, et una dimidia acra iacet in dicto forlongo iuxta terram Walteri Newman, una roda iacet super Magchecrouch' iuxta terram Johannis Newman, et una roda iacet super Broderede iuxta [terram] priorisse de Stodde, et una dimidia acra iacet super Chenerswelle iuxta terram Simonis Frankeleyn, et una dimidia acra iacet super Waterylonde iuxta terram prioris Sancte Fredeswyde, una roda iacet Underwode iuxta terram domine Margarete Fizeles, et dimidia acra iacet apud Suanewelle iuxta terram Nigelli de Heleforde, et una roda iacet super Longehul iuxta terram Abbatis de Osene, et una roda iacet in Tounforlong' iuxta [terram] prioris Sancte Fredeswyde, et una dimidia acra iacet apud Redlonde iuxta terram Walteri Man, et una dimidia acra iacet inte3eslad iuxta Walterum Newman, et una roda iacet inte3lade iuxta terram Walteri Newman, et unam acram dimidiam et dimidiam rodam prati in le Mor' et Rondych' sicut sors est. Habendas et tenendas dictum mesuagium cum crofto adiacente, terram arrabilem pertinentem, cum omnibus suis pertinentiis, predictis Simone Tholus, heredibus vel suis assignatis, de capitalibus dominis feodi illius per servicia inde debita et de iure consueta. Et ego vero predictus Thomas et heredes mei, vel mei assignati, predictum mesuagium cum crofto, terram arrabilem et pratum, cum omnibus ubique pertinentiis ut supradictum est, predicto Simone, heredibus vel suis assignatis imperpetuum warrantizabimus et defendemus. In cuius rei testimonium huic presente carte sigillum meum apposui. Hiis testibus, Thome le Ledhalle, Johanne Frankeleyn de Stonton', Johanne Frankeleyn de Halongton', Thome Frankeleyn de Couele, Simone Frankeleyn de Thomley, cum aliis.

TABLE OF OSENEY ABBEY ACCOUNT ROLLS

| <i>Date (Mich. to Mich. except<br/>where otherwise stated)</i> | <i>Bodl. MS Dep. Deeds Ch. Ch.</i> |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1279/80 (Nov. to Nov.)   | 44                                 |
| 1328/9   | 45                                 |
| 1329/30  | 46                                 |
| 1330/1   | 47                                 |
| 1332/3   | 48                                 |
| 1334/5   | 50                                 |
| 1335 (Mich. to 31 Dec.)  | 49                                 |
| 1336/7   | 51                                 |
| 1337/8   | 52                                 |
| 1338/9   | 53                                 |
| 1338 (Mich. to 30 Nov.)  | 54                                 |
| 1339 (Mich. to 1 Dec.)   | 55                                 |
| 1339/40 (1 Dec. to 10 June)                                    | 56                                 |
| 1340 (16 June to Mich.)  | 57                                 |
| 1341/2   | 58                                 |
| 1344/5   | 59                                 |
| 1346/7   | 60                                 |
| 1348/9   | 61                                 |

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