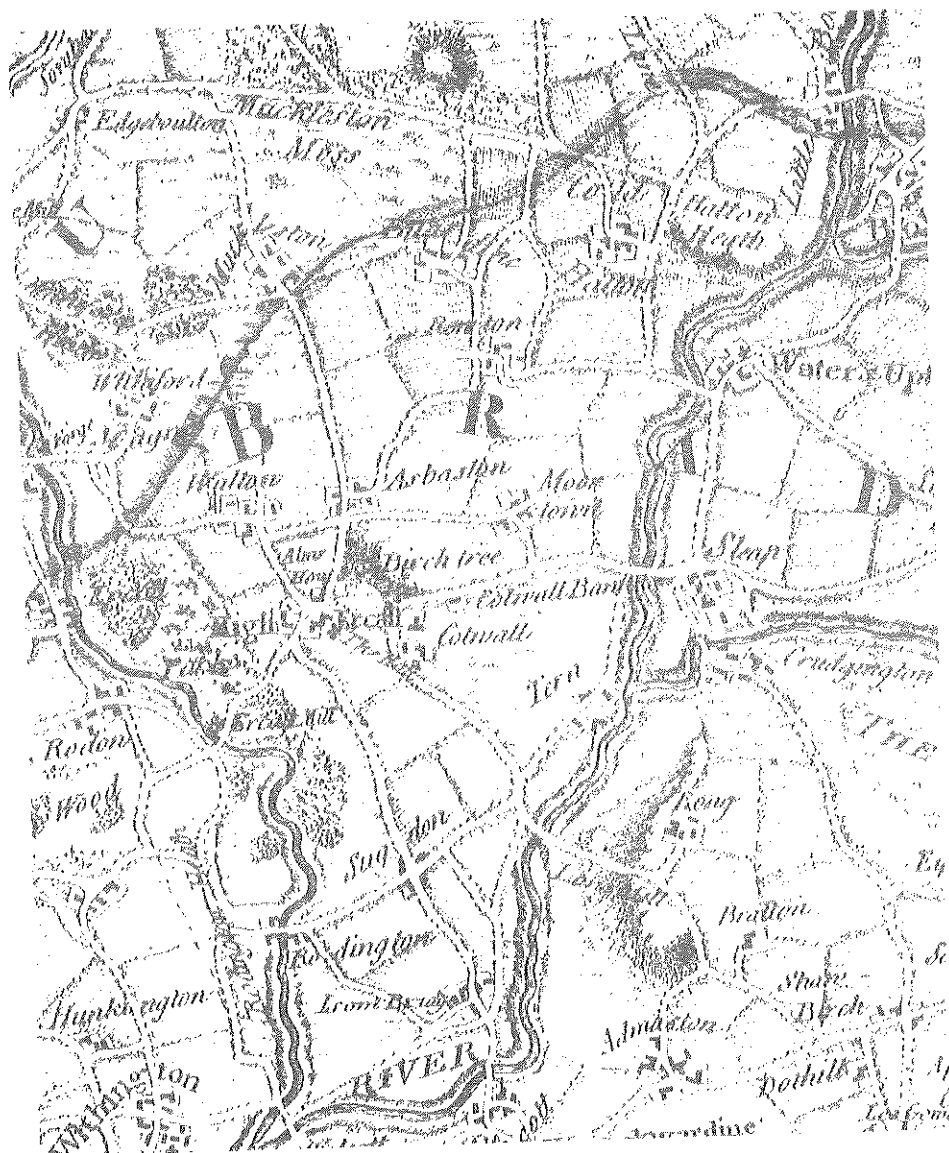


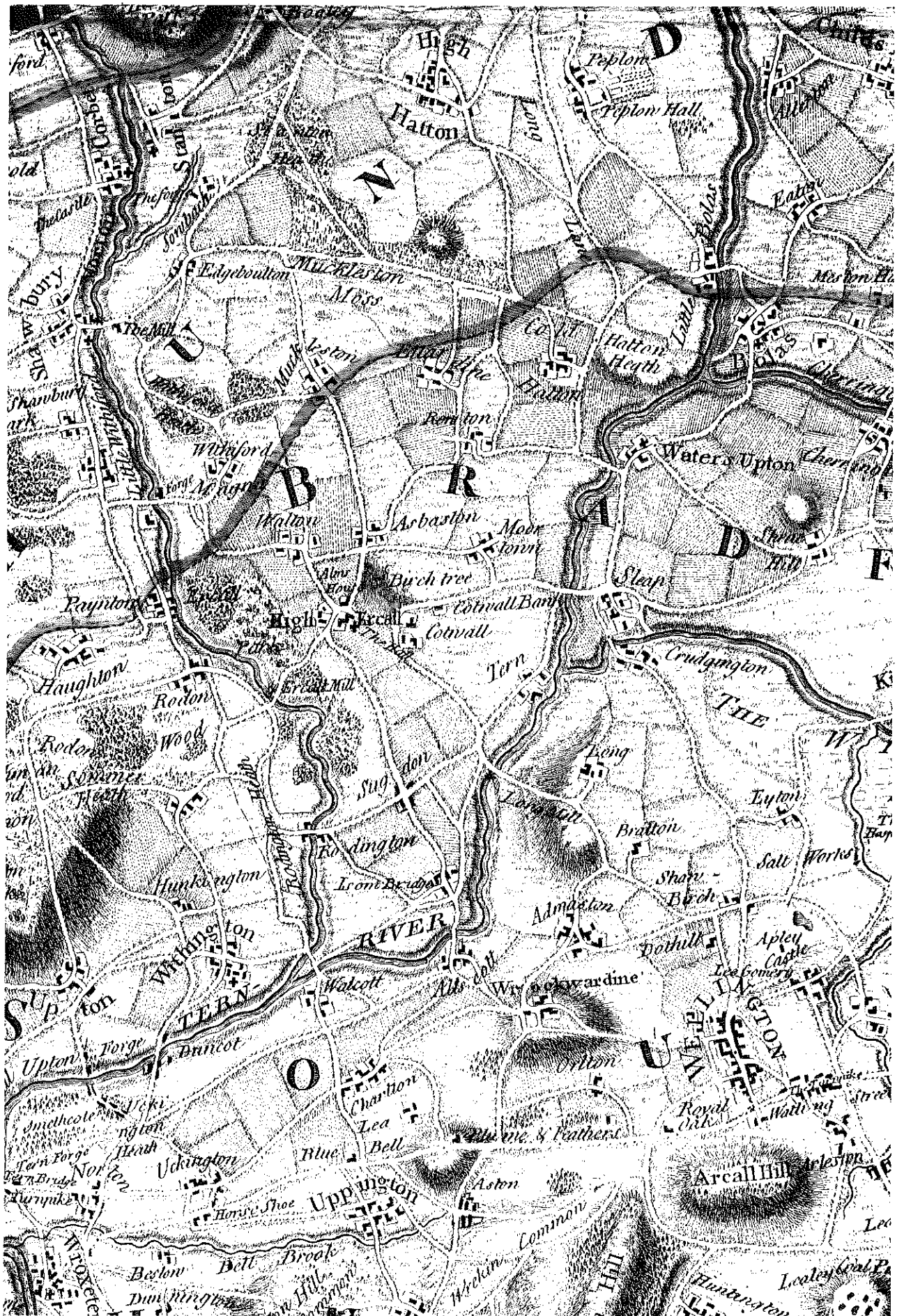
THE DEMESNE AND THE WASTE

MARY C. HILL



TRANSACTIONS OF THE
SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
VOL. 62 (1979-80)
1984

THE DEMESNE
AND THE WASTE



THE ERCCALL AREA, 1752 (ROCQUE)

THE DEMESNE AND THE WASTE

a study of medieval inclosure
on the manor of High Ercall,
1086-1399

by Mary C. Hill

Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society
Vol. 62 (1979-80)
1984

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1984

ISSN 0143 5175

Produced by Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, Gloucester
Printed in Great Britain

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.L.	British Library
Eyton	R.W. Eyton, <i>Antiquities of Shropshire</i> (12 vols. 1854–60)
<i>Monasticon Anglicanum</i>	W. Dugdale, <i>Monasticon Anglicanum</i> , ed. J. Caley and others (6 vols. in 8, 1817–30, reprinted 1846)
R	Deeds at Raby Castle, referred to by box, bundle, and document nos.
S.R.O.	Shropshire Record Office
TM	Tithe map
T.S.A.S.	<i>Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND SOURCES

THIS study of a Shropshire manor began as an attempt to locate inclosures mentioned in a series of 14th-century leases, and to assess their place in the conquest of the waste on that manor. It soon became clear that these assarts were only the last in a long series of clearances. Ercall exemplifies the manor deliberately created out of the waste and consistently managed to take advantage of the waste that remained. From the mid 11th century to the mid 14th there was a steady increase in the acreage of arable on the manor, and the demesne, though it remained roughly constant in extent, varied greatly in location during those centuries. Everything else on the manor — the creation of free tenements in the early period and the substitution of leaseholds in the later, the attempt to create a manorial borough, even the position of the neif at Ercall (the amount of land he held and the conditions under which he held it) — everything else arose directly from the circumstances surrounding the start of this manor and the way it was developed. Inclosure at Ercall was effectively complete by 1345. Except for the warren and the park, little was left for later generations to bring into cultivation.

That is not what I had expected. Indeed the history of this manor contradicts many generalizations about medieval agrarian economy. Ercall seems to be a type specimen of those Shropshire, Cheshire, or Herefordshire manors¹ which, from the start, were worked by labourers without land of their own, and never depended to any significant degree on customary services. Further, it was an outstanding example of a manor where development of land had top priority. Such a forward looking policy was not confined to counties on the marches of Wales.

How much medieval inclosure was there, and did it play as important a part in the development of other manors?

There has not yet been enough quantitative examination of medieval improvement. Nevertheless every manor was a finite area with a given acreage, an ascertainable geology, and its own local conditions. We ought to be able to locate and map areas of original arable and then, given enough documentary evidence, to plot with considerable certainty the stages by which the waste was brought into cultivation. We can only understand a manor on the ground.

The Domesday commissioners expected that extra waste would soon be brought into cultivation. They expressed that hope by stating the number of plough teams each manor might have. We have to ask how soon that total was achieved, and how much waste then remained suitable for development. Was that too assarted within the next three centuries?

There is more evidence for medieval inclosure than at first appears. Besides direct reference to assarts there is much indirect evidence for new arable. We have to bear in mind that, as the soil of the waste was the lord's, medieval assarts were large, a virgate or more. Development was controlled by the lord through his officers; it was not a spontaneous effort by villagers. If not undertaken by the lord himself, it was the work of substantial tenants acting under his authority. Primarily the lord looked to his own benefit when he authorized development. He might want extra land for his demesne or he might wish to establish additional free tenants within his manor. He might sometimes consider adding to the number of customary tenements, even, occasionally, increasing the amount of land available for all his neifs.

Thus the subinfeudation of the 12th–13th centuries was made possible by, and is evidence for, an increased amount of cultivated land.

The creation of a new township, with new customary holdings, new demesne, and a new court for the lord, could happen only because a very extensive development had taken place.

Land settled on younger sons or on daughters must reflect fresh inclosure, for the heir must not be

impoverished by anything done for them.

In the same way, when medieval benefactors gave land to the church, their gifts were usually balanced by intake of new land, because the donor's family must not be injured by the gift. Similarly grants of tithe to religious houses — anything, that is, beyond the two thirds of demesne tithe a lord was allowed to alienate from his parish priest without question — must indicate recent intake, for only from new land could there be any unallocated tithe. The soil of the waste belonged to the lord, and therefore he had the right to dispose of tithe from it as soon as it was cultivated.

All these acts are *prima facie* evidence for a progressive land policy and should lead us to look for new development. Regional studies based on such evidence would certainly yield a more accurate picture of the scale of medieval inclosure.

Apparent fluctuations in the amount of demesne farming can be understood only in relation to land improvement, for the lord who disposed of part or the whole of his old demesne was usually substituting new land for old. The availability of extra land affected the number of free tenants. It influenced the position of the unfree tenant too, and we ought to look more closely at that influence, especially on manors not held by churchmen. The accepted picture has been built on evidence from ecclesiastical manors because their records survive in greater quantity. But it cannot be assumed that laymen and ecclesiastics always pursued the same policies or used the same methods, and it is obvious that a resident lay lord was in a different position, vis-à-vis his tenants, from an absent abbot or bishop. Because he was an individual and not an organization or a body corporate, a lay lord could experiment and could initiate more freely.

This study is based mainly upon deeds, a type of document often overlooked. Yet deeds survive in greater quantity than any other record. Court rolls and estate accounts are rare in Shropshire before c. 1325; and for Ercall only a single court roll (1338–9) and one survey (1399)² remain. So we are obliged to use deeds, which are plentiful; and we are fortunate, through the generosity of Lord Barnard, to have been allowed access to many early leases and muniments of title among the Newport records at Raby Castle.³ The text of a survey by the cartographer John Rocque in 1746,⁴ and the tithe apportionment and map of 1839,⁵ provide a basis on which to reconstruct the medieval field pattern. The tithe map indicates certain areas round each township as probable sites of the township open fields, for comparison with the acreages given in the 1399 survey. In considering where the open fields are likely to have been, we can be guided by field names (e.g. field, furlong, yard), by the land use indicated by Rocque in 1746 and the tithe apportionment in 1839, and by inclosure boundaries of the tithe map, which often preserve the curve characteristic of ancient ploughland. Much medieval arable was later put down to grass, and the field name 'leasow' (in contradistinction to 'meadow') may indicate this changed use, as in Barley leasow (TM 546) and Rye leasow (TM 178). On the other hand, names containing the elements New, wood, thorn, birch tree, rush, gorse, grig, heath, ooze or hoo, white, black, brown, marsh, moor, eye, and such names as cockshut, conegry, hargrave, or steady fast, represent areas brought into cultivation later. Some Brick-kiln fields show where the underlying clay has been used for brickmaking; but Brick Leasow and the adjoining Little Britch in Walton (TM 100 and 98) seem to derive their names from ME bruche, land broken for cultivation around 1300. The name smooth, as in Rocque's Smooth Wood (C 33) and Smooth Cockshut (E 158) and the tithe apportionment's Smeathorns (TM 205–7), derives from OE smeðe, smooth: wood or scrub land cleared for cultivation and thus distinguished from adjoining pieces called Rough Wood or Rough Cockshut. Sherlowe, also spelt Shirlow, probably comes from OE scir, in the sense of sparsely wooded or cleared, with hlaw, hill; that name was first applied to the part of Sherlowe above the 200 ft. contour.

Except in one area — the modern Ercall Park and Lodge farms — Rocque's survey and the tithe map, between them, locate most of the medieval inclosures mentioned in deeds and leases.

After 1839 many field boundaries were straightened and, in discussing this area, it is necessary to refer to tithe map numbers rather than Ordnance Survey numbers. So this study is accompanied by maps of the townships of Walton, Osbaston, Cotwall, Moortown, and Ercall, with tithe map boundaries and field names transferred to a 6 inch scale;⁶ maps of those townships on the same scale showing land use as given by Rocque in 1746; and maps indicating the varying locations of the demesne, as deduced from our records, on a 2½ inch scale.

Finally it must be remembered that, though we may know the approximate date when improvement was completed, we do not know when it began. We know roughly when the new land was added to the demesne, or when it first began to pay tithe, or when it was available for letting to tenants. But we must assume a considerable period for clearance before that. Assarting was a winter job, to be fitted in with all the other winter work, and not continued when the busy spring and summer seasons came along. To judge by the development of Broncroft, woodland was cleared at the rate of 3–4 acres a year. So the

improvement of a 12 acre inclosure would take 3–4 years, of a virgate 7–8 years, and of a carucate 14–16 years. If the land which became Sherlowe Grange were originally scrub rather than dense woodland, its development must still have been spread over many seasons. To clear enough for a new township, part thorn and part heath land, the work had to be done in three stages. From the nature of the evidence, however, we seldom hear of inclosures in the making until they have become field land fit for the lord to use, demise, or give away.

¹ *Domesday Geog. of Midland Eng.* ed. H.C. Darby and I.B. Terrett (1954), 125–7.

² The ct. r. and survey (S.R.O. 864/1–2) were returned to this country in 1957 by Mrs. K.G. Webster of Milton, Mass., through Miss Joan Wake. A fragment (B.L. Add. MS. 41340, f.132) appears to belong to the same roll.

³ Raby deeds (R) are referred to by box, bundle, and document nos. according to an outline list compiled by Miss Mabel H. Mills. Some Newport deeds found their way into the Philipps collection and were bought by Salop. Records Committee in 1947 (S.R.O. 52). Other Newport evidences were in the possession of the Shrews. antiquary Geo. Morris and are now lost, but they were used (with much other valuable material) by R.W. Eyton in his great work *Antiquities of Shropshire* (12 vols. 1854–60), hereafter referred to simply as Eyton. Six deeds (five seen by Eyton) were in the collection of another Shrews. antiquary, Thos. Farmer Dukes, and were acquired by S.R.O. in 1980 (4032/2/15–20).

⁴ Deposited for Ld. Barnard (S.R.O. 168/1). This is a draft and there is no accompanying map; it can however be reconstructed with considerable success.

⁵ Parish copy (S.R.O. 2258/1), hereafter referred to as TM.

⁶ From parish maps by Mr. H.D.G. Foxall (copies in S.R.O.).

CHAPTER 2: THE WASTE

THE area we are considering lies 7 miles NE. of Shrewsbury, 5 miles NW. of Wellington, and 10 miles W. of Newport, on the edge of the Weald Moors but away from the marshes. The highest land is 250 ft. above sea level, and all the hamlets stand on or above the 200 ft. contour. The soil is loamy clay or clayey sand and marl overlying red sandstone, with one strip of gravel between Birchtree bank and Tern farm.¹

Ercall in 1086

The manor in 1066 covered the area later defined as the townships of Ercall, Walton, Osbaston, Cotwall, Moortown, and Tern, with Sherlowe and Weeseland which were not townships; Crudgington (though really a separate manor) had been tacked on to Ercall and was then an integral part of it, administratively and economically. By 1086, however, Crudgington had been detached; and though for a while, c. 1102–c. 1136, it had the same lord, it was never again a part of Ercall. That lordship was now restricted to the land between the Roden, Lakemoor brook, and the Tern (less 484 acres which became Tern lordship). We are dealing with some 4,250 acres.

Speculation about the pre-Conquest development of this district has to be based on place-names, Domesday entries, and a little archaeological evidence.² In the mid 19th century Eyton, working on the theory of total displacement of the pre-Saxon population, postulated a primary Saxon settlement at Rodington with its mother church, a secondary settlement at Ercall hall, and post-Conquest developments on the moors at Walton, Osbaston, Cotwall, and Moortown. We start with knowledge of widespread Romano-British settlement all round Viroconium and consequently are prepared for evidence of continuity here. Iron Age settlement has been found on Shray hill in Crudgington, and a Romano-British enclosure at Cotwall explains why the Ercall-Wellington and Ercall-Newport roads divide there in a U, to avoid the occupied site.³ The field name Hargreaves at Walton may have indicated disturbed ground, though modern development, including a war-time airfield, has removed any trace. The *alba petra* or Hore stone at Osbaston may refer to a standing stone marking a way across the marshes. The element *wal* in Walton and Cotwall (as in neighbouring Walcot) could imply settlement of *Walenses* (Britons or slaves), just as Crudgington comes from the Welsh *cruc* and the river names Tern⁴ and Roden derive from the Welsh *tren*, powerful, and *rhuthr*, rushing, both words warning against floods. But the principal evidence for continued settlement is the name Ercall (D.B. Archelov), for if Ekwall is right, this was the Celtic name for the whole district.

So on this theory we shall see Walton, Cotwall, and Crudgington as Celtic settlements co-existing alongside Saxon settlements at Rodington, Osbaston or Asbaston (Osbeorn's tun), Sleaf (OE *slaep*, a muddy place), and Weeseland (Wilsichelond, the wild dyked land), with Ercall as the name of the whole area before it became the name of one specific locality.

This would explain why the traditional meeting place for the hundred of Bradford was and remained outside the village of Ercall, on a piece of land called the Hundredstede near the ford or bridge over the Roden. That meeting-place was fixed, perhaps c. 1190, before the village existed at High Ercall.⁵

The hall at High Ercall existed before the village. We know that there were six carucates of demesne in 1086. These lay in a single block (not dispersed) at Ercall and at Weeseland, for Earl Hugh's gift c. 1095 of two thirds of his demesne tithe to Shrewsbury abbey especially mentions those localities⁶ and the subsequent history of the two thirds confirms it. Of the six carucates, only one (later divided into two separate virgate holdings) was at Weeseland. Given the hall with its adjoining demesne, there could have

been neither township arable there nor a village until extra land had been developed and the original demesne split up. Besides, the 1086 description of the manor accounts for the population of the three townships round the hall, Walton, Osbaston, and Cotwall, but not for any population at Ercall itself.

This is what we are told about our manor. 'The earl himself holds Archelov. Earl Edwin held it with five berewicks. There are 7 hides. In demesne there are 6 plough-teams and 12 *bovarii*; 29 villeins and 12 bordars have 15 teams. Two mills render 12 measures of corn, and there is a fishery of 1,502 great eels. Here is one league of wood. In King Edward's time the manor was worth £20 per annum. Now it is worth the same. According to a custom, when the countess visited the manor, 18 sums of 20*d.* each used to be brought to her.'

'The earl himself' of course refers to the great earl of Shrewsbury, Roger of Montgomery.

The first thing that strikes one about this entry is how backward-looking it is. For those who gave evidence before the commissioners, the palmy days were 20 or 30 years back, when Earl Edwin had his 5 berewicks and the countess used to visit Ercall at regular intervals. This is not how things were in 1086, but how they had been in 1066 and even before that, before 1057. In 1057 Earl Edwin inherited from his grandfather Earl Leofric and the Countess Godgifu (Godiva), a couple well known for their active improvement of estates. So the initial development of the manor, the building of the hall, the creation of 6 carucates of demesne, the organization which linked the 5 berewicks with the central administration at the hall, is likely to have been the work of Leofric and Godgifu, not their successor; and the countess who received occasional payments of 20*d.* each from 18 tenants (commutation, no doubt, for an earlier food render) was Godgifu herself.

Five berewicks were attached to the hall in 1066. The word taken literally means barley or corn farm, usually an outlying part of an estate away from the manorial centre and the demesne. The implication often is that the whole profit from the berewick will come to the lord, though this was not necessarily the case. At Ercall the five berewicks were presumably Walton, Osbaston, Cotwall, Tern, and Crudgington with Sleaf attached; only when the last of these berewicks is included can we find arable enough outside the demesne for 15 ploughteams owned by tenants.

But Crudgington was never an integral part of the manor. Geographically it is separated from the other townships by the river Tern. Edwin held it, paying a separate farm of 73*s.* 4*d.*, and his grandfather had probably done the same. Leofric and Godgifu wanted to add Crudgington to their manor because they would then control both banks of the river where there were fisheries, and because Crudgington had one valuable asset, grazing rights over the whole of the Weald Moors. It was worth more than 73*s.* 4*d.* to them. By 1086, however, Crudgington had been detached from Ercall and consequently has its own Domesday entry⁷ as *Crugetone*. The manor, formerly Earl Edwin's, was held by Robert Pincerna as 1½ hide. Its demesne was insignificant — one carucate worked by 2 *servi* and an *ancilla*. Besides them, one free man, 9 villeins, and 2 bordars held 3 carucates; and there were 4 fisheries worth 13*s.* 4*d.* The rent had been raised to £4 and a render of 1,000 eels, which hints at an increase in the number of eel traps over the last 20 years.

In Edwin's day the lord had no demesne at Crudgington, for he had his 6 carucates at Ercall and Weeseland. Consequently all the Crudgington arable was cultivated by and for the tenants. What the lord got from all his townships was service, and from Walton some return in cash. At Tern he may have had one berewick from which he took all the profit. There is no evidence for any township land here, then or later, and the two carucates at Tern could have been worked either by customary labour from Cotwall or by *bovarii* temporarily domiciled in a building on the site of Tern farm. A track, referred to in 1227, links Cotwall with Tern and leads nowhere else. A pre-Conquest berewick at Tern would account for the bulge in the township boundary which gave the lord an undue share in the best-drained gravelly soil above Tern farm.⁸ But even this berewick and the berewick system may have been on the way out by 1066.

The manor of Ercall (excluding Crudgington for which a separate farm was paid) was worth £20 T.R.E. and was still worth £20 in 1086. There had been no new development under Earl Roger, whose attention was on other matters, not estate improvement. No wonder the Domesday witnesses looked back to pre-Conquest days: nothing significant had happened since.

The accuracy of the Domesday figures for tenants and plough teams has often been questioned, but on the manor of Ercall at least, they are supported by other evidence (set out in Table 1). We may compare Ercall in 1086 with the Ercall we see in a settlement of c. 1300, an endowment of 1332, and the 1399 survey undertaken when the Gech, *alias* Newport, family came into possession. For a century or more before 1399 customary rents had been fixed⁹ at 10*s.* a year for the half virgate, 5*s.* for a quarter virgate or noke, the half virgate being the normal holding and measuring about 15 acres. Acres on this manor are occasionally described as, and always appear in fact to be, statute or royal acres. Where we can identify virgate holdings, they measure (according to the tithe apportionment figures) 28+ to 32 acres; and the

carucate 60–64 acres.¹⁰

In pre-Conquest Ercall there were five berewicks (Walton, Osbaston, Cotwall, Tern, and Crudgington with Sleaf); 18 tenants (possibly Walton men) paid occasional rents of 20*d.* each. The value *per annum* was £20. By 1086 43 tenants held land in Walton, Osbaston, and Cotwall (Tern and Crudgington being omitted). Of these 43 tenants, 29 were villeins and 2 millers, all probably half-virgaters (465 acres); 12 were bordars with nokes (90 acres). The 12 *bovarii* held no land.¹¹ So the total acreage was around 555 acres, and the value *per annum* still £20.

In 1300 and 1399 there were 36 half-virgate tenements (18 at Walton, 9 at Osbaston, and 9 at Cotwall); and 3 tenements with nokes (one at Walton, 2 at Osbaston). Cotwall had one messuage with a croft and no land, Osbaston a messuage without even a croft. While both mills were working, the total number of tenements was 43, just as in 1086. It had been reduced by one before 1399, with the abandonment of the second mill. With 278 acres at Walton, 150 acres at Osbaston, and 135 acres at Cotwall, there were 563 acres of arable altogether; and to judge from the tithe map, the maximum area possible as open field could have been no more than 570 acres. When both mills were operating, the total rent paid yearly to the lord was £19 3*s.* 8*d.*, slightly less than the value in 1086. Of this £16 15*s.* 0*d.* was paid for ancient holdings, 26*s.* 8*d.* and 22*s.* respectively for the mills.

This similarity in the figures for tenants and acreages cannot be coincidence. The number of tenements in these townships had been fixed by 1086 and did not alter; their size did not materially change, if it changed at all, over the 300 years.

Now if the Domesday tenant figures for Ercall belong wholly to Walton, Osbaston, and Cotwall, then we have none for Tern (because there were no customary tenants there) or for Crudgington (because Crudgington has its own entry). We have no later evidence about Crudgington and Sleaf to compare with Domesday Book's figures (set out in Table 2) because once the Crudgington manor had passed c. 1136 to Shrewsbury abbey, it was joined with Kynnersley and Buttery to form the abbot's manor of Sleaf. What information we have for the 16th–17th centuries suggests that Crudgington too remained static with 240 acres of arable until after the dissolution of the monasteries.

There is just one problem. If the Domesday plough-team figures are to be believed, Ercall, after losing Crudgington, still had land for 15 ploughs belonging to its tenants. At 60 acres ploughed by each team every year, that is a minimum of 900 acres, far more than would be needed by the 43 tenants of Walton, Osbaston, and Cotwall (12 of them bordars). Those townships could not ever have had more than 555–65 acres of arable: land for just over 9 teams. But if we add 2 teams for Tern and 4 teams for Crudgington, we do arrive at the right number.

It suggests that, at the enquiry before the Domesday commissioners, the Ercall tenants were so full of the past glories of their manor — the 5 berewicks of Earl Edwin's day, the memorable occasions when the countess came in person to receive her dues, the 15 ploughteams there used to be when Crudgington was still attached to the manor as its fifth berewick — that they somehow failed to explain that now there were only 11 teams outside the demesne. Then the Crudgington tenants spoke of their 4 teams, and so those 4 were counted twice.

The manor of Ercall was assessed at 7 hides and the manor of Crudgington at 1½ hide. If, for taxation purposes, the unit was taken to be the produce of 2 carucates or about 120 acres, then 7 hides was only equivalent to the produce of 840 acres instead of 1,035, and Ercall was greatly undervalued. At Crudgington, 1½ hide represents 180 acres instead of 240. Such favourable treatment was what Earl Roger expected and got on all his Shropshire estates; it is not obvious why Robert Pincerna was similarly favoured, unless for a time Roger had held Crudgington too before passing it on.

So by 1066 at latest, and probably by 1057, the lords of Ercall had developed all the land suitable for arable in the immediate vicinity of their hall and its hamlets, leaving a strip of waste between each settlement, and a fringe of waste all round the manor boundary. They had created 6 carucates of demesne, and the only considerable pieces of undeveloped land were the lord's wood (that league of wood between Bradford and Great Wytheford, half of which later lords of Ercall were to turn into park), Cotwall wood, Penmarsh, and the heaths on which the township of More or Moortown was to be placed c. 1180. This is why the Domesday commissioners said nothing about land for extra plough teams. It seemed to them that this manor was already developed to the limit of its capabilities.

In a way they were right. The core of the manor remained static from 1057 to 1399 just because it was already mature. In another way, they were mistaken. There was still scope for development. A great deal of extra arable could be added to the total acreage under plough by improvement which would abolish those strips of waste between the hamlets and take in almost all the fringe waste round the manor boundary, leaving very little wood outside the lord's park and only just enough open waste to pasture the lord's and the tenants' beasts. This had been achieved by 1345. Nothing more could be done until the lord

was willing to give up his warren and his park and until the tenants would agree to inclose the open fields; and those steps were not taken till long after our period.

Development of the waste 1086-1345

1086-1223

In this first period of expansion we can observe most of the characteristics that mark medieval inclosure. We shall find that the amount of waste taken into cultivation in a single operation was seldom less than a virgate and could be as much as a carucate; that the agents were the lord (by his steward) and his free tenants, men of standing whose free tenancies resulted from their own activity; that the building of a new church necessarily involved the development of glebe; that new tithe given to a monastic house could come only from new cultivation, as when a whole new township was created; and that the extra corn produced by that township was one of the factors which induced the lord to build a new mill.

There was no church at High Ercall till c. 1090 when Earl Roger founded a semi-collegiate church dedicated to St. Edward 'le Roy' and endowed it with enough land to support two priests. There was to be a rector, holding the glebe and receiving the tithes, and a vicar paid a stipend of 15 marks (£10) a year. The advowson was given to Shrewsbury abbey, Earl Roger's foundation.¹² In 1227 the abbey was allowed to appropriate the living and, as rector, became possessed of 5 nokes or quarter virgates of land in Ercall not far from the church. So the abbey was holding about 40 acres of the original glebe, and the vicar (instead of his 15 marks) was given some part of the tithe and a portion of glebe. Calculating that the rector took two thirds of the whole glebe leaving the vicar with one third (a very normal division, as when demesne tithes were shared between a religious house and a parish priest), the vicar of Ercall had 20 acres. So the original endowment must have been 60 acres, or one carucate.

Where was this original glebe? It was a single block, for Shrewsbury's 5 nokes lay together; it adjoined land not demesne in 1090 but to be developed as demesne about 1245; and it included one identifiable parcel of ground, the plot called Lamsitch croft (TM 354) or Great Washing Pit, or Shepecotefold. Between 1090 and 1227 a lord of Ercall (almost certainly William of Ercall I) negotiated an exchange by which he acquired this parcel (about 2½ acres in fact, though in a dispute it was alleged to be one acre only) in exchange for 4 acres of demesne.¹³ The transaction coincided with a switch from cattle breeding to sheep, and, as the name Great Washing Pit indicates, what the lord needed was a convenient place for sheep dipping. This shows that the original glebe, the 60 acres which Earl Roger had cleared as endowment for his church, was a triangular section of wood lying between his demesne, the area which later became the park, and the marshy area called the Hoo or Hoo Coppice. It comprised the tithe map fields called Badda or Barrow or Bathwell fields, plus the sheep dip, and one of the Park Crofts (TM 345-7, 349-354): exactly 60 acres. Two of these fields called Barrowfield Corner were apparently part of the vicar's allocation in 1227; they were glebe in 1612, 1746, and 1839 (almost the only parcels of the original glebe still in the incumbent's possession), and in 1424 the angle where Barrowfield Corner projects slightly into the park was known as *vicarshete* (*sceat*), the vicar's corner.¹⁴

Ercall and Crudginton manors came into the king's hand after Robert of Bellême's rebellion (1102) and Henry I gave both to Hamo Peverel. So from c. 1102 to c. 1136 the manors shared the same lord and Ercall may have benefited from the association, though Crudginton was not in any sense part of its economy. About 1136 Hamo gave the whole manor of Crudginton to Shrewsbury abbey, and about the same time he reduced the size of Ercall by giving Tern to Ralph fitz Theald.¹⁵ He could do this because he was now encouraging his tenants to assart land for themselves out of Ercall waste.

One virgate was cleared by Baldwin of Walton, whose descendants held it till the 15th century by military service and payment of 5s. rent, a mode of tenure suggesting old feoffment.¹⁶ Hamo held Ercall by the service of one knight, a service Baldwin could be called on to discharge. Another virgate between Walton and Osbaston was developed by Siward and his undertenant before 1140, for c. 1141, Hamo gave this quarter hide to his daughter Seburga so that she could contribute towards the endowment of her husband's foundation, Wombridge priory.¹⁷ A third virgate in the same waste was improved by Pichard (the woodpecker) of Osbaston and was later given by his family to Wombridge, a gift confirmed c. 1180.¹⁸ A fourth virgate at Cotwall was cleared about the same time and held by a free tenant at 2s. rent.¹⁹ Altogether 120 acres had been added to the manor's arable by 1155.

Hamo's death divided Ercall among coheirs, but between 1155 and 1165 the thirds were reunited by William of Hadley the younger, Seburga's second son also known as William of Ercall because this was his sole manor. His successors, with one exception, were also Williams. We may distinguish them as William I-V.

William I extended his demesne at Long Furlong in Sherlowe (still demesne c. 1270), about 15 acres.

He then allowed three tenants to assart a carucate (62 acres) of the demesne waste there, beyond the existing boundary ditch.²⁰ That ditch, mentioned again in 1256, can be located on the tithe map by the field name Sitch applied to TM 518a and 519. Thurstan of Schurlawe and his son William, with their associate Reiner, nephew of Odo of Ercalewe, seem to have been granted a lease for three lives. So, when William I and his wife Isolda (or Sibil) wanted to benefit the family foundation of Wombridge, they gave the whole of this new carucate with the service of its tenants to the priory.

In the 1170s the Pichards of Osbaston developed a second virgate of new land beyond the ring fence of Osbaston field at Moor Ash, an area deemed to be in Erccall township. They were paying tithe to Shrewsbury abbey on the new land before 1181.²¹ About the same time William I decided to create a completely new township with new demesne on the waste between Moor Ash and Crudgington bridge. He assarted land for a single common field of 105 acres, enough for seven half-virgate tenements, 'the land of the men of La Mora' as a 13th-century deed calls it,²² and 85 acres of demesne between that field and a boundary ditch parallel to the Erccall-Newport road. Between ditch and road lay the Great Thorns, and that section William left for his successors to tackle. His new township was known as La Mora or Moortown, and the first part was under cultivation by 1181.

As it was new land, the lord had the right to dispose of its tithe. He gave it to Wombridge²³ with the special concession that the priory might tithe at a ninth instead of the customary tenth. William on his 85 acres of demesne, and his Moortown tenants on their land, would yield to the church 11 sheaves or heaps of grain out of every 100. This was a burden he could not have imposed on free or unfree tenants already holding land from him and already paying a fixed tithe to Shrewsbury. He could do it at Moortown because this was new tithe on new arable.

Ten years later William built a Court at La Mora, giving the tithe on his moveables there to Wombridge. The Court was to be a separate establishment for his son William, who was beginning to take over the estate management. It could later be used as a dower house, replacing an existing dower house on the moated site at Weeseland (OS 1778) where Isolda spent her widowhood.²⁵

William II inherited c. 1200 and turned his attention to the manor mills. Both Domesday mills were on the Roden, one at Bradford bridge and the other perhaps at or near Weeseland. The second was no longer much use by 1200, and the Moortown development suggested a new mill on Lakemoor brook to serve Moortown and Osbaston and also the lordships of Rowton, Ellerdine, and Cold Hatton across the stream. So William II, with the co-operation of Griffin ap Jorwerth Goch of Rowton and Ellerdine and of Griffin's subtenant Robert fitz Warin, enlarged Robert's small neglected vivary there into a large vivary and millpond and built Lakemoor mill on the waste between Osbaston hamlet and the brook. Griffin's tenants from Rowton and Ellerdine were to pay suit there and William have the multure, but Robert and his heirs might keep the multure from their own grain because he had given up his vivary. If other tenants were found going to another mill, the flour should belong to William and the fine to Griffin, unless Lake mill were out of action. For himself Griffin reserved the right to have a boat on the water and fish.²⁶ Baldwin Wischart, son of Gilbert, of Cold Hatton, then gave to Sir William of Erccall and the Lake mill the suit of his Hatton tenants; and, to make sure they went nowhere else, one of Baldwin's men was made to swear on the gospels that he would inform against defaulters.²⁷

All this made Lake mill much more profitable than the mill it replaced.

Having built his new mill, William II assarted 15 acres for the miller and 40 acres for himself. Tenants were warned not to trespass into the lord's corn when they used a footpath from Osbaston to Ellerdine which now ran along the top of the mill bank.⁸

Lake mill has left its mark on the tithe map in the names Broadlake meadow (TM 213), Pool Head (TM 220b), and Lake Mill Meadow (TM 221). A strip of land on the far side of the stream (TM 220a, b, c) became part of Erccall manor and Osbaston township in 1227, when the lord's right to take soil for his mill bank was restricted to this area, allotted for the purpose by a jury of eight knights and the vicar of Erccall.²⁹

William II created no new meadow, but for 5 marks he did acquire a small meadow by the Tern called Wrensmoor or Wren meadow. It had belonged to Ralph of Rodington, and the transaction was confirmed between 1200 and 1210 by Ralph's overlord William son of William fitz Alan.³⁰

1223-1278

The first half of this period saw a very rapid extension of arable at Erccall, bringing 300 acres of new land into cultivation and allowing the lord to dispose of new tithe on 5 carucates of land. The new demesne now ran from Walton to Crudgington bridge. But sheep were as profitable as corn and the market for Shropshire wool was growing, so the development of extra meadow to feed his flocks during the winter was as important to the lord of Erccall as the development of land for the plough. In this period we see another principle in action: that the heir must always inherit as much demesne land as his father and that

provision for daughters must not materially injure the son.

The second half of the period involved consolidation of the demesne by judicious exchanges and continued improvement of the waste by tenants. By 1278 all the easy land within the manor had been brought into cultivation.

The boundary between Ercall and Tern lordship had never been very precisely defined. In 1227 William III came to an agreement with the brothers Ralph and Reginald of Tern³¹ by which the present township boundaries, defined by ditches and landmarks, were established. This left William in possession of Tern vivary, a raised bog at the head of the slope between Tern and Cotwall (TM 289) which may well have been the place where the 1,502 great eels recorded in 1086 were caught. The agreement also gave William a fee within Tern, a virgate of cultivated land, an existing meadow known as Weir meadow, waste in Tern Moor, and the undeveloped river bank along the Tern up to, but excluding, Bridge meadow (already Shrewsbury abbey's). This stretch of the riverside was probably what he coveted most. Between 1227 and 1245 he created six new meadows from land previously untithed.³²

At Moortown William extended his demesne to take in the strip called Great-thorns between the boundary ditch and the road, and all land fit for ploughing below Stew furlong by the Court. On the low ground by Crudginton bridge he inclosed 20 acres of meadow and was annoyed when, in 1233-4, the abbot of Shrewsbury's new mill and mill bank raised the water level in the river and flooded some of his grass. All he could get was a promise that the dam should not be raised any higher.³³ Between Moortown field and Lake mill William developed as meadow all the land along the brook³⁴ that the Osbaston tenants had had for their goose pasture, and they were obliged to make do with about 18 acres on the edge of Osbaston field. Beyond that Goosemoor, between Moor Ash and Walton, William was rapidly assarting another 4 carucates, later called Coneygrey field (because the lord's warren lay on one side of it) and Cross field.

The Moortown development brought William into conflict with Wombridge. The prior, on the strength of former grants, claimed a ninth of all corn and hay at La Mora, from new land as well as old, and a ninth of William's moveables there. The claim was inconvenient for William had promised the new tithe to the prioress of St. Leonard's, Brewood (White Ladies), to secure the nuns' prayers for himself and Emma his wife. His family had done very well by Wombridge in the past, and intercession from a new source might be more effective. Eventually, on 6 October 1245, the prior of Wombridge renounced his claims and accepted in lieu tithe at one ninth from 3 carucates of new demesne in Ercall township, from the whole of Coneygrey field, and from half of Cross field (including the portion later called Rye furlong). The prioress of Brewood was to tithe the Moortown demesne, the fourth carucate of new demesne at Ercall, and the new meadows by the Tern; and she was given land at La Mora to build a grange and 40 ft. on the brook to make a weir. Her portion was secured to her by a subsequent fine in 1256.³⁵

For his next development William needed Wombridge priory's co-operation. He wished to inclose part of Cotwall wood, where the canons had been given the right to feed their pigs. On 15 November 1248 William confirmed their right of common over the whole wood except in his assart called Holtesmore which was to be open from Martinmas to Candlemas yearly and then hayed up.³⁶ This provision shows that the new inclosure was to be meadow. Had it been arable it would sometimes have been fallow and open through the winter, sometimes autumn sown. Wombridge must have tithed Holtesmore for in 1245 William had promised the canons that, if he or his heirs ever again assarted new land, Wombridge should benefit. There is no evidence to locate this inclosure exactly but it may have been TM 543, the first 13 acres of the wood beyond Long Furlong.

All this new arable and new meadow was intended for the demesne. William III was not giving any new land to his tenants. He wanted to have a carucate apiece to settle on his younger daughters Annora and Cecilia and still leave at least 6 carucates for his heir. Until c. 1250 he expected the heir to be his elder son William³⁷ but the young man died before his father and by 1256 the heir to the lordship of Ercall was the second son John.

John was not an improver but he was acquisitive. He cleared no more than 19 acres along the Rowton road, land he needed as part of an exchange. Nevertheless he managed to buy for the demesne about 100 acres in all. For the rest he encouraged improvement by others. He allowed the canons of Wombridge to improve about 21 acres in Sherlowe waste which he could not easily have used himself,³⁸ and he permitted his tenants Ralph and Roumore to take advantage of an agreement with the lord of³⁹ Wytheford which allowed him or his men to assart land between the road to Wem and the Wytheford boundary (13 acres). Between 1256 and 1278 some 53 acres of extra land were brought into cultivation. There remained woodland at Walton and Cotwall, dry waste on Cotwall heath and along the Wytheford border, the Smallthorns at Osbaston, the marshes at Penmarsh, and the Cotwall and Moortown heaths, all still available for development but more difficult to improve or less worth improving.

1278-1345

In this final phase the wastes that separated Ercall from its neighbours were finally converted to arable or meadow. This left barely enough waste for common pasture for lord and tenants.

Improvement alternated between easier and more difficult terrains. The choice was between heathland which could be burnt and ploughed immediately but was worth no more than 6*d.* an acre; scrubland, from which thorn roots had to be grubbed, and woodland where, after felling, tree stumps had to be stocked up but where the extra labour produced land worth 1*s.* an acre; and marsh where the problem was drainage. From all these wastes field land could be made, and there was no problem in disposing of it for land was still in demand.

John's son William IV was a minor in 1278 and did not receive livery of his lands till 1284. Soon afterwards he extended his warren at the expense of 50 acres of Moortown demesne.⁴⁰ To compensate for this he ploughed up about 38 acres of his Moortown waste, Fishpolesheet (TM 283-5) and Moorbank (TM 271). This new land was let to Tern or Moortown tenants. The nuns of Brewood lost part of their tithe but were pacified by tithe from the new land and a confirmation of their rights.⁴¹ At Osbaston William intended to improve Smallthorns and made an agreement to free that waste from intercommoning rights enjoyed by the men of Rowton and Ellerdine. He seems to have cleared 6½ acres above Broadlake meadow, against Lakemoor brook, for the lord of Rowton — 'the land of the lord of Routon and Ellewardin' which adjoined a later Smallthorns inclosure.⁴² On the Wytheford border near the Roden John fitz Aer had been allowed to flood some Ercall land to extend his vivary, as compensation for damage done by the pound at Lake mill;⁴³ and in the wood between the park and the vivary William began to make assarts. By 1303 he had cleared 9 acres though the land was not ready for cultivation when he died.⁴⁴ On the border with Sugdon the Wombridge canons were given permission to assart 40 acres of Sherlowe waste,⁴⁵ land William could hardly have used himself. All this meant about 93-94 acres improved.

William V immediately took up his father's work. He fixed his mother's dower in a settlement dated 23 February 1304,⁴⁶ before the legal formalities over his inheritance were completed, and laid down in detail all her privileges to avoid any chance of dispute. Her third of the demesne arable was to be allotted to her by view of legal men. In this deed William promised that every time he assarted new land, Petronilla his mother should have her third, and this promise he conscientiously fulfilled. So, whenever we find William demising newly developed land, we must assume an adjoining parcel as her share and contrariwise when she is the lessor: of a 3 acre intake, the lord would have two acres to demise, his mother one acre. And Petronilla did not die till 1331-2. The only exception was when 6 acres against Petronilla's wood were cleared for the benefit of her younger son and his younger children.

At Broncroft William cleared 39 acres (TM 38a. 3r. 7p.) along the Wytheford boundary ditch, working from the ends towards the middle. His assarts⁴⁷ can be plotted (see Fig. 17; Table 3); all the cleared land was let for 1*s.* an acre.

At Smallthorns William improved 40 acres, beginning from the Muckleton road. His first assart, ready for letting before he was knighted at New Year 1312, was about 27 acres. He demised to his neighbour Philip of Muckleton and Alina his wife a parcel of field land for which they were to pay him 18*s.* a year.⁴⁸ At the usual rate of 1*s.* an acre, that implies 18 acres. All the bounds are given in detail. The land lay between Isabella's bridge (the Elwall of a Penmarsh lease, perhaps a causeway through the marsh), a field ditch, Brodelakedich or Lakemoor brook, the lady's land, and the Muckleton-Osbaston road. The lady's land was another 9 acres, Petronilla's share, which Philip was going to lease from her. So his total holding was 27 acres, and it corresponds to three tithe map parcels: Low, Middle, and Betton's Smeathorn (TM 205-7), in all 29 acres according to the apportionment. Philip's arable, however, would not have gone quite to the brook as it is shown on the tithe map. A strip of land along its course had been regularly flooded ever since John of Ercall raised his dam at Lake mill, holding up the flow of water; he admitted this in August 1261 when he agreed to compensate John fitz Aer.⁴⁹ So 27 acres will have been an accurate estimate of the area of the Smeathorns then. The name Smeathorn itself indicates inclosure, for it derives from ME *smeðe*, *smethe*, or *smooth*; cleared land.

The next lease, to Roger fitz Ralph of Hatton and his son Roger,⁵⁰ was made in or after 1312, for William was then a knight. They agreed to pay 8*s.* a year rent for a parcel of meadow bounded by le Smethebruche (Philip's land), le Rushihurste (TM 208 Gorse leasow), Broadlakeditch, land of the lord of Rowton and Ellerdine (TM 211 Thistley Smallthorns), le Smalthornes (TM 212 Smallthorns croft) and the field ditch. Petronilla's share of the assart would bring the total to 12 acres and identifies it with Lackey Leasows (TM 209-210), 12½ acres.

A single acre, probably in Smallthorns croft, was leased first to Richard Brodere and then, when his lease fell in, to John le Mercur of La More.⁵¹ He gave the lord 20*s.* consideration to have it for his life,

paying the 1s. a year rent; so he must have wanted it badly.

In Penmarsh William developed about 32 acres between the Muckleton road, the spreading brook, the rest of Penmarsh, and the head of Walton field. There, very soon after William inherited (for he still called himself William son of William), he demised to Philip of Muckleton and his wife⁵² 2 acres of land and two small plots of meadow, a bare half acre put together, all lying near the boundary. One plot of meadow was by the road, near the brook and at Elwall. The other plot was at one end of the arable, at the corner of the assart, which extended SW. towards Brookland and was bordered by Walton field and Stanemonspleck. All this identifies Philip's two acres as a strip across the top of TM 33 and the stoneman's plot with a narrow L-shaped TM 14. It seems from this reference that Brookland (TM 5, 6), between Walton field and the marsh, was already inclosed; the track that goes half round it must have been made in order to reach William's assarts.⁵³

At Penmarsh too some very small plots were leased to tenants. A single acre there was held before 1339 by a customary tenant Roger Lucock. When he died the lord expected a heriot because it was leasehold, and on this manor heriots were paid for leaseholds but not for customary tenements. Roger's representatives failed to pay, the township concealed the default, and at a court on 25 June 1339 the bailiff was ordered to fine the township 2s. and to sequester the land. Two acres or so, separated by a ditch from the Baldwin free tenement, were held in 1338-9 by Richard son of Matthew (part probably of TM 39). He, according to a complaint heard by the court on 5 February 1339, had raised a fosse upon William Baldwin's land. The outcome is not known.

After Petronilla's death William established a chantry in Ercall churchyard and gave towards its endowment 4 acres in Brademere in Penmarsh near the manor boundary.⁵⁴ This was separated from adjoining land by a ditch, and the chaplains were permitted to keep their land permanently inclosed. They were further allowed to lease at the normal rent 6 more acres of Brademere. The exact locality of these two parcels is not given. The 4 acres, however, were by the boundary with Wytheford; they are likely to have adjoined the road and may have been TM 36, 38. The 6 acres may have been part of TM 39 (less the portion held by Richard son of Matthew).

Broncroft, Smallthorns, and Penmarsh assarts were worth 1s. an acre when improved.

At Cotwall, on the other hand, assarts from the heath and from Cotwall wood were valued at 6d. an acre only. It looks as though tenants had already destroyed a good deal of the woodland with their pigs and their search for firewood.

By 1309 William had cleared about ten acres of the heath. Three acres of it were leased to William le Ku and his daughter Joan.⁵⁵ Petronilla will have had another 1½ acre for her share. Four acres by Ku's were leased for a second time in 1323 to Richard son of Huwe of Muckleston and his brother John,⁵⁶ and again Petronilla will have had her 2 acres. This represents the development of the field called Lower Spendloves Pit above the track leading to Sherlowe Grange (mentioned in 1315), some 10 acres (part of TM 544).

In the same area of heath a 12 acre assart at Short Hammonds (TM 542) was available for letting to tenants by 1315. William leased 8 acres of it to Sir Hamund, rector of Isombridge chapel, for his life and the life of Robert of Drayton's daughter Petronilla, while Dame Petronilla leased her 4 acres to Alan of Cotwall and Richard son of William Lauwe.⁵⁷ This new land is described as adjoining 'Cotamchurlowe field' (the carucate held by Wombridge), a marl pit, a footpath and ditch between Short Hammonds and the Wombridge land, and that way from Sherlowe Grange to Cotwall heath; it is thus placed very exactly.

In Cotwall wood, between the Wellington road and Sugdon waste, William cleared about 39 acres. The first inclosure was 12 acres. Of this, Petronilla's 4 acres lay next the road, with William's 8 acres beyond them. Sometime after 1312 the lord and his mother granted leases⁵⁸ of this new land to John Bareson of Tern (son of Roger Bareson of Salop) for the lives of John, his wife Emma, and his sister Agnes. He was to have common rights within Ercall manor and might alienate his leases at will, but William for that reason may have thought it necessary to stipulate that John or his assigns should not cultivate this marginal land more than two years in three. No other lease contains such a clause. And if a fallow year were the established pattern of husbandry everywhere on the manor, would that restriction have been inserted?

Bareson's 12 acres were the first half of two tithe map inclosures called Waste Leasows, TM 531-2, measuring in all 24 acres. The rest, for which no lease survives, were no doubt developed next and demised as 8 acres and 4 acres like the first section. For to the SW. of the Waste Leasows another inclosure, estimated at 15½ acres but perhaps slightly less, was cleared a little later. This was TM 530 (14½ acres). Eleven acres next to Sugdon waste were leased to Robert le Houle.⁵⁹ One headland touched land of the prior of Wombridge (that section of waste the canons had been allowed to improve for themselves in William IV's time). The other 5½ acres of this assart (Petronilla's share) had come into William's hand

through her death and he now held the land above Robert's acres. This dates the lease to 1332 or after.

By the time he settled his estates in 1334 William had brought into cultivation 172 acres for which we have direct evidence. In addition 'bruches' had been made on Walton heath. We know of them chiefly from the 1399 survey and, as the rents paid for them were nominal, it seems likely that William encouraged his customary tenants to break up heathland against the Wem road, charging them little rent because they did the work themselves and it was marginal land. All the names associated with these assarts in the 1399 survey refer to families like the Cubels and the Hickes, who had gone from the manor by the end of that century. The last Cubel reference is in 1380 and then to a tenement formerly his. So we may reasonably assign these developments to the years before 1345. The Harnul bruche of 1399 is Rocque's 3 acre Kernall leasow (part of TM 86), and le Hochehull of 1399 is Rocque's Horn's Hill.

William V's improvements had occupied some 20 years, and Table 4 shows the way that clearance of woodland, scrub, heath, and marsh proceeded simultaneously. After 1324 William undertook no major new development.

When William settled his estates in 1334 the limit of expansion had been reached. The waste of Ercall was so far improved that barely enough was left open to maintain the sheep kept on the manor, to say nothing of cattle. Strict stinting was essential. The Domesday commissioners would have been astonished to learn how much new arable could be added to a manor they had considered fully developed in 1086.

¹ R.W. Pocock and D.A. Wray, *Geology of the Country around Wem* (Mem. Geol. Surv. 1925), 76.

² We await the promised Eng. Place-Name Soc. vols. for Shrop. and have to rely on A.H. Smith, *Eng. Place-Name Elements*, i-ii (E.P.N.S. xxv-xxvi), and E. Ekwall, *Concise Oxf. Dict. Eng. Place-Names*. Cf. G.R.J. Jones, 'Continuity despite Calamity: the Heritage of Celtic Territorial Organization in Eng.' *Jnl. of Celtic Studies*, iii, 1-30 (esp. 22-30); Wendy Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages* (1982), 99 sqq.

³ Inf. from Shrop. Archaeol. Soc.'s Prehistory Group; M.O.H. Carver and J. Wills, *Shrewsbury: the Buried Past* (Shrews. 1974), 7, reproducing an aerial photo. of the site. Archaeology in the last twenty years has changed the accepted picture of settlement and land development, changes summarized by Christopher Taylor in 'The Making of the Eng. Landscape 25 Years on', *The Local Historian*, xiv(4), 195-201 (Nov. 1980). The art. stresses both the antiquity of our landscape and the possibility of named sites shifting position. Such shifts would not be easy at Ercall where settlement had to be on limited areas of higher ground.

⁴ Cf. *T.S.A.S.* lix. 254.

⁵ See the hist. of Bradford hundred in *V.C.H. Salop.* xi, and cf. entries for the hundred in e.g. *Cal. Inq. Misc.* 1348-77, which mention the meeting place as Bradford bridge. Smith, *Place-Name Elements*, ii. 148. gives stede in the sense of 'a place of communal activity'. The name Hundredstede for ground near the bridge is evidenced in the 1424 settlement of Ercall manor, when Thos. and Alianor Newport were to have, as part of their two thirds, a small shaw in the Hundredstede (R 2.8.28-32); this is Rocque's E 21, Hundred Street Coppice, TM 467. Two adjoining parcels of land were called Hundred Street according to Rocque (E 22-23) and the tithe apportionment (TM 397-8), an area of about 10 acres adjoining the road from the bridge to the village.

⁶ *Shrews. Cart.* ed. Una Rees (1975), i, nos. 3 and 5. Dr. Rees, marking both as spurious, says they represent what the abbey was claiming to hold as of ancient right in the mid 12th cent., i.e. long before the living of Ercall was appropriated. No. 5 actually makes Earl Hugh confirm Hamo Peverel's gift, which (as Eyton saw) is plainly nonsense.

⁷ Eyton recognized Crudginton as one of Earl Edwin's berewicks and assumed it was still a berewick in 1086, though the Domesday entry for Ercall does not say so and implies the contrary. Consequently Eyton rejected the identification of D.B. Crugetone with Crudginton and postulated a lost manor of that name near Stanwardine in the Fields, an unnecessary complication.

⁸ About 1134 Tern was given as $\frac{1}{4}$ knight's fee to Ralph son of Theald and was divided among his descendants and others as free tenements. Presumably the land was still worked by landless labourers, since the whole of the cultivated area can be accounted for, leaving nothing for any township arable. See Eyton, ix. 97; deeds for Tern in S.R.O. 972, box 220.

⁹ Fixed rents are indicated by Wm. IV's settlement on his wife in 1300 (Eyton, ix. 89), the chantry endowment of 1332 (R 1.1.47), and the 1399 survey (S.R.O. 864/2).

¹⁰ e.g. the Pichard virgate at Osbaston, first given to Wombridge and later exchanged with Shrews. abbey, is indicated on the tithe map by the fields named Abbey or Abbess Corner (TM 51-3) which, with a piece called Upper Weedy Brook or Bank (TM 158) and part of TM 46, make up a 32-acre block of land. The Pichard virgate at Moor Ash (fields called Near and Far Old Furlong, TM 301-2) measure 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres. The Wombridge land at Sherlowe, reported as a carucate by the Bradford jurors in 1255 (TM 518, 523, 525, 526, two parts of Long Sherlowe, Sherlowe Yard and Upper Sherlowe), is 62 acres. The virgate and 3 acres given by Wischart to Wombridge in 1256 were probably TM 510-11, 519, just over 33 acres (a 30 acre virgate plus 3 acres); the virgate passed on to the Mauveysins *alias* Berwicks, TM 502, 504-5, 29 acres.

¹¹ It is safe to assume that the Ercall *bovarii* held no land, for on a few Shropshire manors the equivalent *servi* had been given land to cultivate for themselves, and in those cases their ploughs are listed separately: e.g. at Wroxeter where the demesne had 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ team, the *servi* male and female 7, and the remaining tenants (7 villeins, 4 *bordarii*, 4 priests, and 1 radman) 4. That suggests that at Wroxeter Rainald the sheriff had actually broken up demesne to create new unfree holdings. He had done the same at Leegomery (Eyton, vii. 309, 340). Both were manors which had not been wasted and whose value had not been increased. Rainald's policy on the manors he received as waste was different. At Crudginton, as at Ercall, the 2 *servi* held no land of their own.

¹² *Shrews. Cart.* i, no. 2, spurious but 'most of its facts are substantially correct'; Eyton, ix. 107-9; *Salop. Parish Registers* (Salop. Par. Reg. Soc.), *Lichfield Dioc.* xx(2), intro.

¹³ *Shrews. Cart.* ii, p. 270, no. 284.

¹⁴ Glebe terriers at Lichfield Joint R.O.; R 2.8.28-32.

¹⁵ *Shrews. Cart.* i, no. 25; Eyton, ix. 97.

¹⁶ S.R.O. 864/2.

¹⁷ Eyton, vii. 353.

¹⁸ Eyton, ix. 106.

¹⁹ R 4.11.1.

²⁰ Eyton, ix. 79; for a ref. to Long Furlong see R 1.1.33.

²¹ Eyton, ix. 106-7; R 1.1.30; *Cal. Pat.* 1558-60, 357; R 1.3.1-3.

²² R 1.1.21.

²³ Eyton, vii. 352, 364.

²⁴ Ibid. ix. 79.

²⁵ The jurors in 1255 remembered her as 'Ysonda de Wilsichelond': *ibid.* 85.

²⁶ Ibid. 82 and note; R 1.1.16; 1.1.28.

²⁷ R 1.1.17.

²⁸ R 1.1.35.

²⁹ Eyton, ix. 82-3.

³⁰ Ibid. 375; R 1.1.23; 1.10.2-3.

³¹ Eyton, ix. 82, citing a quitclaim 'late in possession of Mr. George Morris of Shrewsbury'; R 1.1.15, in which the boundary is described.

³² Eyton, ix. 84-6. The meadows are named in a deed of 1480 by which a later prioress of Brewood renounced her claim to the tithe in return for a rent (R 2.8.61). The Newports' successor Ld. Darlington (*V.C.H. Salop.* iii. 254-5) still owned them in 1813 when they were marked on a survey of Ld. Stafford's estates (S.R.O. 972, box 41 and parcel 238).

³³ R 1.1.25; *Shrews. Cart.* ii, p. 270.

³⁴ R 1.1.21.

³⁵ Eyton, ix. 84-6. The furlongs to be tithed by Brewood are named in the deed of 1480 (R 2.8.61) as Gratethornefurlong, Cistannescrofte furlong, Long furlong, Fisshepole furlong, Moncorne furlong, Tylmundeslawefurlong, and Ednemers, with the meadow of Shakerly, at Moortown; and Whetehalefurlong, Badlawfurlong, Polefurlong, Woleacrefurlong, and Botecroftfurlong at Ercall. Those names indicate a stretch from Badda field to Walton.

³⁶ Eyton, ix. 84. Dame Petronilla was given a third of Heltesmore as part of her jointure in 1304 (R 1.1.5). In 1399 Holtusmore meadow was let to John Houle, senior, for a rent of 18d. a year, and a marginal note indicates that it was later let to Wm. Walshe at the old rent. But by 1424 it was back in the demesne; under the 1424 settlement Margaret Newport, the dowager, received a third of Holtesmore (probably meadow) and her son two thirds called Holtesmore furlong (definitely arable).

³⁷ The Wm. of Ercalowe 'Morvan' who was juror in an inquest of Feb. 1249, apparently (Eyton, ix. 84).

³⁸ TM 519-20, the strip of waste between the priory's Shirlowe Grange carucate and the virgate at Weeseland recently given to the canons by Wischart (Eyton, ix. 105).

³⁹ The agreement between Wm. III and Wm. fitz Aer of Wytheford c. 1250 was confirmed by their sons John of Ercall and John fitz Aer in Aug. 1258 (R 1.1.2), and soon afterwards assarts were made on both sides of the manor boundary. They are mentioned in a later quitclaim, when the right to common after harvest was given up (R 1.1.7).

⁴⁰ The lds. of Ercall had always claimed free warren and Wm. III's settlement of 1256 (R 1.1.21) shows that in his day the warren stopped on the edge of Moortown demesne. Wm. IV was presented at the 1292 eyre for exercising warren (Eyton, ix. 88) as though this were something new. What he had actually done was to extend his warren to the limits described in the 1424 settlement (R 2.8.28-32). It now covered 200 acres. The loss of nearly a carucate of demesne c. 1292 explains the reduction of Wm. IV's demesne to 5 carucates instead of 6 by the time of his death in 1303.

⁴¹ Fishpolesheet (from *sceat*, a corner of land) or Fishpolefurlong was a triangular piece of about 28 acres projecting into Tern lordship and took its name from the nearby vivary.

On 28 May 1480 (R 2.8.61) the Brewood nuns granted the ld. of Ercall a 500 year lease of all their tithes in return for a yearly rent of 6s. 8d. The lands they had tithed are listed and include Gratethornefurlong (the land along the Newport road then part of the warren, for it might one day be ploughed again), Cistannescroft furlong (TM fields called Stew furlong and Plum Tree Yard, and Moor Bank which lies on the NE. side of a drift way into the remaining moor, a track made necessary after its inclosure), and Fisshepole furlong (Rocque's Fishmoor field and crofts). This last had not been arable in 1256 (R 1.1.21) when Wm. III gave his daughters all his Moortown demesne. It was arable by 1327 when Wm. V renewed a lease to Wm. son of Thos. Irreys of Tern, his land adjoining that let to Rob. le Newman of More (S.R.O. 52/31). Wm. IV's deed confirming Brewood's right to the tithes c. 1292 was needed to reassure the nuns after he had taken part of their land out of cultivation (Eyton, ix. 90).

⁴² The intercommoning rights were in dispute between John of Ercall and the lds. of Ellerdine and Rowton for many years before an agreement of c. 1270 between Hen. of Erdington and Sir John of Ercall, which confirmed their tenants' reciprocal common rights and permitted John to control the brook (R 1.1.27; Eyton, ix. 241-2). For the land given or leased in lieu see Eyton, ix. 92 note 4.

⁴³ R 1.1.2.

⁴⁴ Under the 1303 settlement, Petronilla was to have a moiety of the foreign wood and all her husband's assarts from it; in return she released to her son her third of 17s. 2d. rent and 23 rent hens (R 1.1.5). She was entitled to a third of the assarts anyway, so her third of the rent was regarded as equivalent to rent for the other two thirds. Taking money and hens as together worth 18s., she was releasing 6s. for 6 acres, two thirds of Wm. IV's 9 acre clearance.

⁴⁵ Eyton, ix. 104.

⁴⁶ R 1.1.5.

⁴⁷ Broncroft assarts were leased to John of Ercall (S.R.O. 52/26), to Rob. Fraunce (S.R.O. 52/20), to John le Mercer (S.R.O. 52/17), to John Dothill (S.R.O. 52/23), to Sir Ric. (termination mentioned on ct. r. S.R.O. 864/1), and to Adam Scott (lease seen by Eyton among Geo. Morris's deeds: Eyton, ix. 95). The 1399 survey shows that Broncroft was then divided into three sections: 'Bronnecroft near the lord's wood', 'Wodebroncroft', and 'Myddelbronnecroft', besides le Pleccus adjoining Broncroft. Two thirds of the total area was then leased out to Walton tenants and a third kept in hand as the third to which Sir Peter's widow Mary would be entitled, if he predeceased her.

⁴⁸ Eyton, ix. 92 and note 3.

⁴⁹ R 1.1.2.

⁵⁰ Eyton, ix. 92 and note 4.

⁵¹ S.R.O. 52/21.

⁵² R 1.1.4.

⁵³ In 1399 Brookland was in the hands of a customary tenant Wm. Alcock, who had paid such a large consideration for his tenement that he was allowed to have this meadow, paying a goose yearly as acknowledgement. The name Brookland and the goose rent show that it was meadow, possibly water meadow.

⁵⁴ R 1.1.44, 47-8.

⁵⁵ Another of Geo. Morris's deeds: Eyton, ix. 107.

⁵⁶ S.R.O. 52/27.

⁵⁷ S.R.O. 52/28.

⁵⁸ S.R.O. 52/16, 18.

⁵⁹ S.R.O. 52/22.

CHAPTER 3: THE DEMESNE

WE start with a demesne of 6 carucates in 1086: one at Weeseland and 5 between Weeseland and the hall. Some part of this area — a stretch along the road from Bradford bridge and land by the hall, 30–40 acres altogether — continued to be demesne until Rocque's survey in 1746. The rest was gradually put to other uses. Yet because new land was continually being assarted from waste, the lords of Ercall were able to maintain their estate at around 6 carucates, never parting with old land until it ceased to be needed for the preservation of their inheritance.

To discover how this was done we have to consider the three ways in which medieval lords might reduce the extent of their home farm: first by creating free tenancies from demesne, secondly by portioning their children from it, and thirdly by over lavish gifts to the church.

The free tenants

One peculiarity of Ercall free holdings should be noted at the start: on this manor heriots were paid by free tenants only. In that respect Ercall resembled Whittington,¹ another of Earl Roger's manors which Henry I gave to Hamo Peverel; and as there is no evidence for any subinfeudation at Ercall until it was given to Hamo, he may have been responsible for introducing the custom on both manors. He could not demand heriots from his unfree tenants of Walton, Osbaston, and Cotwall for, as we have seen, their tenements and the conditions under which they held them had been fixed before 1066 and reflect their mainly Celtic origin.

Beyond the three ancient townships new land was assarted in blocks, so it was natural that the primary block, the demesne, should be an entity, and that free tenements as they were created should also be block holdings rather than strips intermixed with customary land. When the lords of Ercall began to give away old demesne it followed that those virgates or half virgates would lie together, for all the free tenements created after 1102 were either demesne land rendered superfluous by clearance of fresh demesne or assarts direct from waste. Without the inclosure of extra land there would have been no free tenants at all on the manor of Ercall.

The earliest of the free tenements, all in existence well before 1155–65, were taken out of the waste. We know of two at Walton (Siward's and Baldwin's), one (Pichard's) at Osbaston, and one (Muneshulf's) at Cotwall, each a virgate in extent. The second Pichard virgate at Moor Ash followed soon afterwards.²

William of Ercall I took 103 acres from the old demesne near the hall for his free tenants and servants. He gave a virgate at Sherlowe to Thurstan, a virgate at Ercall to Odo,³ half a virgate to Ralph the priest's son to hold for life,⁴ and 28 acres for town crofts for his new village. Now that the lord was resident at Ercall his landless labourers (the *bovarii* of Domesday) who formerly lived within the hall precincts were being moved out. Last to go was the smith. Osbert *faber* and his successor William son of William of Brug (presumably a free man, coming from Bridgnorth, in a district well known for its smiths) still had land within the bailey for their smithy in the 1220s, paying 2s. rent and working for the household without charge. Their successors were removed to a site at the churchyard gate.⁵

Under William II we hear of a virgate at Ercall held by Baldwin,⁶ a croft by the church held by John the miller,⁷ a house (*domus*) in the village given to Ralph, lord of Tern (who surrendered it in 1227),⁸ and a messuage there declared in 1221 to be part of the dower of Matilda, widow of Roger of Peniton or Poynton, with which she had been endowed at the monastery gate on the day of her marriage.⁹ The total loss to the demesne was probably 35 acres.

William III recovered the Cotwall free tenement from Henry of Munesulf and gave it away again to the Wercok or Woodcock family.¹⁰ He recovered the half virgate held by Ralph the priest's son and gave it to John son of Baldwin.¹¹ He gave half a virgate apiece to Peter son of Baldwin,¹² Roger Feysaunt (whose brother Alan inherited it), Sir William the chaplain of Rowton, Roger the forester, and Robert the horseknave.¹³ All these holdings came from the old demesne by the hall. Then he gave the whole of Weeseland, an entire carucate, to William Wischart, son of Baldwin Wischart of Cold Hatton.¹⁴ That, it appears, was in lieu of dower which should have been paid when Baldwin Wischart married Isabella, a sister probably of William III. William and his father would have hesitated to give up so much demesne land until they had developed at least a carucate of new land in its place — and William III had done much more than that by c. 1240. As it was William Wischart backed his claim through his mother with payment of 10 marks. The land was to be held *iure hereditario*, subject to the render of a pair of gilded spurs on the feast of St. Peter's Chains; but nothing is said in the deed about assigns and strictly speaking the donee was given no power to dispose of it. The lord of Ercall may have hoped that at some future date, on failure of heirs, it might come back to the demesne. But he was not able to enforce this, and his attempt in 1256 to stop Wischart and his successor making a vivary for Weeseland under Rough Marl failed completely.¹⁵

In all William had parted with 135 acres, leaving very little of the 1086 demesne in his own hands except the land immediately round the hall and a stretch along the road to Bradford bridge, the Hundredstede. Then he endowed his younger daughters with his 150 acres of new demesne at Moortown, with a great deal of new meadow, and with the Court at La Mora,¹⁶ thus creating a free tenement which lasted for a century.

By the time of his death in 1256 William III had alienated no less than 285 acres of arable from his demesne, and all without harming his demesne husbandry.

John founded a manorial borough at Ercall, obtaining a market charter for it in 1267.¹⁷ For this venture, from which he hoped to profit financially, he used 1½ carucate of new land in Coneygreys field. He had to be able to offer burgage tenements with sufficient land to attract incomers, but, as they would be craftsmen or traders, he did not have to give them all enough land to live on. It was not the best land for it adjoined the warren and must have suffered from the lord's rabbits. Many other lords had projects for new boroughs in the 13th century, and in most cases the new towns failed to develop. John's borough was only a moderate success for his market at Ercall had to compete with old established markets at Shrewsbury and Newport besides the new market established in 1244 at Wellington¹⁸ which was only a stone's throw from Watling Street, a major highway. There was no valid economic reason for another market in the area.

Apart from his burgages John created no free tenements. But he bought up the virgate held by the Pichards at Moor Ash, which Hamo Pichard had already mortgaged to Peter le Vileyn of Salop. John paid 12 marks, according to a bond, to Peter's chaplain William Colfox, and in consideration of this Alan le Vileyn (Peter's son) released his father's claim.¹⁹

About 1272 John tried to get possession of the Poynton messuage in Ercall when Philip of Peniton or Poynton died. At the 1272 eyre, however, it was found that Philip had been rightly seised and therefore his son and heir Philip the younger was entitled to hold it; John had to pay him 6s. 8d. damages.²⁰

In an exchange with his free tenant Alan Feysaunt John acquired 1½ acre (an acre at Hondulfeshet and a small parcel of land *in capite vie viridis in eodem campo*, i.e. on the edge of the demesne at Houch moor) and gave up an acre in Long Furlong, half a selion between the demesne and the vicar's land, and half an acre in Eawynescroft where Alan already held the whole or most of his free tenement.²¹

William IV bought back the two half virgate tenements held by the Baldwin family,²² and in 1291 acquired half (c. 8 acres) of Alan Feysaunt's half virgate.²³ Another half virgate previously held by William Henry came into the lord's hands soon afterwards. From these sources William IV added to the glebe and endowed a chaplaincy. With the residue and from demesne he gave his customary tenants parcels of arable and meadow, the lands for which they were paying additional rents in 1304 and 1399. Presumably these leases were negotiated and granted at the manor court, and if we had the missing court rolls we should know about them, as we do, for example, about the lease of Lake Mill in 1338–9, the only year for which a record survives. As much as 50–60 acres may have been disposed of in this way.

One of the old free tenements, perhaps that originally held by Odo of Ercall, was combined with a Moortown holding when John the lord's son acquired it (perhaps by marriage).²⁴

William V created leaseholds but no permanent free tenements. He bought in the other half of the Feysaunt tenement in 1312, leasing it back to the last holder, John Feysaunt, but reserving for himself a meadow under the park.²⁵ As the manorial borough faded away burgages came back to the lord²⁶ and were regranted, usually 'at will'.

To complete the picture it is worth tracing the later history of that free tenement at Walton created c. 1130–40 by Siward and his under tenant. Hamo Peverel gave it to his daughter Seburga, and she gave it to Wombridge c. 1141. Wombridge exchanged it c. 1230 for a mill at Cheswardine; the land was to be held by Richard son of Hugh of Losford by payment of 1 lb. of cummin or 6d. and one pig a year to the priory.²⁷ Richard seems to have split his holding, keeping for himself only a noke to cultivate with the adjoining half virgate he held, originally from Wombridge afterwards from Shrewsbury (part of the Pichard virgate). His co-tenant there was John of Espley.

Then in 1271 Richard of Losford demised to John, lord of Ercall, first a messuage, croft, and curtilage marked off by metes placed after view by the neighbourhood, and secondly a noke of land at Walton.²⁸ The new boundaries for the messuage indicate subdivision of an existing house site but not necessarily a house at Walton: there is no indication of any messuage on or attached to the virgate assarted by Siward, and the wording hints that house and land were separate properties. The house may have been in Ercall village. Messuage and land were in the joint occupation of three men, Reyner le Wyne, William Pygun, and Richard's own son Elyas; and this again is not the way a normal noke tenement would be held (though, if this noke and Richard's adjoining half virgate were worked together, it would mean in effect a noke apiece for the three). The 1271 demise was in consideration of 4 marks and for a term of 24 years from Lady Day 1271. This is obviously a mortgage; and a year or two later John of Ercall assigned it to William le Kent of Salop for 5 marks (25 per cent appreciation).²⁹ The Kents, a Shrewsbury burgess family, were investing money in land;³⁰ they must have foreclosed on Richard, for the noke with the messuage, croft, and curtilage remained permanently in their possession.

Another noke of the Losford holding at Walton also came into the tenure of the Kents. It may have been held previously by that William Badeson of Walton and his son William who witnessed deeds for the lord of Ercall in the early 1300s,³¹ are still mentioned early in 1338, but disappear about that time.

The last half virgate of this tenement seems to have been acquired soon after 1230 by the Cubel family of Walton — perhaps that Hamo Dulthac of Walton and his brother William Cubel who leased a meadow at Tern in 1237.³² If so, the extra holding would account in part for the later affluence of the family.³³ They certainly held land at Walton near the Kents, for at the Midsummer court of 1339 William Cubel complained that John le Kent, senior and junior, had turned their plough on his land, and the younger man admitted the offence.

In 1383 John son of John Kent held the messuage, croft, and curtilage acquired around 1271 and two nokes of land at Walton. He sold his tenement to William son of William Forester of Wellington for £5, and entered into a bond in £10 for quiet possession.³⁴ We do not know at what point the lord of Ercall was able to buy up this holding; it was presumably after the Gech *alias* Newport family inherited in 1398. The lord had it when Rocque surveyed the manor and had probably had it for many years before 1746.

When William of Ercall died in 1345 there were still four of his free tenants at Ercall: the descendants of his uncle John at Moortown and Ercall; the Malveysins *alias* Berwicks (as successors to William Wischard) holding half of Weeseland — the other half having been given by Wischart to Wombridge;³⁵ the Woodcocks or Wercocks at Cotwall;³⁶ and the Baldwins at Walton. By the time of the 1399 survey only two free tenements remained: the Berwicks' and the Baldwins'. Soon afterwards, on John Baldwin's death in 1408, his free tenement passed to a distant relative Alice, wife of Thomas Brydde of Poynton, and thereafter it vanished.³⁷ The last free tenement, a single virgate of arable, survived till Weeseland was bought by the Newports in 1594.³⁸

The question remains, why did the 12th- and 13th-century lords find it desirable or necessary to have free tenants on their manor, and why was that no longer the case after 1260? It was not connected with military service. The manor of Ercall was held by the service of a single knight in 1130 and there was just one tenant who held by that service, Baldwin of Walton. Free tenants were needed as jurors for the king when the lord's steward held a *curia magna* or the eschaetor held an inquest; but those events happened as frequently in the 14th-century as in the century before.

Perhaps it was a matter of prestige that a lord should have his 'forloccesmen', as the 1304 settlement calls them:³⁹ men who owed him fealty and respect, paid small chief-rents or serjeanty renders and heriots on succession, but little more. What 12th-century lords had desired was a society firmly linked by ties of advowry, of patron and client; what the 14th-century lord preferred was a society held together by the written obligations of lessor and lessee. A lord like William V, with land to demise, could do without free tenants because he had plenty of free leaseholders who could also serve on juries and pay heriots but would in addition give economic rents for the assarted land he had leased to them for terms of years or lives. Land so demised was not lost to him and his successors: it was not held by hereditary right but for limited terms. There was no guarantee for the tenant that his lease would be renewed. His rent might be raised or a heavy consideration demanded. If this was William's reasoning, then the elimination of free

tenements was (like their creation) a direct result of the improvement of the waste. They came and they went, and the demesne was not affected.

The lord's family

If the demesne at Ercall remained undiminished by the creation of free tenements, was it ever reduced by the need to portion younger sons or daughters?

Some provision had to be made for younger sons, but at Ercall it was kept to a minimum. A substantial dower had to be provided for a daughter, if she were to be settled in marriage, for she must have as her portion the equivalent, in land or rent, of one third of her prospective husband's property. She could then live of her own should she survive him, and from her own she could do something for her younger children. If she had no children, it was assumed that her share ought to go back to her own family. In no case must a younger son's appanage or a daughter's jointure lessen the amount of demesne inherited by the heir.

William of Ercall I (also referred to as William of Hadley II) was himself a younger son, who inherited nothing at Ercall. But he was somehow able to acquire the separated thirds of the manor from descendants of his maternal grandfather Hamo Peverel. This he did in three stages, by three separate transactions spread over 10 years.⁴⁰ It may be that his father William of Hadley gave him portion enough to buy the first third and the profits from that sufficed to pay for the other thirds in turn. No considerations are mentioned, of course, but no one was going to part with even a third share in a manor for love.

William II appears to have had a daughter Isabella who married Baldwin Wischart. Her son William Wischart claimed that he had a right to Weeseland through her, and, though he paid 10 marks for a deed confirming this,⁴¹ a carucate of old demesne was an appropriate dower for the wife of a lord of Cold Hatton. The lords of Ercall could well afford to part with 60 acres, having developed so much at Moortown and elsewhere.

William III had two sons and three daughters. His elder son predeceased him, so it was the second son John who inherited the manor. The eldest daughter Margery married John fitz Aer, lord of Wytheford, and for her portion received a rent of 20s. a year due to her father from a tenement at Sowdley near Cheswardine. No one could quarrel with such an arrangement, and her brother, though he laid claim to the tenement, immediately confirmed her right to the rent.⁴²

The two younger girls were given a carucate apiece or rather more, for the lands settled upon them by their father in 1256⁴³ add up to 75 acres apiece, excluding meadow. The whole of the demesne at La Mora was divided between them. They were to share the Court with its grange and sheepfold, and have firing and fencing from their father's wood. His men of Walton, Osbaston, and Cotwall were to work for them under pain of distraint, and the sisters were to receive a rent of 4 marks due from the abbot of Lilleshall for a fishery on the Tern. Annora was to take as her portion the land between the ditch and the road 'to the point where the road cuts through the cultivated land', i.e. to TM 279, and the land called Tilmundeslowe, the tithe map's Tinneresley (TM 274, 275), with five adjoining lands. Cecilia was to have the rest of the demesne arable inside the ditch. The sisters were to divide Edwinesmers 'by the land of the men of La Mora', the tithe map's End Furlong (TM 241), and share the meadows against Lakemoor brook and the meadow called Shakerey by Crudginton bridge. Each might pasture 120 sheep and fold them at the Court. But Annora must take care not to interfere with her father's warren, which adjoined one end of her land.

If either sister died without heirs of her body, her share must revert to her father or his heirs.

This settlement did not interfere with the heir's demesne or rights except that, by giving his daughters the Court at La Mora, William III had deprived him of a dower house for a future dowager. (William's wife Emma was already dead.) As the girls were not of marriageable age when their father died, their brother John persuaded them to give him a 7-year lease of Moortown, promising to find them suitable husbands, men with at least 2 carucates of land and of proper social standing. If he did that and dowered them, then he might keep the land.⁴⁴

John did in fact buy Annora's share of Moortown for 30 marks (£20).⁴⁵ But Cecilia married William, lord of Hales, and persisted in claiming both her land and the whole Court at La Mora. In 1267 she complained of her brother's violent conduct towards her, saying he had threatened to burn down 'her' house. Two years later she and her husband sued him for disseising them of their tenement at La Mora,⁴⁶ and apparently they won for Cecilia was in possession after her husband's death, holding it as her widow's third after she had given his family a quitclaim for his Staffordshire land.⁴⁷ Her brother being dead, she was ready to make up the quarrel and return the land to her nephew William IV. Cecilia had a daughter

Mabel to provide for, but she was willing to accept an annual rent of 12 quarters each of wheat, rye, and oats, and half a mark for clothing during her lifetime, with a lesser provision afterwards for Mabel. In exchange she surrendered all the land settled on her by her father, giving it to her nephew William, his wife Petronilla, and their second son John;⁴⁸ this 75 acres of arable with the meadow rights that went with it was to be his appanage. So the whole of Moortown demesne came back to the family, though only half of it, Annora's share, was at the lord's disposal. We know that, when William died, his widow Petronilla had her third of half the Court and half the land,⁴⁹ her tenant there being that John le Mercer to whom she gave a lease of some of her Broncroft land as well.

John 'le Lordessonne', with his aunt Cecilia's share of Moortown and another virgate he acquired in 1306 in Ercall from Agnes, widow of Richard son of John of Great Ercall,⁵⁰ was exceptionally fortunate. No other younger son was half so well provided for. He was able to get a lease of 6 acres in Broncroft for the lives of himself, his son Robert, and his daughter Agnes,⁵¹ so that altogether he held about 111 acres when he died c. 1311 leaving a widow Iota, an heir Alan atte More, the two children mentioned in the lease, and perhaps a posthumous son William spoken of as William the widow's son of More.⁵² Robert became a priest and was trustee of his uncle William's settlement in 1334.⁵³ Iota and the other children disappeared between 1340 and 1350, leaving no successors at the Court. Moortown reverted to the lord.

William IV, not having to consider his younger son, gave half a virgate at Osbaston to his younger brother Robert — a poor provision for a man who had received nothing from his father, but presumably regarded as adequate. Robert surrendered this half virgate to his nephew William V in 1310.⁵⁴

William of Ercall V had no son. By his wife Scolastica he had two daughters Joan and Petronilla, and, when he settled his estates in 1334, he took care to ensure that the manor should not be divided but should go intact to his grandson William, son of Joan and her first husband Richard Caverswell.⁵⁵ William V turned the dower house at the bottom of the garden, where his grandmother and mother had lived during widowhood, into a home for his chantry priests; and Scolastica with her unmarried daughter had to remove to a house at Alkmere, her own portion. William's second daughter was given nothing from Ercall. Indeed in 1341, when William drew up rules for his chantry in the churchyard, he provided prayers for the church, the realm, his feudal and ecclesiastical superiors, a former vicar, himself, and his grandson who was to succeed him, but not for his wife or his daughters, or even his parents.⁵⁶

The guiding principle, all along, was to keep the inheritance intact. A lord might do what he could for his younger children after that inheritance was secure. At no time during our period was the demesne curtailed on their account.

Church

Then was the Ercall demesne affected by gifts to the church? Every lord, from Earl Roger onward, gave something to the church at Ercall or to religious houses. At first sight the lords of Ercall appear to have been very generous. But when we look again, their donations were always made in such a way that it actually cost them very little and certainly never significantly reduced the amount of demesne arable they held.

Earl Roger gave 60 acres of arable for glebe, land assarted from his wood. Earl Hugh gave two thirds of his demesne tithe to Shrewsbury abbey,⁵⁷ tithe which would otherwise have gone to the parish priests; he would have paid it in any event. Hamo Peverel gave his daughter a virgate to present to Wombridge;⁵⁸ it was land assarted by his tenants, not demesne. His coheirs Walcheline Maminohht and William Peverel augmented the endowment of Haughmond abbey by the gift of Bradford mill, with the mill meadow and a supply of timber for repairs. That was indeed a costly gift, but within 40 years Abbot Richard had given back the mill to be held by the lords of Ercall in hereditary right, subject to the moderate rent of 2 marks a year.⁵⁹ William of Ercall I gave the canons of Wombridge a carucate of assarted land at Sherlowe.⁶⁰ By this he gained the canons' prayers for the souls of his parents, himself and his wife, and lost some pannage, with the distant possibility of recovering the land after the three-lives lease had run its course. He allowed Wombridge to tithe his new land at Moortown at a ninth instead of a tenth⁶¹ for this concession applied to his demesne land there as well as to the seven half virgate tenements held by his men. That added no more than one tithe sheaf or heap to the ten normally paid out of every hundred harvested; it was not a great burden. When William I gave Wombridge the right to tithe moveables at his son's Court,⁶² William II was content to treat that as his own contribution. William III was able to allot tithe on 4 carucates of new land and on the new meadows by the Tern, but the only land he gave away was the site of the prioress's barn and weir at Moortown.⁶³

After the mid 13th century nothing more was added to the endowment of any religious house. John, lord of Ercall, improved the vicar's living as part of his exchange agreement with Shrewsbury and his

purchase of the abbey's fifth noke, and his son redeemed the father's vague promise of further assistance if the cost of living rose.⁶⁴ Between them they gave the vicar 18½ acres. When a suitable half virgate holding came into his hands William IV established a chaplain to say masses in the church⁶⁵ but he took nothing from the demesne for this purpose. William V built a chantry⁶⁶ with 6 priests in the churchyard. They were to have the dower house at the bottom of the hall garden as a community home, and 4 acres in 3 crofts nearby; those 4 acres and the house did come from the demesne. The rest of the endowment consisted of land at Penmarsh (an assart from waste); the profit from 200 sheep; and £20 in rent, the sums from each township exactly equalling the rents due from the lord's customary tenants at Walton, Osbaston, Cotwall, and Moortown. William could do without that money because he was receiving as much again from his leasehold tenants. Perhaps he would not have parted with the dower house and Aldcroft if he had had a son to succeed him who would carry on the name.

Over our whole period, from 1086 to 1345, the demesne at Ercall lost 22½ acres, the site of a barn, a house, and a small piece of garden, through gifts to the church. Demesne management was not in any way affected by this.

Perhaps the lords of Ercall were exceptionally mean in their dealings with the church. But it is equally possible that, if we looked more closely at other manors, we should find that men parted only with what they could afford to lose. They gave because by improvement they had already made up their acreage or had provided themselves with an equivalent income in rents. Prayer was, in one sense, a commodity for which men did not pay more than the going rate.

The extent of the demesne 1086–1345

We can now strike a balance between the amount of arable each lord of Ercall in his turn kept for himself and the amount he gave away. (See Table 5.) The figures are of course approximate for there may be some small parcels not included. But they are near enough right to prove that at Ercall the demesne remained in extent (though not in situation) as static as did the three original townships and their tenements. A steady 6 carucates of arable (or 360 acres, give or take) were handed down from before the Conquest till the mid 13th century; it rose to 7 carucates about 1278; and then, as rents became preferable to land, fell to 6 carucates or just over. There it stuck.

Several factors contributed to this stability. For six generations the manor passed from father to son without a break. The lord was resident at the hall and took a personal interest in his home farm. For a long time this was the only manor held by the Ercalls, and even when they acquired other property through marriages, it was their principal holding. To make the best of their estate was their ambition. Geography favoured them for Ercall lies in a good agricultural area and there were markets available at easy distance. In Shrewsbury especially there was an outlet for produce even in times of agricultural depression. And, to crown all, there was enough new land for development to keep the demesne at 6 carucates of arable whenever the fertility of the older land began to fall.

About 1290 William IV took 50 acres of demesne to increase the size of his warren, and he did not replace them. At his death, however, he was still holding 5 carucates according to the official estimate; in fact rather over 6, about 384 acres. His son reduced the acreage by 5 acres. He chose to lease all his new assarts to tenants, yet he could still hand more than 6 carucates, 379 acres, of arable on to his grandson.

A dramatic decline in the amount of demesne farming is sometimes said to have occurred in the late 12th century, and again in the 14th. Nothing of the sort happened at Ercall.

Did it really happen anywhere? It is not enough to show that old demesne was frequently given away. It must be shown that no new land replaced the old. Ercall cannot have been unique in this respect. The lords of Ercall were probably doing much as their neighbours did; other lords were reclaiming waste, and some at least of the new land became demesne. The relation between improvement of waste and demesne management demands and deserves greater attention than it has so far received.

¹ S.R.O. 1011, box 169, 'Costomes conserninge payment of heriotts within the manner or lordship of Whittington' 1654; Eyton, xi. 29–30.

² Eyton, vii. 353; ix. 106–7; S.R.O. 864/2; R 4.11.1.

³ *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1846), vi. 390; Eyton, ix. 79. Thurstan and Odo are mentioned in the gift of Sherlowe Grange to Wombbridge as being of Sherlowe and of Ercall respectively and as men of standing. To Thurstan and his son Wm. and to Odo's nephew Reiner, Wm. I had entrusted the development of a whole carucate of demesne waste. Neither senior is likely to have held less than a virgate, irrespective of the new assart. Odo's virgate seems to have been the one held in the mid 13th cent. by John of Magna Ercaluwe and after him by his son Ric. and Ric.'s widow Agnes (R 1.1.6).

⁴ This ½ virgate came back to the ld. c. 1223. It lay along the road to Cotwall between the churchyard, the ld.'s flaxyard, and the shepherd's acre, TM 368, 475, 476 (R 1.1.18).

⁵ R 1.1.14. In Feb. 1339 Wm. Smith of Crudginton took from the ld. at the manor ct. a shop (i.e. smith's shop) near the churchyard gate; and, as his predecessor 'Walter called John the Smith' was still alive, 9 selions out of the demesne at Moortown were to be measured out for Wm.'s benefit (S.R.O. 864/1).

⁶ Baldwin of Ercall, a free tenant with sons John and Peter, seems to have been distinct from the other free tenant of the name, Baldwin of Walton.

⁷ Mentioned in the deed of c. 1223 which defined the bounds of the $\frac{1}{2}$ virgate held by Ralph the priest's son (R 1.1.18).

⁸ R 1.1.15; Eyton, ix. 1-2, and 2 note 3.

⁹ Eyton, ix. 1-4. Matilda's husband died c. 1206, so her marriage and endowment take us back to a date around 1200. She must have been married at Shrews. abbey, the only monastery in the vicinity where the nave was also a parish church.

¹⁰ R 4.11.1. Members of the fam. appear as witnesses to leases (S.R.O. 52/23, 28) and the 1327 lay subsidy roll refers to them as Lovecok (T.S.A.S. 2nd ser. i. 129-30).

¹¹ R 1.1.18.

¹² R 1.1.36.

¹³ R 1.1.13, 33. The chaplain, the forester, and the horseknave are mentioned as holding land next to Alan's.

¹⁴ Eyton, in his account of Cold Hatton (ix. 218-21), seems to have thought that a single Baldwin Wischart held the manor for 58 years. Raby deeds show that there were two men of that name. Baldwin son of Gilb. gave the suit of the Hatton men to Lake mill (R 1.1.17). His son Baldwin, with his father, witnessed Rob. fitz Warin's gift of materials to repair Lake mill pond and bank (R 1.1.16). Wm. Wischart, son of Baldwin, was ld. of Cold Hatton through the 1240s and 1250s, and was presumably the son of Baldwin the second. Wm. Wischart acquired Weeseland c. 1240 (R 1.3.1; 1.4.4).

¹⁵ Wm. and his men destroyed the stank holding back the water and were ordered to restore it (Eyton, ix. 105). Eyton was mistaken in assuming that the Malveysins or Malvoisins of Ashfield and Berwick held Weeseland before 1256. The deeds suggest that Hen. Malveysin was in negotiation with Wm. Wischart for a virgate there but died before the transaction could be completed, so that Wischart's deed (though naming Hen. fitz Herbert) was in fact to his son Hen. fitz Hen., whose bro. Thos. is stated to be the next heir should the donee die without issue. He did die within 12 months and attempted on his deathbed to enfeoff his younger bro. Phil. John of Ercall as overlord supported Thos., and at the 1272 eyre his claim was upheld.

¹⁶ R 1.1.21.

¹⁷ *Cal. Chart. R.* 1257-1300, 75. For the small plots into which Conegrey field was divided see TM 164, 166, 311-12, 316-23.

¹⁸ Eyton, viii. 142; ix. 44.

¹⁹ R 1.1.30. John confirmed to the canons of Wombridge their right to tithe all his land at Moortown but reserved this virgate which had always been tithed by Shrews. as rector. His statement that he himself purchased the free tenement was questioned by Eyton (ix. 107) because he believed the whole of Moortown to be demesne, but that had never been the case. The Shrews. tithes 'at More' were eventually bought up by Fra. Newport in 1593 (R 1.3.2, 3).

²⁰ Eyton, ix. 2.

²¹ R 1.1.33.

²² R 1.1.20; 1.1.36.

²³ R 1.1.3.

²⁴ R 1.1.6.

²⁵ S.R.O. 52/25; R 1.1.8-10.

²⁶ e.g. that held by Cecilia le Yreys of Dawley, which she had been granted by Wm. IV and quitclaimed to his son Wm. V between 1312 and 1324 (R 1.1.22).

²⁷ Eyton, vii. 353; ix. 46. The priory agreed to pay Ric. 10s. rent for the mill and also the 3s. rent he owed for it to the abbot of Haughmond. His yearly hog was to be paid to Wombridge only if he had swine in Ercall wood.

²⁸ Eyton, ix. 87.

²⁹ S.R.O. 52/14.

³⁰ Among other places at Tern (S.R.O. 972, box 220).

³¹ e.g. S.R.O. 52/15, 17, 21-23, 28. They were owners of straying beasts in 1338-9 (ct. r.).

³² *Shrews. Cart.* i, p. 100.

³³ In the lay subsidy assessment of 1327 two Cubels were assessed at 12d. each (the same rate as the ld.'s mother), another at 10d., and a fourth at 8d., on their moveables (T.S.A.S. 2nd ser. i. 129-30).

³⁴ S.R.O. 4032/2/16.

³⁵ R 1.1.4, confirmed by a grant from John of Ercall (R 1.4.3); *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vi. 390.

³⁶ Last ref. to the fam. at Cotwall c. 1390 (S.R.O. 4991/1/2).

³⁷ S.R.O. 52/42.

³⁸ R 1.4.5-7.

³⁹ Petronilla was to have a third part *de forlocesmen totius manerii tam de viris quam de mulieribus*, and these were not the servile tenants for she had already been allotted a third of them and their works, according to a schedule which has not survived (R 1.1.5).

⁴⁰ The complicated story of the Peverel coheirs is explained by Eyton (ix. 64-78). One of the deeds is at Raby (R 1.1.12).

⁴¹ R 1.4.1 and 4.

⁴² Eyton, ix. 86; R 1.1.2.

⁴³ R 1.1.21; Eyton, ix. 85.

⁴⁴ R 1.1.1.

⁴⁵ R 1.1.29.

⁴⁶ Eyton, ix. 86, 107.

⁴⁷ Staffs. R.O., D.593/B/24/4/1/3.

⁴⁸ R 1.1.40 and 1.1.4.

⁴⁹ R 1.1.5.

⁵⁰ R 1.1.6.

⁵¹ S.R.O. 52/26.

⁵² In the 1327 lay subsidy roll Alan atte More was assessed at 13d. and Iota the widow at 12d. (the same rate as Petronilla the ld.'s mother). Wm. the widow's son of More is mentioned in the 1338-9 ct. r. as owner of a horse which had strayed into the ld.'s meadow.

⁵³ R 1.1.50, 51, 53; Eyton, ix. 94.

⁵⁴ R 2.4.4-5.

⁵⁵ R 1.1.50-53. Scolastica later surrendered part of her jointure land for a fixed rent: R 1.1.58; S.R.O. 52/33; Eyton, ix. 94.

⁵⁶ R 1.1.43.

⁵⁷ *Shrews. Cart.* i, pp. 5-11.

⁵⁸ Eyton, vii. 353.

⁵⁹ Ibid. ix. 65–6, 81. The agreement was confirmed c. 1275: *ibid.* 87.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 79.

⁶¹ Ibid. vii. 365 and note 8. Eyton's suggestion that Wm. was tithing his demesne twice is plainly untenable. He neither could, nor would, have done so, and he could not have imposed such a burden on his new tenants at Moortown. The fact that he did not is proved by the sums Shrews. and Wombridge respectively accepted as rent in lieu of tithe in the 15th cent. — for the demesne, according to a Shrews. rental of c. 1490, John Newport paid £1 6s. 8d. a year, while Wombridge relinquished all its claims on the manor in 1458 for 13s. 4d. a year. Now a ninth would have been commuted for more than a tenth if the tithes had come from the same land, as Eyton postulates (*Eyton*, ix. 111; R 2.8.54–6).

⁶² *Eyton*, ix. 79.

⁶³ Ibid. 84–6.

⁶⁴ *Shrews. Cart.* ii, pp. 363–4; R 1.1.34. John, when he acquired the fifth Shrews. noke, promised that he and his heirs would supplement the endowment, if it seemed insufficient, and find the sacristan sufficient and competent sustentation from their own goods for ever. The vicar of Ercall is called sacristan as was the vicar of Oswestry c. 1272 (*Shrews. Cart.* ii, p. 327). This usage explains the field name Sextress for 3 inclosures which became part of the glebe about this time (TM 360, 475, 476). John the vicar is called sacristan in a number of deeds which he witnessed, e.g. R 1.1.13; S.R.O. 972, box 220, Tern mills bundle, deed 10.

⁶⁵ S.R.O. 52/14.

⁶⁶ We have plenty of evidence about the chantry endowment: 7 deeds at Raby all dated 10 Feb. 1332 (R 1.1.43–9); 2 royal licences permitting the alienation (*Cal. Pat.* 1330–4, 44; 1334–8, 22); the bp. of Lichfield's *inspeximus* of Oct. 1341, recording Wm.'s gifts and the king's consent (S.R.O. 52/34); and the rules for its management drawn up in 1343 (R 1.1.54). Eyton saw the two royal licences for alienation and supposed only one became operative, but in this he was mistaken. Application for licence to alienate the rents was made while Dame Petronilla was still alive, though she may have been dead by 27 Jan. 1332 when the licence was issued. Application for permission to give away her dower house could not be made till after her death, so licence to alienate the house and land was not issued till 23 Sept. 1334. By that time the chapel was almost or quite complete, and the first *custos* and *sub-custos* of the new foundation were instituted by the bp. on 22 Dec. 1334 (*Eyton*, ix. 113).

CHAPTER 4: THE NEIF

IMPROVEMENT of waste was intended primarily for the benefit of the lord, whose soil it was. But any addition to the manor's arable and meadow and any reduction of its common grazing were bound to affect customary tenants also, and even, to some extent, agricultural practice.

Customary tenants

There were 5 centres of population within the manor of Ercall, as its boundaries were defined from c. 1165. First there were the three ancient townships, Walton, Osbaston, and Cotwall; and, as we have already shown, the number of tenements and their size, and the open field organization of those townships was fixed before 1086 and did not change. William of Ercall III might very well have assarted the area later known as Coneygrey field and used it to create a third field for Osbaston, since that land lay against the ring hedge of Osbaston's main field. He might have assarted the area later known as Cross field and turned it into a third field for Walton, for it adjoined Walton hamlet. But he did neither. He chose to keep the 4 carucates of new land for his demesne. So when John as lord wanted to set up a manorial borough, the Coneygrey land was available for burgage tenements, and long before the idea of a borough had been given up, the time for field reorganization at Osbaston and Walton was past.

It might have been otherwise. We know that on the manor of Ellerdine just across Lakemoor brook, there was a drive to develop new land c. 1290 and again c. 1312, so that enough land was brought into cultivation to treble every tenant's holding. The man who had an 8 acre noke before 1290 ended with 8 acres in each of three fields.¹ At Poynton across the Roden, there were three fields in 1412, each field including a number of *bruches* or breaches; it seems that the size of each open field had been doubled and the new land shared between the lord and his tenants.² But at Ercall the lords preferred to leave their three ancient townships as they had always been.

Instead they created two new townships. The first was Moortown, where William I divided 105 acres of his new land into seven half-virgate holdings in a single field. 'The land of the men of La Mora' was in cultivation by 1181. Once established it too became static. No new tenements were created and no land was added to the original half virgates.

The second was Ercall. Unlike Moortown this was a gradual development. It began when houses and crofts were provided for the lord's landless *bovarii* and for his skilled men — the miller, the shepherd,³ the smith. William I and his son seem to have parted with a little over 30 acres of demesne near the hall. Sixty years later this nucleus of a settlement was deliberately turned into a manorial borough. More houses must have been built and Ercall became a township within the manor, though never a town.

The 1399 survey (summarized in Table 6),⁴ listing all the customary holdings in the manor when the Gech *alias* Newport family inherited it, shows plainly that Ercall township had a different origin from any of the other townships. Its holdings have a different pattern. In the three ancient settlements of Walton, Osbaston, and Cotwall there were altogether 36 half-virgate tenements, 3 quarter-virgate tenements, and 2 houses without field land. At Moortown there were originally 7 half-virgate tenements, though by 1399 two had lost part of their land and were quarter-virgate tenements. At Ercall, on the other hand, there were more cottagers than quarter-virgate tenants and more quarter-virgate than half-virgate tenants: the respective figures are 11, 9 and 7. No other township had any dwelling described as a cottage. At Ercall there were three 'shops': a relic of the days of the borough, whether the term 'shop' referred to a workshop or a shop for sale of goods. William Merchant's shop may indeed have dealt in merchandise for

it seems to have been a lock-up building with no dwelling and no land. The only barn mentioned in the whole survey was at Ercall.

But the 1399 survey does more than reflect the distant past. It describes the manor at a time of change. When the Gech family inherited, simple customary tenure was already a thing of the past. Only one tenant anywhere on the manor claimed to hold his messuage and half virgate straightforwardly 'by custom'. In the townships of Ercall and Walton 17 tenements were being held by a hybrid tenure described as 'at will and according to custom' — a halfway stage bound to end in the prevailing of the lord's will, as it already did in the 36 tenements held simply 'at will': 13 at Ercall, 7 at Moortown, 9 at Walton, 12 at Osbaston, and 4 at Cotwall. This was the pattern for the future. The alternative was for customary tenure to become leasehold. Under the Careswells in the late 14th century leases were often granted to unfree tenants for messuages and land previously held by custom: 21 such leases were still in force in 1399. The men who held them were the lord's neifs, but under their leases they were required to pay heriots as though they were free, for at Ercall heriot marked the free, not the unfree, man.

Customary tenure had gone by 1399, and with it most of the services expected from customary tenants. Everyone who held a dwelling owed suit of court, but when one man held more than one messuage he could pay suit only for the first. Suit of mill, demanded under threats when Lake mill was working, was still admitted as due from all tenants of Moortown, 5 Osbaston men, and 3 Cotwall men. But John Matte was the only Ercall tenant who paid it, though the surviving mill for the manor was at Bradford bridge in Ercall township. Not a single Walton tenant was obliged to take his corn to the lord's mill.

Nearly everyone paid a woodhen for the right to collect firewood, and the Osbaston tenants paid a goose for their goose pasture.

The reeve's salary was met by contributions from the townships of Osbaston, Cotwall, and Moortown. Walton and Ercall did not contribute. The amount to be raised was unequally distributed, some tenants paying as much as $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ and some as little as $1\frac{1}{4}d.$; and the total raised by this means was $56\frac{3}{4}d.$ Two Osbaston tenants and one Moortown tenant were excused, and it looks as if, with two contributions of $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ each from Osbaston and one of $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ from Moortown, the reeve ought to have had £3 a year. Ercall men did not pay towards the reeve because Ercall had been a borough exempt from the reeve's agricultural oversight. Walton's exemption is harder to understand.

In any case the reeve as a manorial officer was a relic of the past too. No one on the manor did any sort of week-work. Even the four cottagers at Ercall, who remembered that they used to do 3 days in harvest or a day's haymaking at Wrensmeadow or half a day carrying hay, now paid a few pence instead. No other tenant paid extra rent in lieu of work. They all gave the lord one day's 'loverype' at harvest but that had become little more than the friendly aid neighbours give one another to get the crops safely in.

We might guess from this that work services at Ercall had always been very light. Looking back to William III's settlement in 1256⁶ (when he arranged for his men of Walton, Osbaston, and Cotwall to work for Annora and Cecilia as they did for him) we see how light they had been. The men on the spot, with tenements in Moortown field, did no work at all. Those from the three ancient townships were expected to weed corn, help with making and carrying hay, and reap. They did nothing more. The heavy time-consuming tasks of ploughing, sowing, harrowing, cattle-tending, and sheep washing and shearing, were done by the lord's own labourers, initially by his *bovarii*. This is why the last relics of work rents clung to certain cottages and cottagers in Ercall township. Because this manor was developed in pre-Conquest times from a hall built on waste with surrounding demesnes assarted from waste, and because it was worked from the start by landless *bovarii*, not, basically, by the work of the lord's customary tenants, so right from the start the money rent paid for the half virgate or noke was more important than any weeding or hay making or reaping due. Regular week-work, often considered a normal part of life for every medieval peasant, had never been part of the life of the lord's neifs on this manor. At most they gave him a day or two three times a year. When Dame Petronilla's jointure was settled in 1304 and a list was made of the tenants whose rents, works, services, aids, and amercements she was to receive, we cannot be sure that she really got anything more than a token 'loverype' from them. We know that she let a good deal of her widow's third to a tenant and joined with her son in demising all new land allotted to her. She may have had no need of anyone's service.

In all this the influence of the waste and its improvement is evident.

Finally, the customary tenant benefited directly from inclosure of waste because he was able to rent extra land and extra meadow from the lord. The sixth column of the summary of the survey in Table 6 demonstrates how many men availed themselves of this chance to hold parcels of new land and what they were prepared to pay: anything from the 16 pullets still given for 'ancient meadow' under the park or wood to the 13s. 4d. paid by John Houle senior for an assart on Cotwall heath or the 20s. William Matte produced for two assarts at Tern. The money a customary tenant gave the lord for extra land could be

four times his customary rent. Men were holding parcels in Broncroft or Smallthorns, or in ex-demesne meadow at Bleinnesford, which might have been leased on the same terms to free men from outside the manor and perhaps had been so leased by William V or his grandson.

Economically, the Ercall neifs were well off and might be thankful to live on a manor with such lenient customs. Their personal status, as the lord's *nativi*, was another matter.

William III could threaten his men with forfeiture of their holdings if they failed to serve Annora and Cecilia as they had served him; and the neif could of course be sold, as John, lord of Ercall, sold Robert Dawe of Cotwall c. 1270–1276.⁶ But in theory he could not be removed from his native soil, and in this case Dawe's new master was William le Kent, that Shrewsbury burgess who held land in Tern and was just acquiring Losford's quarter of a Walton free tenement. Dawe was not going to be taken from the parish of Ercall.

The neif had to pay merchet for permission to marry a daughter or sister to someone from another manor. The 1338–9 court roll records payment of merchet by Sir John the chaplain of Walton and Richard his brother who gave the lord 20s. for licence to marry their sister Scolastica outside Ercall. No doubt Sir John's parents had paid a fine when they put their son to letters. A man who wanted to marry into the manor and take over a wife's tenement was also obliged to pay a fine and at double the rate. Richard Bissop of Ellerdine in 1339 gave the lord 40s. for permission to marry Edith, widow of Richard the shepherd, of Cotwall, and have her lands and tenements there for life.⁷ Had Edith preferred to remain single, there was no prejudice against a woman tenant, as the 1399 survey amply proves.

Suit of the three-weekly court was another mark of servile status. The 1338–9 court roll names 147 individuals as attending (or in a few cases as absent from) courts that year. By 1399 4 Ercall tenants, 3 Walton tenants, and 5 Cotwall tenants claimed to be excused.

There were two mills on the manor, Bradford mill and (from c. 1200 to c. 1350) Lake mill. Tenants of Rowton, Ellerdine, and Cold Hatton, as well as the men of Osbaston and Moortown, owed suit to Lake mill. Tenants from Walton, Cotwall, and Ercall presumably went to Bradford mill, though there is no positive evidence to that effect; and Roger Trumwyn the reeve complained about unfair tolls there in 1339. Lake mill was let to a new miller William Cresset in 1339 for a rent of 22s. a year; but when his lease ran out the second mill was abandoned. There had always been trouble about getting sufficient water for it, and the draining of Penmarsh, with clearance of woodland on both sides of the brook, would have been fatal to it. In 1386 Bradford mill, with the fishing rights and a plot of land called Molnehull, was leased for 12 years⁸ at a rent of 26 small quarters of toll corn (the lord being responsible for payment of the 2 marks rent to Haughmond abbey). The miller was William Kytewylde, who was to have all the lord's suit of mill, from tenants who used to go to Lake mill as well as from any who had been bound to go to Bradford. By that time only 17 tenants on the whole manor admitted a liability but most will have gone to Bradford as a matter of convenience. Suit of mill at Ercall could not be called burdensome in the late 14th century.

There had been some unrest on the manor in 1338–9. It may have been caused by William V's attempt to keep some of his own land for his stock and not for general grazing. In the autumn of 1338 36 people were fined for letting their animals get into Heltesmore or into the lord's crops, and another 11 the following February. This seems a higher number of people than could offend by accident. The February court was told that four men given timber to rebuild their houses had failed to do so, and John of Walton had actually burnt his new timbers. Two brothers were withholding two years' rent, the township of Walton had concealed a heriot, while in a pound rescue at Osbaston the beadle's son had been injured. Then on 30 April 1339 it was reported that eight men and a woman, the lord's *nativi*, had absconded without leave. Two were sons of that John who had destroyed his timber, which suggests premeditated flight. They had no doubt betaken themselves to Shrewsbury, 8 miles away. The ancient borough was very jealous of its right to protect fugitives and in 1300 had successfully defended its privileges against the lord of Hopton Castle.⁹

Clearly the trouble at Ercall in 1338–9 was not discontent induced by intolerable burdens, but irritation at a situation which gave the neif a good economic position and then denied him personal freedom, in particular freedom to go elsewhere.

The high cost of enfranchisement and the difficulty of getting it for more than one life at a time is well illustrated by the story of the Houle family.¹⁰

The Houles were quite well-to-do. John Houle and John the younger were in a group of four who took a lease of Cotwall land for their lives, a lease which ran out in 1396. Another John Houle senior was holding a 40 year lease of a messuage and half virgate with other land, in Cotwall, for which his total rent was 32s. 10d. a year. Around 1401 he paid 20 marks for his personal freedom, though that did not enfranchise his sons who had been born in servitude. So the next lord was able to extract fines of £20 and £5 respectively from the sons, John and William. They in turn had sons who remained unfree. When a

new lord inherited he was still seised of William and Richard, sons of John Houle. They could not produce £20 apiece, but paid 100s. and 4 marks to have their liberty during that lord's lifetime and no longer. After that period William, an older man with more at stake, paid £10 in September 1447; but Richard his younger brother refused and tried to leave the manor. His lord took out a writ *de nativo habendo* in the king's court, arrested Richard, and held him prisoner. The settlement of 1424 mentions a *cage ad hostium* as one of the amenities of the hall. There poor Richard remained till his wife Joan and 'divers other persons unknown feloniously broke into the close and house . . . by night and took Richard' out of custody. This time he seems to have got clean away. He may have been protected in Shrewsbury by a relative, for Thomas Houle, son of Thomas Houle of Tibberton (an adjoining township) had been admitted burgess in 1416.

The story does not end there. The William who paid that extra £10 had a daughter Agnes. She fined with the lord to have licence to marry herself, giving him a purse with 5s. and a silver gilt ring inside it.

William Houle her father seems to have had no sons born in servitude. But there were four relatives still personally unfree. John Howle of Lyndon made fine with the lord at 40s., John Howle of Stockton near Bridgnorth did likewise, and his daughter Alice paid 7s. 6d. and gave the lord a ring of silver gilt. Thomas Howle *alias* Clerk of Stratford on Avon paid 26s. 8d. All these were living outside the manor, having in some way unexplained been allowed to leave, but they were still liable to be reclaimed if they did not pay for their enfranchisement.

Thus in the course of half a century, this family in all its branches paid the lords of Ercall a total of £51 19s. 4d. for their respective freedoms, besides the two rings and the purse. To find the equivalent in modern money we should have to multiply by at least 200, perhaps more. That the Houles could pay so much, though not all at one time, shows them to have been men of substance even though they were unfree. Conditions at Ercall, and especially the advantage of additional new land, had put them in this favourable condition.

Agricultural practice

Since no manor rolls survive, anything we say under this heading must be deduced from the evidence that does remain to us.

The Domesday entry for Ercall uses the word 'berewick'. This suggests that when the hall was first built, with demesne assarted from waste, and five corn-producing units besides, barley was the principal crop. Whether it remained so till 1086 and later is another question, but it seems quite possible. Barley has great advantages over other cereals. Being shallow-rooted it takes little out of the soil and can be grown year after year on the same land without ill effect. So it was a good crop for a restricted area of arable. It has many uses. It can be made into bread, or boiled whole, or made into gruel. It can also be malted: every medieval household needed malt for brewing, with the addition of nettles or herbs. There were three permitted tavern keepers on the manor in 1338, besides the men and women who brewed and broke the assize. We must remember that this has always been and still is a great barley-growing district. Richard Gough, writing in 1700,¹¹ says that in his day barley from Wroxeter fields, only six miles away from Ercall, was accounted 'the best in Shropshire' — with barley from Myddle very little behind.

After c. 1165, when the manor had a resident lord, wheat was grown for his household and perhaps for sale in Shrewsbury. As new land was developed some soils proved heavier and better for wheat, others lighter and better for rye: differences characterizing the Shropshire wheatlands and ryelands. Rye bread or muncorn were becoming staple foods and not only for the poor. One of William III's demesne assarts was called Rye furlong;¹² and when, c. 1285, his daughter Cecilia gave up her share of Moortown in exchange for an allowance of food, she accepted a quarter each of wheat, rye, and oats¹³ — the crops her nephew William IV grew on his demesne. They represent the usual ratio of one third 'hard corn' to two thirds 'soft', the same ratio that a 17th-century vicar had on his glebe.¹⁴

One advantage of wheat and rye is their tougher straw, much better for thatching. With increased building throughout the countryside, and especially in the old and new towns of the 12th and 13th centuries, there must have been a steady demand for good thatching material. Most medieval crops were cut high with a toothed sickle, the straw left standing and the ears of barley or oats thrown down in heaps to be loaded into carts.¹⁵ That left plenty for the cattle to eat once the field had been cleared. Only when long straw was required for thatching did men harvest with the bagging hook (which involved bending) or with the scythe. We must not picture the medieval harvest field as normally stooked and set up in aisle.

When wheat and rye are grown, measures have to be taken to preserve fertility. This was done in part by throwing the fields open for general grazing when the crop had been carried. The stock grazed on the straw, rich in protein, and on the weeds, treading the residue into the ground for humus; the soil was

manured at the same time without the labour of muck-spreading. Marling was extensively practised, at least from the mid 13th century. About 1256 William III gave to Prior Baldwin of Wombridge¹⁶ nearly 44 acres of land by Weeseland vivary, TM 495, with the soil and scrub on it, the area called by the tithe apportionment Rough Marl. From it Wombridge would be able to extract enough marl for the whole Sherlowe Grange estate and for the virgate of land at Weeseland recently given to the priory by William Wischart.¹⁷ The gift put Wombridge on equal terms with Lilleshall abbey, then holding Tern lordship and tenant of the greater part of the arable within that lordship, having acquired the fee there previously held by Buildwas. Abbot Robert had just been given permission to take marl for his Tern lands anywhere on Sugdon heath, and to carry it across any lands belonging to the donor Pagan of Sugdon, or to his wife Alice, except the sown land.¹⁸ A marlpit by the lane from Sherlowe to Cotwall is mentioned as a landmark in 1315¹⁹ and the tithe map is pocked with marl pits and studded with such field names as Marl Yard, Marl Leasow, Marl Field. There was no difficulty in the way of any Ercall tenant's getting as much marl as he cared to dig, given the lord's permission to extract it. But in our period it was not a case of 'lime, lime, and no manure, makes the father rich and the son poor', for the fields had been grazed and dunged for a couple of months immediately before the autumn ploughing and for the whole winter before the spring ploughing. Peas and beans, either grown as a separate field crop or in muncorn, helped to replace nitrogen. At Ercall peas were a major crop. They were tithed as such by the rector, not by the vicar.²⁰

Meadow might sometimes be broken up and cropped for several years;²¹ two thirds of Holtesmoor meadow was under the plough in 1424,²² and it was the prevalence of this custom which led to the introduction of a prohibition clause in post-medieval leases. Arable and meadow often lay intermixed, especially in areas of new assart, as with Philip of Muckleton's leasehold in Penmarsh and the chantry chaplains' inclosure at Bradmere.²³ Field land might be rested by putting it down to grass; the vicar was to tithe both corn and hay from the parcel called the Riley, or Rye leah; by 1479 there was meadow at the head of all Moortown furlongs.²⁴ But no large-scale change from arable to pasture happened.

A three-year rotation with a year's fallow may have been practised at Ercall, but the only reference to fallowing is in connexion with very poor land in Cotwall waste, which William V let on condition that it should be cropped only two years in three.²⁵ Walton and Osbaston had two fields apiece, Cotwall and Moortown one, but it is possible to work a three-year rotation on one or two fields, keeping part of the field as a hitching to be cultivated when the rest lay fallow. Everything considered, we need not assume that fertility was extremely low or that it was getting progressively lower, except at Cotwall with its light soil: there the lord does seem to have had difficulty in getting tenants for customary holdings after 1400.²⁶ Naturally the yield was much less than we expect now with improved strains and ample fertilizers.

Besides cereals and legumes Ercall had a demesne flaxyard in the 12th century and produced linen and linseed oil. The lord's flaxyard is described as lying between the church, the vivary, a row of trees, and the road to Cotwall:²⁷ a position much too near the hall to be agreeable once the lord came to live there permanently. By c. 1220 it seems that flax was on the way out. With more wool, linen was not so much in demand. An acre, part of the Quabbs by that vivary, is listed by Rocque as 'hempbutt as supposed' — clearly it was not then used for that purpose and had not been for many years. A house at Cotwall had a hempbutt in 1746, and there were two quarter-acre Hempbutt pieces at Osbaston, both marked arable.

What medieval Ercall lacked was enough common meadow for tenants. Some held 3 acres apiece, others no more than an acre; and two men from Osbaston and Walton in 1237 were glad to rent extra meadow in Tern lordship.²⁸ William III, on the other hand, developed so much grassland along the Tern and by Lakemoor brook that he could afford to settle all the new meadows between Moortown field and Lake mill on his daughters²⁹ and still leave plenty for his heir. By the end of the 13th century the lord of Ercall was willing to lease 'ancient meadow' by the Roden, under the park and under the wood, to tenants who paid 17s. in money and 23 rent hens.³⁰ The 1399 survey shows 16 pullets and various small sums still due for these parcels, and their location can be reconstructed from Rocque's survey. Two thirds of all tenants were renting extra meadow by 1399 and yet winter feed for stock and flock must have been a problem. What common meadow they had was under the care of haywards. Robert the hayward of Osbaston is mentioned c. 1312³¹ and Hamo of Ercall the hayward of Walton in 1338.

In its early days, when the manor included the township of Crudgington with Sleap, the lord of Ercall and his tenants enjoyed a share of the Weald Moor grazing. Those marshes were noted for fattening beef, either working oxen intended for slaughter in their tenth year or bullocks bred for market.³² We are told that the 1086 demesne was managed with the labour of *bovarii*, and Ælfric in his *Colloquy*³³ explains how that system operated. Two gangs of men worked alternately. The ploughmen went out in the early morning (but not at daybreak) to plough; then they brought the oxen back in the early afternoon, watered them, and handed them over to the oxherds while they themselves filled up the bins with hay. The oxherds led the beasts to pasture, where they still had time to graze their fill before nightfall. They were

watched over all night and brought home first thing in the morning to be fed, watered, and restored to the ploughmen for another day's work. The beast-hamm or bytham at Ercall was the inclosed grazing area.

Ælfric's account throws light on another problem: the amount of land a team could plough. Oxen are slower than horses and a team of oxen has less pulling power than a modern horse team, though they are better on wet or sticky soil. It takes 5 oxen to do the work of 2 horses.³⁴ Hence on heavy soil the 11th century's 8-ox plough team. So more than one acre a day per team was out of the question, and in some areas it would be far less. The length of the working day was limited because the teams had to be fed before they started work and brought back in time for a couple of hours' grazing before the early winter darkness fell. With this in mind and taking account of the number of non-working days in autumn and spring (because of frost, snow, excessive rain, attendance at the three-weekly court, Saturdays, Sundays, Christmas, and saints' days), we may conclude that it is unlikely that there could have been more than 100–110 ploughing days between Michaelmas and Lady Day, and in some years there may have been many fewer. On a Wiltshire manor in 1324–5 customary tenants worked 106 days between 29 September and 25 March; the bailiff's account remarks that they did not work on Saturdays.³⁵ So the theoretical acre per day per team could not be expected of oxen. Given 100 working days from Michaelmas to Lady Day, each team would be able to plough a carucate of 60–64 acres. No ox team could have ploughed double that acreage, even on the lightest soils and in the most favourable weather conditions, though some historians have supposed it possible.

At 60 acres a team, with 6 carucates of demesne arable and the opportunity to breed fatstock for market as a sideline, the manor of Ercall with its 5 berewicks was indeed valuable when Earl Roger took it over. Even with Crudginton detached, it was still well worth having.

When Hamo Peverel gave Crudginton and Sleaf to Shrewsbury abbey c. 1136, he cut his other manor off for good from any share in the Weald Moors. From then the emphasis was on sheep; indeed, when he made his gift, Hamo may have foreseen this swing towards production of wool as the more profitable commodity. Shropshire wool was much esteemed during the 13th century. This change of emphasis accounts for negotiations between William I and the abbot of Shrewsbury, as a result of which William gave up 4 acres of demesne arable for the sake of a small parcel, less than 3 acres, with a runnel of water that could be used for washing sheep (TM 354, Great Washing Pit or Lambsitch croft).³⁶ Beside the road from Ercall to Cotwall there was, c. 1220, the shepherd's acre.³⁷

How many sheep were there on the manor? William III's settlement on his daughters shows that in 1256 there were 240 sheep in the Court fold at Moortown. If the lord kept a proportionate number on the rest of his demesne, as he surely did, his total flock will have been 760 strong.³⁸ The abbot of Shrewsbury had the right to pasture 200, later increased to 240, on the Ercall wastes.³⁹ A Tern tenant had 12 acres of Cotwall assarts leased to him and was allowed to run 30 sheep on the open land of this manor,⁴⁰ a concession which put him in the position of one of the lord's freeholders, rather than that of the half-virgate tenant. The chantry chaplains were allowed to keep 200. One sheep per acre of customary land seems to have been regarded elsewhere as the minimum, and if the Ercall half-virgaters were allowed 15 sheep, noke tenants 7, and cottagers one or two, then, with the lord's 500 for his 5 carucates, the Moortown 240, the abbot's 240, the chaplains' 200, 90 for the 3 free tenants, and 30 for Bareson, we have a total of 1,953 sheep. This allows only one sheep per cottage and none for the lord's other leaseholders. It is probably an underestimate: 2,000–2,100 is more likely. That means about 5 sheep per acre of summer grazing, plus the lambs. No wonder the abbot was warned to remove all lambs at the end of the season. With such a flock, it was clear that no new assarts could be contemplated after c. 1330, for wool was at least as profitable as corn.

Such a flock could be kept on the residue of open land only with the aid of careful management. It was essential not to have the sheep long on any one pasture. The chances are that all sheep were brought off the waste in late summer when the lambs were separated from the ewes; they were put into the meadows to eat the second aftermath so that their droppings would improve next year's hay. By late autumn or early winter, depending on the season, the riverside meadows became too wet for sheep and there was a chance of flooding. So the sheep were brought up to the higher land, either to the stubbles after the long straw had been eaten down by the cattle (for sheep can only graze close) or to the inclosed crofts where they were folded during the bad weather. The yard at La Mora, where William III's 240 sheep were folded, was just over 4 acres, an area big enough for such a flock to be kept all winter with hurdles to pen them. The chantry chaplains with their 200 sheep were given 3 crofts near the hall, one adjoining their common dwelling, one in le Touncroft, and Aldecrofte *ita quod si illa tria crofta non contineant quatuor acras quod ille croftum quod vocatur Aldecrofte augmentatur de campo proximiorie usque ad plenam sufficientiam quatuor acrarum*:⁴¹ they would need 4 acres for folding their 200 sheep through the winter, and William V reckoned they were going to augment his cash endowment by selling their clip. All the

Ercall town crofts were about 4 acres, enough to allow part to be cultivated and part kept as pasture. There was plenty of demesne hay for winter feeding the lord's sheep, and the court at Moortown was amply supplied from meadows along Lakemoor brook. The chaplains had 2 acres of meadow in Penmarsh as part of their endowment and were permitted to lease extra. Even so they, like the rest of the lord's tenants holding 2–3 acres of meadow, must have been hard put to it to maintain their flocks in bad winters.

By such a routine, never keeping the sheep more than 3 or 4 months on any pasture, the grass was not eaten down beyond recovery and the risk of infection was minimized. In spite of every precaution, however, risk of fluke and foot-rot and murrain was high. In April 1339 the bailiff, looking back over the past winter, reported the deaths of 16 rams, 21 ewes, 2 hogs, and 9 lambs out of the lord's flock *et curia recognovit quod sic fuit*. No doubt the tenants' sheep had suffered likewise.

Some of the wool produced may have been reserved for local use. There was a family of weavers, the Webbes, at Moortown. Some Ercall wool came back as cloth to be finished at the walkmill established at Weeseland about 1256 and still there in 1424.⁴² Several fields at Weeseland were called Tenter Leasows in 1839 (TM 501, 502, 504, 505). This transfer of fulling mills from the towns to the country was a result of 12th- and 13th-century mechanization, replacing human 'walking' by water-powered stamping.⁴³ It also brought the cloth nearer to the source of lye, one of the cleansing agents used. At Ercall lye for fulling may have come from a buckhouse in the lord's wood which has left its name on inclosures by the Roden (TM 438–440). We do not know when it operated but the probability is that it used undergrowth and small timber or coppice when the woods were being cleared from c. 1300 onward. After wormwood, beech or bracken produced most potash for the lye maker.

In Ælfric's day shepherds milked their ewes. But that meant restricting the number of lambs reared, and the practice largely died out when wool was so much in demand and the great object was to increase the number of sheep to the maximum the grazing would allow.⁴⁴ As the number of sheep grew the number of oxen and cows had to be limited. The abbot of Shrewsbury was cut down to two milking cows. The allowance for John Bareson was 4 oxen, 4 cows, or 8 beasts of a kind; while the six chantry chaplains might pasture 6 oxen and 6 cows besides their 2 horses. This stinting meant that Ercall never became a cheese-making area. Some cattle, of course, were slaughtered each winter, but fewer than has been supposed for it would be folly to kill off working oxen, capable of service till their tenth year at least, or good breeding cows. Old cows, old oxen, unwanted bull calves, and bullocks, would be got rid of, but chiefly by way of Shrewsbury cattle market.

It may be assumed that pigs were kept by everyone. Sherlowe tenants had the right to put their pigs into Cotwall wood, paying pannage to Wombridge.⁴⁵ William IV's chaplain c. 1300 was permitted to keep 4 pigs pannage free⁴⁶ but the chantry chaplains were to have 12 between the 6 of them, just enough to keep them in bacon and ham. Each township may have had its swineherd, though we only hear of one, William *porcarius* of Walton, in 1338.

A swine market was held in Shrewsbury at St. Andrew's tide, and there was a pig market at Newport too. In 1292 15 pigs were being sent to Newport under the charge of Dame Alice's swineherd, but at Crudginton bridge on the manor boundary he was stopped by two of the lord's men; the pigs were slaughtered and the carcasses taken to the lord's larder, for William IV claimed them as his own saying his mother had had charge of them for fattening only. Alice brought a case and William (having claimed clergy) spent some time in the bishop's prison, but in the end his story was accepted.⁴⁷ When it came to fixing his widow's jointure in 1304, Dame Petronilla was forbidden to put any pigs at all into the lord's park.⁴⁸

Ercall was one of those Shropshire manors where heriot was exacted from free tenants and leaseholders but not from customary tenants. This made it worthwhile for neifs to keep horses for carting or riding. A number of men were fined in 1338–9 for letting their horses stray, and they cannot have been the only horse owners on the manor.

For the tenant, free or customary, his whole economic position depended on the right to put his stock into the common fields and common meadows after harvest and haymaking. Without the stubbles and the aftermath his cattle, sheep, and horses could not have survived the winter for there was none too much hay and there were no root crops. Hence permission to keep small parcels of meadow in defence was granted rarely: to favoured tenants such as Philip of Muckleton, who paid well for the right, or to the chantry chaplains. Hence the alarm when customary tenants were excluded from any piece of arable, however small. In February 1339 William V let a small piece of demesne at Edwinsmer or Ednemer in Moortown to a free tenant Thomas Fraunce, or Frances, of Rowton. The following autumn Thomas did his best to exclude the rest of the Moortown tenants, free and unfree, from commoning after harvest on his 4 acres. He brought a case against Thomas Bade, claiming half a mark damages because Bade's stock

had depastured in the inclosure. Bade said he had right of common and put himself on the verdict of a jury. The jury declared 'that the said place is common pasture of the said Thomas' and fined the leaseholder 6d.⁴⁹ The right to common on the fields in winter was something to be guarded jealously.

The court roll for 1338–9 lists an unusually large number of tenants, both free and unfree, whose cattle, horses, sheep, or pigs had strayed into the lord's oats and winter wheat or into his inclosure at Holtesmore. Was this a protest because William V was beginning to exclude his tenants from part of his demesne arable and meadow? Perhaps he had so many sheep and cattle of his own that he no longer needed his tenants' stock to manure the land; previously the lord's interests and his tenants' had coincided, but by 1338 that may no longer have been so obvious.

The 1399 survey shows that by the end of the 14th century many of the old customary tenements were held at will or on lease. Tenure protected by custom had almost gone and with it nearly all the customary services. But the open fields survived till 1700. They were an indispensable part of Ercall's economy because the waste had been reduced to a minimum. On many Shropshire manors the open fields vanished almost without notice in the late 16th or early 17th century for there was enough hill pasture to render winter grazing on the open fields of no special value. It could not be so at Ercall. The fields there remained open until the introduction of root crops changed the situation in another way.

So in its manorial economy (as far as we can deduce it from scattered references) Ercall was not very different from other manors where geographical conditions allowed an option between cattle, sheep, and corn. It differed in this, that by the mid 14th century lord and tenants faced problems not arising on most manors till the 16th century or later. They were the natural result of that progressive land policy which had ensured Ercall's prosperity for the past 300 years.

⁴¹ R 1.32.1–2.

⁴² *Shrews. Cart.* ii, 265–7: a list of tithes from Poynton township to which Shrews. was entitled as rector of High Ercall. The ld. of this manor in 1412 was Rob. Swinnerton.

⁴³ John the miller had a house near the church and the shepherd his acre nearby by c. 1220 (R 1.1.18). Ralph, ld. of Tern, relinquished his house in Ercall in 1227 (R 1.1.15). The Poynton fam. kept theirs from c. 1200 till after 1272 (Eyton, ix, 1–2).

⁴⁴ S.R.O. 864/2.

⁴⁵ R 1.1.21.

⁴⁶ R 1.1.31.

⁴⁷ B.L. Add. MS. 41340, f.132.

⁴⁸ S.R.O. 4032/2/17; Eyton, ix, 95. The mill is not included in the 1399 survey because the lds. of Ercall held it as tenants of Haughmond abbey, not as part of the manor. Wm. Kyttewyld may still have held the mill (in addition to his messuage and $\frac{1}{2}$ virgate, 2 cottages, a toft and a noke, and the meadow under Bradford bridge), for a fragment of a rental of c. 1420 shows him paying 5s. rent, while Alyn Myleward paid 3s. 6d.; there is nothing to show what these rents were paid for (S.R.O. 52/37B).

⁴⁹ H. Owen and J.B. Blakeway, *Hist. of Shrews.* (1825), i, 133.

⁵⁰ R 1.1.69 and 2.8.51; S.R.O. 52/36, 38.

⁵¹ R. Gough, *Antiquities & Memoirs of the Parish of Myddle* (Shrews. 1875), 175.

⁵² It is so named in 1424: R 2.8.28–31.

⁵³ R 1.1.4.

⁵⁴ Lichfield Joint Record Office, Ercall glebe terrier 1693.

⁵⁵ The practice continued in some parts to the end of the 19th cent.: G.E. Evans, *Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay* (paperback edn. 1965), 87; D.J. Viner, *Old Cotswold Photographs* (1977), nos. 19 and 20.

⁵⁶ R 1.4.2.

⁵⁷ Eyton, ix, 105.

⁵⁸ S.R.O. 972, box 220, bundle relating to Tern mills, deeds 15–17; deeds of Wm. of Tern, deed 3; bundle for Tern, Sugdon, and Isombridge, deed 5.

⁵⁹ S.R.O. 52/28.

⁶⁰ From c. 1430 the abbot of Shrews. (as rector) leased his Ercall tithes to groups of local men (R 2.8.43). Thos. Newport was the last abbey lessee and paid a rent of £5 for the main tithes of Walton, Osbaston, Cotwall, and a further £5 for the rest, including, by special mention, tithe peas from Walton and Osbaston and his own demesne tithes (R 2.8.80).

⁶¹ For an example see *Shrews. Cart.* i, p. 109.

⁶² R 2.8.28–32.

⁶³ R 1.1.41, 43–4.

⁶⁴ List of tithes in glebe terrier 1612; R 2.8.61.

⁶⁵ S.R.O. 52/18–19.

⁶⁶ In 1424 three half-virgate tenements were in the ld.'s hand and were allotted to the dowager; there was no demesne land in Cotwall pre-1345. But two of the holdings were probably moieties of the Wercock free tenement which disappeared in the late 14th cent. A Sugdon deed of c. 1390 refers to land, apparently in that township, given to Harry Wercocks of Cotwall; that may mean that the fam. left its old free tenement about then for newer and better land just outside Cotwall (S.R.O. 4991/1/2. Philipps Coll. 31182).

⁶⁷ R 1.1.18.

⁶⁸ *Shrews. Cart.* i, p. 100.

⁶⁹ R 1.1.21.

⁷⁰ R 1.1.5.

⁷¹ S.R.O. 52/17.

⁷² See 'Hereford Cattle and Ryeland Sheep', *Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club Trans.* xxxviii (1964), 38.

⁷³ *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, ed. M. Swanton (1975), 109.

³⁴ The opinion of the Cotswold Farm Park, where working oxen are kept. Cf. *T.S.A.S.* lix. 140.

³⁵ Acct. r. for Downton, printed by J.Z. Titow, *Eng. Rural Society* (1969), 133.

³⁶ R 1.1.25; *Shrews. Cart.* ii, p. 270.

³⁷ R 1.1.18.

³⁸ *Shrews.* abbey had a total flock of 847 for shearing in 1333: *Shrews. Cart.* i, p. xxi, note 7.

³⁹ R 1.1.35.

⁴⁰ S.R.O. 52/16, 18–19.

⁴¹ R 1.1.44.

⁴² In 1256 the prior of Wombridge quitclaimed to Wm. III a watercourse leading from Weeseland vivary (TM 496) into Wm.'s ancient ditch, so that he could take water *ad utilitatem molendini* (R 1.4.2). The ancient ditch is still there and so is the watercourse, now carrying water from the ditch over the site of the vivary into the river. The mill meadow *iuxta le Walke Mulne de Willeslond* was settled in 1424 (R 2.8.30). One of the Ercall tenants in 1399 was Wm. Walker, who held 2 messuages in the village, but only $\frac{1}{2}$ virgate of land, on a 40 year lease. Another 1399 tenant was Wm. Lancastreshyre with a cottage and 3 lands in Ercall township, whose name survives in 3 Lancashire crofts (TM 510, 511, 513) at Weeseland; he must have been an incomer originally; and may have settled at Ercall in connexion with the walkmill, though the fam. remained there long after the mill ceased to work.

⁴³ For a description of the machinery and process see D.H. Robinson, *The Wandering Worfe* (1980), 13.

⁴⁴ On the small manor of Cuxham (Oxon.), which had little or no waste, ewes were still being milked in 1289–90; the milkmaids were paid 2 bushels of mixed corn: P.D.A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cux. m. 1240–1400* (1965), p. 61 note 4; and see *Manorial Records of Cuxham, Oxfordshire c. 1200–1359*, ed P.D.A. Harvey (Oxon. Rec. Soc. 1, 1976). Milking ewes may have been normal practice at Cuxham when there were enough sheep to make it profitable (the size of the flock there fluctuated wildly), but there is only one reference to paying the girls. At Cuxham, and anywhere in that region, it would have been easy to sell the dead lambs, valuable mainly for their skins but also used as meat (hence the street cry 'Young Lambs to sell' and the vendor's pole hung with carcasses).

⁴⁵ Eyton, ix. 79 note 3.

⁴⁶ S.R.O. 52/14.

⁴⁷ Eyton, ix. 88–9.

⁴⁸ R 1.1.5.

⁴⁹ B.L. Add. MS. 41340, f.132. The lease was entered into at the man. ct. (S.R.O. 864/1).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

ONE of the fascinations of studying medieval life is its diversity. The manor we have been examining bore very little resemblance to the 'typical Midland manor', either in the origin and development of its demesnes or the conditions under which its tenants held and worked their land. In many respects it had become by 1399 far more like a well managed 17th-century estate.

What we cannot judge is whether Ercall was unique or whether, as seems more likely, it represents a 'marcher' type of manor, newly developed out of waste before the Conquest and relying always on being able to extend cultivation into further waste, always using slave, domestic, cottage labour for cultivation of a large home farm, with only occasional assistance from the lord's customary tenants.

But whether Ercall was unique or a type, this study has shown how much inclosure could take place within the agrarian economy of the period 1086 to 1399; how persistent field boundaries are once they have been established; and how much record evidence can be found for development, even when the obvious sources are missing. If that evidence has established criteria for examining improvement on other medieval manors, it will have served its purpose.

APPENDIX I: THE MEDIEVAL HALL AT ERCALL

A RESETTLEMENT of the manor was needed in 1424 when Margaret, widow of Thomas Gech *alias* Newport III, decided to marry, as her second husband, Richard Archer. In lieu of an annuity of 300 marks for life,¹ she was to have her widow's third of the hall and the estate, and her son Thomas with his wife Alianor their two thirds.² This settlement enables us to picture the hall as it was in the early 15th century and probably as it continued until the rebuilding of 1608.

Thomas and Alianor were to have two thirds of the hall, kitchen, larderhouse, bakehouse, brewhouse, gate and bridge, and dovehouse; the great chamber and chambers behind it with the latrine annexed; two wine cellars; a little chamber called *le Cage ad hostium* of the great chamber; a house within the garden called le Noresry; stable, great barn, le hayeberrie, oxhouse, carters' stable, yeomens' stable; a tower called le Birlyreka; a stone tower; 2 parts of the garner; the middle and lower chambers of the gatehouse; all the orchards except le Bene croft; all the gardens. Besides their two thirds of demesne lands and meadows, they were to have two parts of the park (from le Parke Yate following the ditch as far as le Mulle Croftes, and the Middle Park from the twisted oak to le Launde); and two parts of the wood, starting at an aspen standing at le Vicareshete.

Margaret was to have a third part of the hall, kitchen, larderhouse, bakehouse, brewhouse, gate and bridge, and dovehouse; 3 rooms in the lower part of the hall (one above and two below); a small new barn near the brewhouse; a cowhouse; one upper chamber above the gate; Benecroft; and a third of park and wood. She had no share of the garden, and only a very small patch of orchard.

These details show us the moat and bridge; the 3 storey gatehouse containing 5 rooms, the whole upper floor being a single chamber; and a detached stone tower capable of defence. Besides the hall and offices, there was the great chamber and rooms behind it, with 2 more rooms on the ground floor and one above them; the hall was still open to the roof, but the chambers (or at least the two in the lower part of the hall) had a ceiling and a room over. The new barn speaks of recent improvement; and clearly the hall was the centre of a busy home farm with its stabling, barleyrick tower, garner, and hay-bury or loft. The manor orchards seem to have been important; we have a much earlier reference to an orchard by the church,³ probably TM 367; Bean croft may be TM 366. The Great Orchard, TM 386, was almost 11 acres in extent.

¹ R 2.8.20-1, 23-6.

² R 2.8.28-32.

³ R 1.1.18.

APPENDIX II: VIVARIES AND PONDS

THE importance of standing water in the economy of a medieval manor is plainly demonstrated at Ercall, where there were so many vivaries and ponds.

First there was the raised bog on the border between Ercall and Tern (TM 259), probably the source of the 1,502 great eels of the Domesday entry. It is mentioned in 1227 when Ralph, lord of Tern, quitclaimed to William de Hedleie (i.e. William of Ercall III) parcels of land within a boundary starting from Crudginton bridge and going to the head of the black ditch by the side of William's lordship, from that ditch to Tern vivary, from the vivary by the boundary ditch as far as the aspen, then by another ditch dividing Ralph's profitable land (Tern field) and William's heath, as far as the footpath crossing Powemonnes furlong (i.e. the track linking Cotwall and Tern).¹ It was this vivary which gave the name Fishpoleshete or furlong to adjoining land.

Then there was the pond near the hall in the field called Quabbs (TM 472) which may have served a double purpose, as a stew for fish for the hall, and as a source of water for retting flax from the lord's *linarium* nearby.² Rocque speaks of land adjoining the pond as 'hempbutt as supposed'. This pond has been drained but a hollow in the field still indicates where it used to be.

The old vivary which became the pond and vivary for Lake mill has been fully discussed. At its original extent it may have flooded the greater part of Broad Lake meadow (TM 213), though there was always enough grass round the margin to be worth mowing. On 15 August 1245 William III came to an agreement with his neighbour Madoc ap Griffin ap Jorwerth Goch, which allowed the former to raise the height of his bank, provided it did not extend the water beyond the limits set in 1229; William in return agreed that Madoc and his heirs might take the grass by the vivary *ita quod falcatores in aquam non intrent*. The tithe map suggests that it was the lower part of Broad Lake meadow, between the 1839 pond and Pool Head, which was flooded, and the 1245 deed calls the pond a reservoir (*choysello*) for the mill.

One consequence of William III's improvement to his mill was damage to his neighbour's interests. At the Shropshire eyre of 1256 William le Franceys and John of Rewelton, both subtenants at Rowton, claimed that William had injured their tenements and in particular had destroyed a stank set up by le Franceys somewhere on his own side of the stream. The court decided for the plaintiffs; and when John of Ercall succeeded his father later that year, he paid 2 marks damages, promising never to raise his mill bank again. William le Fraunceys then promised not to harm Lake mill.⁴

Next the land higher upstream began to be flooded; it was as compensation for that flooding that John of Ercall agreed that John fitz Aer his brother-in-law should be satisfied by view of legal men *de tanta terra quam aqua vivarii predicti Johannis de Ercalewe quod vocatur Lakepol superabundavit per exaltacionem stagni eiusdem vivarii plus quam exaltatum sint tempore Willelmi de Ercalewe patris sui*.⁵ This allowed John fitz Aer to extend his own Wytheford vivary on the Roden into Ercall land at Broncroft.

Between Bradford bridge and Weeseland, between Rough Marl and the river, there was and is a long narrow meadow, TM 496. William Wischart flooded this in 1255 to the depth of a few feet; a slight bank under the rough still shows where the water came. A fairly low weir in the river would be enough to do it, and Wischart claimed that his vivary was really part of Rodenhurst, on the other side of the Roden. Nevertheless, when in that same year Wischart passed over his interests to Henry Malveysin, a minor, William III took action; with 5 accomplices he levelled the stank and destroyed the vivary. But at the eyre of 1256 he was ordered to rebuild it at his own expense and pay 2s. damages. It was clear that he had known about the vivary and consented to it; he had mentioned it as a landmark when he gave Rough Marl to Wombridge and had agreed with the prior about a ditch over the land Wischart had just given the

canons, so that he might take water from it!⁶

In 1304 this vivary was part of Dame Petronilla's jointure; by then it had come back into demesne. It seems very probable that it was not really part of the Weeseland free tenement, but one of the meadows Wischart mentioned in his deed to Malveysin in which he had only a leasehold interest.⁷

Dame Scolastica, widow of William V, also had this vivary as part of her jointure, one of the very few places within the manor allotted to her. She surrendered it to her grandson on 15 April 1352.⁸

The prioress of Brewood was given 40 ft. on Lakemoor brook near her Moortown barn to make a weir.⁹ Presumably this was to be a fish trap. As it is not referred to again, she may have let it lapse. A little later John of Ercall got permission to widen Lakemoor brook in the stretch past Moortown (with the proviso that he was not to interfere with cattle from Rowton and Ellerdine when they watered there)¹⁰ and he may have made a small vivary there, for the *parvum vivarium versus Rowton* was included in Dame Petronilla's allocation in 1304.¹¹ That would account for *le Stagnum* for which a Moortown tenant, Hamo Cuff, paid 12d. extra rent in 1399.

There was some kind of pond close to the Court at More, giving a name to the tithe apportionment Stew furlong (TM 245). It may indeed have been a stew pond, but in 1480 the nuns of Brewood called this land Cistannescrofte furlong¹² and the pond may equally well have been a cistern or reservoir for storing water; or it may have served both purposes at the same time.

The damage caused to William III's meadows at Moortown by the abbot of Shrewsbury's mill bank at Crudgington was the cause of much ill-feeling in 1234 and later.¹³ But the abbot did agree not to raise the dam again, and there is nothing to suggest that this agreement was breached.

¹ R 1.1.15. For date see Eyton, ix. 82.

² R 1.1.18.

³ See above, Development of the waste; Eyton, ix. 83.

⁴ Eyton, ix. 241; R 1.1.32.

⁵ R 1.1.2.

⁶ Eyton, ix. 105-6; R 1.4.2.

⁷ R 1.1.5; 1.4.3.

⁸ R 1.1.58.

⁹ Eyton, ix. 85-6.

¹⁰ R 1.1.27.

¹¹ R 1.1.5.

¹² R 2.8.61-2.

¹³ R 1.1.25; Eyton, ix. 83.

FIGURES



FIG. 2: WALTON TOWNSHIP: EXTENT OF ARABLE IN 1746 (ROCQUE)

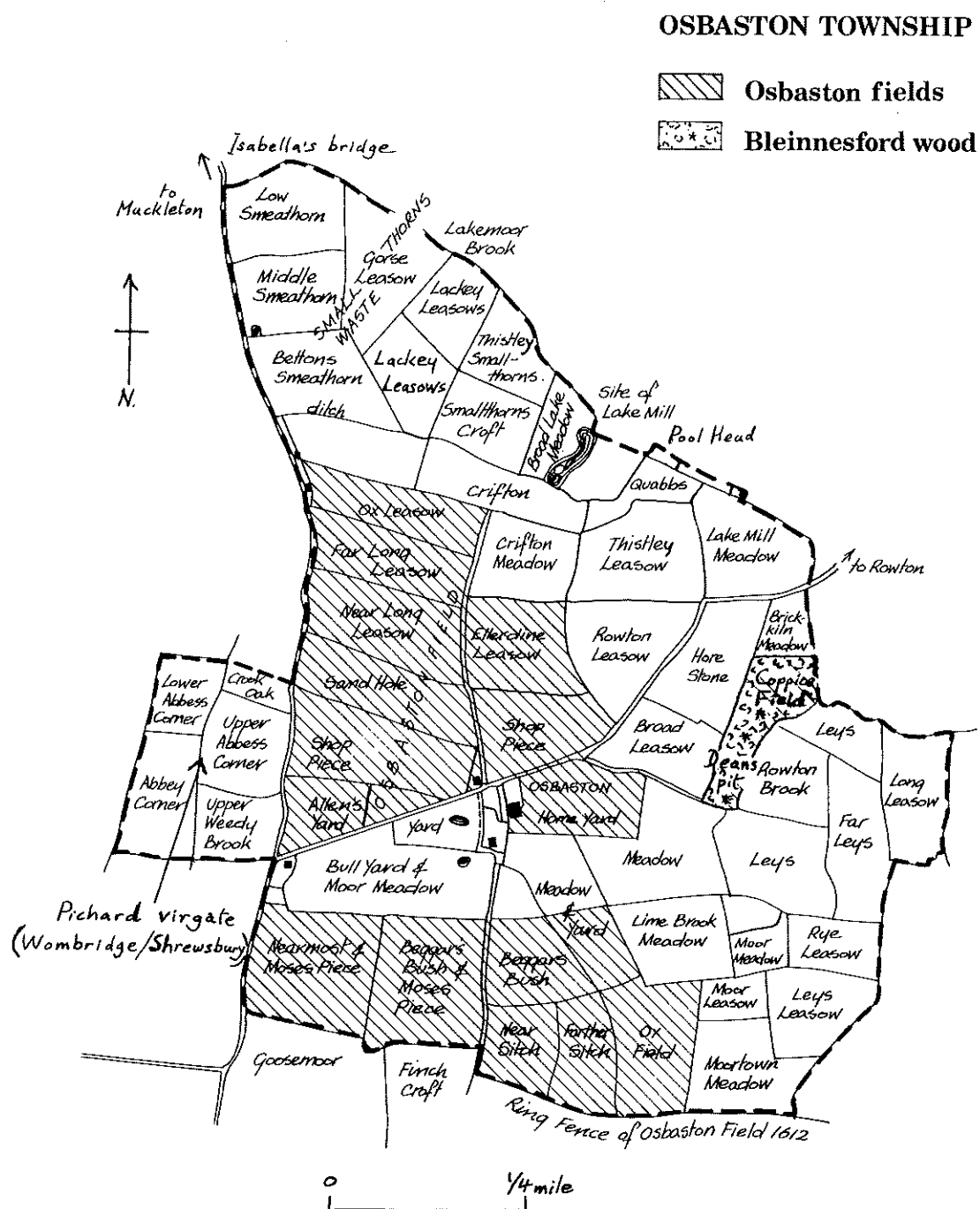


FIG. 3: OSBASTON TOWNSHIP, SHOWING FIELDS

OSBASTON TOWNSHIP
Extent of arable in 1746
(Rocque)

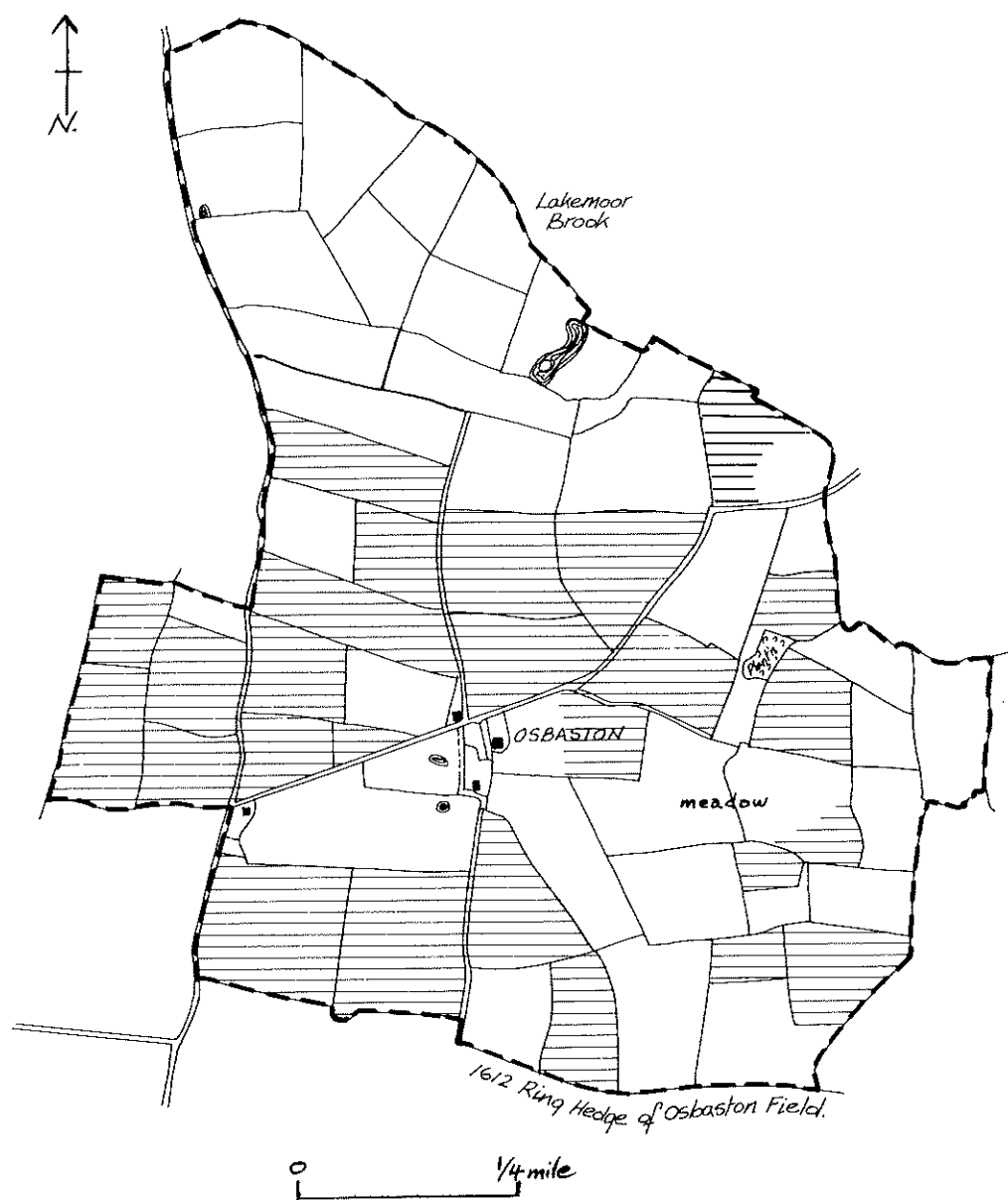


FIG. 4: OSBASTON TOWNSHIP, EXTENT OF ARABLE IN 1746 (ROCQUE)

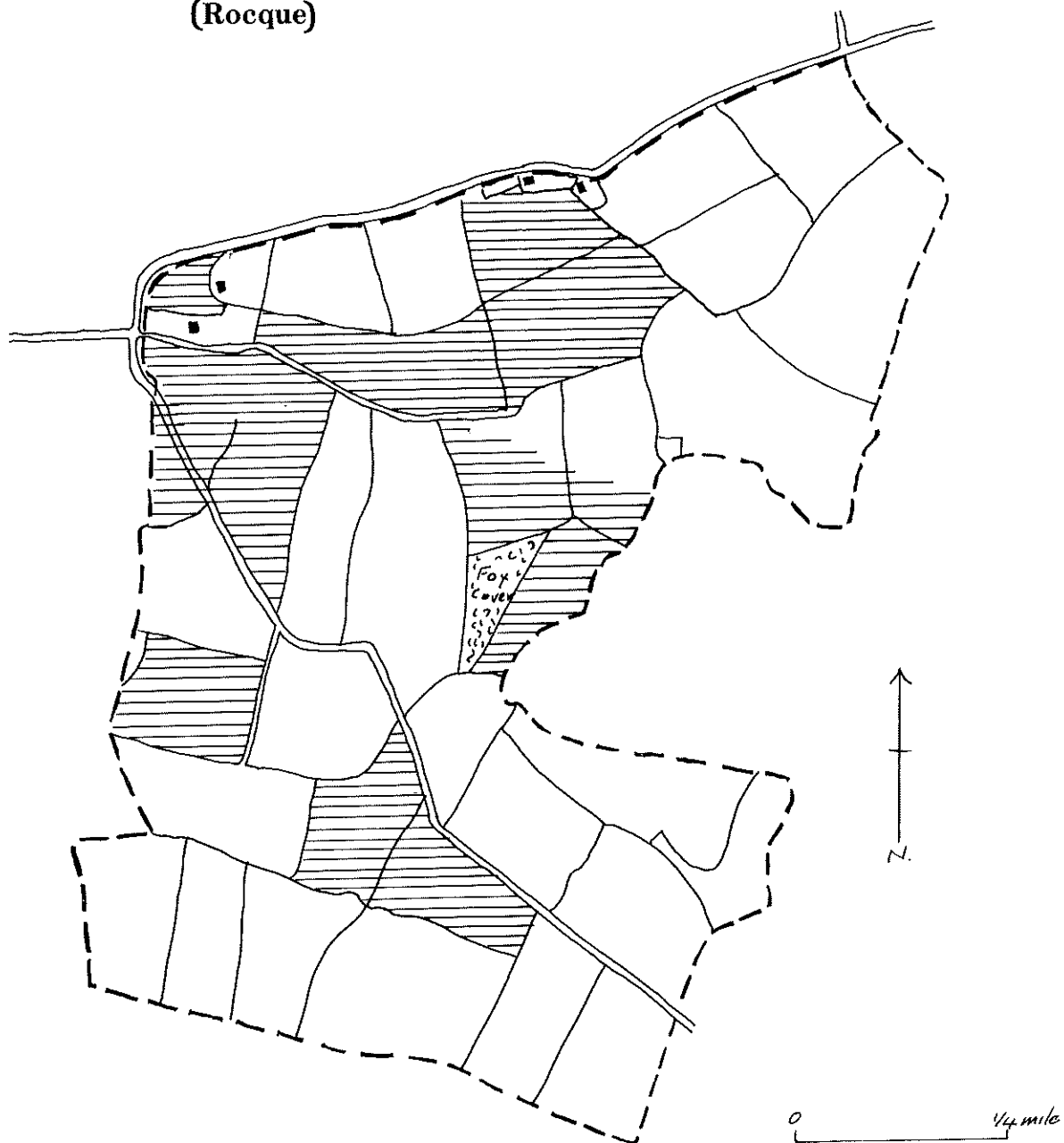
COTWALL TOWNSHIP**Extent of arable in 1746****(Rocque)**

FIG. 6: COTWALL TOWNSHIP, EXTENT OF ARABLE IN 1746 (ROCQUE)

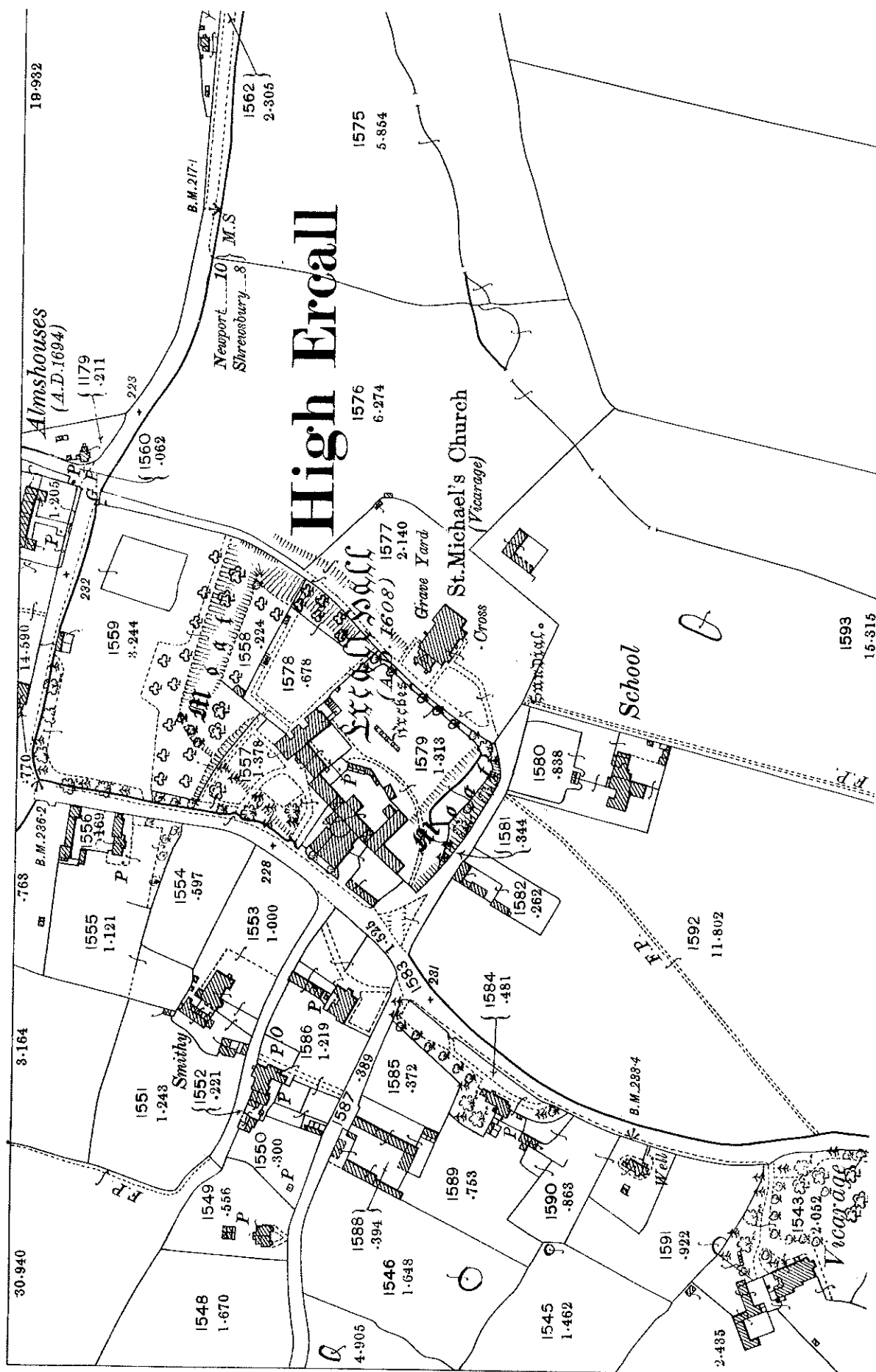


FIG. 7: THE HALL SITE (O.S. 25-INCH MAP, 2ND EDITION)

Ercall Glebe c. 1090 - 1227

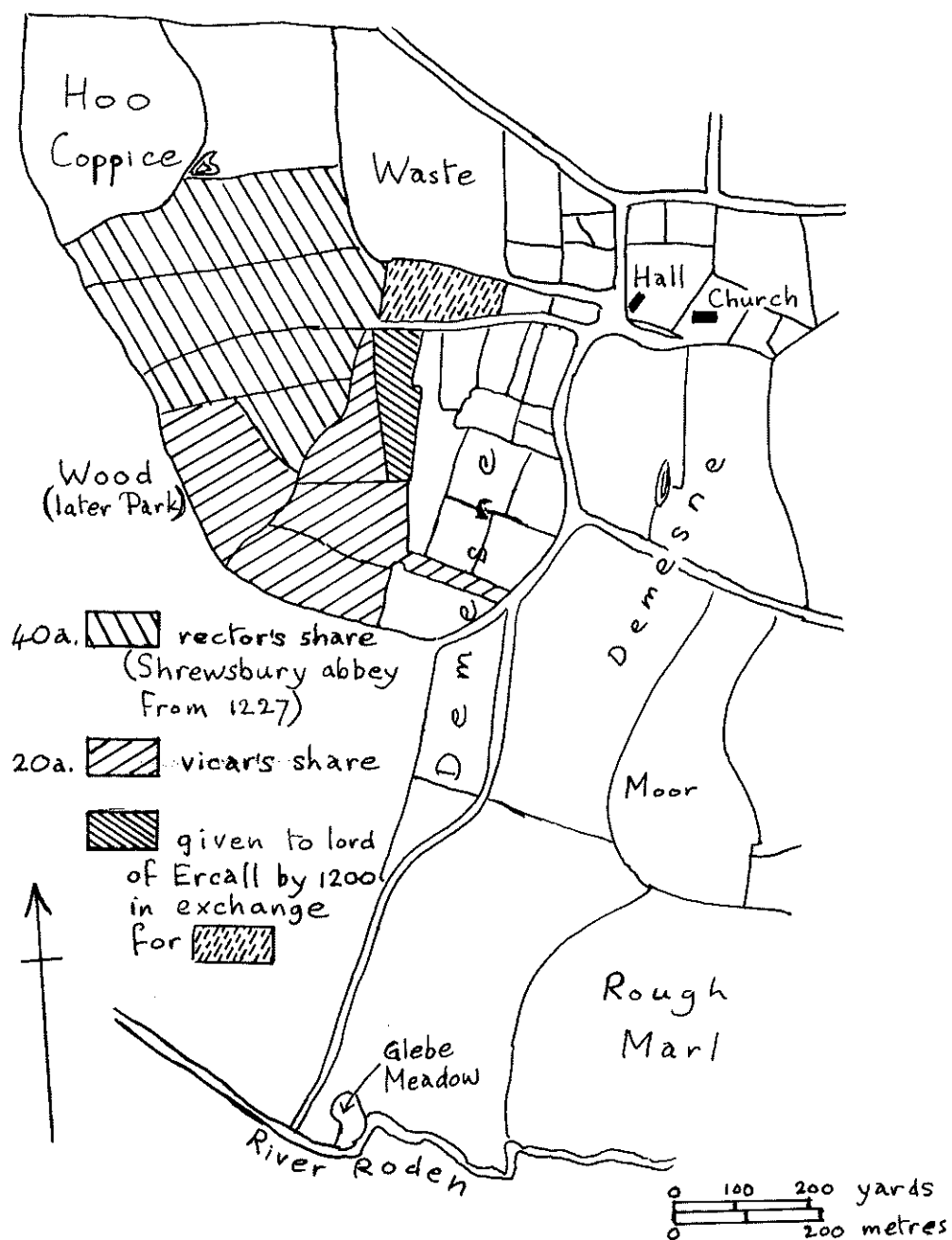


FIG. 8: ERCALL GLEBE, 1090-1227

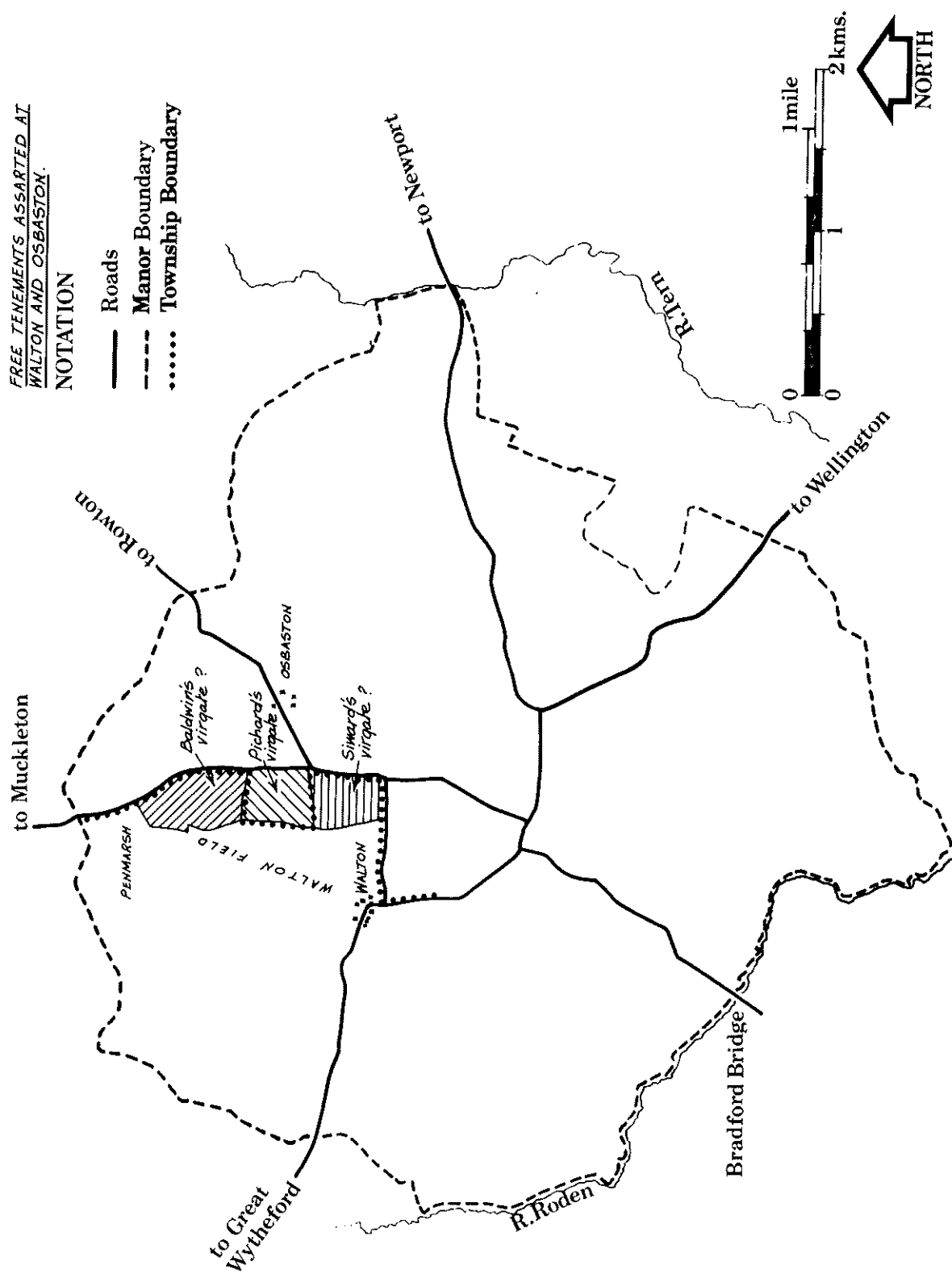


FIG. 9: FREE TENEMENTS ASSARTED AT WALTON AND OSBASTON

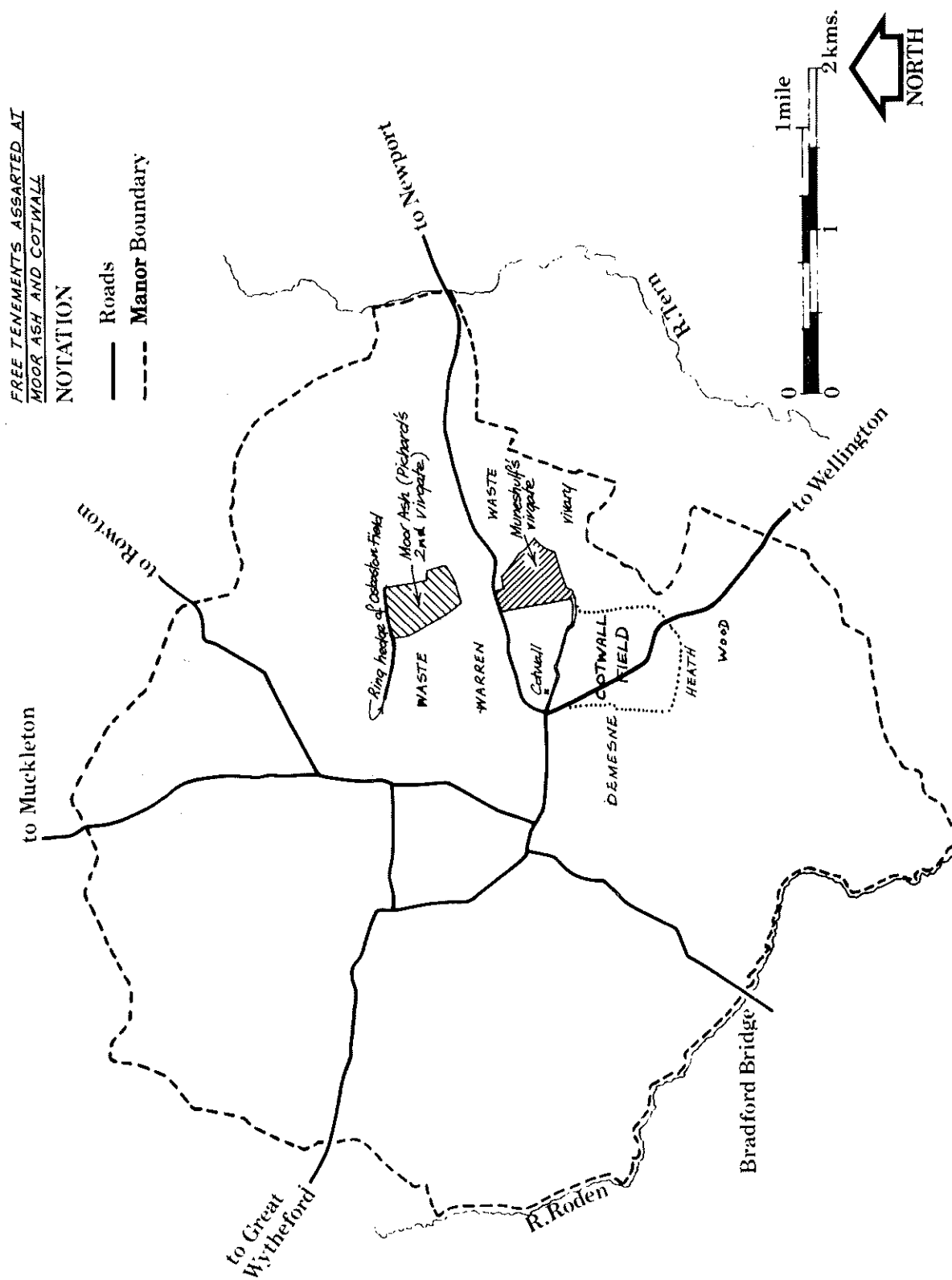


FIG. 10: FREE TENEMENTS ASSARTED AT MOOR ASH AND COTWALL

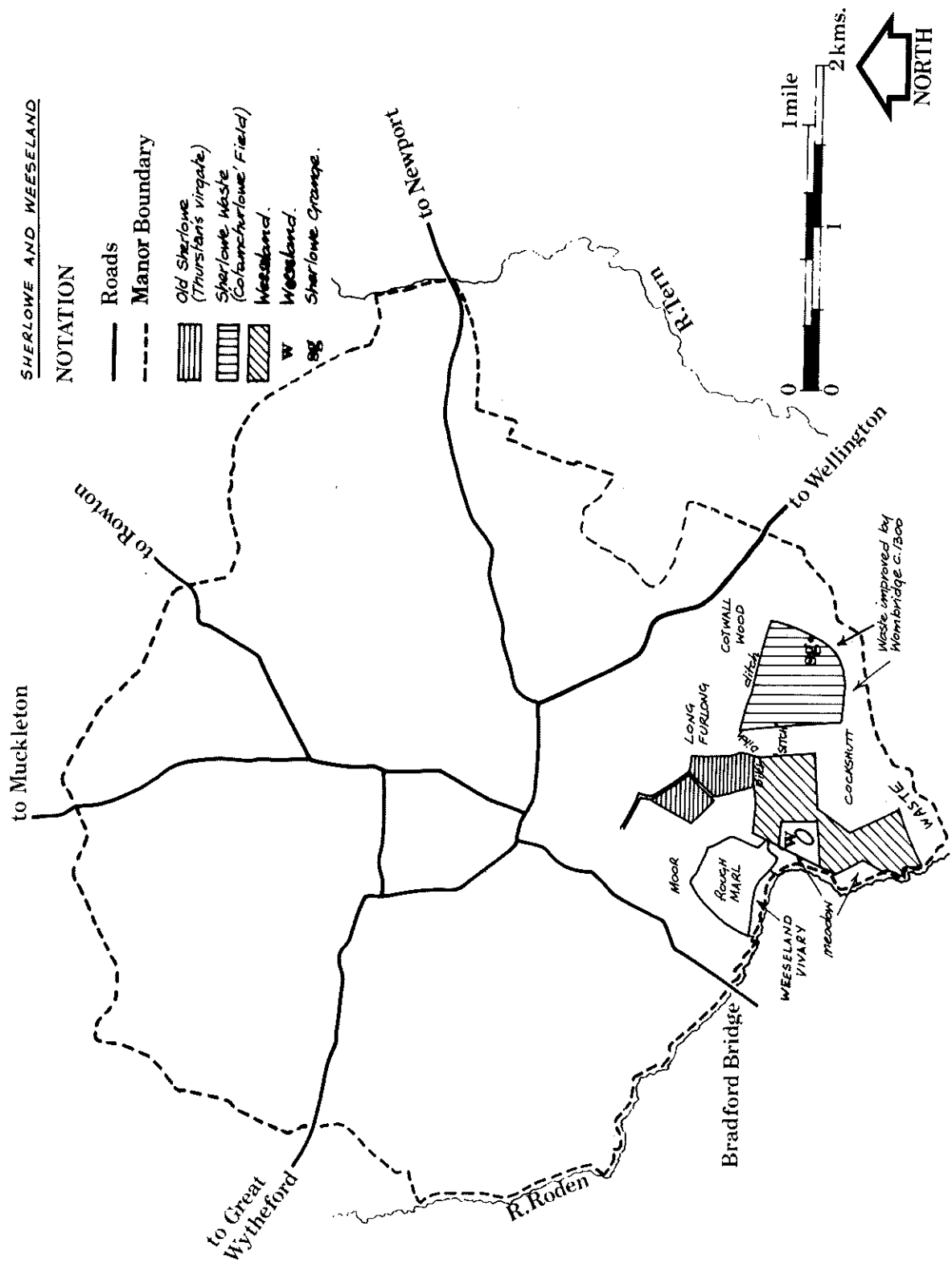


FIG. 11: SHERLOWE AND WEESELAND

NOTE ON FIG. 11

Old Sherlowe (Thurstan's virgate) included Old House Leasow and Old House Croft (TM 490 and 516). 'CotamchurLOWE' field was SherLOWE waste assarted by Thurstan, Odo, and Reiner *c.* 1170–1200 and given to Wombridge. The land bounding it on the west (TM 518a, 520, including 'Sitch') was waste improved by Wombridge *c.* 1272. The northern part of Weeseland (TM 511, 512 (pt.), 519, also including 'Sitch') formed the virgate and 3a. given to Wombridge by Wischart *c.* 1256. Weeseland was demesne given to Wischart as 1 carucate, a virgate of it being transferred to Malveysin *c.* 1256. Rough Marl, 'the moor under the vivary', was given to Wombridge *c.* 1256.

MOORTOWN

Demesne as divided in 1256

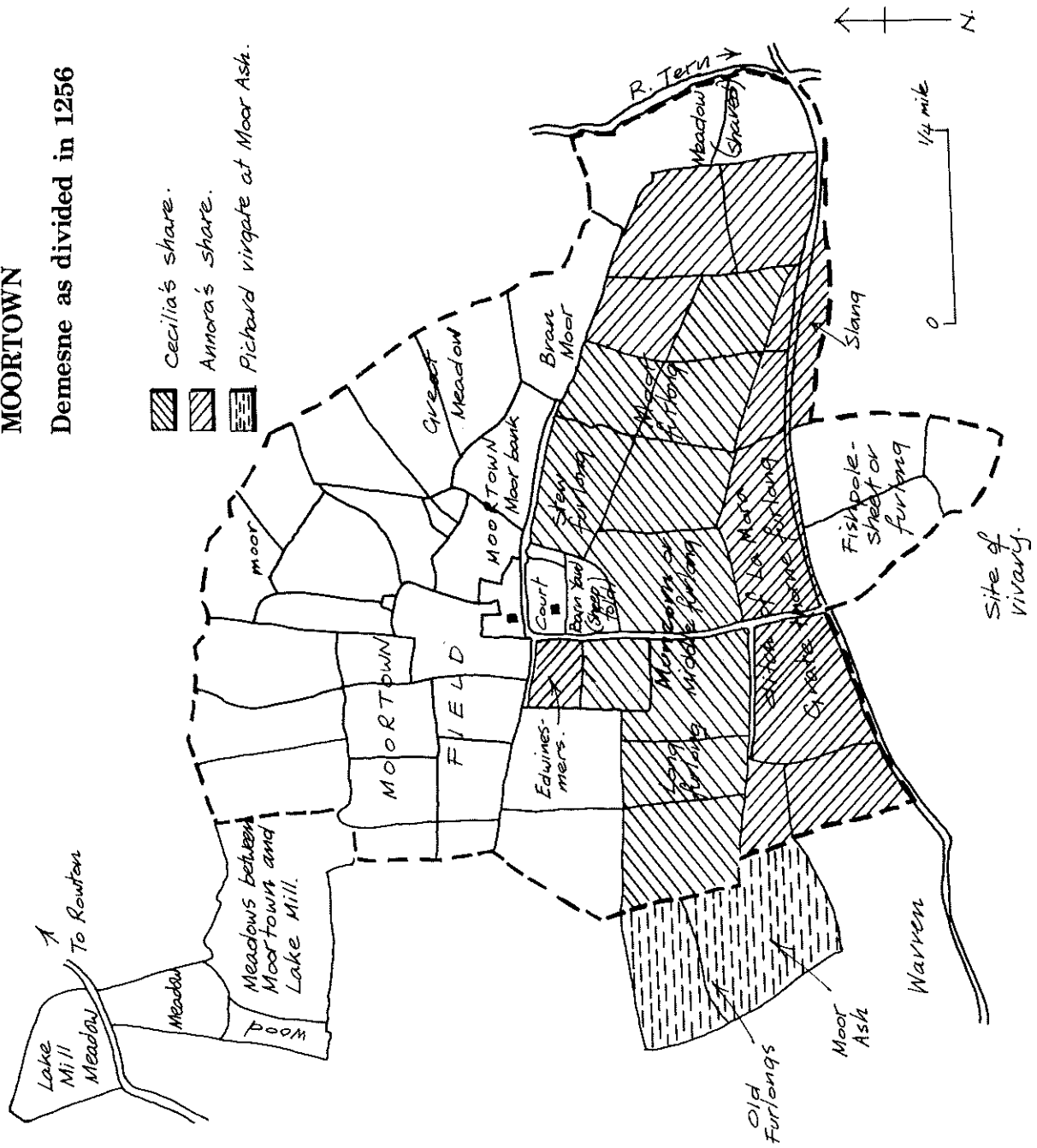


FIG. 12: MOORTOWN: DEMESNE AS DIVIDED IN 1256
Cecilia's share represents the demesne as assarted by William I, Annora's share the extra demesne assarted by William III.

MOORTOWN
 Extent of arable in 1746
 (Rocque)

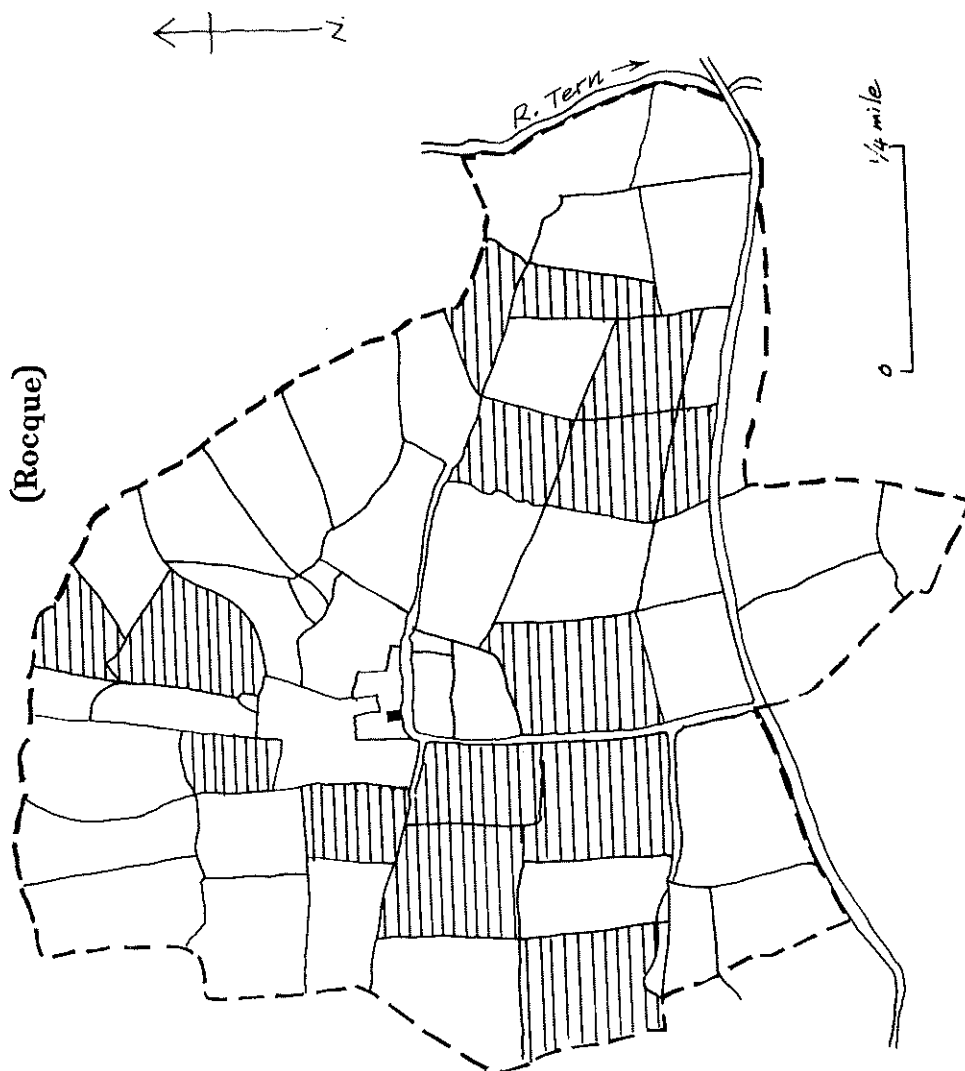


FIG. 13: MOORTOWN: EXTENT OF ARABLE IN 1746 (ROCQUE)

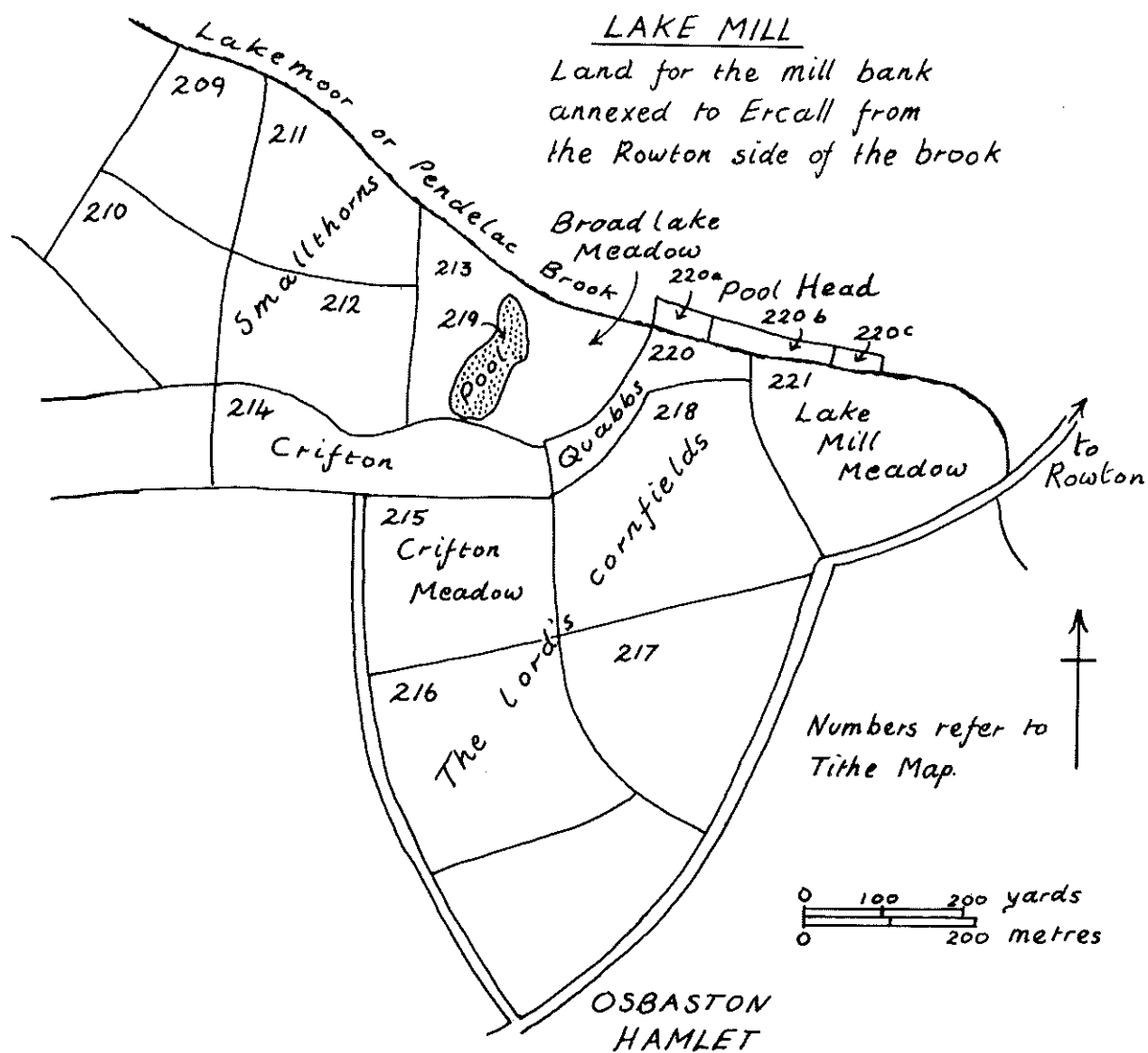


FIG. 14: LAKE MILL: LAND FOR THE MILL BANK ANNEXED TO ERCCALL FROM THE ROWTON SIDE OF THE BROOK

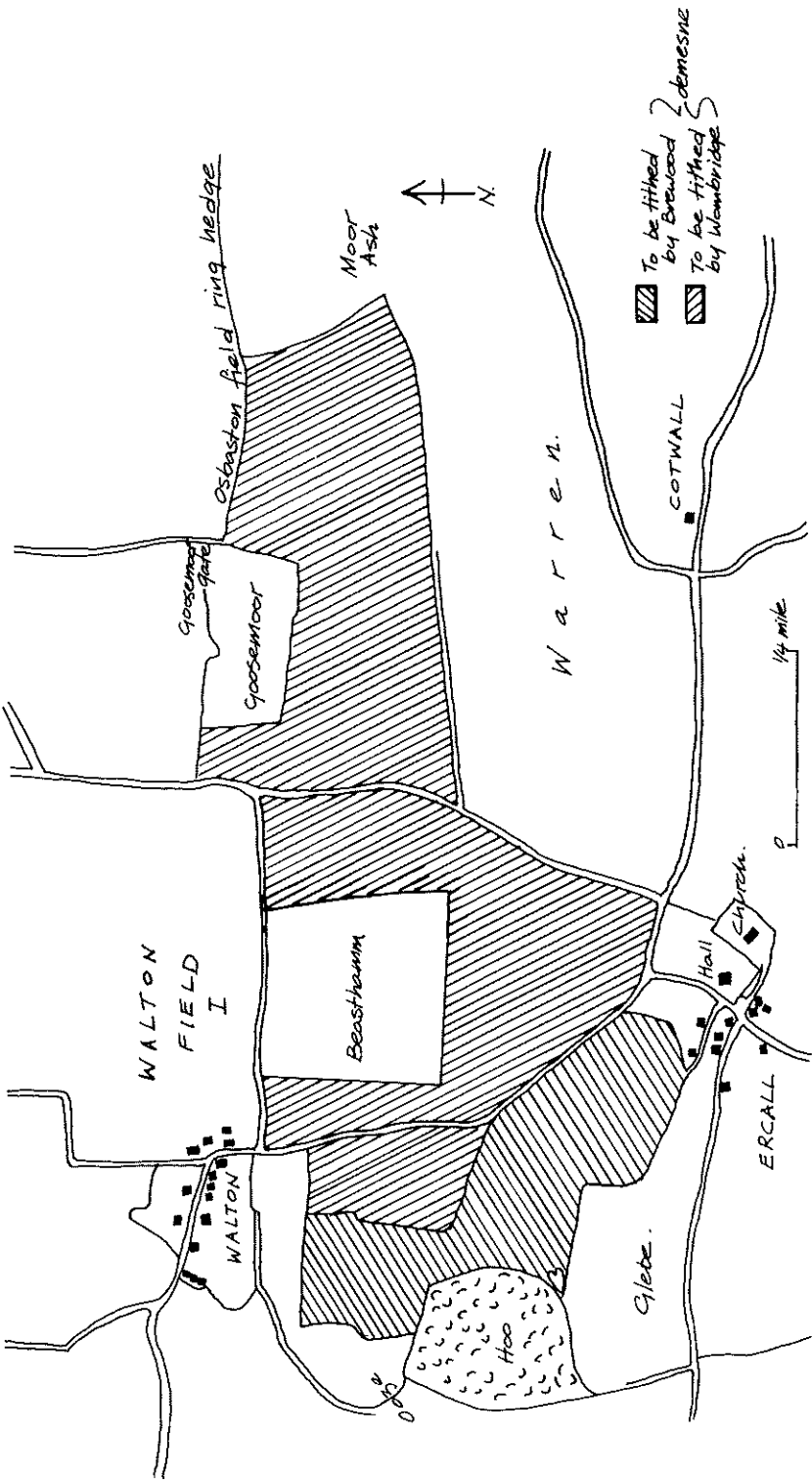


FIG. 15: FOUR CARUCATES ASSARTED BY WILLIAM III BETWEEN MOORTOWN AND WALTON BY 1245

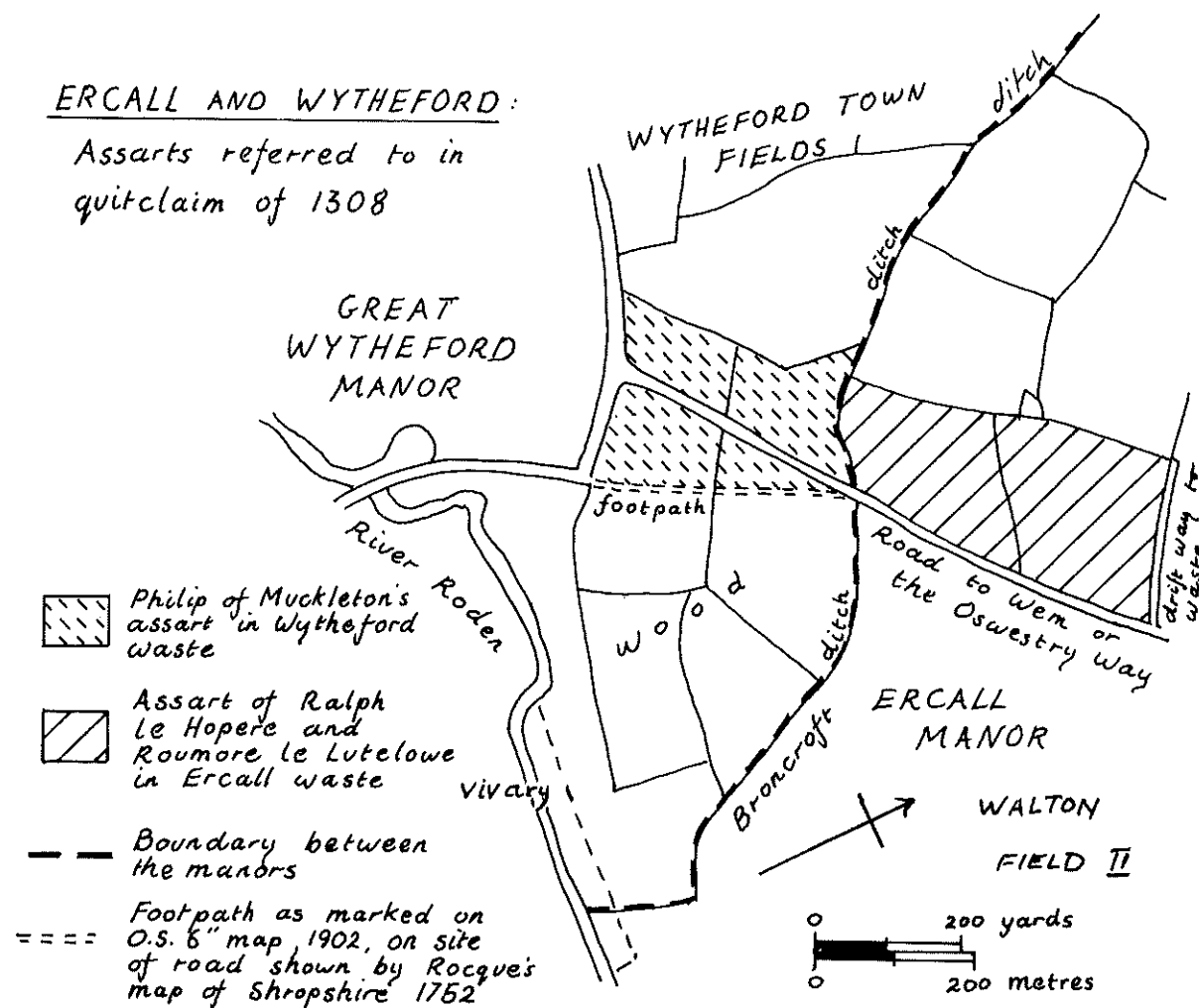


FIG. 16: ERCALL AND WYTHEFORD: ASSARTS REFERRED TO IN QUITCLAIM OF 1308

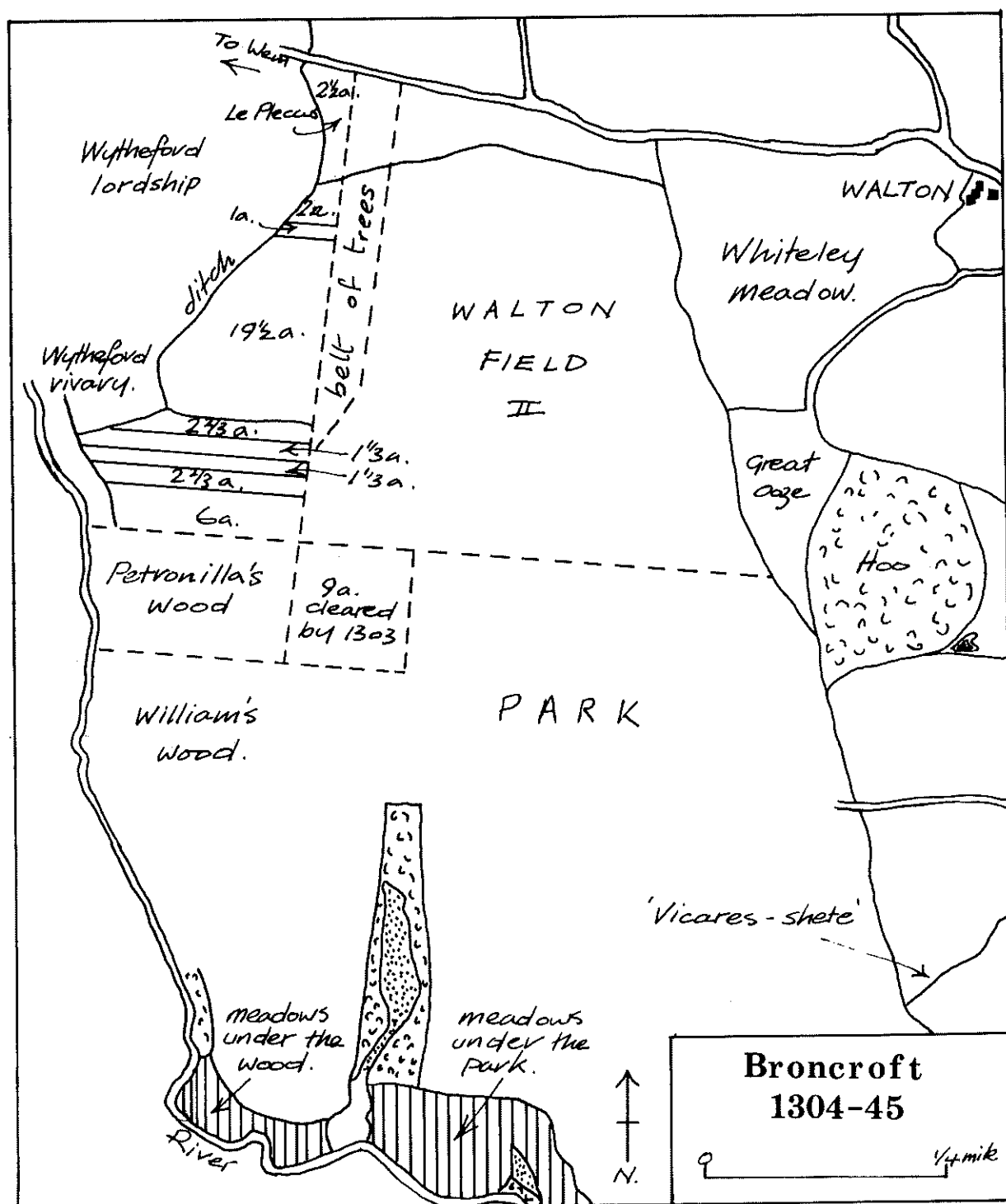


FIG. 17: BRONCROFT 1304-45

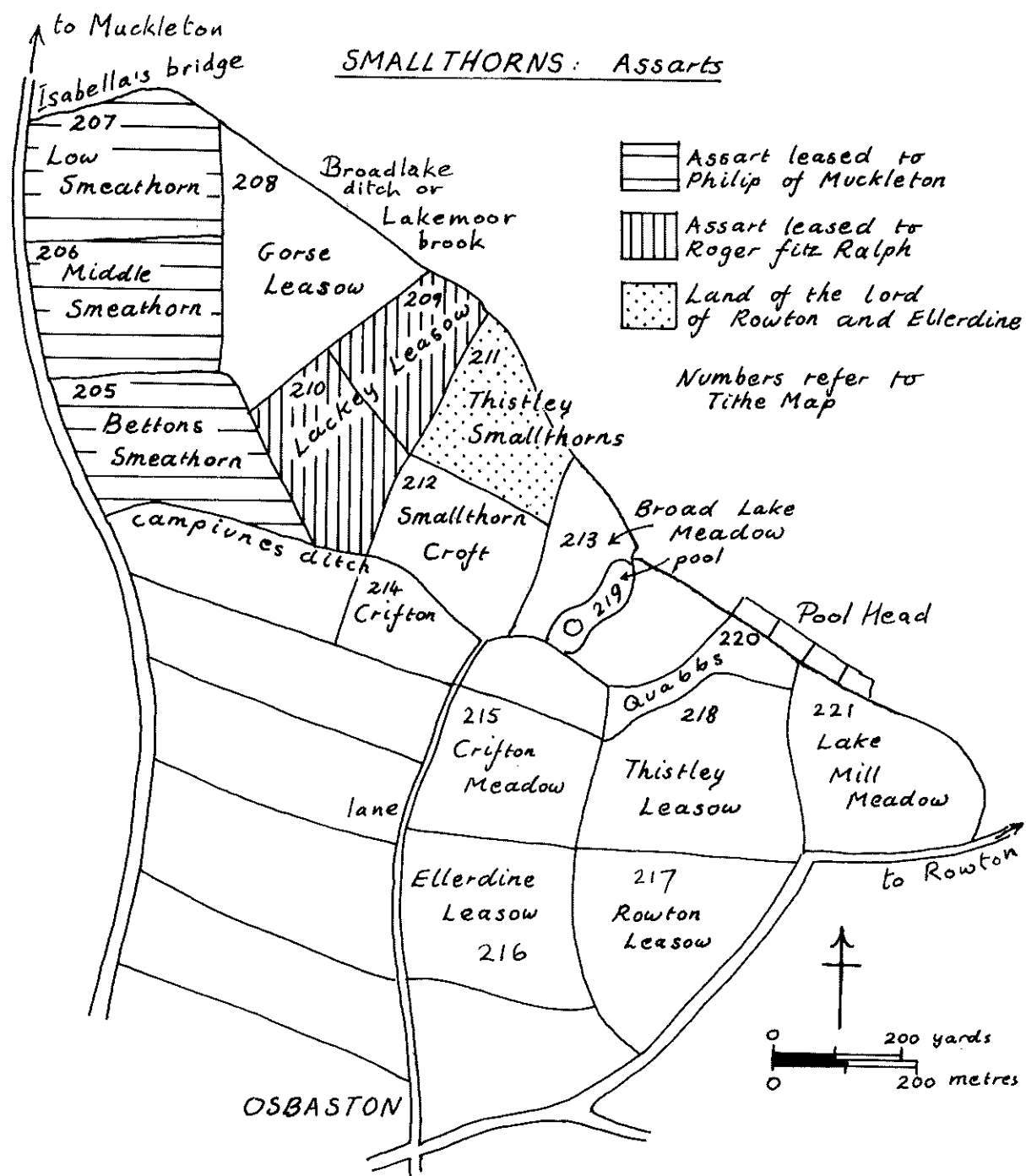


FIG. 18: SMALLTHORNS: ASSARTS

PENMARSH: Assarts

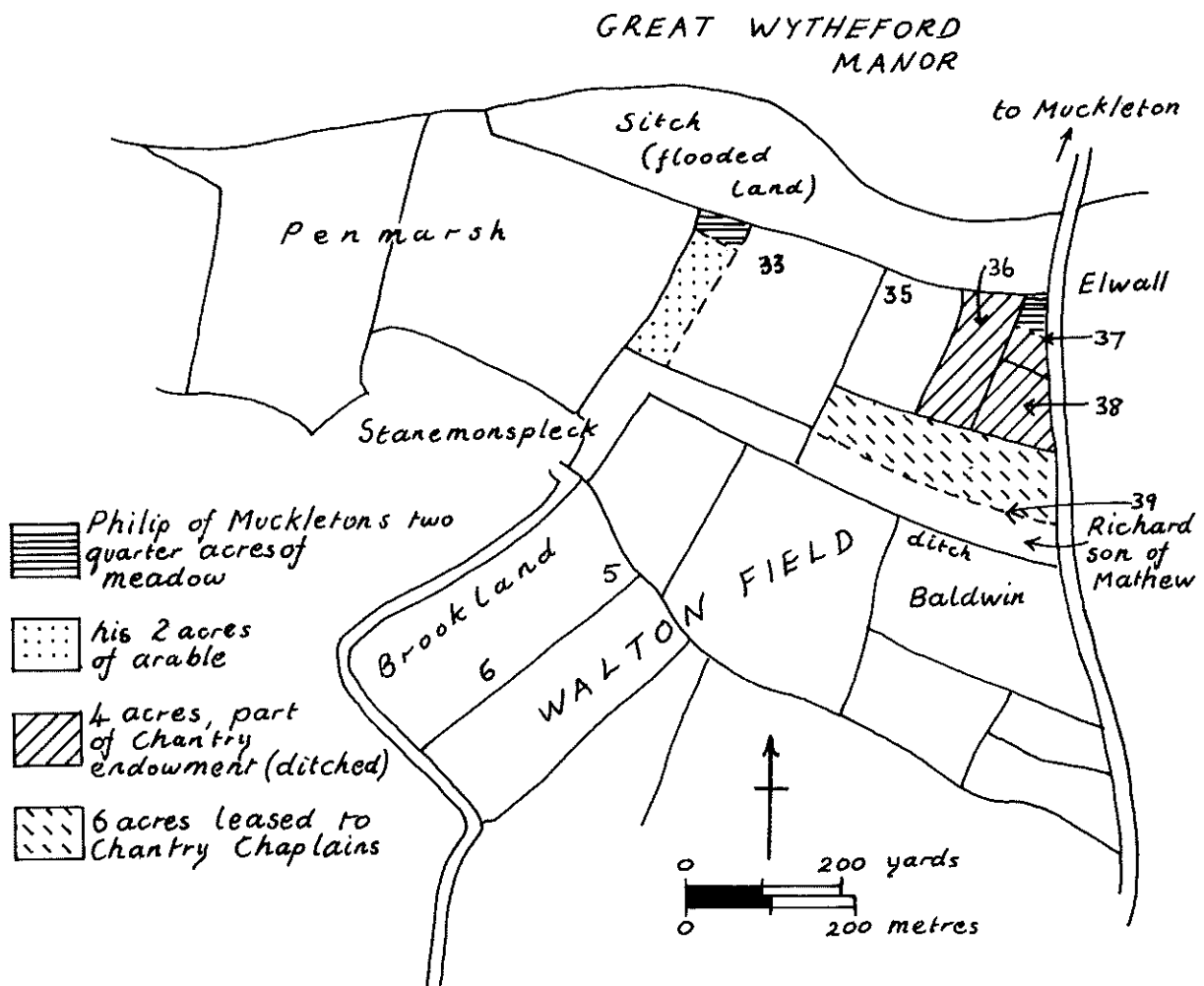


FIG. 19: PENMARSH: ASSARTS

COTWALL

Assarts made by William V

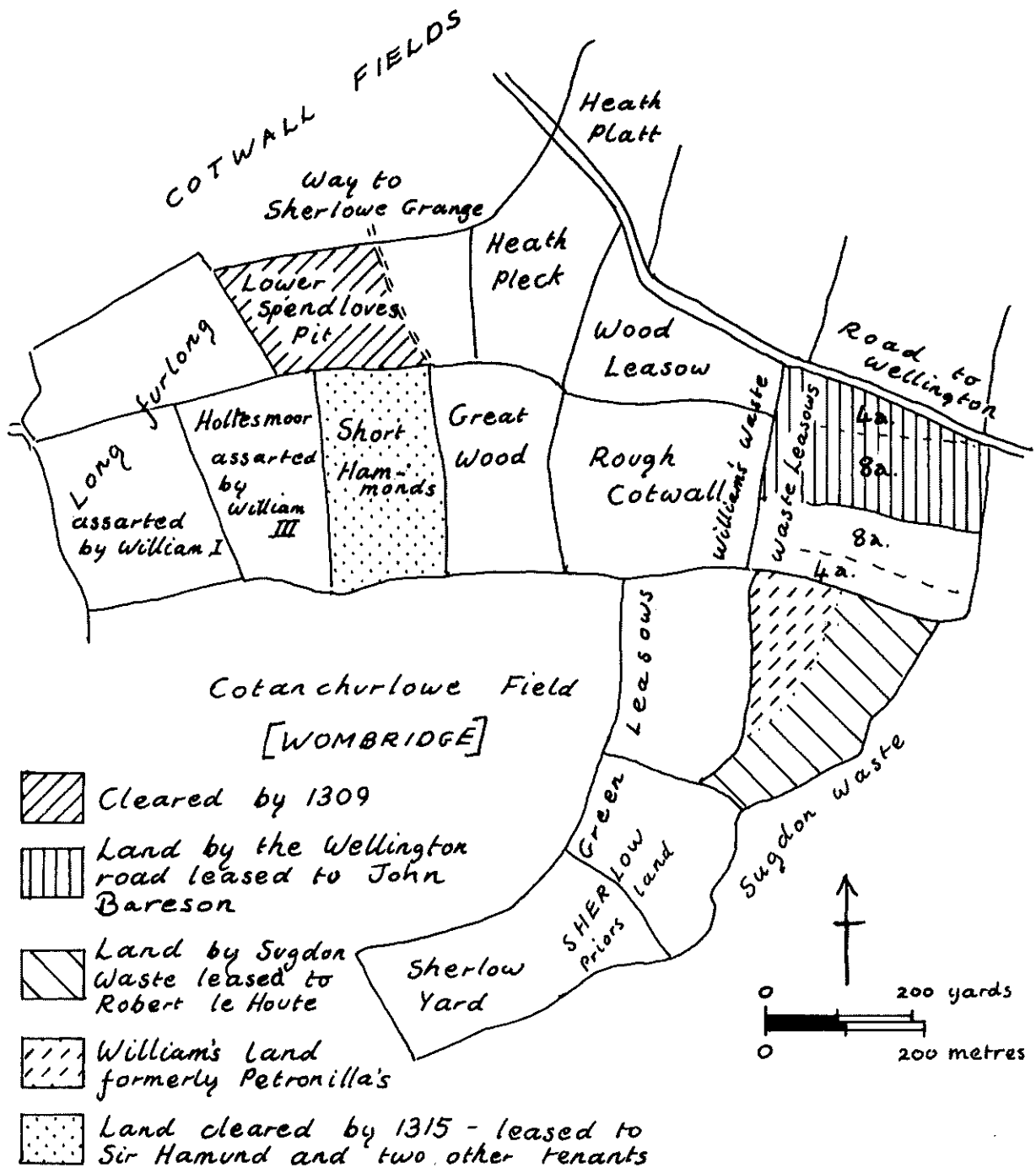


FIG. 20: COTWALL: ASSARTS MADE BY WILLIAM V

Bruches on Walton Waste subdivisions indicated by Rocque (R)

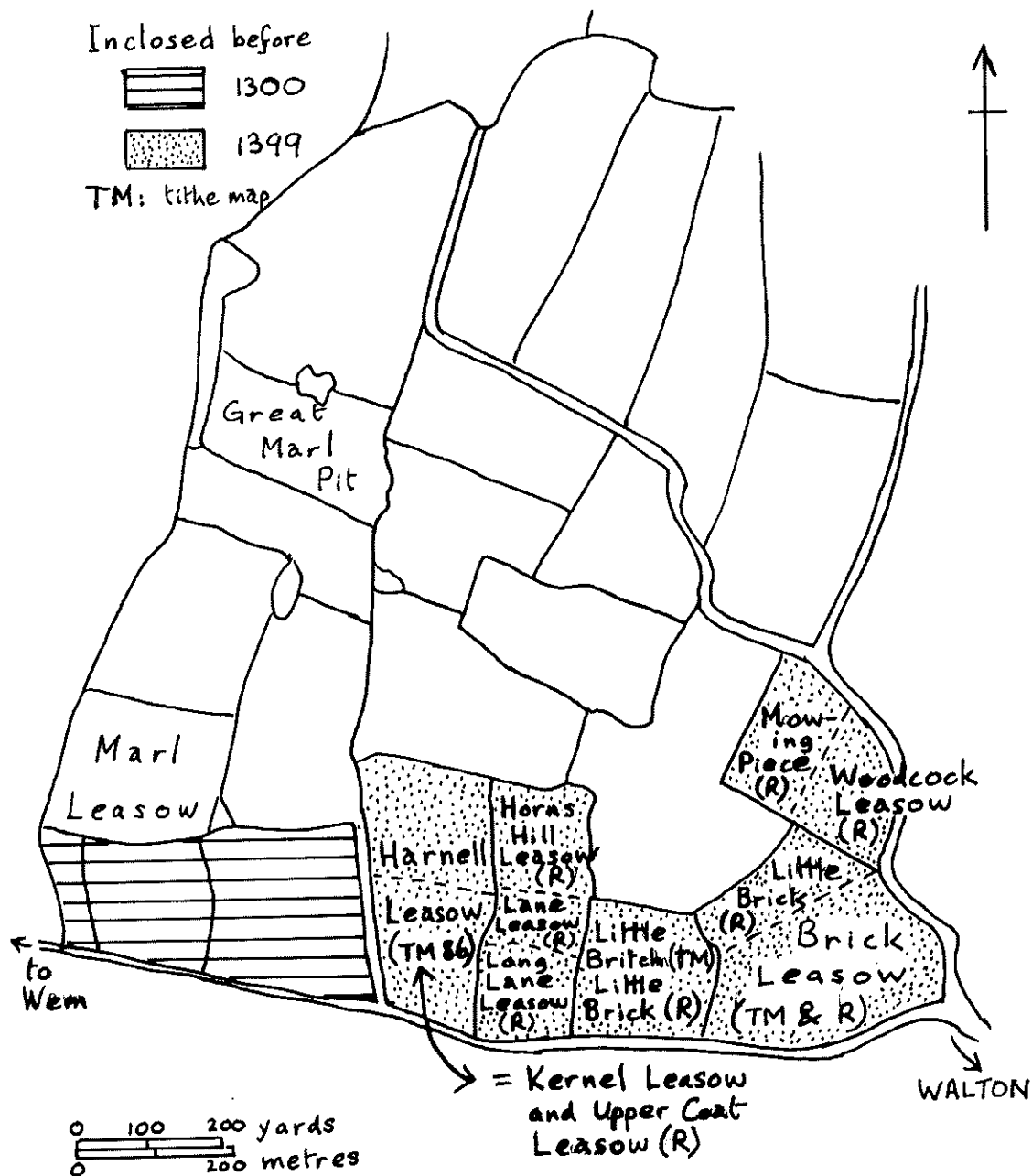


FIG. 21: BRUCHES ON WALTON WASTE, SUBDIVISIONS INDICATED BY ROCQUE

Bruchs mentioned in 1399: Thomasbruche, Ashebruche, Harnulbruche, Kubul and Marot bruche, Hickebruche, Hochehul, Asshemedewe. Total rent c.18s.

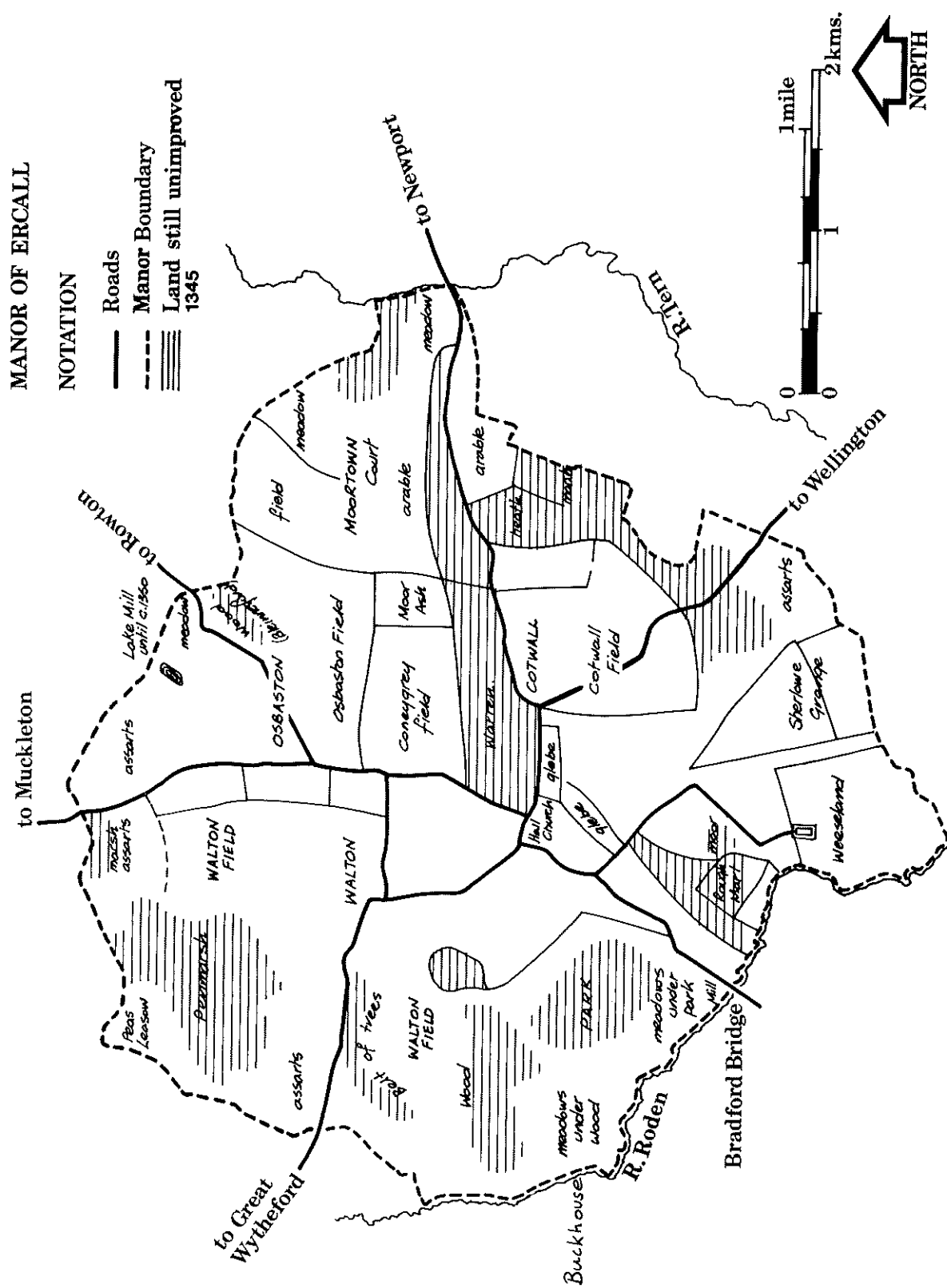


FIG. 22: MANOR OF ERCALL: LAND STILL UNIMPROVED 1345

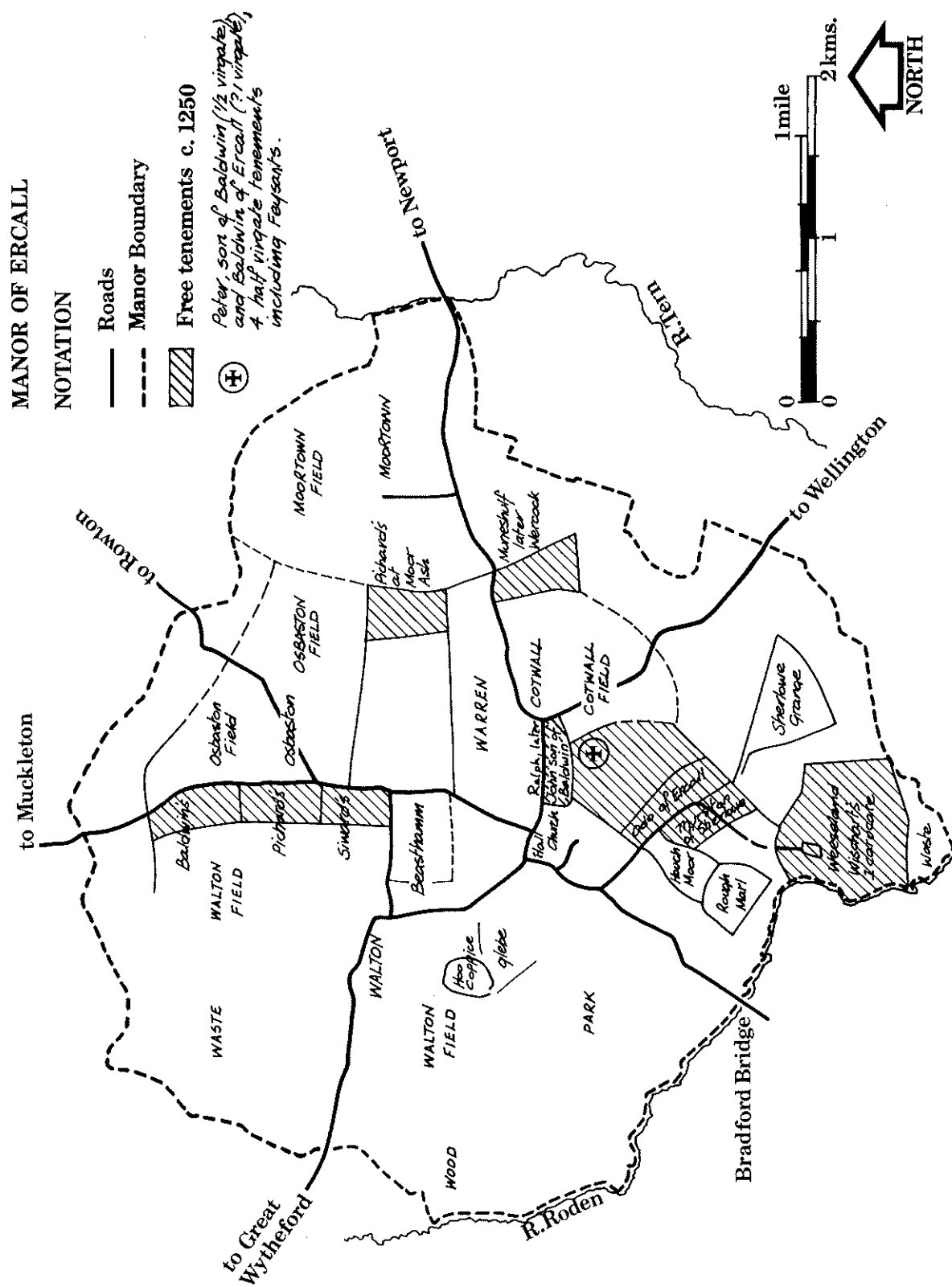


FIG. 23: MANOR OF ERCALL: FREE TENEMENTS c. 1250

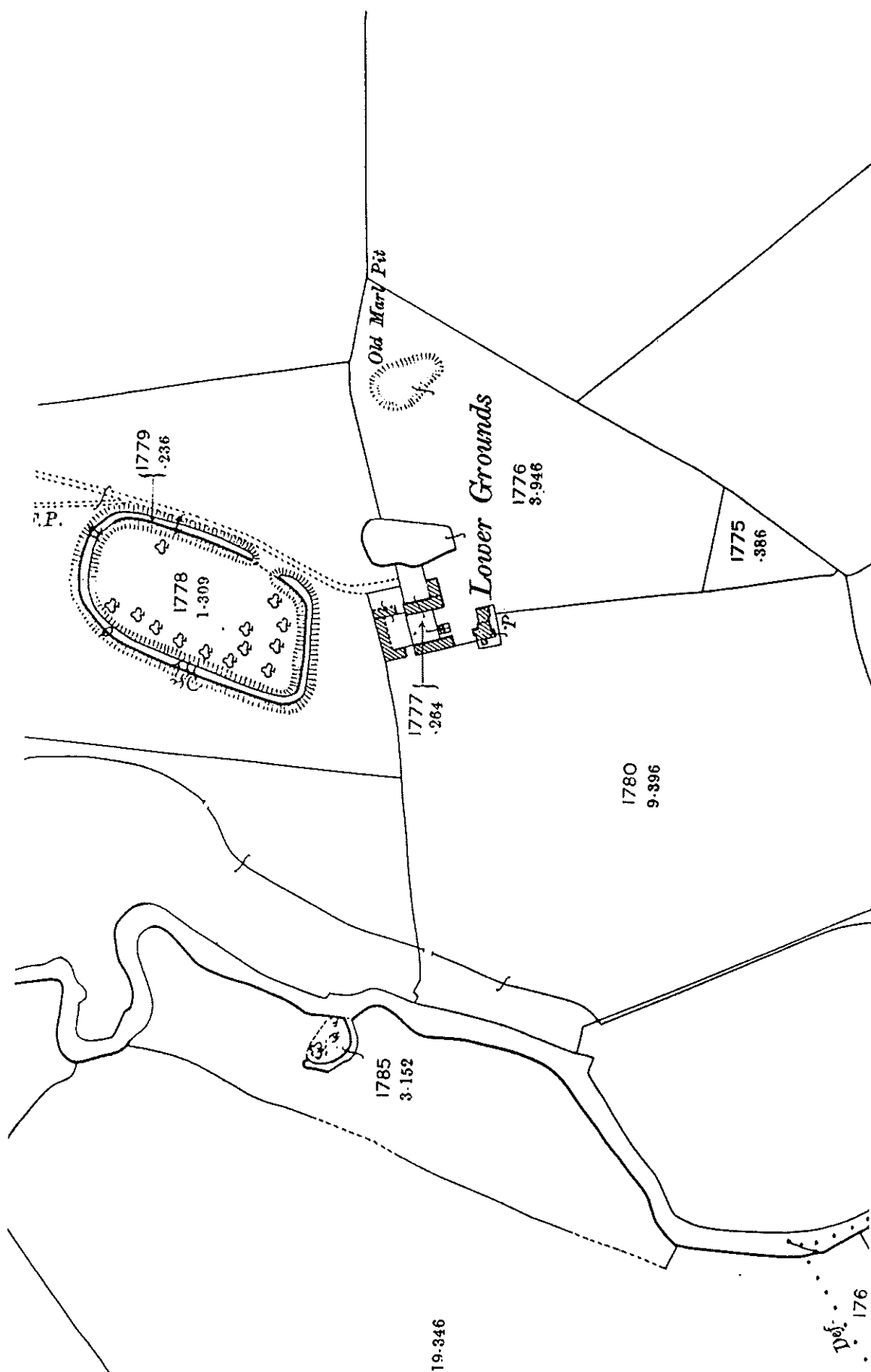


FIG. 24: WEESLAND MOATED SITE (O.S. 25-INCH MAP, 2ND EDITION)

THE WALTON FREE TENEMENTS

Diagram shewing presumed development of Siward's

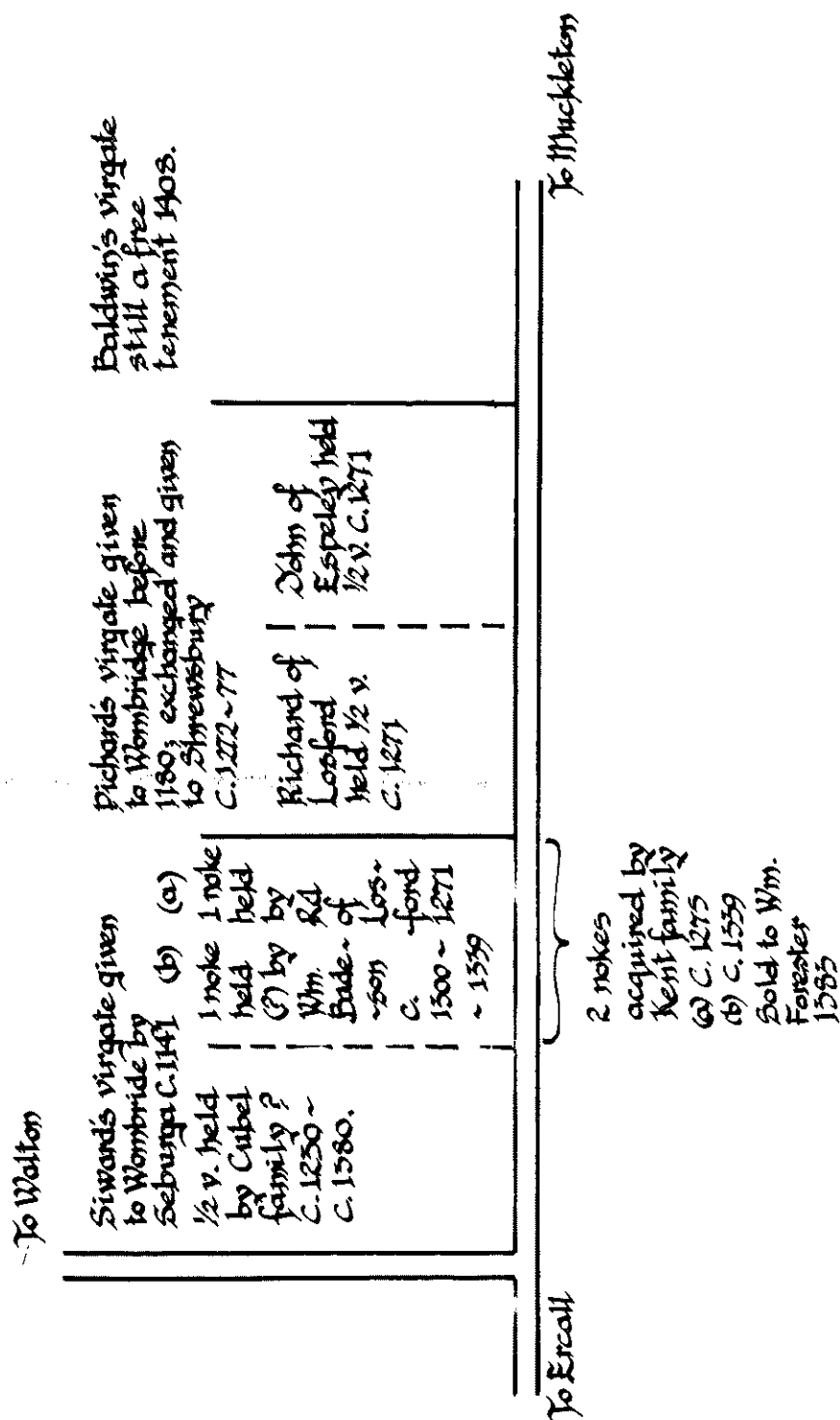
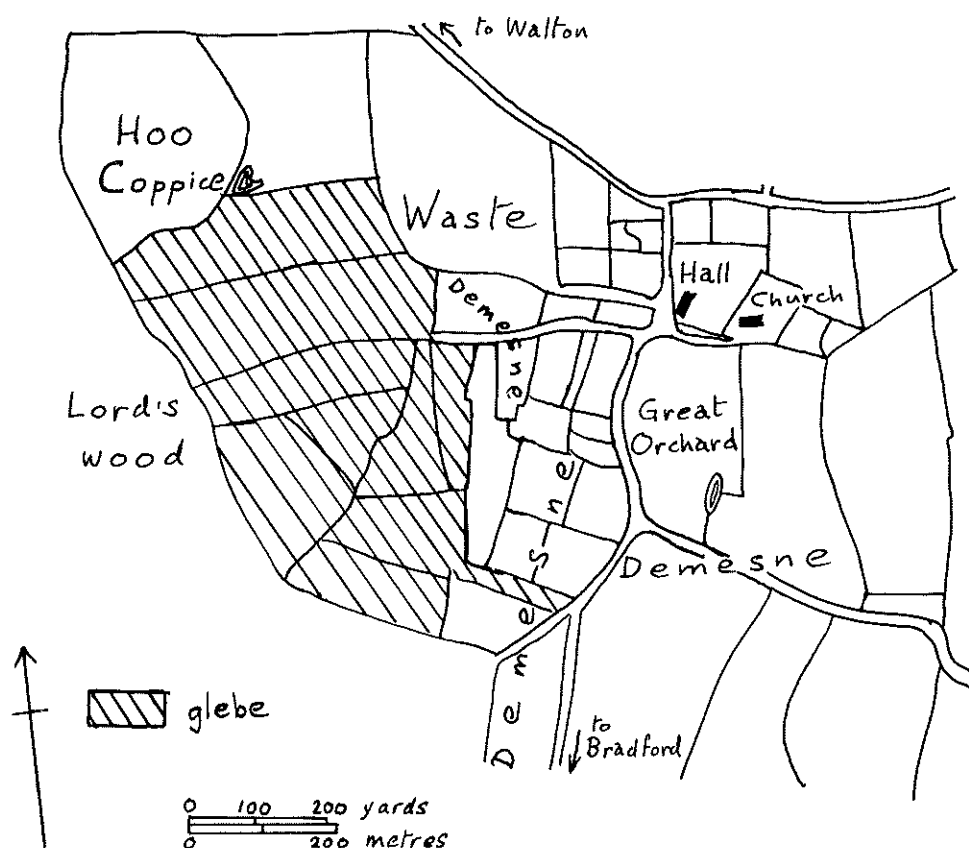


FIG. 25: THE WALTON FREE TENEMENTS: DIAGRAM SHEWING PRESUMED DEVELOPMENT OF SIWARD'S

The Glebe

c. 1090



c. 1256

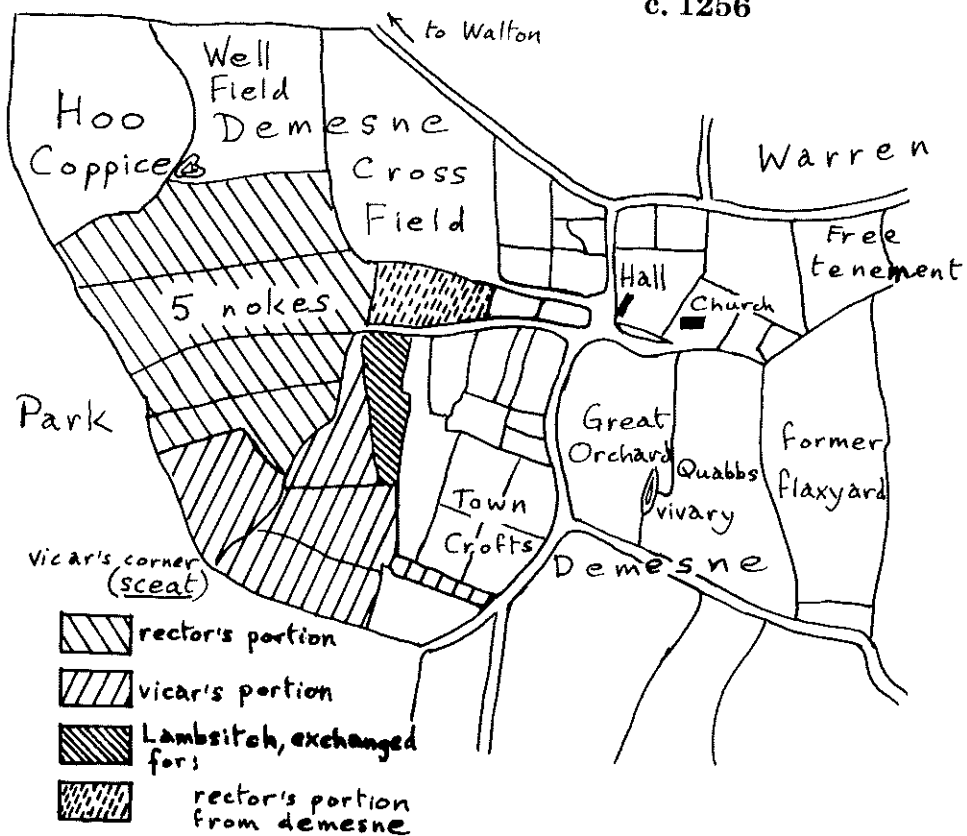


FIG. 26: THE GLEBE c. 1090 AND c. 1256

Vicar's Glebe c. 1272-1303

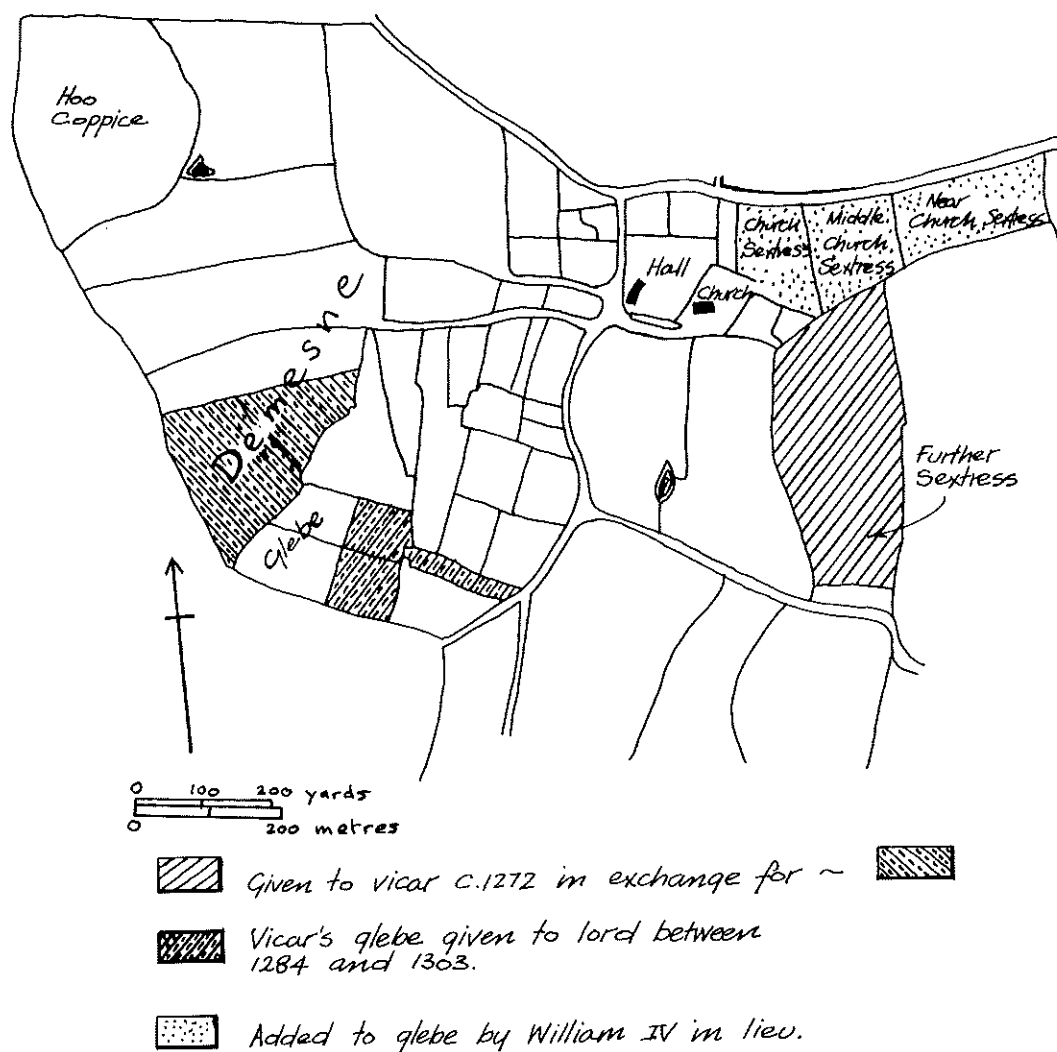


FIG. 27: VICAR'S GLEBE c. 1272-1303

Vicar's Glebe 1612

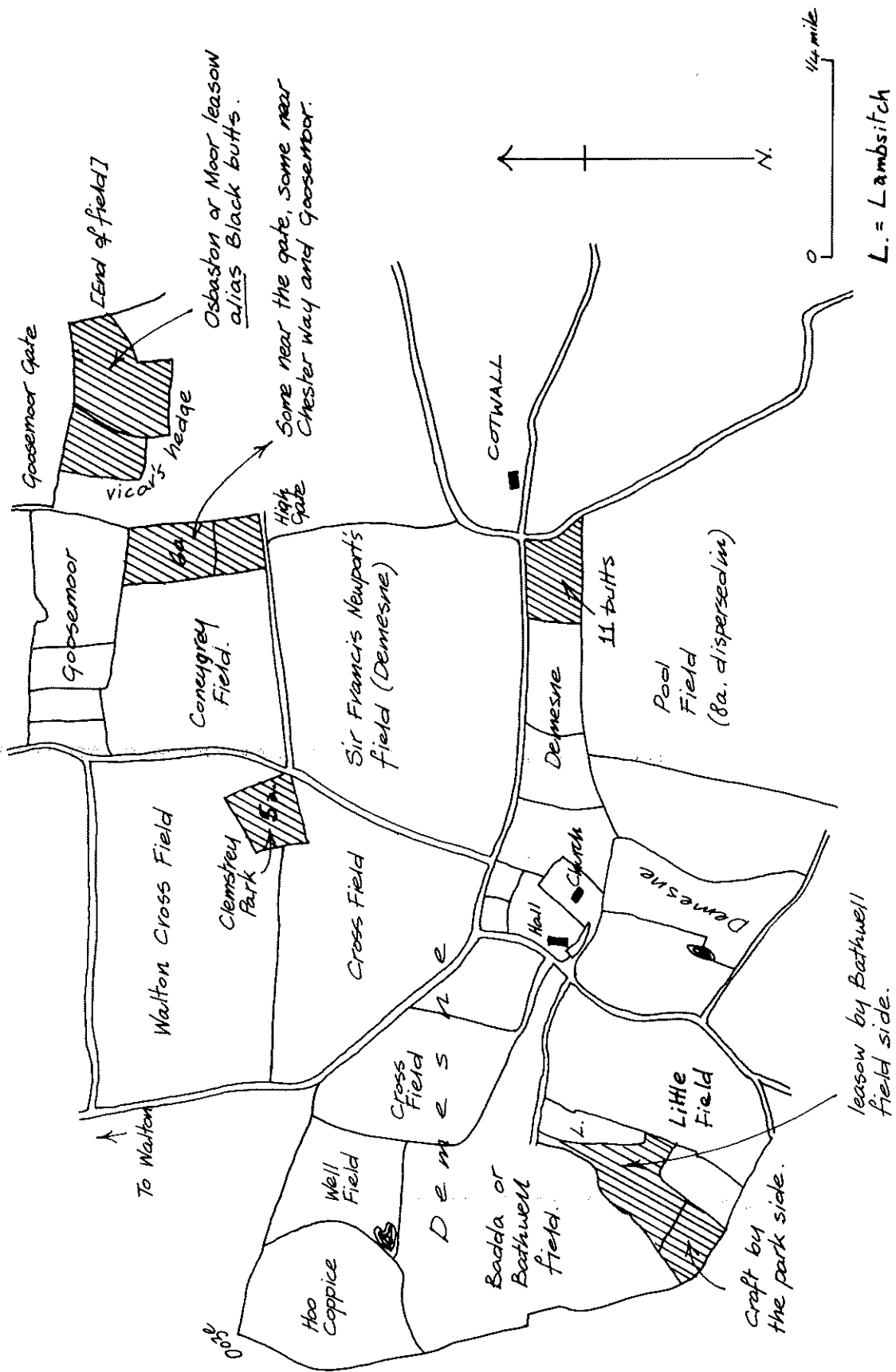


FIG. 28: VICAR'S GLEBE 1612

ERCALL MANOR C.1086-1100.

NOTATION

- Roads
- - - Manor Boundary

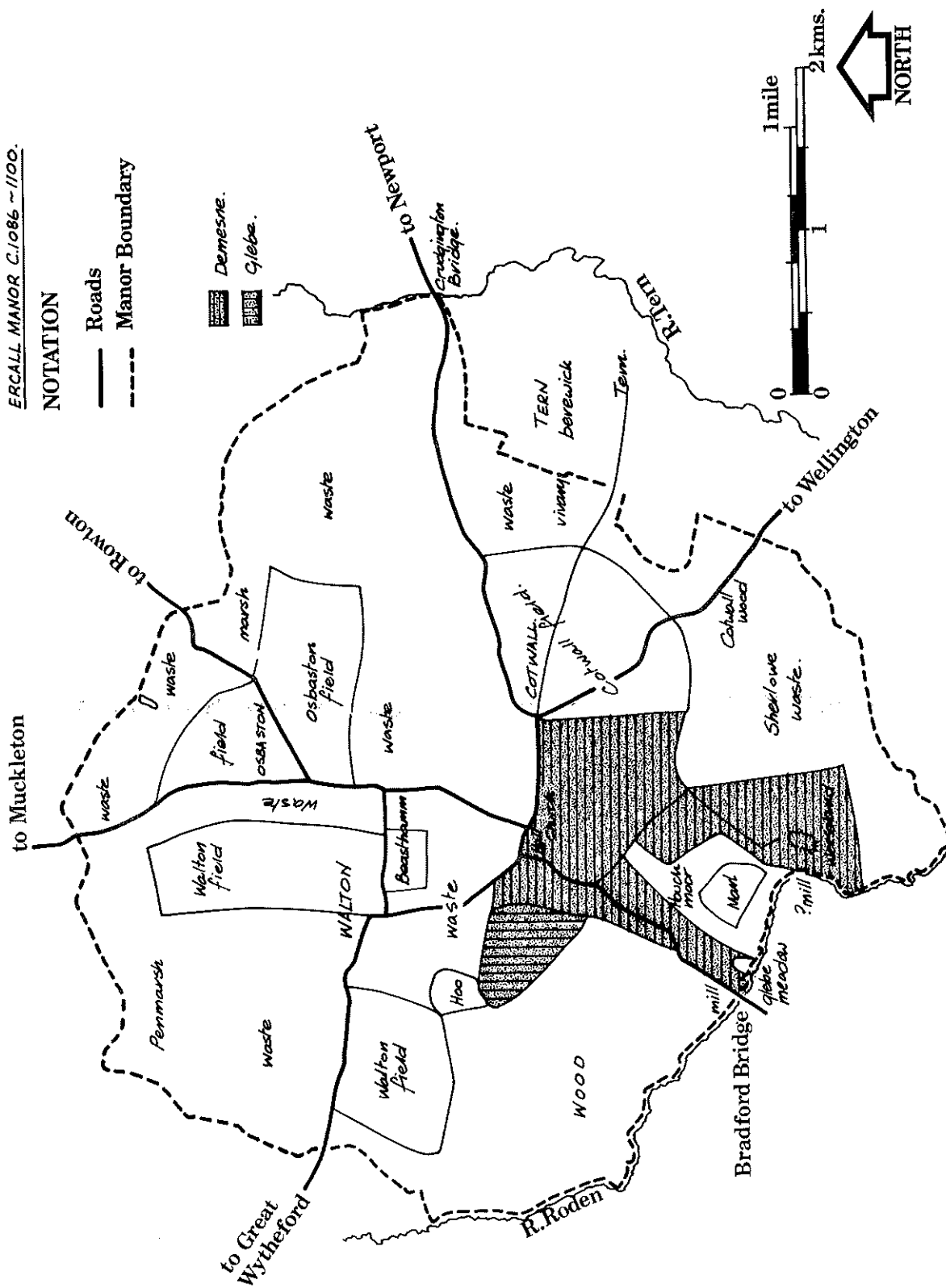
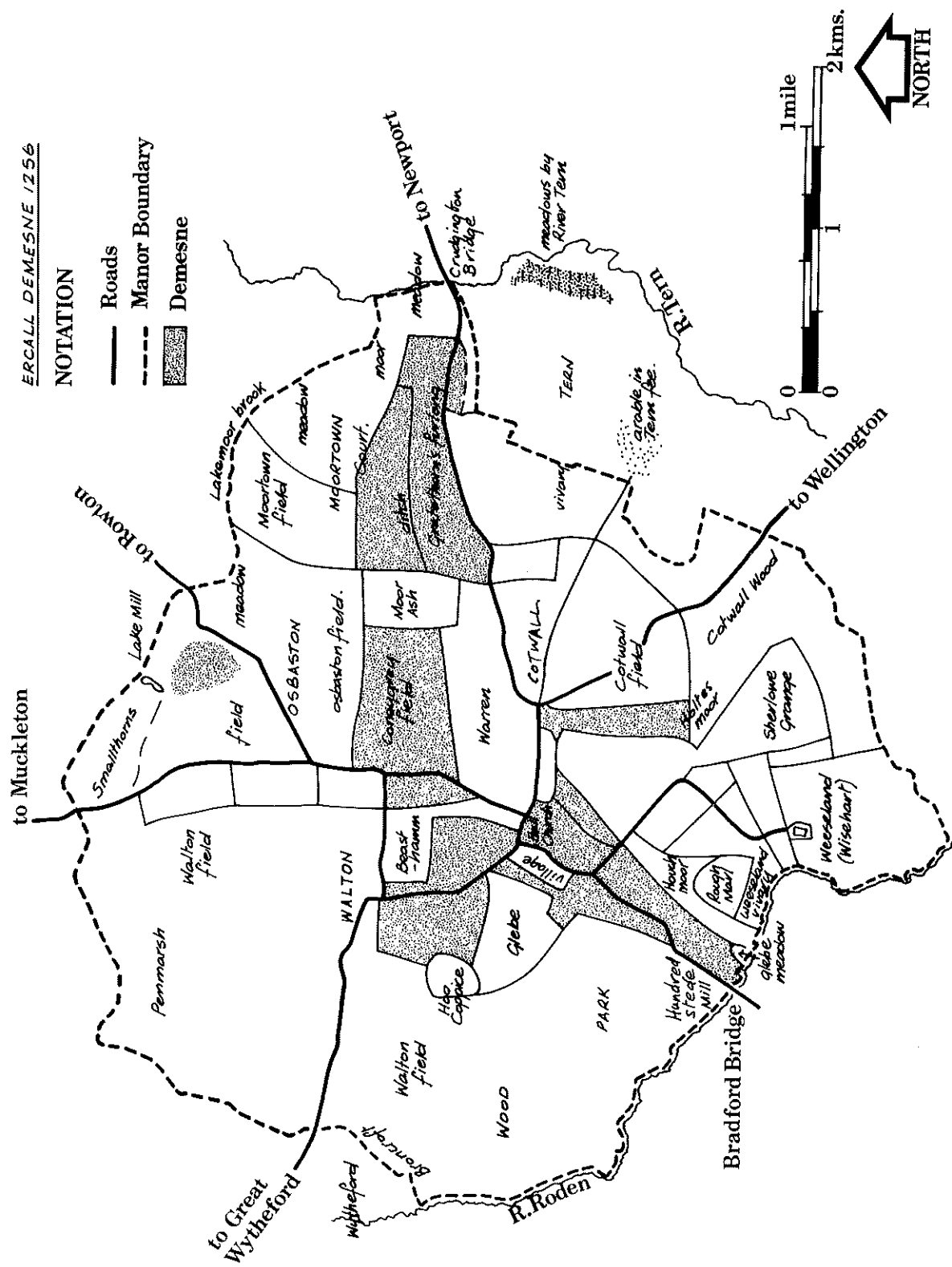
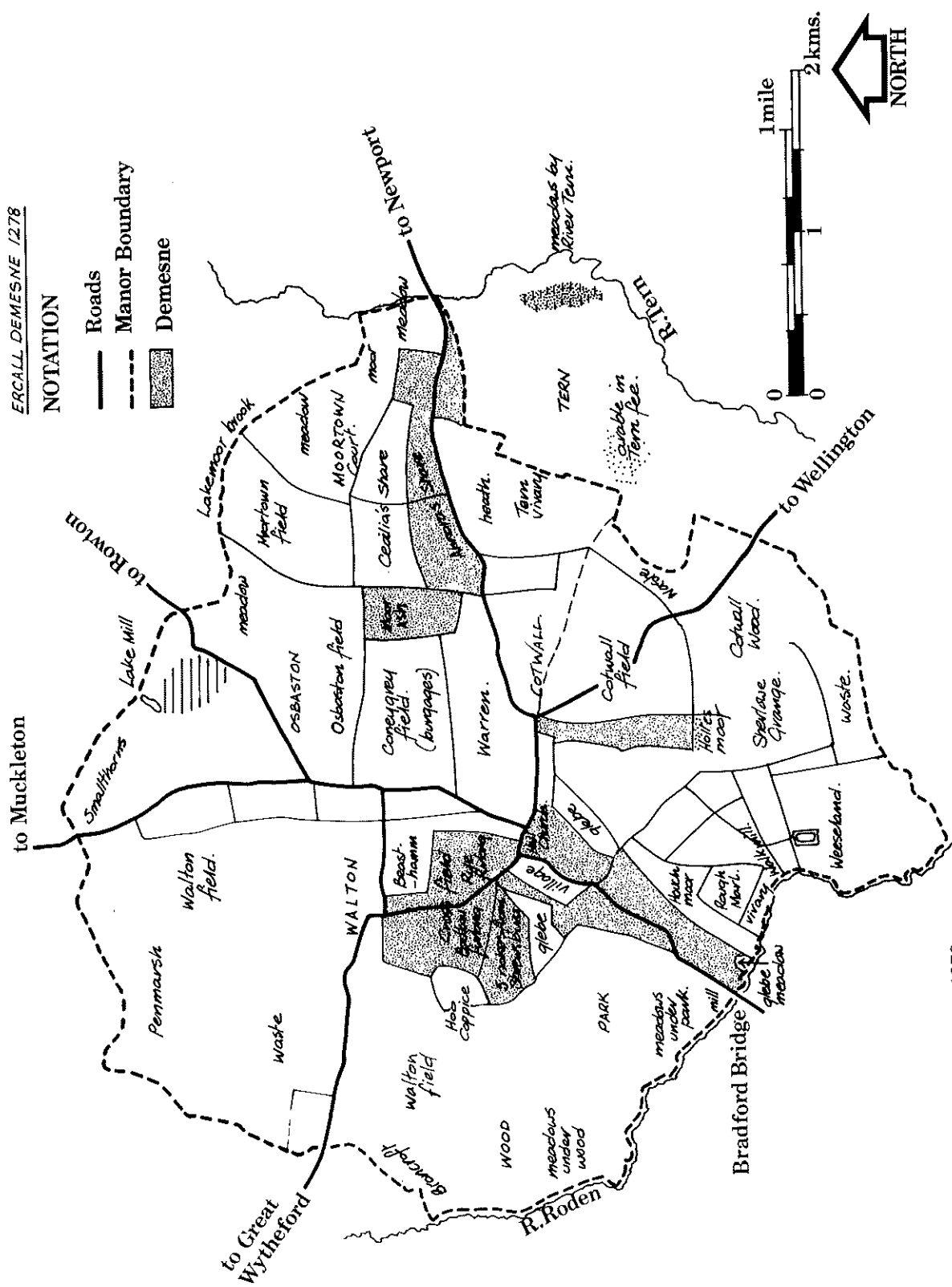
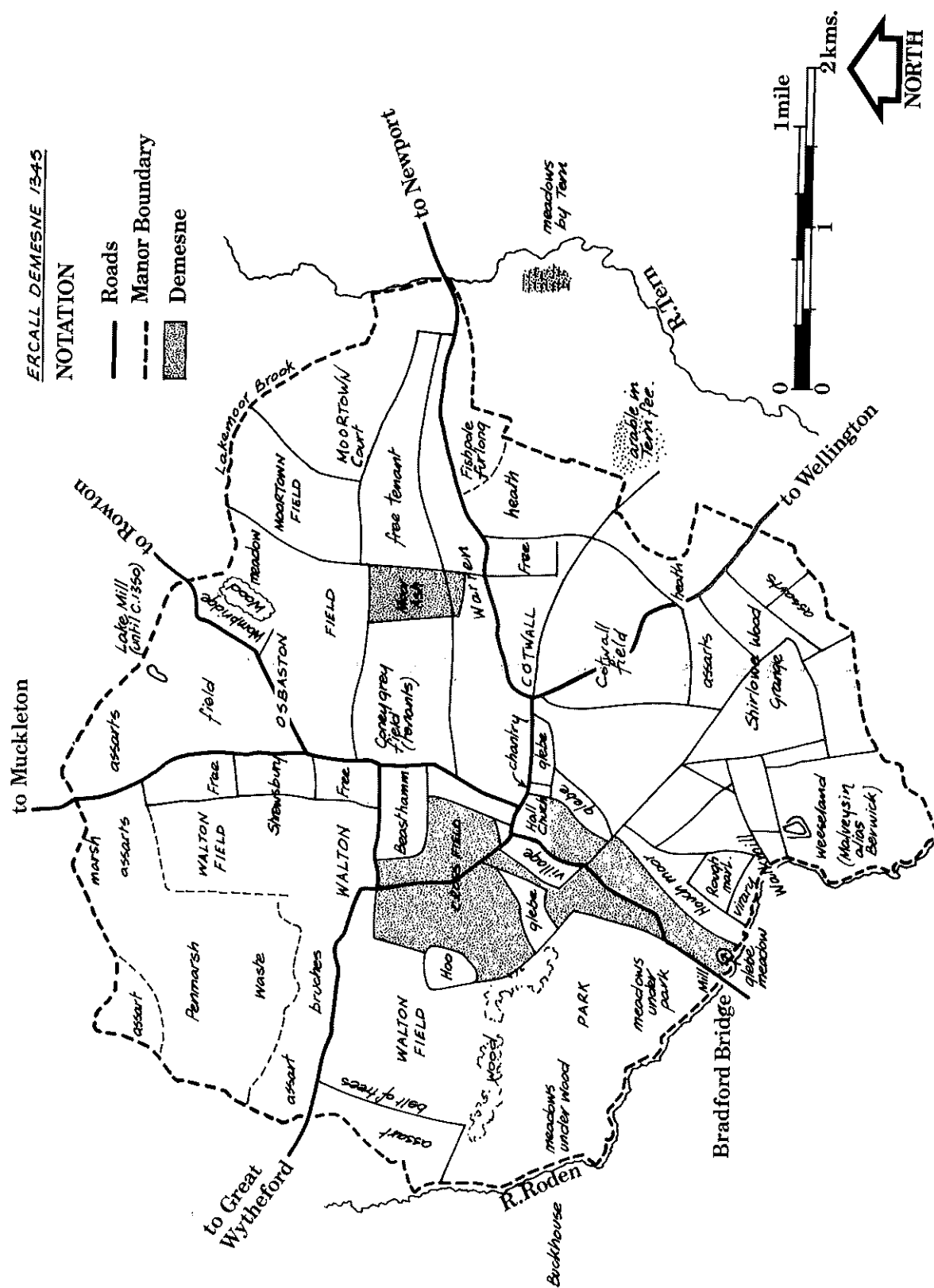


FIG. 29: ERCALL MANOR c. 1086-1100, SHOWING DEMESNE AND GLEBE







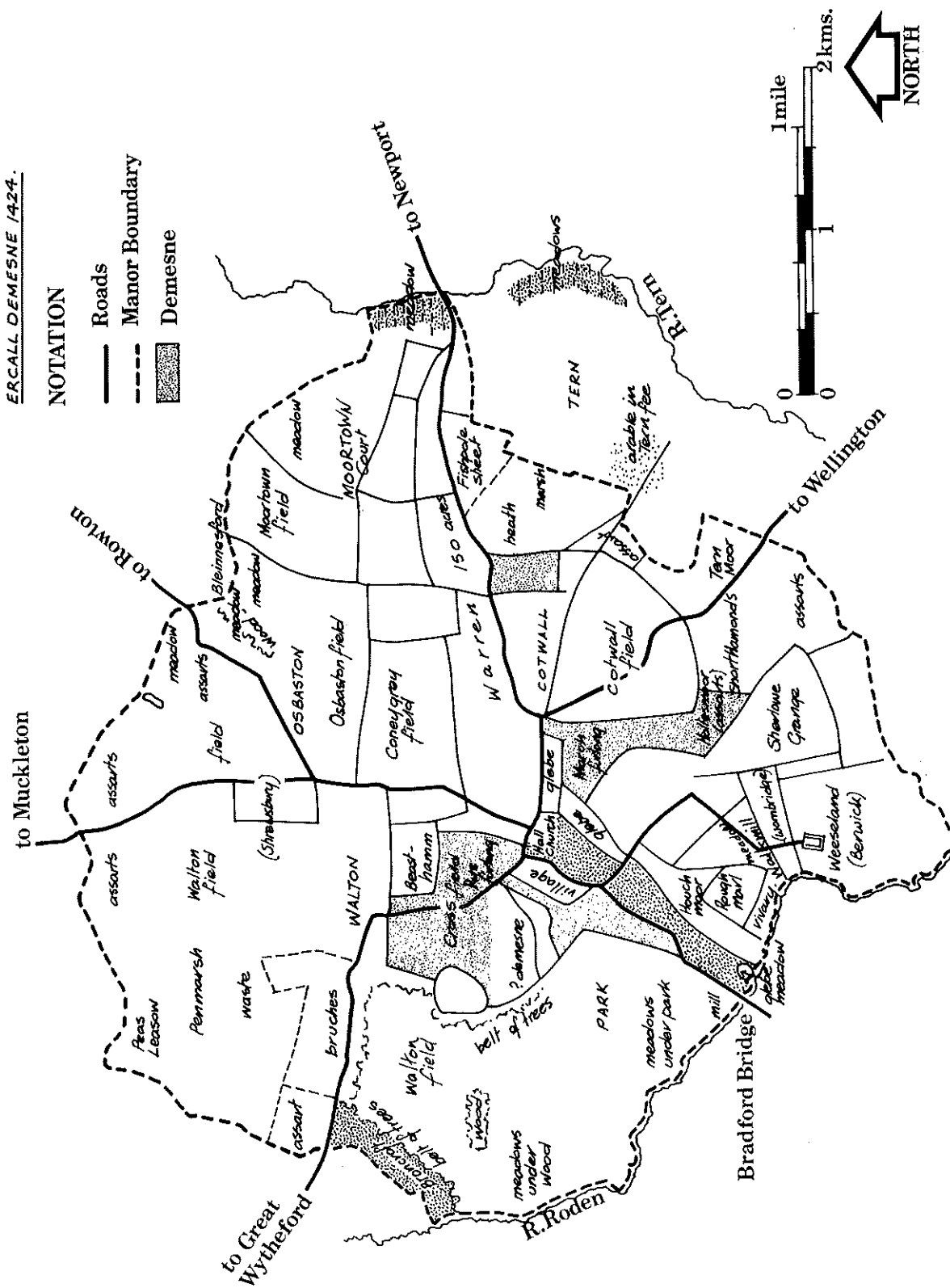


FIG. 33: ERCALL DEMESNE 1424

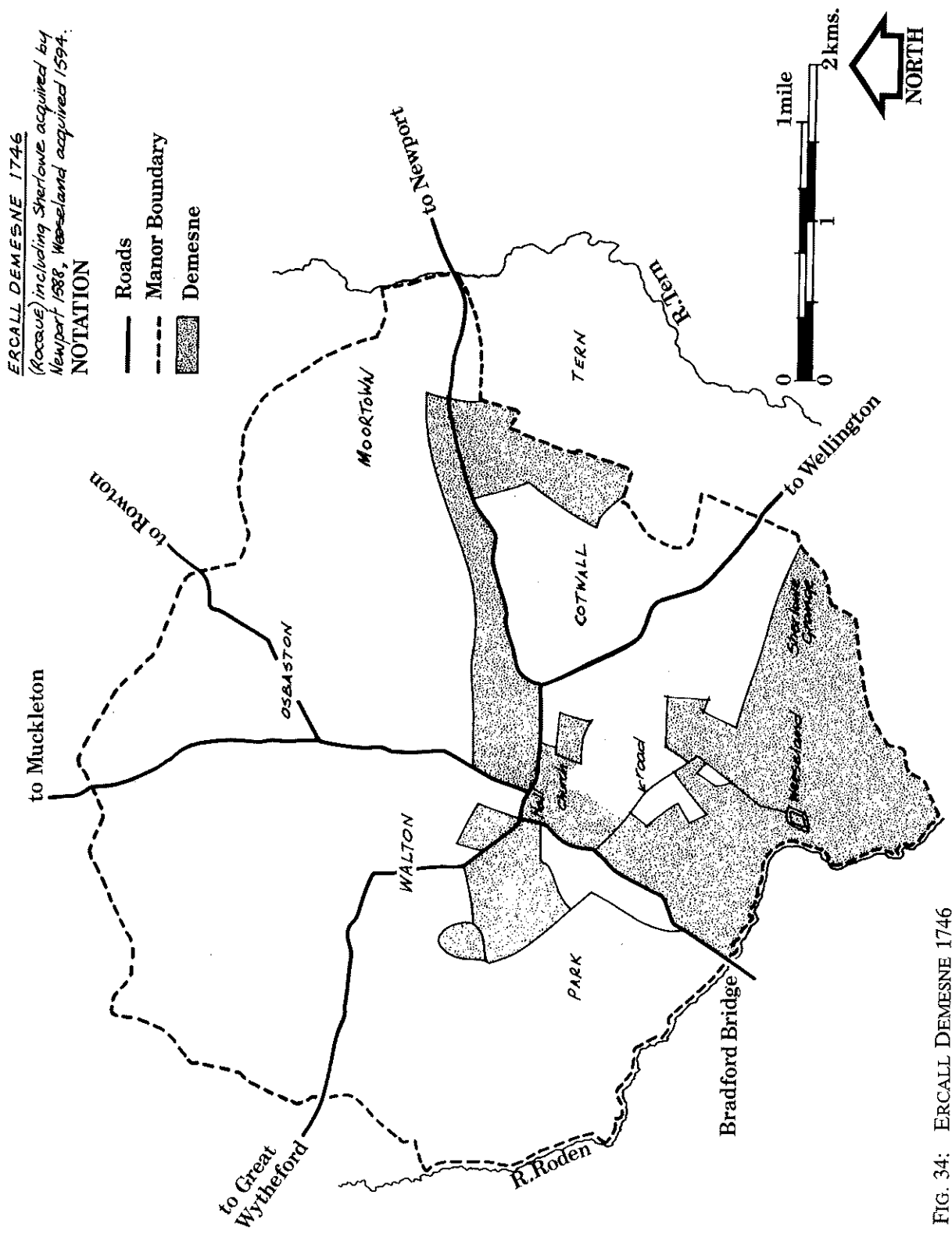


FIG. 34: ERCALL DEMESNE 1746

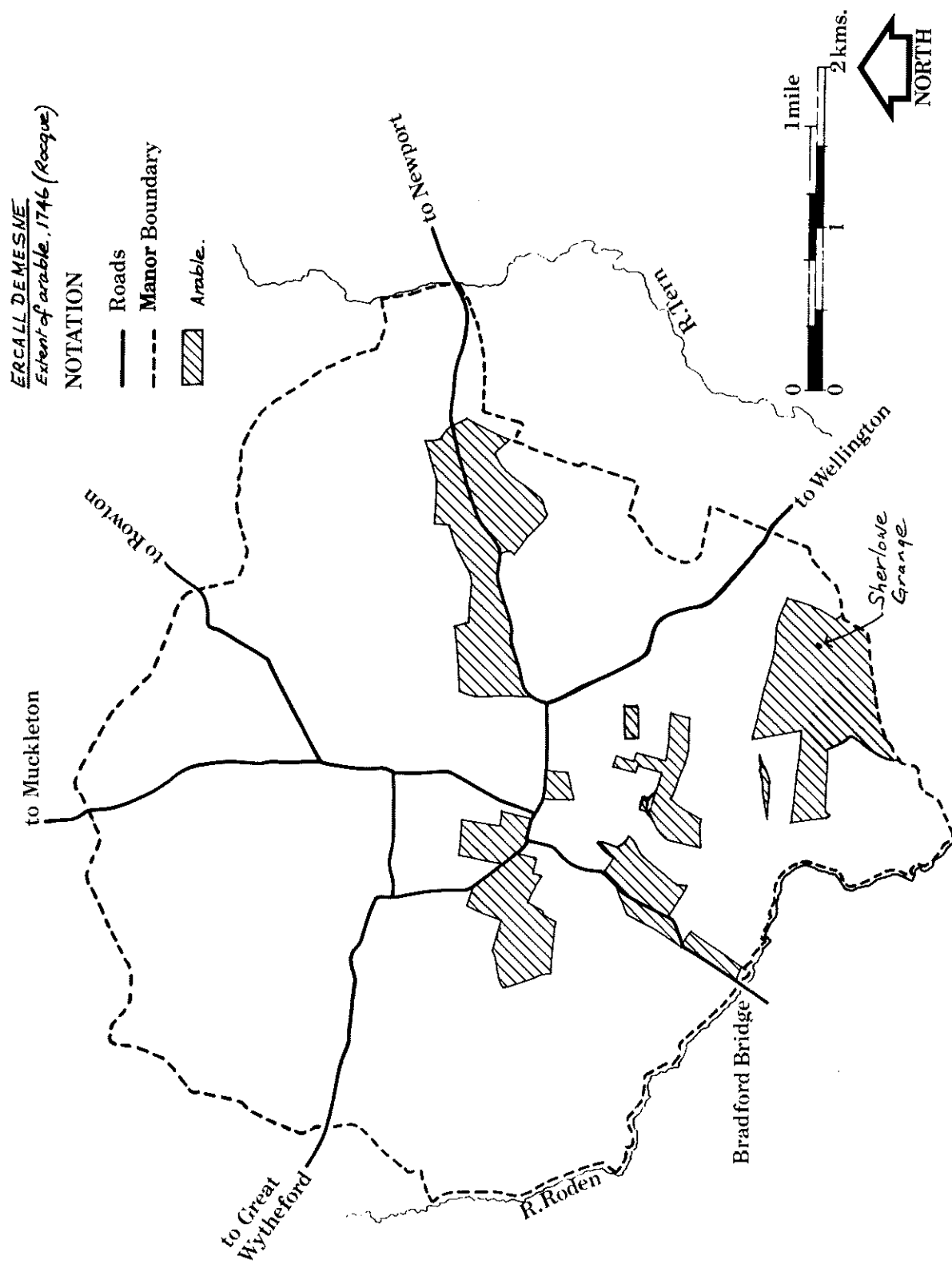


FIG. 35: ERCALL DEMESNE: EXTENT OF ARABLE, 1746 (ROCQUE)

TABLES

TABLE 1: Ercall: tenants and acreages 1066–1399

TENANTS

<i>Pre-Conquest</i>	<i>1086</i>	<i>1300 and 1399</i>	
5 berewicks (Walton, Osbaston, Cotwall, Tern, and Crudgington with Sleep).	In Walton, Osbaston, and Cotwall: 29 villeins 2 millers 12 bordars with land, and 12 <i>bovarii</i> without land.	$\frac{1}{2}$ -virgate tenants Walton: Osbaston: Cotwall:	18 9 9
18 tenants (from Walton?) pay occasional 20 <i>d.</i> rents.	No tenants at Tern; Crudgington not included.	noke tenants Walton: Osbaston: Cotwall:	1 2 0
		messuage & croft Cotwall:	1
		messuage without land Osbaston:	1
		2 mills (1300) 1 mill (1399)	
total no. of tenements: 43		total no. of tenements:	43
		total rent for main holdings in 3 townships:	
			£16 15 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>
		rents of mills	22 <i>s.</i> 0 <i>d.</i>
			26 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i>
VALUE p.a.	£20	VALUE p.a.	£20
		TOTAL:	£19 3 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i>

ACREAGES

<i>1066 and 1086</i>	<i>1399</i>	<i>Max. in presumed open field areas (TM)</i>
29 villeins with 15 a. each: 435 a.	Walton 18 half virgates 1 noke	278 a. Walton 281 a.
2 millers with 15 a. each: 30 a.	Osbaston	150 a.
12 bordars with 7½ a. each: 90 a.	9 half virgates 2 nokes	Osbaston 152 a.
12 <i>bovarii</i> with no land.	Cotwall 9 half virgates	135 a. Cotwall 137 a.
TOTALS	555 a.	563 a. 570 a.

TABLE 2: Crudgington: tenants and acreages 1066 and 1086

1066	1086	
demesne: nil	demesne, 1 carucate:	60 a.
tenants, 4 carucates:	tenant, 1 free man with 1 virgate:	30 a.
	9 villeins with 15 a. each:	135 a.
	2 bordars with $7\frac{1}{2}$ a. each:	15 a.
	240 a.	240 a.

TABLE 3: William V's assarts at Broncroft

Plot	area	boundary one side	the other
Outside Broncroft — William's wood, Petronilla's wood, and her husband's assarts cleared by 1303	9 a.		
6 a. adj. her wood, demised to John of Ercall and his children, cleared by 1311 (still waste beyond)	6 a.	Walton field	Wytheford vivary
William's plot demised to Robert Fraunce and his children ($2\frac{2}{3}$ a.), cleared c. 1312	4 a.	Walton field	Wytheford vivary
Petronilla's share demised to John le Mercer of More ($1\frac{1}{3}$ a.)		Walton field	boundary ditch
Petronilla's share let to John le Mercer ($1\frac{1}{3}$ a.) William's plot demised to Robert le Hayward ($2\frac{2}{3}$ a.), cleared c. 1314–15	4 a.	nearly to Walton field	boundary ditch
William's land demised to Sir Richard of Adbaston, chaplain, lease terminated Mich. 1338 (13 a.), cleared by 1324–30	19½ a.	not stated	
Petronilla's share (if lease granted before her death) $6\frac{1}{2}$ a.			
Petronilla's share demised to William Cubel (1 a.) William's plot demised to John of Dothill (2 a.), cleared before 1304–5	3 a.	not stated	ditch
The Pleccus — plot in waste let to Adam Scot 1345–6, cleared last	$2\frac{1}{2}$ a.	not stated	
TOTAL	39 a.		

TABLE 4: William V's improvements

<i>Date</i>	<i>Woodland</i>	<i>scrub</i>	<i>heath</i>	<i>marsh</i>
1304 1305	3 a. at Broncroft ¹			2 a. and $\frac{1}{2}$ a. of meadow in Penmarsh ² Stanemonspleck ²
1306-9		27 a. in Smallthorns ³	10 a. of Cotwall heath ⁴	
1310-11	6 a. at Broncroft ⁵			
		William knighted at New Year 1312		
1312-13	4 a. at Broncroft ⁶	12 a. of meadow in Smallthorns ⁷ 1 a. ⁸		
1314-15	4 a. at Broncroft ⁹		12 a. in Cotwall Wood ¹⁰	
1316- c. 1324	19 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. at Broncroft ¹¹	39 a. in Waste leasows, Cotwall ¹²		1 a. in Penmarsh ¹³ 2 a. in Penmarsh ¹⁴
c. 1320- 1345			'bruches' in Walton heath by tenants, c. 43 a. ¹⁵	4 a. ¹⁶ 6 a. ¹⁷
1345	Le Pleccus adj. Broncroft, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. ¹⁸			

¹ Wm. s. of Wm. to John of Dothull: S.R.O. 52/23.² Wm. s. of Wm. to Phil. of Muckleston and Alina: Eyton, ix. 92. No lease for the other 7 a. of TM 33 or for TM 35. Stanemonspleck mentioned in lease to Phil.³ Wm. to Phil. of Muckleston and Alina: Eyton, ix. 92.⁴ 3 a. leased by Wm. to Wm. le Ku and dau. 1309: Eyton, ix. 107; 4 a. leased for second time to Rd. and Jn. sons of Huwe, 1323: S.R.O. 52/27.⁵ Wm. to bro. Jn. and children 25 Dec. 1311: S.R.O. 52/26.⁶ Sir Wm. to Rt. Fraunce and children: S.R.O. 52/17.⁷ Sir Wm. to Rog. fitz Ralph and son: Eyton, ix. 92.⁸ Leased 1st to Rd. Brodere, 2nd to John le Mercur; S.R.O. 52/21. Perhaps in TM 212, Smallthorns croft.⁹ Petronilla to John le Mercer: S.R.O. 52/17.¹⁰ 8 a. leased by Sir Wm. to Sir Hamund 9 Mar. 1315; 4 a. already leased by Petronilla to Alan of Cotwall and Rd. Son of Wm. Lauwe: S.R.O. 52/28.¹¹ Leased by Sir Wm. and Petronilla to Sir Rd. of Adbaston, chaplain, perhaps for 14 years: 1st ref. to him 1324 (Eyton, ix. 110), lease ended 1338 (S.R.O. 864/1).¹² 12 a. leased by Sir Wm. and Petronilla to John Bareson (S.R.O. 52/18, 16); no lease survives for next 12 a.; 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. adjoining Sugdon waste (11 a. Sir Wm. to Rt. le Houle c. 1332, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Wm.'s hand: S.R.O. 52/22).¹³ Leased to Roger Lucock, d. 1338.¹⁴ Leased to Rd. son of Matthew before 1338: S.R.O. 864/1.¹⁵ Tenants: Cubel, Hickes, Marot, etc.¹⁶ Chantry endowment 1332.¹⁷ Leased by chaplains: R 1.1.44, 47-8.¹⁸ To Adam Scott 1345-6: Eyton, ix. 95.

TABLE 5: Demesne gains and losses 1086–1345

In 1086 there were 6 carucates of demesne at Ercall and Weeseland: 360a. (Apart from that, Tern berewick was reserved for the lord's profit but c. 1130 was given to Ralph fitz Theald.)

William I (c. 1165–c. 1200) acquired 360 a. of demesne. At Sherlowe he disposed of 1 virgate (to Thurstan), at Ercall 1 virgate (to Odo), $\frac{1}{2}$ virgate (to Ralph for life), 4 a. (to Shrewsbury abbey in exchange), and 28 a. of town crofts: *total disposals* 107 a. He gained 15 a. of assarts at Long furlong, 85 a. of assarts at La Mora, and c. 3 a. (Great Washing Pit) from Shrewsbury abbey in exchange: *total gains* 103 a. Demesne c. 1200: 356 a.

William II (c. 1200–c. 1223) inherited 356 a. At Ercall he disposed of 1 virgate (to Baldwin), a croft (to John the miller), and a garden (to Ralph, lord of Tern): *total disposals* c. 35 a. He gained 40 a. of assarts at Osbaston: *total gains* 40 a. Demesne c. 1223: 361 a.

William III (c. 1223–1256) inherited 361 a. At Ercall he disposed of six half virgates (to Peter son of Baldwin, John son of Baldwin, Roger Feysaunt, the chaplain of Rowton, Roger the forester, and Robert the horseknave), at Cotwall 1 virgate to Wercock, at Weeseland 1 carucate to Wischart (65 a.), at La Mora the whole demesne to daughters (150 a.): *total disposals* 335 a. He added 65 a. to the demesne at La Mora, 240 a. between La Mora and Walton; he recovered 1 virgate from Henry of Muneshelf and $\frac{1}{2}$ virgate in Ercall from Ralph the priest's son: *total gains* 350 a. Demesne in 1256: 376 a.

John (1256–78) inherited 376 a. He used 90 a. to found the manorial borough, disposed of 19 a. of assarts at Osbaston (to Wombridge priory, with right to improve the waste), 32 a. (in exchange with Shrewsbury abbey, with 10s. rent and a promise to augment the glebe), 18 a. to the vicar, and 2a. (in exchange with Feysaunt): *total disposals* 161 a. He recovered 75 a. (Annora's share of Moortown), assarted 19 a. at Osbaston, bought 29 a. (the Pichard virgate at Moor Ash), acquired 32 a. (the Pichard virgate at Osbaston, in exchange with Shrewsbury abbey), 40 a. (in exchange for 5 nokes of rectorial glebe at Ercall), a noke from the vicar, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ –2 a. (in exchange with Feysaunt): *total gains* 204 a. Demesne in 1278: 419 a.

William IV (1278–1303) inherited 419 a. He let 38 a. of assarts at Moortown to tenants, added 50 a. at Moortown to the warren, gave away two $\frac{1}{2}$ virgates (one, at Osbaston, to bro. Robert; the other to the chaplaincy), added 8 a. to the glebe, settled 75 a. (of Moortown demesne) on younger son John, conveyed $6\frac{1}{2}$ a. of assarts in Smallthorns to the lord of Rowton: *total disposals* $207\frac{1}{2}$ a. He assarted 38 a. at Moortown, bought 1 virgate (back from the Baldwins), recovered $\frac{1}{2}$ virgate from William Henry, bought 8 a. (half the Feysaunt free tenement), recovered 75 a. (Cecilia's share of Moortown), and assarted $6\frac{1}{2}$ a. in Smallthorns: *total gains* $172\frac{1}{2}$ a. Demesne in 1303: 384 a. (5 carucates according to inq. p.m.).

William V (1303–45) inherited 384 a. His new assarts were let to tenants, burgages recovered were let 'at will', $\frac{1}{2}$ virgate recovered from his uncle was disposed of as 2 nokes, 8a. (the other half of the Feysaunt tenement) bought were leased (to John Feysaunt, reserving meadow). Otherwise he gave 4 a. from the demesne by the hall and 1 a. (house and garden) to the chantry (with 4 a. at Penmarsh). *Net disposals* 5 a. Demesne in 1345: 379 a.

TABLE 6: The 1399 survey summarized

Abbreviations

bb	= best beast	lr	= one days loverype	sl	= selion
c	= cottage	m	= messuage	sm	= suit of mill
cr	= croft	mea	= meadow	t	= toft
cu	= curtilage	n	= noke	v	= virgate
cus	= by custom	pa	= pasture	w	= by will
g	= garden	r	= contribution to reeve's salary	w & cus	= at will according to custom
go	= goose paid	sc	= suit of court	wh	= wood hen paid
la	= lands				

ERCALL TOWNSHIP

<i>Tenant</i>	<i>holding</i>	<i>how held</i>	<i>rent</i>	<i>dues</i>	<i>extra land and rent</i>
Wa Brytton	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	cus	10s.	sc, wh, lr	mea under lord's wood 2s.
Wm Webbe	c, g, 10 se	w	3s.	sc, wh, lr	Shepcotefold croft 2s.
Dd Sawyer	m, n	w	5s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Wm Wrench	m, n	w & cus	5s.	sc wh, lr	—
Wm Aundens	—	—	—	—	pas called Meresend 5s.
Mjy Sumpter	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w & cus	10s.	—	Hasdemedewe and Neshemedewe 3s. 6d.
Adm Chyn	m, c, g, 3 la	w & cus	3s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Jn Smith	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w & cus	10s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Mjy Paun	c, g, 3 la	w & cus	3s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Law Franshemon	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w & cus	10s.	sc, wh, lr	mea under park, mea at Bradfordbrugge 10d.
Agnes	m, n	w & cus	6s.	sc, wh, lr	se near Wetelond 6d.
Chaunterel	m, n	w & cus	5s.	wh, 6d.	—
Jn Matte	c, g, 3 la	w & cus	3s.	for work	—
	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w & cus	10s.	sc, sm	mea under park 16d.
Adm Carter	c, cu	w & cus	3s. 8d.	sc, wh, lr	Bleennesford 9d. with mea, bylet under mill-leat 3s.
Marion Aleyn	m, n	w & cus	5s.	sc, wh, lr	Wa Ossborne's land 8d.
Thos Houle	m, n	w & cus	5s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Wm Kyttewyld	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w & cus	10s.	wh, lr	mea under park —
	2 c	w	12d.	—	mea under Bradford bridge
	t, n	w	4s.	services	Thomasbruch 18d.
Rt Leulyn	c	w	12d.	4d. for work	Wolvesacre & 6 se 18d.
Jn Meere	m, n	w	5s.	sc, 2wh	Wheteley 5s.
	barn	w	8d.	2 lr	—
Ag. Cottewall	c, 3 la	w	3s.	sc, wh, lr	mea under park 12d.
Wm Lancastreshyre	c, 3 la	w	3s.	sc, wh, 12d. for work, lr	—
Rd Tene	c, 6 la	w	3s. 8d.	sc, wh, 11d.	—
	2 shops	w	16d.	for work & lr	—
Wm Bate	m, n	w	4s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Wm Walker	2m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	40 yrs.	10s.	wh, lr	—
Wm Merchont	shop	w	8d.	—	—

MOORTOWN TOWNSHIP

<i>Tenant</i>	<i>holding</i>	<i>how held</i>	<i>rent</i>	<i>dues</i>	<i>extra land & rent</i>
Rt Mylle	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, sm	Taillour mea 5s.
	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	r 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., lr	—
	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	usual r 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	parcel land 5s.
Wm Webbe & Rd his son	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	usual r 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	Edemarshe 4s.
	m, n	w	5s.	sc, wh, sm	3 buttes in le Cley 3d.
	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	r 2d., lr	—
Hamund Cuff	m, n	w	5s.	—	the pond 12d.
	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wg, sm	Syche mea 6d.
Wm Yuggote	m, n	w	5s.	lr	mea under More Ollar 6d.
township				sc, wh, sm	—
				lr, r 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.	—
				—	Newemedowe 2s.
				—	pas of Marshe 14d.

WALTON TOWNSHIP

<i>Tenant</i>	<i>holding</i>	<i>how held</i>	<i>rent</i>	<i>dues</i>	<i>extra land and rent</i>
Jn Bryd sr	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v 3 yards t, n	w & cus	10s. 5s. 4s.	sc, wh, lr	Bronnecroft 6s. 6d. Blennesfort mea 5s. parcel under wood near Roden 6d. Whyteley (lease) 4s. 6d.
Mrjy Nolle	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Mrjy Wode	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Jn Brid jr	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	20 yrs. by lease	9s.	sc, wh, lr heriot bb	—
Mrjy Knot	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Wm Badde	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr	Wodebroncroft & Thomasbruch 5s.
Rd Bryd	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	life by lease	10s.	sc, wh, lr heriot	1 a in Bronnecroft at will 2s.
Jn Brid jr	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	31 yrs. by lease	10s.	sc, wh, lr heriot	Ashebruch at w 6s. 2a in Bronnecroft 3s. Harnulbruch 2s.
Jn Cartwright	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	12 yrs. by lease	10s.	—	—
Thos Wrought	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Jn Bedell	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr	mea near Penmarshe at w 4s.
Jn Badde	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	wh	plot in Bronnecroft near lord's wood 5s.
Jn Wylde	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr	parcel under Roden 12d.
Wm Alcock	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	life by lease	10s.	sc, wh, lr heriot	Brokeland go Cubbul & Marot's bruch, Hickebruch, at w 20d.
	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	wh, lr	Hochehul 4d. Asshemedewe, at w 5s.
Jn Bryde, Rd Strode, & Wm Alcock Wm Alcock Rd Watur					pas called Pleccus, at w 2s. 6d. parcel under park parcel under moor 16 pullets parcel in Bronnecroft w & go
Rd Wade	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w & cus	10s.	sc, wh, lr	—
Wm Badde jr	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w & cus	10s.	sc, wh, go, lr	—
Jn Huggyns	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	lease 60 yrs.	10s.	sc, wh, lr, heriot bb	—
Rd Hulle					parcel in Bronnecroft, lease 8 yrs. 9s.

OSBASTON TOWNSHIP

<i>Tenant</i>	<i>holding</i>	<i>how held</i>	<i>rent</i>	<i>dues</i>	<i>extra land and rent</i>
Wm Ryvere	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr, go, r $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.	—
Wm Ryvere & Jn Houle	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr, go, r $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.	—
Wm Saunder	m, n	w	5s.	sc, wh, lr, go, r $1\frac{1}{2}$ d.	—
Elionor Cotewall	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr, go, r —	—
Wm Shyr Lowe	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	lease 40 yrs.	10s.	sc, wh, lr, go, sm, r $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.	Dole in Smaethorns 18d., Ledemore hay 6s. 8d.
Hy Hawcuston	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr, go, sm, r $3\frac{1}{2}$ d.	parcel on Roulton brook —
	m, cu	w	2s.	sc, wh, lr, sm, r $3\frac{1}{2}$ d.	
	c, cu	w	3s.	sc, lr, go, sm	
Jn Bryd	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr, go, sm, r $3\frac{1}{2}$ d.	2 parcels in dole in Smallthorns, w, 18d., g formerly Wm Saunder's 6d.
(formerly Law Frenshemon)	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	—	
Wm Warde	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr, go, sm, r $3\frac{1}{2}$ d.	mea & land 3s.
	m, n	w	5s.	sc, lr, sm, r $1\frac{1}{2}$ d.	—
Jn Houle jr	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	10s.	sc, wh, lr, go, sm, r $3\frac{1}{2}$ d.	Hie hay 18d.
township					pool & Lacmore 2s. Smallthorns 40s. 4d.

COTWALL TOWNSHIP

<i>Tenant</i>	<i>holding</i>	<i>how held</i>	<i>rent</i>	<i>dues</i>	<i>extra land and rent</i>
Jn Houle sr	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	lease 40 yrs.	10s.	sc, wh, lr, go, sm, r $3\frac{1}{2}$ d.	assart on Cotwall heath 13s. 4d. Assheyards (3) 6s. 8d. Holtusmore mes 18d. 3 butts nr way to Sherlowe 4d. butts & marsh at Ownforlong nr Tern field 12d.
Wm Matte	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	lease, 20 yrs.	6s.	—	Gonnyng plekes & Hooke mea, lease from death of Wa Houle 4d.
	t, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	lease, 20 yrs.	6s.	—	Kentesbruche & Hammebruche 11s.
	t, $\frac{1}{2}$ v		8s.		assarts, Oldebruche Ademereshe, 20s.
Wm Houle	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v & 5 rudes	lease, 6 yrs.	10s.	sc, wh, sm, r $3\frac{1}{2}$ d.	plot waste at Brownehelde 2s. moiety Weremedowe 3s.
Wm Sompter	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	?lease	11s.	wh, r $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.	plot called Smaleheth —
Jn Hamyes	m, cr $\frac{1}{2}$ v, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	15s.	sc, wh, lr, sm, r $3\frac{1}{2}$ d.	—
Wa Cotewall	m, $\frac{1}{2}$ v	w	8s.	wh, r $3\frac{1}{2}$ d.	Gonnyngus plekke & Cotewall Hoke mea 12d.
Jn Kent					assart in field of Cotwall, lease for life 3s. 4d.
township of Tern					2 plots pa in Tern Moor 2s. 6d.
Thos Yrych					2 plots in waste of Cotwall, lease 12 yrs. 11d.

GLOSSARY

advowry	In Marcher lordships, protection and countenance given by the lord to those who placed themselves under his patronage.
advowson	The right to present incumbent to living
amercement	Payment to the lord of the court in order to have the lord's mercy for some trespass.
<i>ancilla</i>	Female slave.
appropriation	Grant of a parish church to a religious house, which thus became rector in perpetuity and entitled to the rectorial tithes; a vicar (or substitute) performed the duties of the cure.
assart	An area cleared of trees and scrub.
assarting	The process of clearing new land.
berewick	A barley or corn farm; an outlying part of an estate from which the lord might take the whole profit.
bordar	Smallholder; a villein of the lowest rank.
<i>bovarius</i>	Oxherd-ploughman, a landless labourer.
breach, britch	ME. <i>bruche</i> , land broken for cultivation.
burgage	A tenement in a borough, not subject to manorial custom.
carucate	The amount of land ploughed by one team; here 60–64 acres..
collegiate church	Parish church with an endowment for more than one priest.
defence	Land in defence was permanently fenced and so never common.
demesne	Land directly cultivated by or for the lord, his home-farm.
feoffment, old	Feoffment before 1130.
ferndell	A quarter; a quarter hide, i.e. a virgate.
fosse	Ditch and bank.
furlongs	Subdivisions of the common field, each theoretically a square of about 10 acres.
glebe	Land originally given as endowment for a parish church.
grange	Barn.
heriot	Best beast or best good paid to the lord on a tenant's death; often a mark of customary tenure but here paid by free tenants and lessees.
hide	Unit of assessment for calculating payments, especially royal taxes; on this manor reckoned at about 2 carucates or 120 acres.
intercommoning rights	Right to put beasts on waste land shared by men of two manors.
jointure	Estate limited to wife to be enjoyed after husband's death.
leasow	Pasture land or arable fallowed for several years.
loverype	A day's work at harvest done without pay.
marl	Soil consisting of clay and carbonate of lime.
merchet	Payment due to lord for permission for tenant to marry his daughter off the manor.
moveable	Personal property as opposed to real estate.
multure	Payment of a part of the grain ground to the lord of the mill or his miller.
muncorn	Mixed grain, often including beans or peas, sown together (also called maslin or dredge corn).

neif, <i>nativus</i>	A person servile by birth and blood, tied to the soil.
noke	A quarter virgate, about $7\frac{1}{2}$ –8 acres.
pannage	Right to feed swine in a wood, payment to the lord for that right.
park, lord's	Area of woodland and pasture, fenced and reserved by the lord for his exclusive use, often stocked with deer.
quabb	ME. quabbe, a bog; a field name.
sacristan	Alternative name for vicar at Ercall and Oswestry.
<i>servus</i>	Slave, landless labourer working for lord and living in his hall.
sitch, stitch	Balk of land, ditch and bank.
stank	<i>Stagnum</i> , mill pond.
stint	Allotted number of animals allowed on common.
tithe	Proportion of crop, usually a tenth, paid by all parishioners to the parish priest; after appropriation of a church, divided between rector and vicar.
villein	Customary tenant.
virgate, yardland	On this manor, about 28–32 acres; normal customary holding the half virgate.
vivary	Fishpond, stew pond.
warren	Ground where lord kept rabbits; the right to keep rabbits, granted by the Crown.
waste	Any part of the manor not yet cultivated.
weir	Fish trap on river.

