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HAMMERMAN'S HILL

The Land, People and Industry of the Titterstone Clee Hill Area of  
Shropshire from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries.

By Kenneth W.G. Goodman

Volume I

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1978.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to trace the major changes, during a period of about three hundred years, in the Titterstone Clee Hill area of south Shropshire

Its main objective is to see to what extent developments over a long period of time provided conditions which prepared the way for the great increase in industrial activity that occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century.

The underlying geology, the general geography and an outline of the earlier history of the area have been examined to provide a background to the changes that occurred in agriculture, settlements, population, and in industry, where the emergence and expansion of the iron and coal industries have received close attention.

The thesis, which reveals that the area was very poor, studies the possible causes and the impacts of developments which include changes in landholding patterns and in land management, the polarization of society, the attitudes of manor lords and of industrial entrepreneurs, increases and other movements in population, and alterations in settlements.

During this period industrial activity passed through three distinct stages. The first, which began before the middle of the sixteenth century, was encouraged by the growth in local demand for raw iron, particularly between 1580 and about 1630, but during the second the progress of the iron industry was restricted by the slower growth of the local market and by limited success in acquiring a share of the West Midland market. The third stage differed greatly from the earlier stages and was far more active for the area adopted a new role as the major supplier of ironstone and, later, of coal to the ironworks at Bringewood and Charlcott. As a result the district became involved closely with the main movements and the fortunes of the Midland and national iron markets although it played merely a subsidiary or supplementary part in industrial innovations and changes. However, the increase in coal production was encouraged further by the growth of a wider local market as roads were improved and by 1783, when the area's close connection



with the major iron markets was severed, the coal industry was able to replace the large-scale mining of ironstone and to support the great increases in population that had taken place.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have benefited from the unfailing kindness and assistance of many archivists and librarians during the course of my lengthy and persistent searches for the material on which this thesis is based. I am very grateful to all of them, particularly to Miss Honor Williams and Mr. Carr of Shrewsbury Borough Library Local Collection; Mr. F.B. Stitt and Dr. Margaret O'Sullivan of the William Salt Library and Stafford Record Office; The Keeper, the Public Record Office and Mark Frankel of the Photographic Section; Mr. David Jenkins, The Librarian, and Mr. G. Maldwyn Griffiths of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; The Librarian, University College of North Wales, Bangor; Professor J.K.S. St. Joseph and the Committee for Aerial Photography, University of Cambridge; Mr. Rex Clark, the Librarian, Kidderminster Library; The Secretary, Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts; The Librarian, and The Keeper of Special Collections, The John Rylands University Library of Manchester; Mr. John Norton, The Curator, Ludlow Museum; Miss Meryl Jancey and Miss Daphne Hubbard of Hereford Record Office; the County Archivists<sup>Salop and</sup> <sub>^ ^</sub> Worcester Record Offices; The City Librarian, Hereford Library; The County Archivist, Berkshire Record Office, Reading; The Librarian, Chester City Library; The Archivist, University of Keele; The Librarian, Oswestry Branch Library, Shropshire County Library; The Librarian, Tenbury Branch Library, Worcestershire County Library, and Mr. Veysey and Mr. C. Williams of Hawarden and Ruthin Record Offices, Clwyd.

I am grateful, also, for the guidance and encouragement given to me by my supervisor, Dr. Margaret Spufford, and for the help given to me, earlier, by Dr. David Palliser. In addition I would like to express my thanks for the help and facilities extended to me by the Governors, the Executive Principal, Dr. G.O. Phillips, and several members of the staff of Athrofa Gogledd-dd Cymru, the North E. Wales Institute, Cartrefle College, Wrexham. In particular, I owe much to the Associate Principal, Mr. Hywel Evans, to Miss Olive Jones and Mr. Victor Perry of the Library, to Mrs. Barbara Davies, Mr. Mark Dunton, Mr. Gordon Thomas and Mr. Ted Freeman of the Resources Centre, and to the College Dean, Mr. E.G. Davies.

I have had to make many visits to south Shropshire for the purpose of undertaking fieldwork. Invariably, on these occasions I have received help and encouragement from my mother, from many other relatives and from the local people in general, and I have cause to be very grateful to the late Rev. Holt, Rural Dean of Burford, the Rev. Oldroyd, vicar of Cleobury Mortimer and the Rev. Lockhart, rector of Bitterley, for providing access to documents, and to Mr. T.C. Hancox of Wellington and Mr. R.A. Lewis of the County Education Office, Stafford, for sharing with me their knowledge of the source materials concerned with the industrial history of this area.

Finally I would like to thank Mrs. Nicola Pike for her valuable assistance in preparing the script and for the great skill and care which she has displayed in the difficult task of typing it.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with the Titterstone Cleve Hill district of south-east Shropshire. The area was remote and relatively inaccessible in early times and was not well-known until recently when the cheapness and mobility of the motor car brought it within the range of many more people. Nowadays it is a popular attraction for visitors from the Birmingham area. In the past, although Ludlow was only a few miles away and population movements into and out of the district were made, the inhabitants of the higher parts tended to feel out of touch with other places and a clannish spirit developed. Within living memory foot travellers on the main Ludlow to Kidderminster road risked being stoned as 'foreigners' when passing through Cleve Hill village, the largest settlement on the hillside.

Many people do not realise that the area is part of Shropshire. They assume that it is in Worcestershire, possibly because of its distance from Shrewsbury, or because of the Cleve barrier and the generally southerly aspect of the area. Little has been written about it in histories of Shropshire and less, naturally, in histories of Worcestershire. The industry of the area has been particularly badly served. This is due, partly, to difficulties with source materials but the main reason is the greater attraction exercised by the more significant industries of the Coalbrookdale area, for these tend to hide the existence and influence of industry elsewhere in the county<sup>1</sup>.

Titterstone Cleve was the centre of an active iron smelting industry in the sixteenth century and was one of the first places outside Sussex to have blast furnaces. However, no Lacon, Blount, Walker, Knight, or other iron-master, achieved the fame of an Abraham Darby, for in spite of the early adoption of the blast furnace, and the rapid development of iron production by the early years of the seventeenth century, the market for iron and its products was limited, no great technical

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1. A recent illustration of this point is afforded by B. Trinder, 'The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire' (London, 1973). Mr. Trinder's preface indicates at once that the work is concerned with the east Shropshire coalfield, and adds: 'No attempt is made to examine industrial developments elsewhere in the county'.

innovations were made in iron-smelting, and carriage continued to be very costly. Consequently, the initial expansion was followed by slower growth and consolidation in the later years of the seventeenth century, and then by a period when, although the industry began to expand again, the River Teme beyond Ludlow and not the Titterstone area provided the main centre of production. Nevertheless, even when this occurred Titterstone Clee continued to provide most of the ironstone that was needed and, as the production of iron increased, the mining of ironstone became a more extensive and more carefully organised activity. Coal-mining, sometimes in association with ironstone-mining, expanded also, and as the domestic and industrial demand for coal grew it acquired greater economic importance.

Most studies of areas in which large-scale industries developed naturally use an economic approach. When dealing with the industries themselves they prefer to concentrate on technical innovations or on various advances in technology which had more or less general implications. As a result, there is neglect, usually, of both the general geography and other aspects of the background from which the industries arose to flourish, or to wither and die, and of the people and communities most closely affected.

The aim of this study is to adopt as far as possible an interdisciplinary approach, supported by the results and insights acquired in the course of extensive and detailed fieldwork, so that general economic changes, industrial and other developments, and the impact of regional and national influences can be placed in the context of the area, and of its people, during the period of about 280 years preceding the industrial revolution.

The general objectives are, firstly, to describe the background of the area and to give an account of the changes in agriculture and population and of the development of industry, particularly the early iron industry, between about 1500 and 1640; secondly, to describe and account for the effects of population movements, the slower growth of industry and the increasing rate of agricultural changes on the social and economic life of the area between 1640 and circa 1720; and, thirdly, to describe, and to assess, the main implications of the rapid expansion of the mining

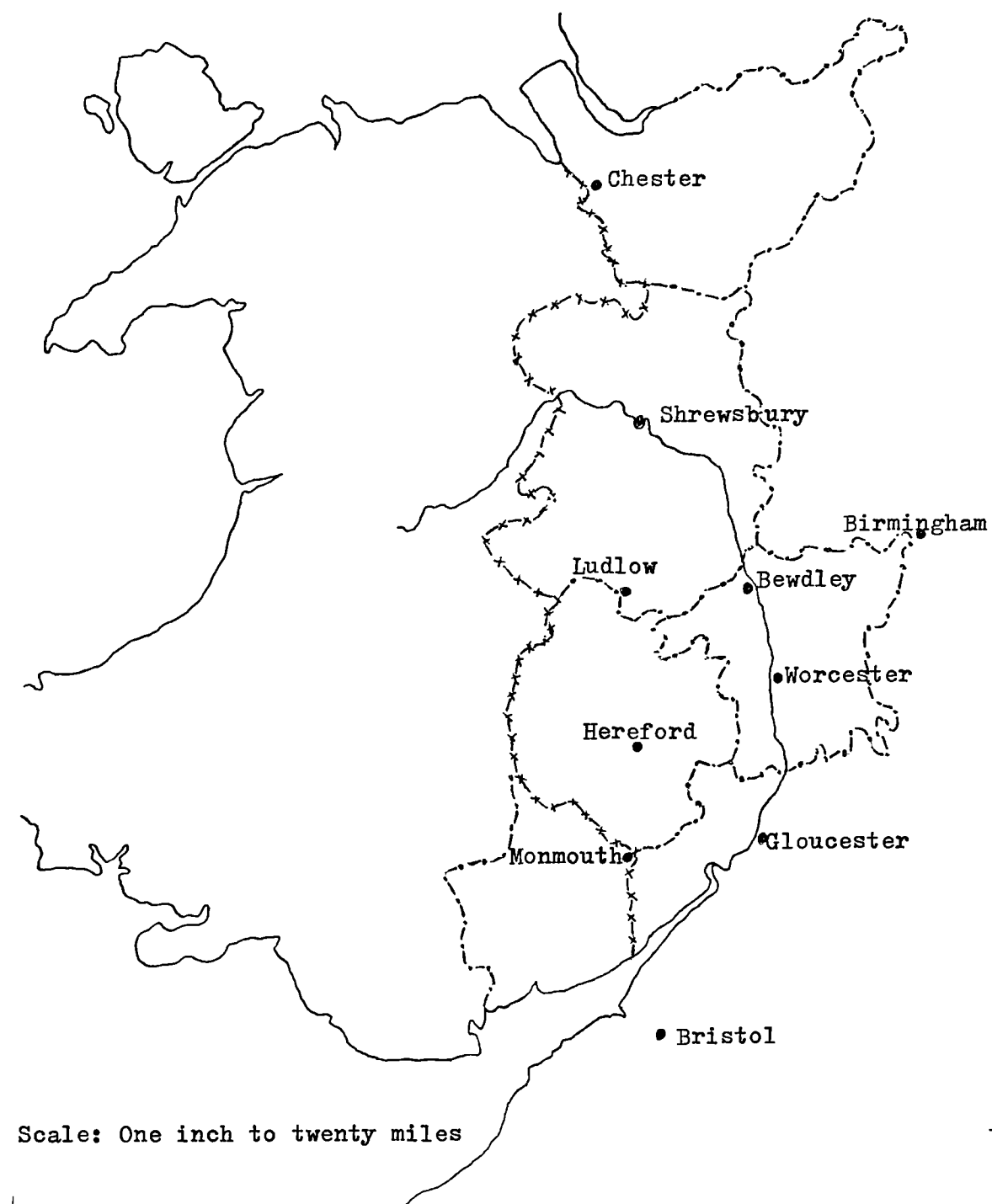
industry to a position of dominance in the area between circa 1720 and 1780.

The pursuit of the second of these objectives was made very difficult by the lack of detailed accounts, and by the general paucity of information relating directly to the local iron industry during a period when it was controlled and organised by local gentry and yeoman iron-masters. The searches which were made into the collections of documents left by them were unsuccessful, and very frustrating, for all references to the iron industry have been omitted or removed, as though by design. As a result, the account of its development between 1640 and 1720 is built up from fragments and is neither detailed nor convincing at first sight. Nonetheless, the existence of a considerable amount of industrial activity related to the ironworks of the area was confirmed by a large number of indirect pieces of information and, to a greater extent, by the continuity of large-scale mining and of other industrial activities revealed by the detailed accounts that are available for the period after 1720.

These activities, particularly in the mining industry which continued to expand as it became more closely involved with the ironworks of the Knight partnerships and, later, as the demand for its coal increased, dominated the development of the area centred on Titterstone Clee. As a result, and because the major changes in landholdings and land management had taken place already, the influence of the land receded into the background. Therefore, it has not been investigated during this period to any great extent as it was during earlier periods.

FIGURE I

## The Borderlands of Wales



## PART ONE

### THE AREA AND ITS AGRICULTURE, PEOPLE AND EARLY INDUSTRY TO 1640

#### 1. THE AREA:

##### (a) Description

The hills of central and southern Shropshire, south of the great arc of the middle Severn, effectively separate the shire into two unequal and differing parts. Although they appear to be an extension of the old, Cambrian rocks of Wales, they are, in fact, newer rocks of the West Midlands and were identified and investigated by Murchison whose 'Silurian System' was published in 1839. Most of north Shropshire, undulating and gentle, forms a natural extension of the Cheshire Plain or lies in the valley of the River Severn. To the west the Welsh mountain barrier, emphasised by the Mercian frontier, and by language and ethnic changes, forms an effective and natural border <sup>1</sup>. But south of Shrewsbury a series of hills, ranges and rocky platforms, of which the most conspicuous are the Clee Hills, change the aspect and nature of the countryside and have influenced the agricultural systems and settlement patterns. The hills, in general, lie along a north-east/south-west axis and are tilted from north-east to south-west. The vales and valleys permit communications, therefore, to southern and western areas from the north, but the south-east parts of Shropshire are not so fortunate. There the Clee platform is a barrier to the north and west, and the heavily wooded Teme valley and Abberley hills to the south are difficult to penetrate, as is the Wyre Forest to the east <sup>2</sup>. This forest probably extended much further north in prehistoric times, covering the still well-wooded area to the north-east of Titterstone Clee. The complete absence of

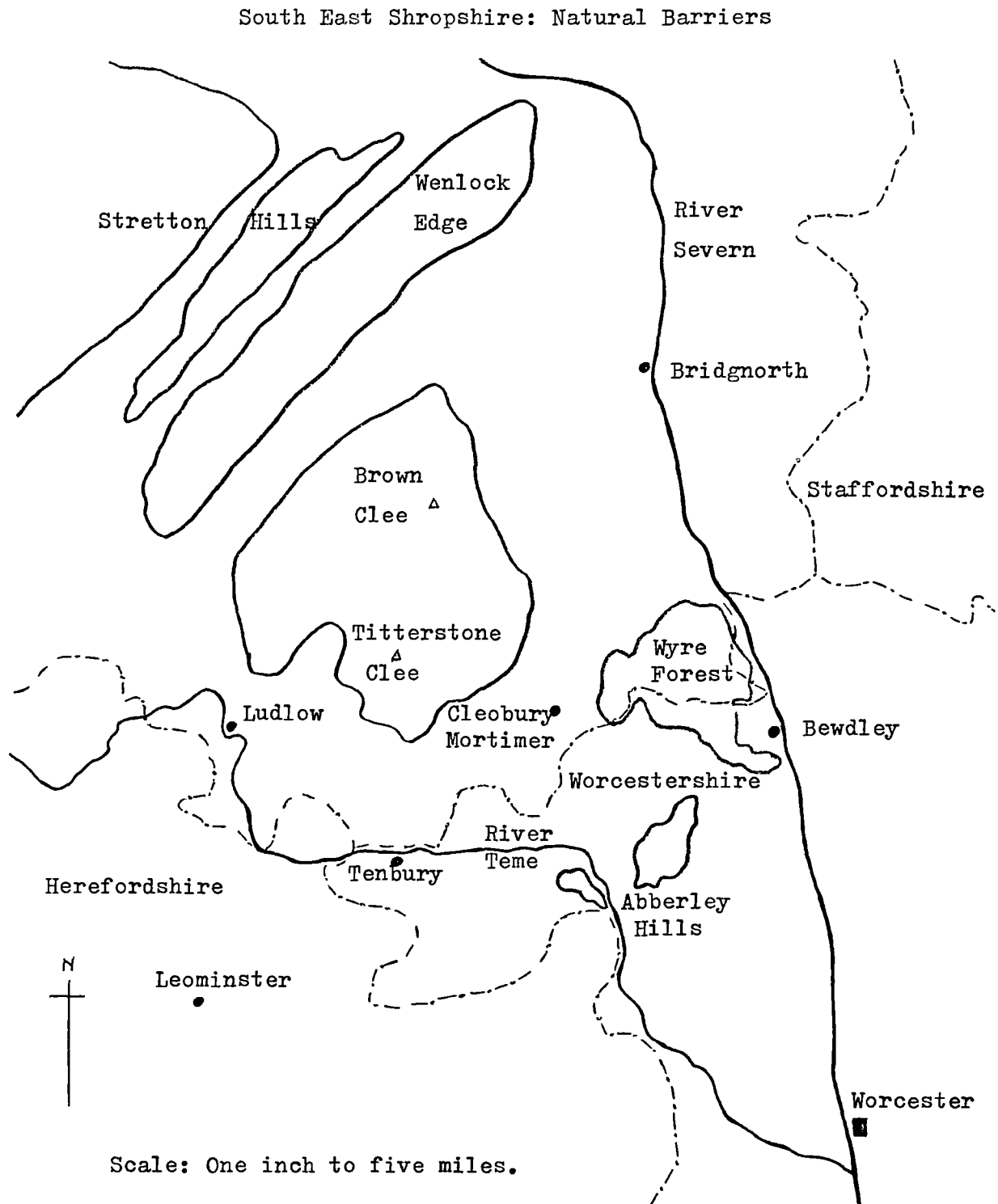
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1. Figure 1, p. 4.

2. Figure 2, p. 6.



FIGURE 2



proved finds of prehistoric date supports this view <sup>1</sup>.

During the period of the early Anglian settlements the relative inaccessibility of the area effectively extended the defensible Celtic frontier to the Severn, from Bewdley northwards. The Hwicce failed to penetrate the area in large numbers from the south-east and similar efforts made from the east were also ineffective. Penetration occurred during the later Anglian settlement period <sup>2</sup> when the area was outflanked by Mercians who came from the north-east and then extended the area under their hegemony southwards along the routes used earlier by the Romans into the Hereford Plain. The late date of Anglian settlement in the area is suggested by the evidence of the place-names <sup>3</sup>; by the survival of Welsh words in Shropshire dialect (such as 'du' or 'dhu' in dhustone - 'blackstone' - the dark-coloured basalt of the area); and by the claims of Owain Glyndwr, whose agreement with Mortimer and the Percies, in 1405, if successful, would have taken the Welsh frontier back to the Severn <sup>4</sup>.

The volcanic peak of Titterstone Clee is 1750 feet high and is only five and a half miles from Ludlow. It provides a backcloth of rugged grandeur to the medieval castle and town when viewed from Whitcliffe. About six miles due north of Titterstone the highest peak of Brown Clee, Abdon Burf, rises less abruptly and less impressively to a height of 1790 feet. Titterstone also dominates the countryside to the east and to the south. A.E. Houseman looking back as he leaves Shropshire, near Bewdley, sees, far behind the Wyre Forest, 'the high-reared head of Clee'. An earlier topographical poet, Michael Drayton, describing

- 
1. B.H.St.J. O'Neill, 'Excavations at Titterstone Clee Camp, Shropshire, 1932', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, lxxxix (1934), 94.
  2. D. Sylvester, The Rural Landscape of the Welsh Borderland (London, 1969), pp.90, 91.
  3. Ibid., pp.98, 101.
  4. W. Rees, An Historical Atlas of Wales (2nd. edn., Cardiff, 1951), p.47 and Plate 52.

the view near Burford and Boraston where the River Teme leaves Shropshire would be conscious of the overhanging presence of Titterstone but was intent on giving an impression of the dominant position of the Clee Hills as a group in the area between the Severn and Wales.

When at her going out, those mountains of command  
 (The Clees, like loving twins, and Stitterston that stand)  
 Trans-severned behold fair England tow'rds the rise,<sup>1</sup>  
 And on their setting side, how ancient Cambria lies<sup>1</sup>.

Four miles to the east of Ludlow in the parishes of Bitterley and Caynham the abrupt, steep ascent of the Titterstone Clee Hills begins. Titterstone and the lesser peak of Hoar Edge rise to the north-east of Bitterley Court where 'the prospect towards Ludlow is delightfully extended over a fruitful and cultivated tract of country'<sup>2</sup>. On the peak of Titterstone are the remains of an early Iron Age camp. This was first noted on a map of Shropshire, published in nine sheets by Robert Baugh of Llanymynech on 1st August 1808, to a scale of just under an inch to the mile, and it was first investigated in some detail by C.H. Hartshorne about 1840.<sup>3</sup> Leland refers to another early Iron Age camp at Caynham, four miles to the south-west: 'Cainham Castle, of some callyd Caiholme, now downe, stood (3) Miles from Ludlaw'<sup>4</sup> but does not state directly that there is a camp on Titterstone: 'The highest parte of Cle is cawlyd Tyderstone. In it is a fayre playne grene, and a fountayne in it'<sup>5</sup>. However, the reference to the enclosure (within the stone ramparts of the camp) is accurate and indicates that he might well have made a personal visit to the summit of Titterstone.

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1. The Poly-Olbion (Works of the English Poets from Chaucer to Cowper), Vol.iv (London 1810), Song viii, p.229. See below, Plate 1, p.9.

2. The Shropshire Gazetteer, pub. T. Gregory (Wem, 1824), p.17.

3. Rev. C.H. Hartshorne, Salopia Antiqua (London, 1841), pp.23-29.

4. The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1545, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (London, 1906-1910), ii, 80.

5. Ibid., v, 189.

## PLATE I

## TITTERSTONE CLEE HILL.



I. View of Titterstone peak and Hoar Edge from lower Bitterley.



2. View of Knowle Hill and Hoar Edge from Dinthill, Boraston.

The 'fayre playne' is about half a mile long and about a third of a mile wide with an area of seventy one acres. Silver Spring flowed from the enclosure until the area was quarried in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Views are wide and varied. 'Many parts of this hill afford extensive prospects of numerous distant hills, and other prominent objects, situate in twelve or thirteen counties' <sup>1</sup>. Today, it is believed locally that the list could include sixteen counties and that, given good visibility, both the Irish Sea and the Bristol Channel could be seen.

Six miles from Ludlow the road to Kidderminster passes over a ridge, which extends southwards from Hoar Edge to Knowle Hill, and reaches a height of over 1250 feet. On the Ludlow side of the ridge, settlements look towards the west and south-west over the hills of central Wales and across the Hereford Plain to the Brecon Beacons and the Black Mountains in the distance. These settlements are sheltered from the north and east winds by the hills but are exposed to the westerly winds. The lower areas are climatically an extension of the Hereford Plain, and have more rain and sunshine, and a slightly longer growing season, than the north of Shropshire and the central Midlands. The upper areas are, in inclement weather, unpleasantly wet and wind-swept but they have some soil and parts have been settled and enclosed, almost to the exposed rocky sides of the final peak leaving relatively little unenclosed waste in some of the parishes. Fences and hedges, or stone walls, run up to the centre of the ridge which acts as a parish boundary for more than two miles of its length. As soon as the ridge is crossed there is a dramatic change. The settlements face the south and south-east and there are magnificent views, of the Malverns and of hills beyond them to the south, and of the Clent and Lickey Hills to the east. For this area Cleobury was a natural centre

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1. W. Felton, Description of the Town of Ludlow (Ludlow, 1811), p.114.  
See below, Plate 2, p.11.



## PLATE 2

## VIEWS FROM TITTERSTONE CLEE HILL.



- I. View from Magpie Hill to the north-east over Hill Houses, Farlow, and Catherton Common.



2. View from Magpie Hill to the south over the island settlements of Lower Whatsill, in the foreground, and parts of Hopton Bank.

of local government and trade until recently, apart from the places in the south which were controlled from Burford - the centre of Overs Hundred - and were later attracted by the north Worcestershire market town of Tenbury. The area is not so exposed to westerly gales but has less protection from the cold east winds of winter, although a series of lesser ridges that extend from Clee Hill, like the fingers of a splayed hand, reduce their force in places.

On the lower slopes of the hill down to the Rivers Teme and Rea the countryside appears to be well-wooded, and further to the east the Wyre Forest stretches from near Cleobury Mortimer almost into Bewdley. On the upper slopes large areas of unenclosed wastes remain. They are crossed by many paths and overgrown tracks, and contain large patches of bracken, clumps of gorse bushes, areas strewn with boulders, and cottage enclosures. Near the summits the waste has been gashed hideously by modern roadstone quarries.

The relics of other, earlier industries can be seen also. In the lower parts of the waste and in the enclosed areas adjacent to it there are many limestone quarries and clay pits, and further up the hillside numerous ironstone mines, coal pits and spoil heaps mar the landscape and draw attention, through the intensive and untidy nature of past industrial activity, to the geographical situation and geology of the area <sup>1</sup>.

#### (b) Situation and Geology

The Devonian old red sandstone marls and rocks, which overlie the higher beds of the Silurian system, stretch in a great sweep along the border country from south Wales to the west of Bridgnorth and the River Severn. A few miles to the east of Ludlow they are folded into a gentle syncline which forms a nearly triangular-shaped platform six hundred to

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1. See below, Plate 3, p. 13.



(Cambridge University Collection : copyright reserved).

View of Titterstone Clee Hill looking NNW from Studley.



Titterstone  
- quarries.

Hoar Edge  
- 'Belfry'  
& 'Granite'  
quarries.

Coreley  
Common.

Studley.

Farlow  
Enclosure.

Basalt, coal  
& ironstone  
spoil heaps.

Cornbrook  
Dingle.

Converging  
packhorse  
routes.

Limestone  
quarries.



eight hundred feet in height, with a slight tilt to the south-east, from which rise the two main peaks of Brown Clee and Titterstone Clee <sup>1</sup>. These peaks and their subsidiary hills contain outlying remains of the carboniferous measures that were connected at one time, through the denuded Wyre Forest coalfield and its southern extension towards the Abberley Hills, with the east Shropshire coalfield around Coalbrookdale <sup>2</sup>. The remains have been protected from severe denudation by durable caps of basalt, a doleritic rock. The basalt is particularly extensive and deep on Titterstone Clee which possesses, as a result, the largest areas of carboniferous measures <sup>3</sup>.

In Figure 3 the area has the appearance of an island situated some miles off the coast of the carboniferous measures of east Shropshire. Its ultimate disadvantage, its limited size, is noticed at once but this was less important than the effects of its relative isolation caused by the poor communications of the area. This isolation was an advantage in the early stages of the development of the iron industry for Titterstone, in particular, was able to provide much of the ironstone used in south Shropshire, north Herefordshire and parts of Worcestershire without fear of serious competition.

During the sixteenth century the migration to the area of large-scale iron smelting was encouraged by the presence of large supplies of wood in the local forests, chases, parks and countryside. Saxton's map of Shropshire of 1577 shows the Wyre Forest, Cleobury Park and a wooded area around Hopton Wafers to the east of Titterstone, Dean Park to the south and Bringewood Chase, Mocktre Forest and Oakley Park to the west.

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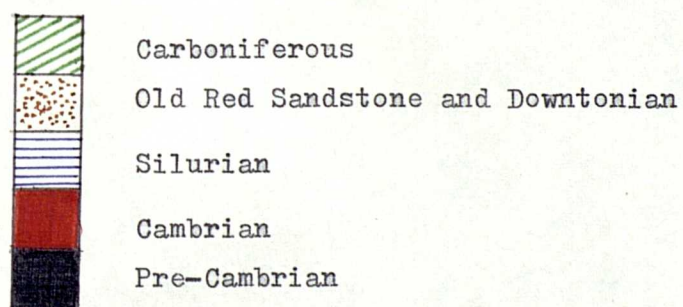
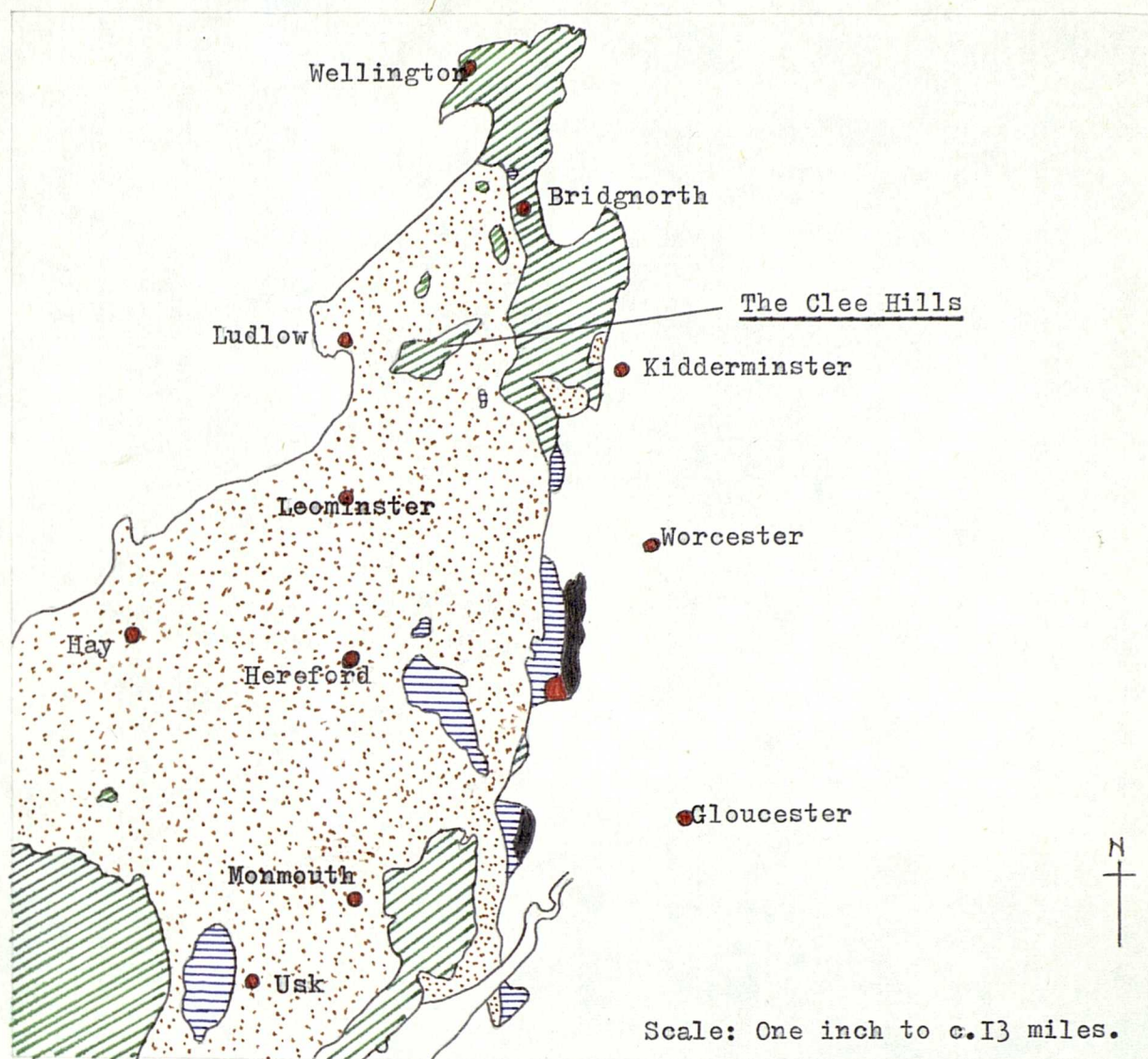
1. Figure 3, p. 15.

2. T. Eastwood, Stanfords Geological Atlas of Great Britain (London, 1964), p.147. V.C.H., Shropshire (London, 1906), i, 34.

3. The Coalfields of Great Britain, ed. Sir Arthur Trueman (London, 1954), pp.285, 286. V.C.H., Shropshire (London, 1906), i, 451.

FIGURE 3

## The Geology of the Welsh Borderland



Based on R.W.Pocock and T.H.Whitehead, The Welsh Borderland, British Regional Geology, 2nd edn. (London, 1948) p.2.

Furnaces and forges were established on, or near, Titterstone and its supplies of coal attracted some smiths, nailers and other ironworkers to the area. However, its situation became a serious disadvantage as the small local market was satisfied and a surplus was produced, for the area was distant from large centres of population and from central markets, and it had no access to transport by water nearer than Bewdley and land carriage was difficult and expensive.

The coal of Titterstone Clee had an even more limited market, particularly while wood was plentiful as an alternative fuel. The Gutter coal of Catherton was sulphurous <sup>1</sup> and in other places the seam had bands of clay and stone running through it <sup>2</sup>. Some of it was used locally for it was suitable for lime-burning and tanning, and for brewing and other domestic purposes, but its wider adoption was restricted by its poor quality, by mining difficulties that made it relatively expensive, and by the cost of carriage, for its pithead price could be more than doubled by transport costs over distances as short as five to ten miles.

There were no roads other than tracks through the upper parts of the hill for there were few settlements. Travellers used the village roads that crossed the flanks of the hill so avoiding the steeper climbs. These roads, however, passed over heavy marl and clay soils which caused serious problems, particularly in the numerous damp valleys. In 1502, Prince Arthur died in Ludlow and his body was taken through Caynham, Hope Bagot, Coreley, Earls Ditton, Hopton Wafers, Catherton and across the River Rea at Detton in Neen Savage parish, on its way to Bewdley. The carriage was drawn by six horses but in places the way was so bad that oxen had to be used to assist them <sup>3</sup>. Telford, referring to the area from Cleobury

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1. D.G. Jones and T.R. Owen, 'The Age and Relationship of the Cornbrook Sandstone', The Geological Magazine, 98 (1961), 287-288.

2. See below, p. 290.

3. Mrs Edward Childe, 'History of Cleobury Mortimer', Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (T.S.A.S. hereafter), ii (1879), 45-46, citing a Ms. transcribed in Leland's Collectanea.

Mortimer northwards, in 1797, considered that this district was the one in which a canal was most wanted. He noted that the soil was, generally, strong clay which would be rendered rich by easy communication and that near the southern end of the proposed canal there was plenty of coal and some limestone. But he added: 'the roads in this large district are so very bad, that at many seasons most of them are altogether impassable, nor can they be effectually improved at any reasonable expense, owing to the nature of the soil ...' <sup>1</sup>. That the roads were in a bad condition was confirmed elsewhere for it was stated that they were 'exceedingly bad' <sup>2</sup>. Yet some road improvements had been made during the eighteenth century. The most important of these was the re-direction of the main route from Ludlow to Bewdley over the steeper, and drier, parts of the hill so that it passed close to the mining areas <sup>3</sup>.

Transport to Bewdley was made easier by this improvement and the local market for coal was extended into more distant parts of south-west Shropshire but the steepness of this road, long distances, and the poor condition of other roads in the area, as noted by Telford, kept transport costs relatively high and acted as a brake on production.

The costs of production, which were dependent to a great extent on the geology of the area, were also very important and played a considerable part in controlling the rate of development and the direction which it took.

To the north and west of Titterstone peak the basalt rests on old red sandstone but elsewhere it rests on the productive coal measures <sup>4</sup>. These cover about four to five square miles and include a variety of shales, clays, fire-clays, ironstone measures and sandstones, and five main coal

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1. J. Plymley, General View of the Agriculture of Shropshire (London, 1803), pp.311-12.

2. Ibid., p.124.

3. See below, p. 349.

4. Figure 4, p. 19.

seams. These in descending order are: the Great Coal (five to nine feet); the Three Quarter Coal (one to two and a half feet); the Smith Coal (two to six feet); the Four Foot Coal (two to four feet); and the Bluestone or Gutter Coal (three feet) <sup>1</sup>.

The productive coal measures lie on a bed made up of red, brown, yellow and grey sandstones, grits and conglomerates, some grey to green clays, mudstones and thin coals <sup>2</sup>. It was named Cornbrook Sandstone in 1917 and appears to be of little economic value <sup>3</sup>. It lies on lower carboniferous limestone which outcrops in the north-east of Titterstone Clee at Farlow and Oreton, and in the south-west in a great sweep around Knowle Hill from Cornbrook to Gorstley. In both areas the limestone has considerable depth and has been quarried until recently to provide lime and building stone. Leland noted that, in the Clee Hills, there was 'Plenty of Cole, yerth, stone, nether excedinge good for Lyme, whereof there they make muche and serve the Contre about' <sup>4</sup>. The large area, implied by Leland, was supplied, probably, in its more distant parts with building lime only. The cost of transporting lime on the backs of animals, which would have been made necessary by the poor state of the roads and by the lack of wheeled transport, would have made it too expensive for agricultural use. Such objections would not apply, however, to the immediate neighbourhood of the limestone outcrops.

The overlying basalt is rich in iron, as can be seen at a glance, but extraction of the ore from the hard rock would not be worthwhile. Although some ironstone has been dug from the drift and decayed basalt in

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1. Coalfields of Great Britain, ed. Trueman, p.285.

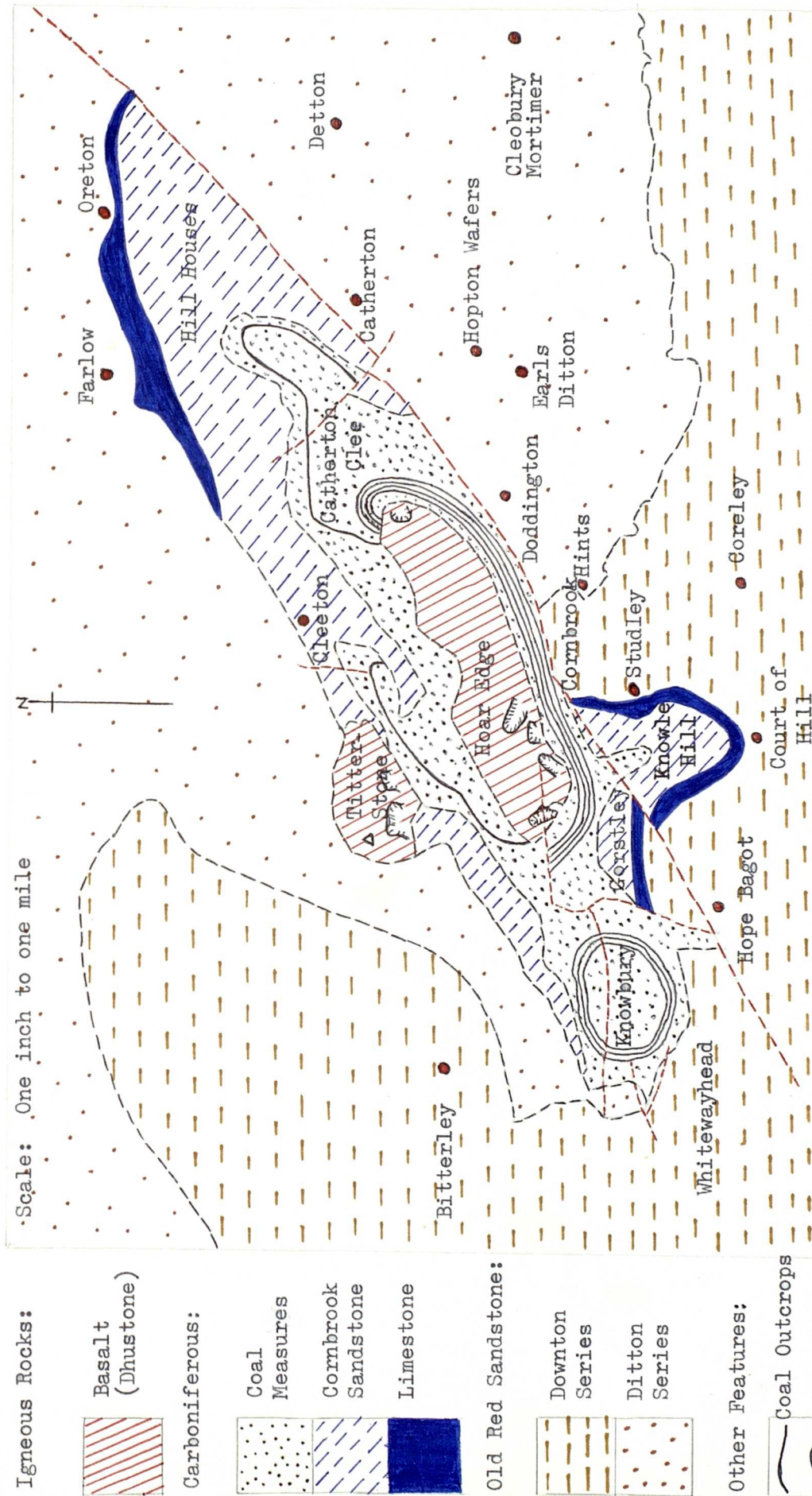
2. F.H. Edmunds and K.P. Oakley, The Central England District, British Regional Geology (2nd. edn., London, 1947), pp.30-31. D.G. Jones and T.R. Owen, art.cit., 285, 288.

3. R. Midston, T.C. Cantrill and E.E.L. Dixon, 'The Forest of Wyre and the Titterstone Clee Hill Coal Fields', Trans. Royal Soc. of Edinburgh, li, Part iv, 27 (1917), 1064-1065, 1076.

4. The Itinerary of John Leland, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, v.189.



The General Geology of Titterstone Cleve Hill



Based on the Geological Survey of G.B., Solid, Old Series, Sheets LV N.W. and N.E., revised 1884; Drift Sheet 166 (1967); the geological publications referred to in the text and footnotes. The position of the Gutter outcrop on Catherton Cleve and of the same outcrop south of Titterstone peak has been established with the help of aerial photographs, field work, and mining and other records.

a small area to the west of the Belfry quarry known as Hill Top <sup>1</sup>, the bulk of the ore extracted in the district has undoubtedly been taken from lower measures. Ironstones are present throughout the coal measures but have been found workable at a few levels only. Large amounts were found in association with the Gutter seam particularly in the roof of the seam. This seam which outcropped extensively in Catherton and in Caynham was the earliest to be worked for its coal and its ironstone was used at an early date. The ironstone is known locally as 'blackband' ironstone because of its dark colour and because of the adherence to it of layers of carbonaceous matter <sup>2</sup>. Its economic importance was, at times, greater than that of the coal itself.

As the market for coal increased, seams that contained better quality coal were exploited and less ironstone was obtained as a by-product of coal mining. More ironstone had to be obtained, therefore, from other measures.

Most of the other deposits are of grey-clad ironstone which occur in the shales, or binds, either in the form of bands known as 'pins', or as nodules or balls which can be up to several feet in diameter. One measure, containing them near the surface, lies just beyond the basalt cap and stretches from Hoar Edge to Cornbrook, and from there almost to Farlow. Many of the small ironstone pits were shown on a map of Lord Craven's estates which was made in 1769 <sup>3</sup>, and in most cases can still be found by visitors. The quality of the ironstone was high <sup>4</sup> and its location was fortunate for it was not too difficult or expensive to extract, but when it was exhausted other supplies had to be sought for,

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1. See Plate 3, p. 13 and Plate 16.2, p. 358.

2. R. Kidston et al., 'Titterstone Clee Coal Field', 1069.

3. Shrewsbury Borough Library (S.B.L. hereafter), MS.2481, ii, Map vii.

4. V.C.H., Shropshire, i, 451. R.I. Murchison, Silurian System (London, 1839), pp.113, 115, 121-122.

sometimes at greater depths, when no alternative sources could be found near the surface.

The rocks of Titterstone Clee are folded into a syncline and the upper strata, lacking the protection of basalt, have long disappeared from many places. The remaining strata form a basin-like shape pitching to the south-west <sup>1</sup>, in which the coal measures have been altered in thickness and in regularity according to the position and angle at which they lie. Faults and basalt intrusions added to the difficulties caused by variations in the depth, position and thickness of seams <sup>2</sup>. The problems are implied, but not fully understood, in Murchison's reference to coal-mining on the Clees:

'Coal has been wrought on these hills from time immemorial, and numerous old shafts attest the extent of these operations, by which indeed nearly all the best coal has been extracted. As the ground, however, has never been regularly allotted, each speculator having begun his work where he pleased, and abandoned it when he encountered a difficulty, it is impossible to say how much of the mineral has been wasted and what quantity may remain beneath in unconnected and broken masses' <sup>3</sup>.

When the seams were found at, or near, the surface they caused few problems. The erosion of the sides of the syncline has exposed the ends of the coal seams in a series of outcrops, notably the four upper seams in the area skirting Hoar Edge and centred on Cornbrook, and the three upper seams in the Knowbury area. Extensive outcrops of the lowest of the five main seams, the Gutter or Bluestone coal, occurred in that part of the hill, Catherton, which shows the gentlest declivity from the basalt and is furthest from the centre of the syncline <sup>4</sup>. This seam does

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1. D.G. Jones and T.R. Owen, art.cit., 287.

2. Rev. Nightingale, A Topographical and Historical Description of the County of Salop (The Beauties of England and Wales series, 1812), pp.30-32. The effects of the faults and intrusions were so severe that Nightingale considered that the coalfield should be counted as six separate coalfields.

3. R.I. Murchison, The Silurian System, p.123.

4. See below, Plate 6, p. 91.



not outcrop to the west of Catherton for a fault, running from north-east to south-west, provides an abrupt boundary to the south-east section of the coalfield. Near Cornbrook dingle, and to the south-west of it, only the coal measure outcrop is affected <sup>1</sup>. In this area the transition is from upper coal measures to the underlying limestone but in Cornbrook dingle itself, and on its sides, old coal works, ironstone quarries and the remains of an old iron-smelting furnace, lime kilns and brickworks are in close proximity, for the great depth of the dingle has brought the Gutter coal outcrop within reach again, so concentrating within a small area several measures of great economic importance. Cornbrook dingle was the main centre of industrial and mining activities on Titterstone for many years. The fortunes of its works had great influence on the course of developments elsewhere on the coalfield and when mining developed into a large-scale activity, controlled by an individual, or by small groups of partners, it became the centre from which other mining activities on the hill were supervised.

The basin-like shape of the measures in the Titterstone syncline which ensures that springs exist high on the hillside, even on the peak of Titterstone itself, indicates the general course that mining activities would be likely to follow. The outcrops, particularly of the Gutter seam, provided easily worked, cheap ironstone and coal and were discovered and exploited first. In the lower parts of the Catherton and Cornbrook outcrops of the Gutter seam there are signs that the ironstone was mined by the primitive method known as 'scouring'. This was carried out by digging trenches down to the seams in the areas near the streams. Then, by diverting the pent-up streams or by draining ponds suddenly, the works were flooded and the earth was washed away leaving the heavier

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1. D.L. Dineley and D.W. Gossage, 'The Old Red Sandstone of the Cleobury Mortimer Area, Shropshire', Proc. Geological Assoc., 70 (1959), 235.

ironstone exposed and cleaned ready for the furnace <sup>1</sup>. When this method was no longer practicable, and as the seams dipped, simple bell-pits provided access to them in the less steeply inclined areas and on the hillsides levels, or drifts, were driven into them from the bottoms of narrow shafts. Also, both bell-pits and levels were used to extract ironstone from the shales near the basalt cap.

After the easily accessible coal of the outcrops had been exhausted there was little knowledge of the position and size of the seams and much time and capital was wasted in searching for them. Even when good seams were found their early promise could not always be relied upon and considerable additional expenditure might be needed for extra driving and other unproductive work. Often this was not considered worthwhile and so it led to the sudden abandonment of work in a particular pit and the loss of all of the capital invested in it.

As the scale of mining was increased bell-pits and small shafts with levels became less practical and were, to a large extent, replaced by larger and more extensive levels that were driven up through the floors of the seams from sites on the lower slopes of the hill. These levels were extended, in time, further and deeper into the hillsides and as the distances to the coal-face increased considerable trouble was caused by lack of ventilation, by faults and by the declining quality of the seams.

Eventually the levels were abandoned and, in order to gain access to the best coal, the mine owners were forced to sink deeper vertical shafts <sup>2</sup>. These were sunk, at first, in areas beyond the basalt cap for the task was easier and cheaper and the distances to the seams were generally shorter. These seams were found to be limited in size, however,

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1. See below, Plate 7, p. 93. Some signs of scouring can be detected, bottom left, on the sides of the streams near the edges of Knowle Bank wood. Cambridge University Collection photograph, BEP 9, which has not been reproduced here, shows, clearly, numerous trench lines and other surface works that have been used in the scouring process.

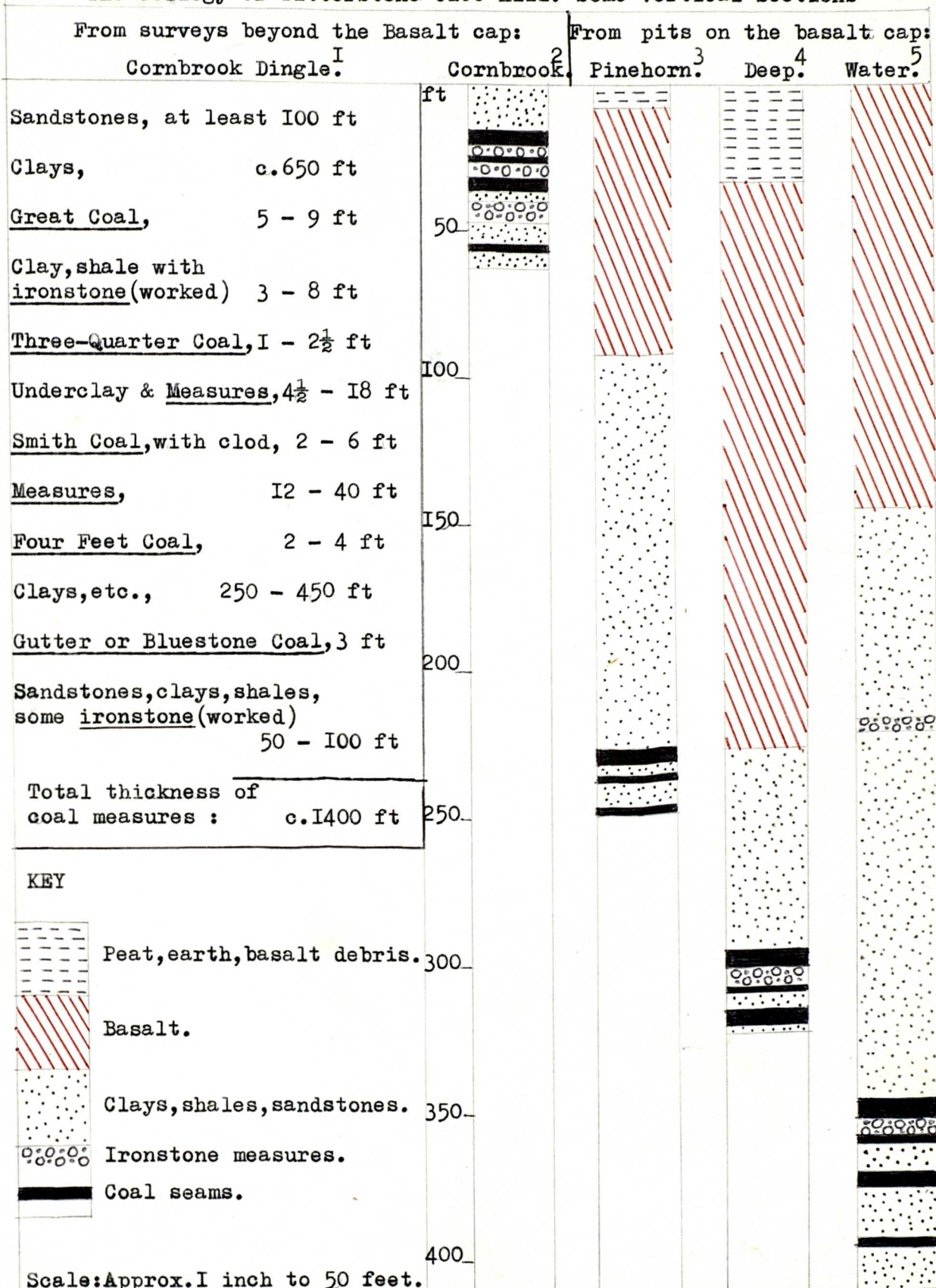
2. Figure 5, p. 25.

and it soon became necessary to drill through the basalt cap, using long-handled drills known as 'jumping bars', and sledge-hammers <sup>1</sup>, to tap the larger reserves of coal that existed underneath it. Drilling through the hard rock was a very difficult and expensive task. It required a great amount of capital, and good fortune for there was little knowledge either of the thickness of the basalt, which could vary from forty to three hundred feet, or of the position and depth of seams. At Titterstone quarry the basalt rests immediately above the Great Coal seam but north-east of Cornbrook it is one hundred and eighty feet above it <sup>2</sup>. Obviously, these shafts could absorb a great amount of capital and the sinking would require careful organisation and planning as well as new skills and careful supervision.

As the seams that were mined became deeper the problems of draining the workings became serious and, at times, overwhelming. The earlier shallow pits were drained by driving a sough, or adit, into the lowest part of the seam from a point further down the hillside. Such soughs were not usually very long or deep, particularly on the steeper hillsides, but they increased the expenses and dangers of mining <sup>3</sup>. In 1769, Samuel George, an old miner, stated that soughs should be only about two feet six inches square <sup>4</sup>. He did not comment on the nearly airless, painfully cramped and dangerous conditions that must have been endured by the human moles who made them. Although the soughs of this type all collapsed many years ago some can be identified for they still drain old workings and have become springs which have been noted by the Ordnance

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1. Information kindly supplied by a retired miner, Mr. J. Bishop, The Crescent, Clee Hill.
  2. R.W. Pocock, 'The Age of the Midland Basalts', Quarterly Journal of the Geological Soc. of London, lxxxvii (1931), 4, citing D. Jones, Geological Magazine (1871), 363.
  3. J.U. Nef, The Rise of the British Coal Industry (London, 1932), ii, 170.
  4. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 6110.

## The Geology of Titterstone Clee Hill: Some Vertical Sections

1. R. Kidston et al., *art. cit.*, p. 1068.2. T. H. Whitehead & R. W. Pocock, *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of G. B.: Dudley and Bridgnorth*, (London, 1947) p. 47.

3. Ludlow Museum, 'Section of New Pit at the Clee Hill', (1871).

4. J. Plymley, *op. cit.*, p. 61.5. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

Other sections are given in Murchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 114, 115. These provide more details of the ironstone measures than the above pit sections.

Survey, as in the case of the Gibbet spring <sup>1</sup>.

In the lower, less steep parts of the hillside and in the upper parts, where seams became too deep to be drained by simple soughs, longer drifts or levels were constructed. Such levels drained themselves but a considerable amount of skill and judgement was required when driving them to ensure that the seam was exploited as fully as possible. The earliest level in the area of this type for which documentary evidence exists was referred to as 'the Sough' during its working life <sup>2</sup>. In 1769, in a map of Lord Craven's estates, it was described as the 'Old Level' <sup>3</sup>. In later years deeper pits created a more serious drainage problem that was not always solved. The most costly scheme involved the driving of an adit, in 1820, from an existing level, that had been long exhausted, on the eastern side of Cornbrook dingle for more than a mile to drain a series of pits sunk on the plateau between Upper Watsill and the source of the Cornbrook <sup>4</sup>. The adit now supplies most of the water carried by the Cornbrook.

The work of miners was made, at the best, very unpleasant by constant dampness, and at the worst, very dangerous by the risks attendant on the sudden drowning of the workings. For wash-outs could occur when earlier, unknown, drowned workings were inadvertently encountered.

Coal-mining ceased on Titterstone Clee in 1922 when the last pit, aptly named 'The Trout' was allowed to drown itself because the cost of working and draining it had become too great to allow its coal to compete with coal brought from other areas by road and rail transport.

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1. Plate 15.1, p. 351.

2. Kidderminster Library, Knight Mss., Book 244.

3. See above, p. 20, note 3.

4. 'Clee Hill in Past and Present', Ludlow Advertiser, Dec. 26, 1957, p.4. See below, Plate 14.3, p. 344.

(c) The Soils

The Clee Hills lie within the Highland region of England and Wales and much of the area is economically poor. It is wet and exposed and has large tracts of moorland and hill slopes and is more naturally suited to pastoral than to arable farming. Even in the once heavily wooded lower areas, which are less exposed, grass grows better than cereals, especially in the soaked, or 'gley', soils to the east and north-east where some of the meadows produce very good quality hay.

The waste, including areas of waste that have been enclosed within the last two centuries, corresponds very closely with the area covered by the carboniferous measures. On the steeper parts little soil is retained and elsewhere, apart from small areas of peat bog, it is generally thin and stony and suffers from exposure to relatively severe weather for much of the year. Bracken and gorse flourish and grasses are coarse, strong and tufted. On the soils below the peaks, where the slope and the climate are less severe, better quality grasses grow in sufficient amounts to maintain large numbers of hardy hill sheep from neighbouring townships. However, even in the recently enclosed areas, only rough grazing exists.

Because of its limited agricultural use and its exposed position, few parts of the waste were settled, or even fenced, when industry developed on a larger scale in the early eighteenth century. Its open spaces provided little hindrance to the sinking of pits, the disposal of spoil, the erection of stables, brickworks and limeworks, and the building of new roads. It was, thus, easy to move elsewhere and abandon old works if necessary, especially where, as in the case of mines, surface structures were limited to stables and a windlass or gin which could be transferred easily. The ability to redirect efforts in this way could be limited by the terms of leases or by the general attitude to mineral exploitation of landowners or manor lords, but this restraint did not apply to most of the waste. There, it could be argued, capital was likely to be used more

efficiently when it was put into new works rather than into old works, from which the best coal had already been extracted, for it would lead to a higher rate of extraction, at least while seams were apparently unlimited and could be drained by driving adits. This type of mining would not encourage the adoption of new technical devices designed primarily to keep old mines operating successfully and it has been noted that the Clee Hill coal-field was backward compared with other coal-fields <sup>1</sup>. It was a labour intensive industry and attracted and maintained an increasing population as mining developed. The waste provided space for the erection of additional houses for workers and their families, where this was allowed or where conditions were favourable.

Outside the carboniferous measures the underlying old red sandstone extends for considerable distances without interruption, apart from small inliers of Silurian rocks at Veen Sollars and at Caynham. The transitional Downton series occurs in the areas to the west, south and south-east of Litterstone Clee and lower old red sandstone of the Ditton series to the east, north and north-west <sup>2</sup>.

The soils of these measures are generally deeper, particularly in the areas above the Downton series to the south-west and the south-east, although near the carboniferous measures they contain a high proportion of sandstones, limestones and basalt fragments. The Downton series consists largely of marls <sup>3</sup>, with some sandstones and discontinuous seams of impure limestones, or cornstones. Thick belts of heavy, red clay soils predominate but a series of small, hard sandstone rocks, outstanding now as a line of low ridges, reveal areas where the soil is sandier, lighter and less fertile.

Climatically, most of the area based on the Downton series is an

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1. R.A. Lewis, 'Two Partnerships of the Knights' (Birmingham Univ. M.A. thesis 1949), p.57. (Deposited at Kidderminster Library)

2. Figure 4, p. 19.

3. Edmunds and Oakley, The Central England District, pp.22, 25.

extension of the Hereford Plain and it has fewer May frosts<sup>1</sup> and a longer growing season than the area to the north-east. The influences that encouraged the development of the Hereford Plain into 'the corn barn of the West Midlands'<sup>2</sup> in the sixteenth century seem to have had effects in this area, also. Camden noted that the Cleve Hills were 'famous for producing the best Barley'<sup>3</sup>, and the use of lime in the district was referred to by Leland<sup>4</sup>. Originally heavily wooded down to the River Teme, it still has a well-wooded appearance. Small woods, coppices and hedgerow trees are common and, because the mild conditions, with warm, sunny summers and moderate rainfall, favour fruit trees, there are many orchards. Hops are grown, also, but much less extensively than formerly. Some of the soil is very heavy and although good crops of wheat can be grown more emphasis is placed on animal husbandry and on fodder crops. Some wheat, potatoes and sugar-beet, however, are grown for sale. The lower areas stock a high proportion of cattle but sheep farming becomes progressively more attractive as the higher reaches of the hill are approached and most of the land in this area is permanent pasture, although it can be converted to arable when necessary. In the areas adjacent to the waste, where pasture is poorer but is extended by common grazing rights, few cattle are kept. Since the nineteenth century the farmers of the lower areas have tended not to use their common grazing rights and have kept smaller flocks of heavier breeds of sheep. These have more discriminating palates and bigger appetites and require better pastures and larger amounts of fodder crops. The emphasis here is on meat rather than wool production.

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1. D. Sylvester, Rural Landscape, p.56.

2. The Agrarian History of England and Wales, 1500-1640, ed. J. Thirsk (Cambridge, 1967), iv, 8.

3. W. Camden, Britannia (1586), ed. Gibson (1695), col.542.

4. See above, p. 18.



The soils to the east and north-east are based largely on the Ditton series which have a higher proportion of sandstones and cornstones than the Downton series <sup>1</sup>. Although the predominant soils are red, deep and fertile like those to the west they are noticeably thinner, stonier and less fertile in many places, particularly in the upper reaches, and the presence of more hard rocks with greater resistance to erosive forces has given rise to numerous small ridges and hills and to a higher terrain generally than in the area of the Downton series <sup>2</sup>. Also, the area is exposed to the east and is overshadowed by Titterstone from the west so it is at a disadvantage climatically and contains what has been referred to as 'the bleak cores' of the Clees <sup>3</sup>. It is colder, suffers from May frosts and has a shorter growing season and more severe winters. Fruit is less easily grown and orchards are consequently rarer but this countryside also gives the impression of being well-wooded. It stretches to the Wyre Forest and was once a western extension of the Forest. The recent clearance of this area is indicated by the richness of its present woodland appearance, by the scattered settlements and the relatively low population and by late topographical place names such as Overwood, Button Oak and Woodhouse <sup>4</sup>. In the eighteenth century it was part of the region known as 'The wheatlands' <sup>5</sup>, but today it is largely pastoral with emphasis on cattle rearing and fodder crops in the lower, richer parts, and on sheep farming in the higher, less fertile parts.

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1. Edmunds and Oadley, The Central England District, p.26.

2. Dineley and Gossage, 'Old Red Sandstone', 225-226.

3. D. Sylvester, 'The Hill Villages of England and Wales', Geographical Journal, cx (1947), 83.

4. T. Rowley, The Shropshire Landscape (London, 1972), pp.95, 98.

5. J.P. Dodd, 'The State of Agriculture in Shropshire, 1775-1825', T.S.A.S., lv, Pt.1 (1954), 3, 22-23.

(d) The Parishes

The pre-nineteenth century parishes to the south and east of Titterstone Clee <sup>1</sup> have a dispersed or semi-dispersed settlement pattern and are made up, with the exception of the village of Cleobury Mortimer, of small hamlets and scattered farmsteads and cottages. The roughly north/south trend of the area, a consequence of the tilting of the Clee Platform is indicated by the general shape of the upper parishes, for they follow the lines of the ridges and valleys downhill towards the Rivers Teme and Rea. Several of these parishes are long and relatively narrow, and the lateral boundaries have been drawn by the crests of ridges or by the valley streams. The elongated shape of these upper parishes has been emphasised by the extension of their boundaries high into the waste where natural and ancient boundary lines such as Hoar Edge have been used as well as more recent, agreed, straight boundaries marked only by a series of stones or by a low mere or bank. In these parishes, although the Clee Hills are said to be the core of the single-township parishes of the south Shropshire uplands <sup>2</sup>, an upper township usually existed in association with one or more lower townships in the parish organisation. An apparent exception, Hopton Wafers, a small parish which had only one township, had a hamlet settlement at Hopton Bank on the hillside.

Nash, a chapelry in Burford parish, now a parish in its own right, falls into the same group as the parishes with upper townships to a limited extent. It had a small share of the waste, where the limestone outcrops, on the south part of the Knowle Hill. Instead of an upper township there was a late medieval manor, Hulle (now Court of Hill estate), and a hamlet at Knowle. Its lower townships were at Nash and Tilsop.

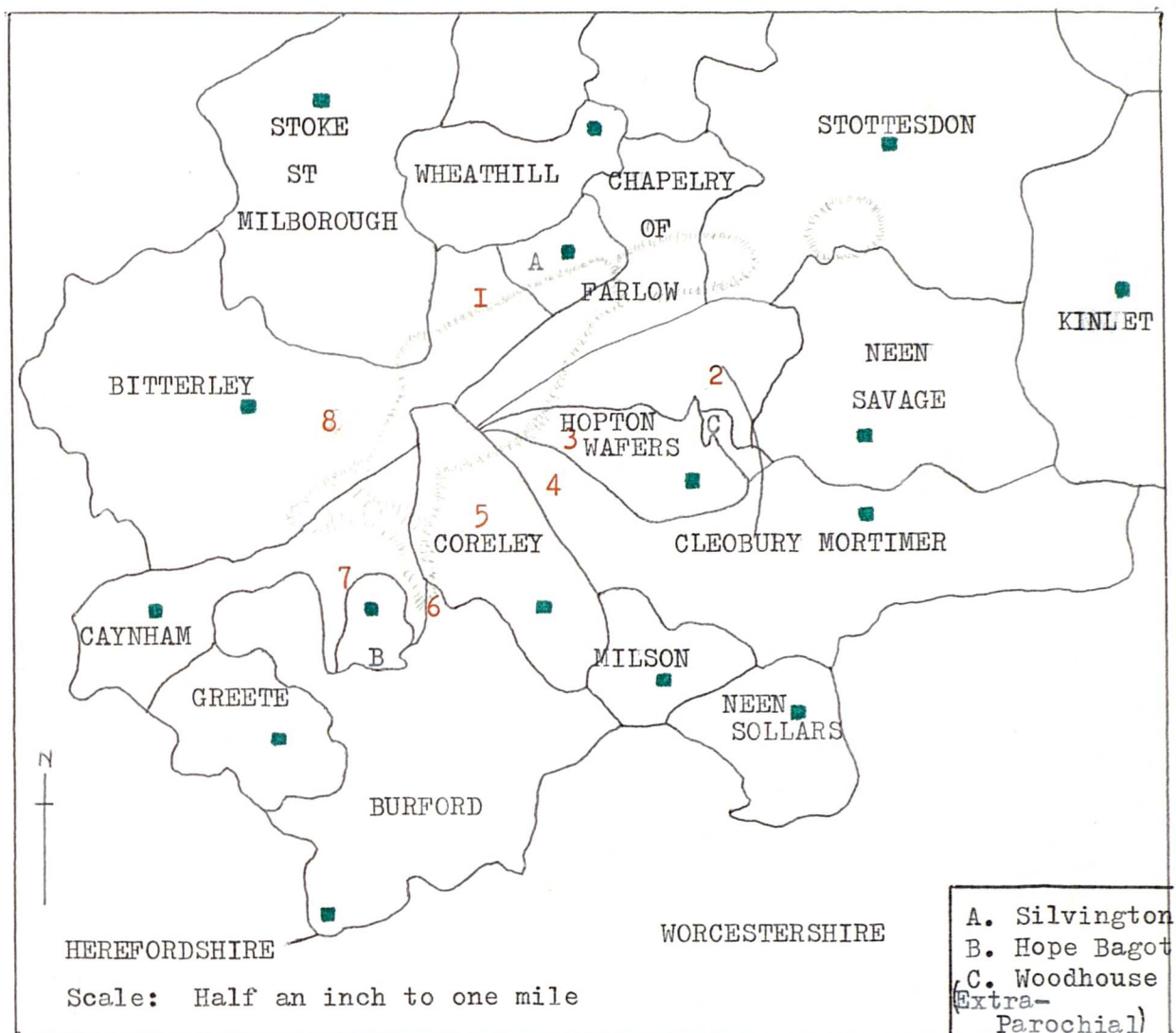
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1. Figure 6, p. 32.

2. D. Sylvester, Rural Landscape, p.341.

FIGURE 6

## ANCIENT PARISHES OF SOUTH EAST SHROPSHIRE



Parochial townships ■

Upper townships and settlements

- 1. Cleeton Township.
- 2. Catherton Township.
- 3. Hopton Bank
- 4. Doddington Township.
- 5. Hints Township.
- 6. Knowle
- 7. Bennettsend Township.
- 8. Hillupencott Township.

The parishes with associated upper and lower townships fell roughly into two groups. Most had one or two lower townships on the outer edges of the hill which provided the parochial centre. These townships retained common rights of grazing in the upper waste although their richer soil and greater proportion of arable land enabled them to maintain a larger population than the poorer upper townships. In another group of parishes, which had several lower townships, the parochial centre lay beyond the outer edges of the hill as at Cleobury Mortimer and Stottesdon. The agricultural connections of such parishes with the waste tended to be less important except in those parts that lay on the upper slopes. Common pasture rights were not retained by the distant lower townships which were more firmly based on the deeper, richer soils. Local, limited areas of stony, infertile land within each township or, in some cases the woods between townships, provided common pastures.

A third group of parishes lay beyond the limits of the hill. These had no upper townships nor other close connection with the hill. Their centres were well inside the areas once heavily wooded and they included Greete, the Burford and Boraston chapelries of Burford parish, Milson and Neen Sollars.

During periods when population was increasing the lower parishes, and lower townships in mixed parishes, tended to be more attractive. The climate was more pleasant, soils were more fertile and the woods, which still existed, could be cleared to extend the arable lands. The parochial centres provided more opportunities for by-employments having both greater supplies of raw materials and larger markets, and their woods and fuller streams could be used for fuel and to provide power. By contrast the bleak upper townships were more dependent on pastoral farming and the importance of their large wastes lay mainly in their use as grazing land although their mineral resources were not entirely unknown.

However, the spare land of the lower areas was not unlimited and the ability of available land to absorb further population increases, or even to maintain previous population levels, could be reduced by changes in land-ownership patterns or in farming practices, or by a decline in the relative importance of local industries. In such situations the upper townships became more attractive for their wastes provided space for squatters' cottages and a precarious livelihood, based on a small patch of land and hill grazing, which could be supplemented with seasonal farm work and, at times, with some haulage, quarrying or mining. When more thorough exploitation of mineral resources was undertaken in some of the upper townships the squatters provided a supply of labour, and more workers were attracted onto the hillside from lower townships and from places outside the area. As a result the upper townships became more densely populated, new centres of population developed on the hillside and old centres expanded. Lower parishes tended to lose population or, at least, to have a much lower rate of increase than upper parishes, and in mixed parishes the upper townships made more impact and had more influence than before on the affairs of the parish.

(e) Early Settlements, Agriculture and Population

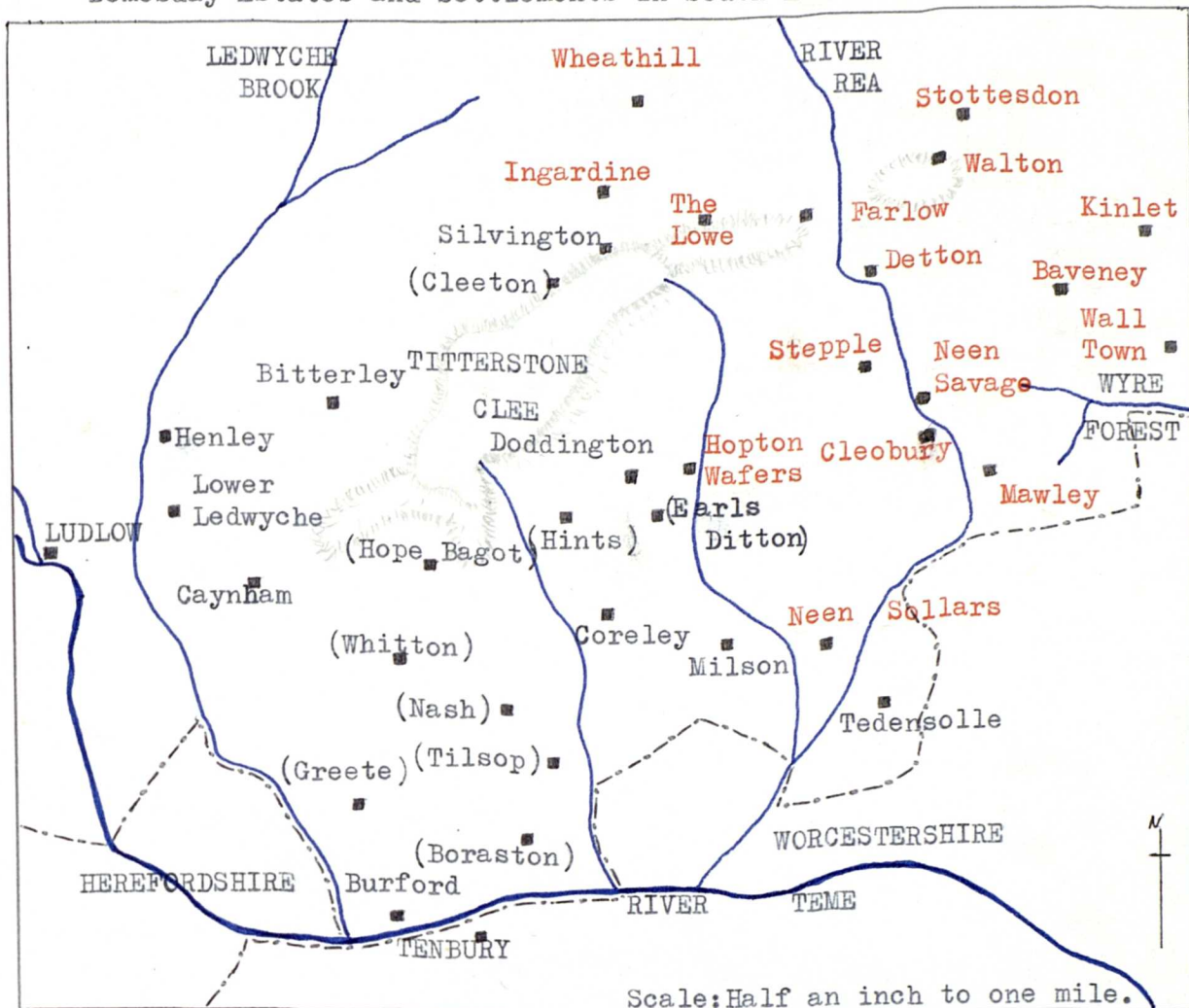
The early settlements of the area were a mixture of Celtic settlements, created by downhill movement from the camps, and of valley settlements made by the later waves of Mercian colonists. The hybrid cultural and settlement pattern that evolved, indicated by place names and the survival of Celtic elements in Shropshire dialect, came under Mercian overlordship. The Mercian settlements appear to have been nucleated hamlets and their farming pattern was based on large areas of arable land, the importance of which is emphasised by the careful attention given to it in the Domesday Book <sup>1</sup>.

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1. See Figure 7, p. 35. The calculations that follow are based on the translations of the Domesday Book given by Rev. C.H. Dringwater in V.C.H., Shropshire, i, 309-349, and by R.W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire (London, 1857), iv, 298-378 (Overs Hundred), 139-297 (Condetrret Hundred).

FIGURE 7

Domesday Estates and Settlements in South East Shropshire.



Manors in Ovret (Overs) Hundred are shown thus: Bitterley.

Settlements within those manors, for which there is later evidence, are shown thus: (Hope Bagot).

Manors in Condret (Stottesdon) Hundred are shown thus: **Ingardine**.

The amount of arable land appears to have been relatively small when it is possible to place it within an area of known size. Overs Hundred, which may have got its name from its position (for it included most of the high land of Titterstone Clee), contained twenty seven and a half hides within an area of about thirty six square miles. It had nine estates <sup>1</sup> although some of the largest of these included other settlements, as was revealed by later references <sup>2</sup>. Bitterley contained five townships, including Cleeton; Caynham contained four townships, including Hints and Hope Bagot; Burford, which stretched from the River Teme to Coreley, contained at least six townships. When these are included the number of settlements, twenty one, had on average a little over one hide of arable land each. They were still scattered and in some cases quite distant from each other. There were 125 adults recorded in the hundred although the entry for Silvington was omitted. This is, on average, approximately six to each of the twenty settlements remaining, which have an area of about thirty three square miles, or roughly four per square mile, which was within the range 4-3-2 calculated for Shropshire as a whole by Darby <sup>3</sup>. Non-serfs numbered ninety five and, assuming them to have been householders, multiplying them by five and adding the number of serfs gives a rough population total for the hundred of 505, an average of about twenty one per thousand acres. Burford, most of which lies far down the slope, had an average of thirty per thousand acres. Its roughly ten and a half square miles contained nearly half of the population of the hundred, 246, so the upper slopes were very sparsely populated. This is confirmed by other figures for Condetret Hundred (later known as

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1. Ten including Doddington. However, this estate was valued with Cleobury in Condetret Hundred and was transferred to that hundred shortly afterwards. Eyton, op.cit., iv, 298, 355-56.
  2. Eyton, op.cit., iv, 298-378 passim.
  3. H.C. Darby, An Historical Geography of England before 1800 (repr. Cambridge, 1948), p.209, Figure 25.

Stottesdon Hundred), which provide more information on the townships of the upper slopes. Doddington's one hide was valued with Cleobury, Ingardine had one virgate and rendered 5<sup>s</sup> a year, the Low had one hide, rendered 10<sup>s</sup> a year, and had three non-serfs - the only persons referred to in these upper areas. Farlow, attached to the manor of Leominster, rendered 3<sup>s</sup> a year<sup>1</sup>. Obviously, pastoral farming was still of considerable importance to these poorer areas as it had been in the days of the Celtic settlements.

On the lower slopes and beyond, although some woodlands were omitted as was often the case in the survey, a significant number were mentioned. At Caynham, Burford, Cleobury and Tedensolle (Neen Sollars) there were woods sufficient for fattening two hundred, one hundred, five hundred and forty swine, respectively, and Cleobury woodlands yielded £2. Also, in Stottesdon, there were two leagues of woodland about which nothing else was reported.

By 1086 Ralf de Mortimer held much of the area around Cleobury. Through a combination of ruthlessness and judicious marriages his successors became great marcher lords. Roger Mortimer played a leading part in the victory over Simon de Montfort at Evesham, and at Kenilworth, in 1266, he received a reward in the form of a charter which gave him the right to make Cleobury and Chelmarsh, described as a single manor, independent of all suits. Mortimer considered that more than twenty manors were members of Cleobury-Chelmarsh and set up his central court and gallows at Cleobury. Eventually, as part of the Earldom of March, many members of Cleobury Honour passed to the Crown by inheritance through the Mortimer heiress, Anne, who was the grandmother of Edward IV.

The quasi-regal powers exercised by the Mortimers over much of

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1. R.W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire, iv, 191.



south-east Shropshire ensures that little is known of their undertenants <sup>1</sup>. However, it is clear that a considerable expansion of the cultivated land occurred in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Many small, scattered settlements and isolated farmsteads were recorded in deeds for the first time during this period and the personal names in the Lay Subsidy Roll of 1327 indicate others <sup>2</sup>. Much of the well-wooded or waste areas between lower parishes was colonised at this time. Their irregular-shaped fields, enclosed by ditches and banks which now support thick hedges, show that the new lands were not added to the common fields in many cases, and that they were suited to pastoral farming. The names in the subsidy of 1327 confirm that expansion had taken place mainly in the lower parishes. There are no references to new settlements in Coreley, Doddington, Hope Bagot or Hopton Wafers, and only two in Bitterley, one of which referred to Trapnell in Burford while the other referred to a settlement in lower Bitterley. On the other hand references to places in Neen Sollars, Cleobury and Burford were numerous. In the Nash-Tilsop part of Burford, alone, four of the eight names refer to three local farmsteads: the Shear, Sherbourne and the Hemm.

By the thirteenth century the area known as the 'Ryelands', centred on Leominster, and including south Shropshire, was benefiting from the demand for its wool, the renowned 'Lemster ore'. That the wool trade brought prosperity to the area is indicated by the buildings that were erected at that time and by the power and influence of some of the leading burgesses of Ludlow. The buildings included many of the local parish churches, some of the medieval buildings of Ludlow (notably the magnificent church of Saint Lawrence), and Stokesay Castle. As early

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1. J.C. Anderson, Shropshire: Its Early History and Antiquities (London, 1864), p.282.

2. 'The Shropshire Lay Subsidy Roll of 1327', ed. W.G.D. Fletcher, T.S.A.S., 3rd ser., vi (1906), 123-151 (Stottesdon Hundred); 3rd ser., vii (1907), 353-359 (Overs Hundred).

as 1240 William le Moneter, a burgess of Ludlow, purchased estates in Whitton and established a landed family there <sup>1</sup>. Lawrence of Ludlow, a wool merchant, who bought Stokesay estate in 1231 also established a landed family <sup>2</sup>, and Nicholas of Ludlow, who was a large exporter of wool between 1270 and 1274, seems, at times, to have acted as the attorney of the English merchants in Flanders <sup>3</sup>.

The importance of sheep to the Titterstone Clee area is revealed in the church assessment of 1341, the Nonarum <sup>4</sup>, which also reveals that population and prosperity had declined generally before the arrival of the Black Death. Assessments, based on those of 1291, had to be severely reduced. Tenants were described as 'incapable' (Burford), 'impoverished' (Neen Sollars and Hopton Wafers), or had 'quit because of poverty' (Stottesdon). But in many parishes, significantly, the reasons for reducing assessments gave great emphasis to sheep: 'No lambs or wool in the parish' (Neen Savage), 'lack of sheep stock' (Coreley and Hopton Wafers), 'no stock of lambs or sheep' (Stottesdon).

This crisis, which had forced some tenants to quit, must have been made much worse a few years later by the ravages of the Black Death, for Shropshire was badly affected, and it could have encouraged a decline in communal agriculture in the original nucleated hamlets - which had already been weakened by the dispersal resulting from the expansion of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries <sup>5</sup>.

The decline probably continued when the process of clearance and dispersal was resumed later in the Middle Ages. The new settlements

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1. Some old Shropshire Houses and their Owners, ed. H.E. Forest (Shrewsbury, 1924), pp.143-144.

2. Ibid., p.144.

3. V.C.H., Shropshire, i, 428 and footnote.

4. R.W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire, iv, 139-297 passim, 298-378 passim.

5. D. Sylvester, Rural Landscape, pp.127-128.

are indicated by hamlets and farmsteads with descriptive or topographical names such as the Wood, Hillhouse and Oak in Milson, Wallhouse and Dinthill in Boraston, Churchbridge in Nash, and Brookrow and Woodrow in Coreley. Clearance is revealed, also, in the names of individual enclosures such as Burnt Land, Smoke Acre, Stocking, Ridding and the Hawthorns <sup>1</sup>.

Shropshire was among the counties investigated by the Enclosure and Depopulation Commission in 1517 but the returns did not refer to any of the parishes in the area <sup>2</sup>. The Depopulation Act of 1536 did not concern itself with Shropshire, so it appears that, although open fields still existed in some townships, much of the land had already been enclosed by the early years of the sixteenth century without adding to the distress of the population, or, at least, without attracting attention to it. The area, which was still very remote, contained large woodlands and wastes, including extensive hillside wastes. It had a predominantly pastoral economy and was very thinly settled by people who were very poor.

The lack of population in the area and the poverty of the people is shown very clearly by the returns to the lay subsidy granted to Henry VIII by his parliament in 1523. The first payment of this subsidy, which was made in 1524, has been used for this purpose as the rolls have suffered little damage and are more detailed, on the whole, than the rolls that contain the details of the second payment, although these provide some useful figures for purposes of comparison.

In 1524 the number assessed in the southern part of Stottesdon Hundred, in the parishes of Caynham, Cleobury Mortimer, Coreley, Hope Bagot, Hopton Wafers and Neen Savage, which covered an area of thirty square miles, amounted to 127 people <sup>3</sup>. In addition, in Farlow, which

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 9751. Court of William, Earl of Arundel, for the manor of Hints, 1536.

2. W.E. Tate, 'A Handlist of English Enclosure Acts and Awards', T.S.A.S., lii (1948), 17-19.

3. P.R.O., E.179/166/131.

was assessed with Leominster in Wolphy Hundred of Herefordshire and for which details were not given, there were several other people. As the total amount paid in Farlow only amounted to five shillings, it is improbable that more than three or four people were assessed there <sup>1</sup>.

The 1524 return for the hundred of Overs includes all parishes in the hundred <sup>2</sup>. In Bitterley parish the township of Cleeton is listed separately and in Burford there are separate accounts for Whitton, Greete, Nash and Tilsop chapelries and for Burford 'et the Franches' which includes Boraston. The number of people assessed for the whole hundred amounted to 137.

If those assessed in Silvington parish are deducted from the total for Overs Hundred there were 128 who were assessed for the same area in which 125 adults were recorded in the Domesday Book and in which ninety one were assessed for the subsidy of 1327, which had been widely evaded. Although the figures from Domesday Book and the 1524 subsidy are based on different criteria, they give a strong impression that the population of the area had declined since the eleventh century and even if great caution is used in this respect it can be safely assumed that the area, including the southern part of Stottesdon Hundred, was still very sparsely populated during the early years of the sixteenth century. This view is confirmed by a more detailed study of the subsidy returns.

Although the returns for 1524 dealt with all persons aged sixteen years and above, with the exception of peers, and of clergy unless they held secular properties, poor people who were below the tax threshold were not included. It has been shown, elsewhere, that about a third, and sometimes more, of the population in some towns and counties fell into this

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1. P.R.O., E.179/117/105.

2. P.R.O., E.179/166/136.

category <sup>1</sup> but there are reasons for believing the proportion was lower in this area and was offset to a large extent by the fact that in many houses there were several persons who were assessed.

Comparisons of the names referred to in the subsidy with names given in manor records of Cleobury Foreign, Hints, Coreley, Doddington, Boraston, Bitterley and Hope Bagot dated between 1516 and 1536 <sup>2</sup> reveal that there were some people in all of these places who were omitted from the assessment. The omissions were not numerous and included William Bishop and Walter Map of Cleobury Foreign and Dudnell, John Dicher and William Smallman of Hints, George Chapman of Coreley, William Uncle and William Hide of Doddington, Thomas Holland of Boraston and Richard Sheppard of Bitterley, all of whom were probably assessed in other parishes outside the area for some were men of substance and others were men who were known to have moved, from time to time, between holdings in different parishes. None were wage-earners.

Only ten of the 127 people listed in the southern part of Stottesdon Hundred and eighteen of the 137 in Overs Hundred were assessed as wage-earners. Together they represented 10.6% of those assessed which is a much lower proportion than has been noted elsewhere <sup>3</sup>. The small numbers of wage-earners imply that there were relatively few landless men in the area even if it is allowed that some were too poor to be assessed, as was clearly the case in some places, and that others who were servants and labourers were overlooked, as at Burford 'wher is the House of the Barony of Burforde longing to Mr Cornwale' <sup>4</sup> but where no

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1. W.G. Hoskins, Provincial England (London, 1963), pp.83, 90-91, 93. R.A. McInley, Norfolk Surnames in the Sixteenth Century (Leicester, 1969), p.13.
  2. P.R.O., S.C2/197/101 (7-20 Henry V111). S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 7180, 9751.
  3. W.G. Hoskins, op.cit., pp.83-84. Margaret Spufford, 'Rural Cambridgeshire 1520-1680' (Leicester Univ. M.A. thesis, 1962), pp.47-48.
  4. The Itinerary of John Leland, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, v.17. See also volume ii, 78, 'The Baron of Burforde's cheife howse caullyd Burford is a little above Tembyri ripa sinistra in Shrobbshire'.

wage-earners were listed in the returns.

It is clear that wage-earners were far less numerous than those who held small amounts of land and supplemented their income either with the profits made from trades or other by-employments, or with the wages earned from casual or part-time work. In general the subsidy was levied on wages down to a yearly value of £1 at the rate of  $4^d$  in the pound, on goods down to a yearly value of £2 at the rate of  $6^d$  in the pound and on lands down to £2 at the rate of  $1^s$  in the pound and people were assessed on whichever brought most revenue. Yet, in most parishes in Overs Hundred, and in some in Stottesdon Hundred, many people were assessed on other standards which in some cases involved the taking into consideration of more than one form of wealth which was sometimes, but not always, described as 'goods'. In Hints John Chelmarshe was assessed at  $6^d$  'for his goodes', as were John Coundley and Roger Coundley 'for lyke', and in Whitton Edward Jukes, whose goods and lands were valued at  $10^s$  and  $13/4^d$ , respectively, was assessed at  $8^d$ . Of the twenty two men assessed in Greete, three were assessed  $4^d$  each on goods valued at  $£1/6/8^d$  and nine were assessed  $4^d$  each on goods valued at £1. Levies of similar severity were made on nine out of thirteen people in Milson, on four out of nine in Silvington, on two out of five in Cleeton, on five out of twenty four in Neen Sollars, and on fourteen out of thirty in Burford.

It cannot be assumed that all of those assessed were householders for they included sons who were living at home, parents living with their sons, co-heirs living together, servants living in, and other servants and labourers earning wages who lived at home or with relatives. John Hopkes and 'his son', and James Farmer and 'his moder' were assessed ~~together~~ at Neen Savage and Cleobury Foreign, respectively, and William Adams and his son, William, and William Edwards senior and William Edwards junior, followed each other in successive entries at Cleeton and

Greete, respectively. Humphrey and Richard Coningsby, who were both assessed on lands valued at £7, were listed in successive entries at Neen Sollars and John Hinckesman of Silvington who was assessed on goods valued at £5 was followed immediately by Walter 'his servant' who was assessed on his wages of £1 a year. In addition, in nearly all parishes there are other entries where two or more men with the same surname that is not particularly common succeed each other although there is no other sign that they were closely related. They included Richard and John Heycot in Caynham, John and Humphrey Adams in Neen Savage, Roger and John Coundley in Hints, Richard and William Boughton in Cleobury Foreign, Ancell and Phillip Cowper, and Thomas and John Crump in Bitterley, William and John Matthews in Milson, Thomas and John Wen in Silvington, and Edward, John and Walter Jash in Jash and Tilsop. None of these men were assessed on wages but in all cases, with the exception of the Boughtons, at least one of them was assessed on goods valued at £2 or less so it can be assumed that at least some of them shared households. There is no indication of the proportion of wage-earners who lived in although the reference to John Hinckesman's servant, Walter, appears to imply that his situation was not common in the area.

Precise estimates of the population of the area cannot be derived from the subsidy rolls because of the uncertainties encountered in them but if the total number of persons assessed is multiplied by five the result, 1320, can be accepted as a relatively accurate basis for comparisons.

The severity with which the assessments were applied to the poor did little to conceal the poverty of the area. The total amount collected for the whole of Overs was only £14/12/4<sup>d</sup> of which Sir Thomas Cornwall paid £5 on lands assessed at £100. The remainder of the people who were assessed paid, on average, only about 1/5<sup>d</sup> each. The total amount collected from the 127 people in Stottesdon Hundred amounted to £7/15/3<sup>d</sup>,

only, and was, on average, just over  $1/2\frac{1}{2}^d$  each.

In Overs the various parts of the parish of Burford provided  $\pounds 9/4/10^d$  which was nearly two thirds of the amount collected for the whole hundred. Of the balance, the lower parishes of Neen Sollars and Milson, and the lower parts of Bitterley provided  $\pounds 2/0/8^d$  and  $\pounds 2/9/6^d$  respectively, and the upper township of Cleeton and its neighbouring parish of Silvington paid only  $9/4^d$  and  $8/4^d$  respectively.

The total amounts paid by other parishes and townships in the area were low also, particularly in those that were situated high on the hillside where there were extensive wastes and in those to the east and north-east in the 'bleak cores' of the Clees. In Cleobury borough twenty five people paid a total of  $\pounds 1/15/6^d$  so Leland was not being unjust when he referred to Cleobury as a 'poore Village' <sup>1</sup>. The remainder of Cleobury parish amounting to over seven thousand acres, including parts of the Wyre Forest, the lower townships of Mawley, Bransley, and Dudnell and the upper townships of Earls Ditton, Doddington and Catherton, was assessed as 'Cleobury Forren' and twenty nine people paid a total of  $\pounds 2/3/0^d$  there. Coreley, Hopton Wafers and Caynham were assessed at  $17/4^d$ ,  $18/4^d$  and  $19/9^d$  respectively, Farlow at  $5^s$  and Hope Bagot at  $3^s$ . Neen Savage townships paid a combined total of  $\pounds 1/8/4^d$ , only, although twenty four people were assessed.

The townships of Stottesdon parish to the north were poor also. Only two people were assessed in both Harcourt and Walton which paid  $4^s$  and  $5^s$  respectively, four people in Chorley paid a total of  $4^s$ , six in Wrickton paid a total of  $8^s$  and six in Oreton paid a total of  $7/6^d$ .

In general, poverty appears to have been less severe in the areas outside the district to the north and north-east <sup>2</sup>. Although the

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1. The Itinerary, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, v.9.

2. P.R.O., E.179/166/131.



assessment at Eudon in Chetton parish amounted to only 8<sup>s</sup> for seven people, eight people at Aston Eyre paid a total of 15/6<sup>d</sup>, the same number at Cleobury North, on the slopes of Brown Clee, paid a total of 19<sup>s</sup>, and nine people at Highley, which was on the banks of the Severn to the north-east, paid a total of 16<sup>s</sup>. The assessments in the nearby parts of Herefordshire to the south and south-west lack the details of the persons who were assessed but the total amounts paid give a strong impression that poverty was less severe there. The small chapelry of Rochford paid £1/2/0<sup>d</sup>, Little Hereford paid £1/16/6<sup>d</sup>, Kimbolton paid £1/4/2<sup>d</sup>, Morton paid £3/19/8<sup>d</sup>, and Croft paid £5/13/6<sup>d</sup> <sup>1</sup>.

In the townships of Burford parish, which was dominated socially and economically by Sir Thomas Cornwall, wealth was otherwise relatively evenly spread, although there were some exceptions, as was the case, also, in the parishes of Neen Sollars and Milson. In Nash and Tilsop township, Whitton chapelry and Neen Sollars parish differences based on the holding of fiefs or sub-fiefs still existed and in these three places, respectively, John Hill paid 6/8<sup>d</sup> of the total assessment of 18/6<sup>d</sup>, Edward Hopton paid 10<sup>s</sup> of the total of 17/8<sup>d</sup>, and the Coningsbys together paid 14<sup>s</sup> of the total of £1/11/0<sup>d</sup>. At Bitterley John Blount and Stephen Kemsey, whose lands were valued at £26/13/4<sup>d</sup> and £13 respectively, and William Adams of Cleeton whose lands were worth £4, were much wealthier than other people in the parish. Clearly, Adams and his son, William, and Thomas Adams, who was assessed on goods valued at £3/6/8<sup>d</sup>, dominated Cleeton township for they paid between them 8/8<sup>d</sup> of a total assessment of 9/4<sup>d</sup>. Blount and Kemsey, who were both referred to as 'armiger' in 1528 in a court roll of the manor of Doddington-Hints <sup>2</sup>, for which Blount was the steward, dominated large parts of Bitterley.

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1. P.R.O., E.179/117/105.

2. P.R.O., S.C2/197/101.

Disparities in wealth and social position of this nature were less common in the parishes of southern Stottesdon. The largest individual payment in this area was made by Richard Hide, Lord of Hopton Wafers manor, who paid 7<sup>s</sup> towards the 18/4<sup>d</sup> assessed in Hopton Wafers parish. In Coreley and in Neen Savage the highest single assessments were 4/6<sup>d</sup> and 4<sup>s</sup>, on Thomas Badger and Thomas Foxall, respectively, and in Caynham, in Cleobury Borough and in Cleobury Foreign the highest individual assessments were only 3<sup>s</sup>.

TABLE 1

Analysis of the 1524 Subsidy for Overs Hundred and southern Stottesdon

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Numbers in the groups</u>		
	<u>Overs</u>	<u>southern Stottesdon</u>	<u>Total</u>
£5 and above	1	0	1
£1 to less than £5	1	0	1
10 <sup>s</sup> to less than £1	2	0	2
5 <sup>s</sup> to less than 10 <sup>s</sup>	4	1	5
2/6 <sup>d</sup> to less than 5 <sup>s</sup>	6	8	14
Less than 2/6 <sup>d</sup>	123	118	241
	<u>137</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>264</u>

The social and economic pattern revealed by an analysis of the assessments of 1524 for Overs and the southern part of Stottesdon Hundred can be expressed as a pyramid which has a very wide and thick base supporting thin and narrow upper parts surmounted by a spire. With the obvious exception of Sir Thomas Cornwall and a few gentry, namely John Blount and Stephen Kemsey, nearly all of the people of the area were in a state of wretched poverty, and the rest were very close to that state. Even those who, like William Adams, Richard Hide, John Hill, Edward Hopton

and the Coningsbys had manorial rights, were poor and the economic and social disparities that existed between them and the remainder of the population were relatively small. Lower in the scale among the peasantry, although many had fragmented holdings that were too small to maintain them and others were landless, the differences of wealth between them and their richer neighbours was not great enough to polarise society. Nonetheless, it is clear that some engrossing of land had occurred already and that society was beginning to be affected by this and by other changes in land structure and land management which gathered pace after 1524.

## 2. THE CHANGING PATTERNS OF LANDHOLDING, LAND MANAGEMENT AND AGRICULTURE.

Much of the land gained from the wastes by the establishment of small settlements and isolated farmsteads during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as well as the land acquired by renewed expansion in the later Middle Ages, was enclosed as clearance and settlement took place <sup>1</sup>. Little of it appears to have been added to the common fields and in the early years of the sixteenth century it was held by freeholders who were the successors of the men who had cleared it. The lower parishes, and the lower townships of upper parishes, were most noticeably affected by this process although similar enclosures, on a smaller scale, occurred up the hillside in upper townships such as Hints where a series of 'closes' extended for some distance above the open fields to meet the waste.

The predominantly pastoral nature of farming in this area was emphasised by this pattern of clearance and expansion. Although a great increase in the settled lands occurred between the eleventh and

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1. See above, pp. 38-40.

seventeenth centuries, the area of arable land does not appear to have increased commensurately so its relative importance was reduced considerably. The importance of sheep and of the cloth industry in the area continued into the sixteenth century and beyond, and the presence of a large number of cattle is revealed by the numerous by-employments at Ludlow and Cleobury Mortimer that depended on leather <sup>1</sup>, and by the importance of cattle at Ludlow and Bridgnorth markets <sup>2</sup>.

The fact that Shropshire was not included in the Depopulation Act of 1597 confirms that enclosure had not caused great problems there during the sixteenth century. Its exclusion from the draft bill followed debates in the Commons in which Sir Thomas Coresbye noted that the county was natural pastoral land suited to enclosure and the 'bread of Oxen and Daries ...', and added 'that as Herefordshire and the other countries adioyning, were the Barnes for the Corne, soe this Shire might and would bee the Dayrie howse to the whole Realme ...' <sup>3</sup>.

The use of better farming techniques and of improvements had led to the great increases in the production of cereals in Herefordshire and adjacent districts and similar efforts were made in south-east Shropshire. Evidence of early attempts to improve the soils is afforded by the presence of many old marl pits, or by the survival of their names, on the lower slopes of the hills. One of them, in Hints township, <sup>4</sup> is sited on old red sandstone grits and pebbles which are heavily banded with cornstones and lime pellets. It is in the lands once owned by the abbey of Wigmore and its name indicates an early sixteenth century origin at the latest. Nearby, in an upper corner of the old common field of Hints

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1. See below, pp. 112.

2. Agrarian History, ed. J. Thirsk, iv, 492.

3. Cited in W.E. Tate, 'Handlist of English Enclosure Acts and Awards', T.S.A.S., lii (1943), 19. Agrarian History, ed. J. Thirsk, iv, 8, 100.

4. Known as Monks Pit.

township once known as Cross Field, is an enclosure named Hints Pit. Other townships have similar evidence of the existence of old marl pits.

Before the middle of the sixteenth century, as Leland noticed, large amounts of lime were being supplied from the Clee Hills to the country around them <sup>1</sup>. This referred particularly, no doubt, to the nearer parishes for they could be supplied more easily and more cheaply. Other aspects of agricultural improvement were probably stimulated by the expansion of lime-burning, coal-mining and ironstone-smelting for these activities increased market opportunities and made farming more profitable. This probably encouraged the more opportunist farmers, from early in the sixteenth century, to enclose open fields, where they existed, to acquire more holdings and to consolidate their lands. The greatest changes were probably encouraged, however, by the developments in Herefordshire and neighbouring parts of Worcestershire, that enabled them to market corn over a wide area of the West Midlands, later in the sixteenth century. Both Tenbury and Ludlow markets were close to the producing areas and the Titterstone area, with its existing industry, provided a ready market for grain which must have been supplied previously from the surpluses of the local parishes situated lower down the hill.

The effects of the arrival of large supplies of cheaper grain are not directly recorded and there are no indications of its transport or sale, nor of its price and the amounts sold. Indirect evidence of its influence is provided by the growing importance of Tenbury as a market town <sup>2</sup> and by agricultural, industrial and population developments in the parishes of the area.

Among the consequences <sup>3</sup> of the importing of quantities of cheaper

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1. See above, p. 18.

2. See below, p. 73.

3. The arguments in the two paragraphs that follow owe much to the stimulating suggestions of E.L. Jones in 'Agricultural Origins of Industry', Past and Present, 40 (July, 1968), 58-71.

grain one would expect to find a period of agricultural depression among local growers of food grains, particularly among the smaller farmers, followed by an adjustment involving a greater concentration on pastoral farming and the adoption of new crops such as fruit and hops. The development of more concern for a commercial agriculture would thus concentrate farming on the lines best suited to the pastoral nature of this area and would lead to greater efficiency and higher profits. It would encourage, also, further enclosing, engrossing and concentration of holdings and would release labour and capital for industrial and other activities. Thus the rapid growth of the iron industry in the late sixteenth century was probably stimulated, indirectly at least, by the agricultural developments that stemmed from the corn fields of Herefordshire.

Another result of the changes in agriculture would be an increase in per capita income particularly at a time when populations were static or slowly increasing in agricultural areas and not keeping pace with rapid industrial developments in other areas. The inelasticity of demand for food grains would allow a surplus of income to be used for the purchase of meat and other livestock products as well as for the purchase of other goods. This in turn would further stimulate the trend towards greater agricultural efficiency and towards pastoral farming and encourage secondary and tertiary industries. For the population at large the more varied and improved diet with its greater content of animal proteins could be expected to increase strength and resistance to diseases and eventually lead to natural population increases.

Some enclosure of old open fields and of common meadows and pastures occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but was in places, only partial. At Mawley and Prizeley in Cleobury Mortimer parish, a survey of 1579 reveals that, by then, only the small amounts of twenty nine acres, thirty five acres, and twenty eight acres remained unenclosed

in the three common arable fields <sup>1</sup>. The total of ninety two acres represented about 26% of the township lands listed, which did not include the waste lands. All the meadow land, twenty four and a half acres, was enclosed and owned in severalty, and pasture land amounted to more than two hundred acres. In Coreley, one of the open fields of Hints township was still unenclosed as late as 1769 <sup>2</sup>, but two others had been largely enclosed before 1592 <sup>3</sup>. In Coreley township, part of Coreley field was still open in 1592 but it appears to have been enclosed shortly afterwards for even the name of the field had been replaced by the names of its separate parts by the second half of the seventeenth century. In the town of Cleobury Mortimer, one of the 'tillable' fields, the Lyde field, was still unenclosed in 1651 when John Batche sold his four ridges and six butts of land in it to Thomas Chetwin for £14 <sup>4</sup>. The other arable fields of Cleobury appear to have been enclosed long before this time. When the same ridges and butts were sold to Thomas Lowe in 1729 they were said to be lying in the field 'called the Lloyd field being now enclosed' <sup>5</sup>.

The enclosure, or partial enclosure, of the open fields was often an aspect of the preparation for the engrossing of and, eventually, the consolidation of holdings. So, also, was the increase in the severalty holding of strips, in those fields that remained open, for it made the building up of large holdings of land easier, although not necessarily

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1. The survey is reproduced in some detail in H.L. Gray, The English Field Systems (repr. Merlin, London, 1959), p.449.
  2. S.B.L., MSS 2481, ii, Survey in the parish of Coreley, and Map VI. The same map shows that in Dudnall township, in Cleobury parish, parts of five or six fields were still unenclosed in 1769.
  3. Hereford R.O., Terrier of Coreley glebe. This terrier is not dated, but internal evidence indicates that it was written between 14th Dec., 1591 and 20th July, 1592. It was signed by Edward Coling and Richard Nash, churchwardens. Coling was buried 29 Sept., 1620, and Nash was buried 7 July, 1608.
  4. Salop Record Office (S.R.O., hereafter) 1048/436.
  - 5 S.R.O., 1048/438.

inevitable.

The land of Mawley and Prizeley <sup>1</sup>, amounting to about 350 acres, was held by five people, three of whom held amounts of thirty five acres, forty two acres, and forty nine acres. But Elizabeth a Wyer held a messuage and  $117\frac{1}{2}$  acres and Edward a Wyer held four messuages and 103 acres.

Accounts given in to the Exchequer by William, Earl of Arundel, for the year ending Michaelmas 1535, include the accounts of the bailiff of Doddington-Hints manor <sup>2</sup>. These show that there were sixteen freeholders in the manor, some of whom were building up considerable holdings. William and George Chapman had four messuages, and their lands, in Coreley, Humfrey Bury had messuages and lands in Hints and in Doddington, Hugo Milston had two messuages and lands in Hints; and in Dudnell township, Cleobury parish, William Map had four messuages and their lands which included an orchard. The lands of John Chelmarsh in Hints and in Coreley passed, by the marriage in 1577 of his granddaughter Margaret, into the hands of the Cleobury family. Margaret's husband, William, was described as 'gent.' when he was buried in 1599. The same lands, with only minor changes, passed to the Wellins family in 1623 when William Cleobury's granddaughter, Margaret, married Edward Wellins at Ludlow. In 1662 Margaret, then Widow Wellins, divided the lands into three roughly equal marriage portions for her daughters <sup>3</sup>. Most of these lands were acquired, over the next fifty years, by the Baldwin family. When John Baldwin sold his property in 1737 to Sherrington Davenport the lands formerly owned by Margaret Wellins amounted to about two hundred acres <sup>4</sup>.

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1. See above, p. 51.

2. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 7180.

3. S.R.O., 1150/354, 355, 356.

4. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 9608.



Some of the men referred to in the Earl of Arundel's accounts had lands in other manors, also. One of them, John Bullock, sold his lands in 1561 to Richard Nash <sup>1</sup>. They amounted to 290 acres and included a messuage and lands situated in Coreley manor and a cottage situated in Milson manor, as well as the messuage in Doddington-Hints manor that was referred to in the Earl of Arundel's accounts.

Similar records confirm that lands were being engrossed in other parishes of the area and that the process was encouraged by the release onto the land market of abbey and other church lands. However, many of these lands were scattered in small parcels, particularly when they were held in the old open fields. Edward Coling, yeoman, of Coreley, leased ninety four acres of land in Coreley and Hints, and twenty six acres in Doddington from Sir Rowland Hayward under two separate leases late in the sixteenth century <sup>2</sup>. He had also leased large areas of land from Richard and Thomas Ottley of Pitchford in their manor of Coreley in 1598, including the scattered holdings of 'Byrdes grounde and Plantinges Moore' <sup>3</sup>, and from 1611 he had an interest in a messuage in Hartall, Burford parish <sup>4</sup>. As a result his lands were spread over an area of several square miles and even those held in one area were scattered.

The terrier of Coreley glebe lands of circa 1592 <sup>5</sup> refers to many scattered parcels and strips lying amongst the equally scattered strips of Edward Coling, Richard Nash, Thomas Taylor and others in the open field called Bradleys field. Holdings were also interspersed elsewhere in the parish in the pasture and meadow lands, and even, to a lesser extent, in

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 621.

2. These leases are referred to in a new lease made in 1616 between Sir John Hayward and Edward Coling. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 8448.

3. National Library of Wales, Pitchford Hall Documents, 1058.

4. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 1016.

5. See above, p. 52, note 3.

the enclosed old arable fields, Hoppall and Cross fields.

Hopton Wafers' glebe terrier of 1604 refers to items of 'errable grownde lyinge and being in the Comon fyeldes of the said parishe', and it describes pieces of land that were obviously scattered and interspersed as at Coreley. However, some strips had been consolidated into small groups and some enclosure had taken place in at least one of the open fields, for included in the church lands were several ridges lying together in a field called Mearbage 'lately enclosed out of the said field' <sup>1</sup>. During the early part of the seventeenth century gradual consolidation of holdings continued to take place through numerous private exchanges and purchases and by 1657, when a survey of the lands of the Palmers Gild was made, many more strips had been brought together in small groups although there were still many holdings that were scattered <sup>2</sup>.

In Hope Bagot, as early as 1565, Richard Stary, yeoman, and Thomas Hunte, yeoman, exchanged lands. Richard Stary gave up twelve selions and acquired nineteen which lay between lands already in his possession <sup>3</sup>. On 25th March, 1650, Richard Sheppeard of Redford, gent., and George Thomson of the Shear, gent., both of Burford parish, exchanged parcels of land in Nash which included the 'Little Plumpitt' and another parcel by 'Nashe Chapell yard' <sup>4</sup>. Enclosure and consolidation appears to have proceeded more swiftly in those parts of the area where there were resident manor lords or a high proportion of large freeholders than in parts, such as Doddington-Hints manor, that were dominated by absentee landlords like the Earl of Arundel and his successors, Rowland Hayward and Lord Craven.

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1. The Hopton Wafers' terriers are deposited at Hereford R.O.

2. S.R.O., Ludlow Corporation, 356/686. See below, p. 141.

3. S.R.O., 1670/3.

4. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 1410. 1411.

The engrossing and consolidation of land considerably reduced the number of holdings that were available. To some extent this was compensated for by the clearance and settlement of new land.

Expansion up the hillsides in upper parishes and, more noticeably, into the wastes and woodlands in lower parishes, continued during the sixteenth century. Expansion up the hillsides is illustrated by a reference, in a rental of 1567, to a payment made by Humfrey Parker for a piece of 'waste' ground called the 'Marshgrownde', in Doddington <sup>1</sup>. In 1613 it was leased to Richard Davies as 'pasture' and was called the Marsh road <sup>2</sup>. Much of the area lying near it on the hillside, known as the Gorst, was enclosed at about the same time. Some enclosures were made earlier including Yewtree Farm and Hillside Farm in Hints. Hillside Farm was conveyed to Thomas Taylor in 1640, when it was known as Abbots Nook <sup>3</sup>. This appears to imply an early sixteenth century origin, at least. The lands enclosed with it are known as Shetfields. On the edges of these enclosures, facing the waste, a series of small cottages was built from the sixteenth century onwards, as is indicated by architectural evidence. Similarly in Snitton a tenement and lands known as Gorstley existed in 1540 when the manor was conveyed to William Foxe by John Adams <sup>4</sup>. In the manor rent roll of 1612 another tenement on the hillside, the Heath, and a house and close were referred to for the first time, although they were not named, and the 1648 rent roll included payments for several more plots, and 'divers parcells of land', and for a cottage 'and new inclosures' <sup>5</sup>.

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 8384.

2. S.B.L., Ibid., 8447.

3. Kidderminster Library, Cat. of MSS, 6317, 6318, 6319. The original documents were destroyed in 1955 when the library was flooded.

4. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 6100, p.3.

5. S.R.O., Oakly Park Estate, 20/Box 13.

Expansion into the wastes and woodlands of lower parishes appears to have been most active in Neen Savage and Cleobury Mortimer parishes, particularly in areas bordering the heavily wooded valley of the River Rea, in the woods near the Wyre Forest and in the forest itself. An indication of settlement in the Wyre Forest is the increasing occurrence of early forms of Wyre as a surname in parishes in the area. The 1524 subsidy returns referred to four people named 'A Weere' or 'Weare' in the district. All of them lived in parts of Cleobury Mortimer parish. Margaret and John a Weere are referred to in Coreley parish register in 1564. The five landholders at Mawley and Prizeley who were referred to in the survey of 1579 included four, Edward, Johan, Elizabeth and John, whose surname was 'a Wyer'. Joyse Awyer was married in Neen Savage in 1585 and John Awyer was referred to in the same parish in 1586. Margaret, daughter of Francis a Wier, was baptised in Coreley in 1597, and in 1601 the final form of the name was given in Burford register when William Wyer was married. However, more recent settlement was implied by a Neen Savage entry in 1605 of the burial of 'Margerye, a Weere, syngle woman'. Neen Savage parish register also notes the baptisms of a son of John Poston 'dwelling in the Comyne ...', and of a daughter of Nicholas Essex 'of the Weere', in 1576, and of a daughter of John Holeway 'of the Comine ...', in 1580.

Several other families, living in different parts of the Wyre Forest, are referred to in other entries made at this period. Although it does not begin until 1601, Cleobury Mortimer parish register has many references to settlements, in the woodlands, that had been made earlier <sup>1</sup>.

During the sixteenth century, however, as population increased and agricultural changes continued, the woodlands and wastes began to take on an additional and wider role in the economy of the district. They

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1. See below, p.110.

continued to provide land that could be cleared for agriculture or for settlement and they gave opportunities, also, to those who were anxious to undertake the more energetic exploitation of mineral and other resources that was encouraged by the attitudes and policies of the Crown. In particular, the area provided a site for the establishment of a large-scale iron industry for its advantages, at that stage, far outweighed any disadvantages caused by its poor communications. It had large woods that could supply the charcoal to feed the voracious furnaces and suitable streams that could provide the blast. The other raw materials of the industry were known to be present for they had been worked on a small scale for many years.

The continued assarting of the wastes and woodlands, the extension of hill settlements and the growth of industry were related closely to population pressures. Some of these pressures had been caused by changes in land management and structure that had reduced the amount, and value, of common arable land and had decreased the number or size of available holdings, but others had been caused by large increases in the population.

Although exact information on population movements is not available for the period after 1524 the contemporary belief that population had increased before 1600, and was continuing to increase, is supported by much indirect evidence, including increasing pressure on land resources, and, in particular, by the entries in the parish registers that have managed to survive from that time. The registers illustrate, also, with the aid of other sources, some of the changes, and the variations in those changes, that had taken place in social life, in agriculture, and in industry, in different parishes and settlements in the area.

### 3. POPULATION CHANGES AND THE PEOPLE

Details of baptisms, burials and marriages for the late sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century do not exist for most of the parishes in the area. The earliest volumes of the registers of baptisms of the parishes of Milson <sup>1</sup> and Neen Sollars <sup>2</sup>, which begin with entries for 1707 and 1708 respectively, contain inside their front covers the total figures, for their parishes, of baptisms, burials and marriages for the century from 1553 to 1658. The details are as follows:

<u>1558-1658</u>	<u>Baptisms</u>	<u>Burials</u>	<u>Marriages</u>
Milson	168	125	23
Neen Sollars	351	229	26

The excess of baptisms over burials, a crude increase, was forty three in Milson and 122 in Neen Sollars.

More detail is given by the registers of Coreley <sup>3</sup>, Burford <sup>4</sup> and Neen Savage <sup>5</sup> which begin in 1543, 1558 and 1575 and can be considered as reasonably complete from 1562 to 1622, 1585 to 1650, and 1576 to 1640, respectively. These parishes, which covered nearly twenty square miles, contained a large proportion of the area and provide a good cross-section of the district. Coreley, which was situated much further up the hillside than the others, was a relatively poor parish for it was small and included large areas of poorer pasture and waste. In its waste it

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1. Milson Parish Register, Shrops. Par. Reg. Soc. (Shrewsbury, 1915), xvi, Part 5.

2. Neen Sollars Par. Reg., Shrops. Par. Reg. Soc. (Shrewsbury, 1914), xvi, Part 4.

3. The original registers are deposited in the Old Rectory, Coreley, where they were studied with the kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. Milner, the occupiers, and Rev. Holt, Rural Dean of Burford.

4. Burford Par. Reg., Shrops. Par. Reg. Soc. (Shrewsbury, 1913), xvi, Part 2.

5. Neen Savage Par. Reg., Shrops. Par. Reg. Soc. (Shrewsbury, 1916), xvii, Part 1.

contained, however, the largest part of the deposits of ironstone and coal, and some limestone. Burford was the largest of the three parishes, and was the richest agricultural parish in the area. Its farmlands and woods faced the south-west, and it was close to the market centres of Tenbury and Ludlow. It had only small areas of hill waste in its chapelries of Whitton and Nash on the edges of the parish and was firmly based on the heavily wooded Teme valley. Neen Savage lay further to the east on and beyond the eastern edges of Titterstone Clee. It was colder and generally higher than the lower parishes to the west and south-west, although centred on the River Rea, and had a south-eastern aspect. These features, its wet Dittonian soils, the restraints imposed by the Mortimers in the interests of the chase and its remoteness, had made it unattractive with the result that, although more of its land had been cleared and settled in the later Middle Ages, much of it remained heavily wooded in the early sixteenth century thus providing opportunities for further clearance and attractions for the iron industry, which was heavily dependent for its fuel on large supplies of charcoal.

As neither listings nor other local census figures exist for the three parishes it has been necessary to make estimates of the populations at different times. For 1524 it has been assumed that the people who were assessed separately for the subsidy represent the number of households which existed at that time, and that there were, on average, five persons in each household. Even if, as it may be argued, the figures produced are under-estimations they provide a valuable basis for comparisons. For the later years of the sixteenth century and the early years of the seventeenth century the detailed study of the records of baptisms and burials over ten year periods in the parish registers provided figures which were averaged and then multiplied by thirty one and thirty, respectively. Where there were no great disparities between the baptismal and burial figures the mean was taken to represent the

approximate population figure for the middle years of that period. Again, it should be recognised that the choice of the multipliers, which represent the birth-rate and the death-rate, respectively, is speculative and gives only a rough guide to true population figures. It does provide, however, valuable indications of the general population changes and movements.

TABLE 2

Population Estimates for Coreley, Burford and Neen Savage, 1524 - 1635-36.

	<u>1524</u>	<u>1565-6</u>	<u>1575-6</u>	<u>1585-6</u>	<u>1595-6</u>	<u>1605-6</u>	<u>1615-6</u>	<u>1635-6</u>
Coreley:	80	84?	102	130	137	120	138	166
Burford:	260	305	-	-	-	380	324	479
Neen Savage:	120	-	-	265	325	295	303	253

Despite its inadequacies the demographic information indicates that there had been a large increase in the population of the area since 1524 and that this increase had taken place, to a great extent, during the second half of the sixteenth century, particularly between the 1560s and the 1590s. The greatest increase, over 100% between 1524 and 1585-6, had taken place in Neen Savage. Although the population of this parish continued to increase for some years after 1590 the period of rapid increases had clearly ended about then. The population was relatively stable from then until about 1620, and in some parishes it decreased. Afterwards, with the exception of Neen Savage, the population began to increase again.

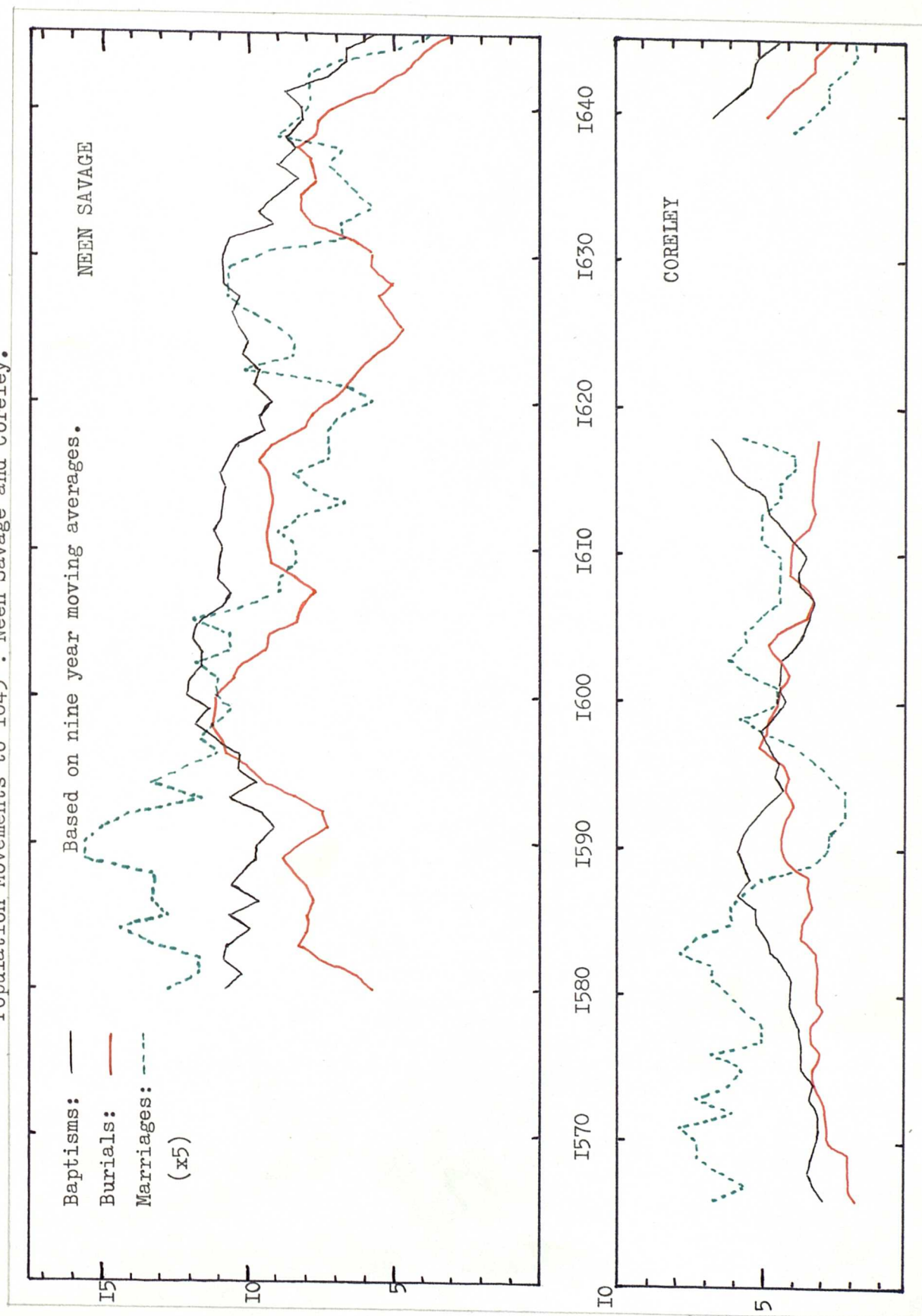
The population graphs of the same parishes, based on nine-year moving averages all reveal a steady excess of baptisms over burials, with the exception of a period of crisis late in the sixteenth century, and confirm that the figures for Milson and Neen Sollars, referred to above, are part of a general pattern in the district <sup>1</sup>.

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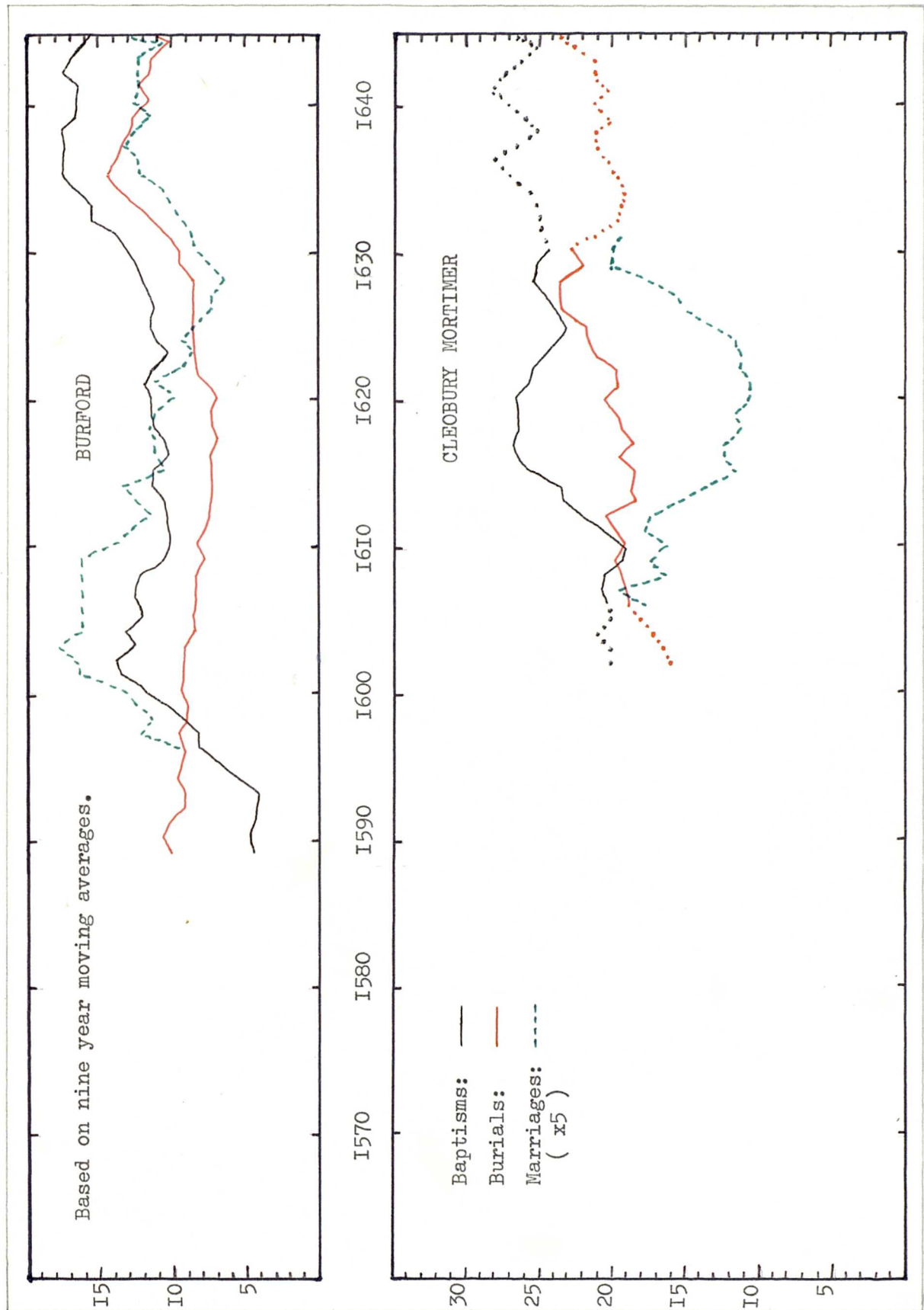
1. Figure 8, p.62 ; Figure 9, p. 63.



Population Movements to I645 : Neen Savage and Coreley.



Population Movements to 1645 : Burford and Cleobury Mortimer.



The Neen Savage population appears to have been remarkably stable between 1580 and 1640, but from 1610 onwards there is a slight, but clear, decline in the figures. In Coreley the figures show, in general, a rising trend between 1566 and 1622 but a greater increase, that had begun about 1610, had taken place by 1640 as the few figures for that period indicate. The increase in baptisms after 1610 followed an increase in the numbers of marriages, as did an earlier increase in baptisms between 1575 and the early 1590s. Between these two periods there was a period of difficulty which appears to have lasted much longer in Coreley than in the other parishes. In Burford, which does not appear to have been greatly affected by the crisis of the 1590s, there was a much more noticeable increase in the numbers of baptisms over the period from 1590 to 1650 with a steady number of burials until the 1620s. Burials, from this date, began to increase in parallel with a more rapid rate of increase in the number of baptisms, but the excess of baptisms over burials remained nearly constant.

Although the moving averages give a good indication of the general direction of population changes in the area they tend to hide or distort short-term fluctuations, such as those that occurred in the 1580s and 1590s, and they give very little indication of the underlying pressures on population exerted by forces of social and economic change. These can be revealed best by a detailed study of the registers themselves.

The detailed study of the population of each parish reveals that they were far from static societies. Some families provided an impression of long-term continuity but even this was largely illusory beyond two or three generations for population mobility was considerable. A survey of surnames in Coreley made between 1613 and 1622 compared with a similar survey made between 1573 and 1582 shows that only 56% of the surnames found during the earlier period were referred to in the later period. In Burford of the surnames found during the period 1586 to 1595 only 57% were still there between 1626 and 1635. In Neen Savage the changes were even greater for of the names recorded in 1576 to 1585 only 34% were

noted in 1616 to 1625.

The movements were basically of two different types. The first involved the movement of people who were recognisably local and who moved from parish to parish within the district. Among these were many families who had been associated with the area over a long period and who are immediately identifiable because their locative surnames are derived from local placenames. Among them were Cleeton, Cleobury, Detton, Dudlick (Duddlewick), Ersland and Oseland (Earls Land), Hince (Hints), Hinton, Lowe, Nash, Stepple and Whitton. These, and others, often reappear in a nearby parish when they disappear from their previous parish. This movement is particularly noticeable between parishes that have a common boundary, such as Coreley and Burford, and suggests that a high proportion of this type of movement was made over very short distances and that many of the people involved were servants or farm workers. One of the families referred to in the Coreley register between 1573 and 1582 (25%), occur in the Burford register between 1586 and 1595. Meanwhile, six families had moved from Burford to Coreley. Of the nine Coreley families six are to be found in Coreley again between 1613 and 1622, and all the Burford families were back in Burford between 1606 and 1615. From, roughly, 1610 the movements between Coreley and Burford were noticeably reduced but were still significant and still more often in the direction of Burford, the larger and agriculturally richer parish, than in the direction of Coreley. The movement in favour of Burford was probably greater than it appears for Coreley Church, situated within a few hundred yards of the boundary with Burford, was used in preference to their own, more distant church by many people from the Nash, Tilsop and Knowle areas of Burford parish.

These movements indicate that, as well as the people who remained firmly in their own parishes, there were many people who moved away for part of their lives.

A noticeable movement can be discerned, also, between parishes that are more distant from each other. Neen Savage names quoted in the period 1576 - 1585 that appear in Burford register by 1626-35 include Ashbatch, Hacluit, Iddins, Monox and Whoper. As only rare or unusual names were used as a guide the amount of movement was probably greater. Movement the other way appears to have been much less, however, and as late as 1625 was confined, apparently, to the Amias family, members of which had resided in Burford, until about 1560, before moving to Neen Savage.

The second type of movement involved people who travelled much greater distances. Some local people, who cannot be traced in later records, must have left the district but the counting of local names that disappear, as a rough guide, does not indicate widespread emigration. On the other hand, large numbers of outsiders came into the district. Some, like Sir Sebastian Harvey and Sir Thomas Edwardes, purchased local manors, others like Edward Coleing, who was baptised at Norbury near Bishops Castle in 1565, acquired leases of farms, but most were much poorer people who left very little record of their existence, apart from references in the parish registers.

Places of origin are rarely given but it is obvious that a large number of the newcomers had come from Wales. The earliest entries in parish registers indicate that a steady flow of Welsh people had been coming to the area from, at least, the second quarter of the sixteenth century and that, as they had been absorbed into the communities, their names had been anglicised. This movement probably got under way after the Act of Union of 1536 for the subsidy returns of 1524 for the whole area contained only one undoubtedly Welsh name. This was 'Morice a Myrike' (Maurice ap Meurig), who was assessed in Burford. Moreover, contemporary manor court rolls that have been studied for this period contain no Welsh names that do not occur also as English surnames. The

infrequent settlement of Welsh migrants is emphasised by a reference to 'Richard Welsheman' in the presentments made to the court of Doddington-Hints manor on 30 April, 1529<sup>1</sup>.

In the parish register entries made later in the sixteenth century the new arrivals can usually be identified either by the entries that give the Welsh form of their names, or by the absence of a surname, or by badly misspelt names in cases where clerks were defeated by Welsh orthography. Many were obviously landless and destitute for a high proportion were referred to as 'beggars' or 'poor' and others were described as 'servants'. Some were single men or women when they arrived and were first noted when they were married in their adopted parish, others had arrived with their families as a few baptismal entries show. Such easily identifiable migrants provide some indications of the quantity, type and pattern of movements into the area.

Neen Savage, with an area of about 3,800 acres, contained four manors which had large demesne lands, or capital messuages. It contained, also, several dispersed hamlets and large farmsteads. The recent nature of these settlements is indicated by names such as Elcot, Nethercott<sup>2</sup> and Overwood, all of which were small hamlets based on large farmsteads. Further clearance of woods and wastes during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries added to the size of the larger holdings, which were further augmented by the engrossing of earlier holdings.

Neen Savage parish register records the highest number of people with Welsh names and the highest number of beggars in the district. Between 1575 and 1616 alone there were twenty six recent Welsh names and eighteen beggars recorded. On the other hand during the same period eleven gentry, including a knight, a 'medicus' and a 'minister' were referred to. These

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1. P.R.O., S.C2/197/101.

2. See below, Plate 5.2, p. 76.

people employed most of the servants noted in the register, emphasising that considerable social and economic disparities had emerged in the parish since 1524. Many of the servants, beggars and those with identifiable Welsh names moved on, for they were not referred to again, and were replaced by others in a similar condition. This suggests the existence of a class of itinerant poor for whom the presence of industries and of a large number of gentry in Neen Savage was an attraction and also suggests that there were few opportunities for more permanent settlement. References to agricultural by-employments are rare and the closure of the small local smithies and mills as industry became more firmly established in Cleobury must have reduced the amount of alternative employment, and could have affected, also, the opportunities of the more permanent inhabitants. The total number of surnames in the subsidy returns of 1524 was eighteen. The number noted in the parish register entries between 1576 and 1585 was eighty three, but between 1616 and 1625 it had fallen to sixty nine. As the number of servants, beggars and other itinerants was roughly the same during both periods the figures appear to show that the settled population of the parish could have been declining. This supports, for the period after 1610, the view suggested by the entries on which the population estimates and the moving averages were based, although some distortion of these could have been caused by people who stayed for very short periods in the parish.

The outward movement of Neen Savage population is also suggested by the number who went to Burford <sup>1</sup>. However, the greatest attraction was probably exerted by Cleobury Mortimer with which it shared a common boundary. Cleobury was a much larger parish and contained large areas of wasteland, extensive woodlands and an expanding iron industry. Moreover, the large village of Cleobury, which was only a mile away from Neen Savage

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1. See above, p. 66.

Church and township, was developing as a market town <sup>1</sup>. The benefits and employment offered by town life would be an added attraction. Of the fifty five family names noted in the Neen Savage register between 1576 and 1585 that had disappeared by 1616 to 1625 twenty one (38%), had reappeared in the Cleobury register between 1602 and 1615. Only two of these were recent Welsh names. Allowing for the greater attraction of Cleobury Church and for some reverse movements to Neen, this still indicates a considerable population movement from Neen to Cleobury and accounts for the subsequent decline of the hamlet settlements particularly at Detton and at Nethercott <sup>2</sup>.

Coreley was the smallest, and the poorest agriculturally, of the three parishes and had the lowest population. It contained about 2,200 acres, of which nearly one thousand acres was hill waste <sup>3</sup>. Some large farms had been built up especially in lower parts of the parish, by the clearance of woods in the late Middle Ages, and others had emerged, as holdings were consolidated, but much of the land was still in small parcels that formed parts of smallholdings. Some were scattered among the larger holdings or were enclosed pieces of Coreley Field in Coreley township, or of Hoppall Field or Cross Field in Hints township, but most were strips, or blocks of strips, in the unenclosed common field known as Bradleys Field in Hints, or were closes, or old encroachments or small settlements that stretched up the hillside from the arable fields to the edges of the waste. The terrier of 1592 <sup>4</sup> does not identify all those people whose lands are adjacent to church lands. Nevertheless, it refers

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1. See below, pp. 81, 83.

2. I am grateful to Major and Mrs. Lennox of Nethercott Farm for the opportunity to study both the house platforms and crofts near their house and the buildings that have been adapted for use as farm buildings.

3. The survey of 1709 gives the amount of hill waste in the parish at that date as 943 acres. Cottage enclosures and other encroachments into the waste amounted to approximately forty nine acres. S.B.L., Mss 2481, ii.

4. See above, p. 52.



to fifteen different landholders in its account of about sixty to sixty five acres of land. In 1567 Richard Ersland paid a copy fine of twenty shillings 'for a tenement and half yard land', Thomas Taylor paid eight shillings 'for a messuage', Thomas Hare paid five shillings for a meadow and six parcels of 'grownde' and three other people paid three shillings and four pence, twenty shillings and twenty one shillings for a meadow and two different messuages<sup>1</sup>. A rental of the manor of Doddington-Hints for 1615 gives details of payments made for land by twenty three people who were tenants in the part of Coreley parish, amounting to about 1,532 acres, that was in the manor<sup>2</sup>. Payments varied from one shilling to two pounds with an average payment of eleven shillings. If the payments of the seven large leaseholders are deducted, the average amount paid by the remaining sixteen was nearly five shillings and five pence. Obviously, many holdings must have been very small and heavily dependent on the additional pasture for sheep provided by the waste. There are indications that the waste also provided by-employments for some of these small landholders. In the same rental Richard and Roger Ersland, who each paid five shillings for their land, shared a payment of three shillings and four pence 'for a lyme kilne'. John Richards made a similar payment and, although they were not mentioned in the rental, there must have been men who benefited from digging the limestone, the coal used to burn it, and some of the ironstone for the Cleobury furnaces, and other men who provided the necessary transport.

There was no resident lord of the manor and only one person living in the parish, William Clebury 'of Hynts', who was buried in 1599, is referred to as 'gent.' in the register between 1543 and 1600. Social

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 8384 ('Accounts of Mr. Rowland Hayward for Hyntes and Corleye').

2. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 7449. Some of the remaining acres belonged to the small manor of Coreley which was controlled by the Otley family of Pitchford, other parts, including large freehold lands, appear to have evaded the manorial organisation during the later years of Hayward ownership.

disparities were far less than in Neen Savage and only one servant is referred to in the same period. No beggars are referred to until 1637 and a burial entry of 1585 for 'Sibila, paupercula' is the only reference to severe poverty. Careless or uninformative recording may be responsible for the absence of other references to wretched poverty but the study of the burial entries shows that most refer to known local people and that there could not have been many itinerants. This seems to be confirmed by the scarcity of entries referring to people with recent Welsh names. Three were mentioned between 1567 and 1569, four between 1581 and 1587 and one in 1605. Even if the anglicised names such as Powell, Price and Lloyd are included, families of Welsh origin did not form a significant proportion of the population of Coreley in the sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. It seems clear that this parish was less attractive to the poor people, beggars, wanderers, servants and young unmarried men and women who made up such a high proportion of those who went to Neen Savage. But a detailed study of the register between 1562 and 1640 indicates that the population was steadily increasing, as the estimates of population and the graph based on the moving averages show, and that this increase was at least partly due to the settlement of migrants, for the number of surnames, which had been thirteen, only, in the subsidy roll of 1524, was thirty four between 1573 and 1582, forty three between 1593 and 1602 and forty eight between 1613 and 1622. This evidence of settlement and some engrossing of land helps to explain the diminishing size of landholdings shown by a comparison of the rent-roll of 1615 and manor court details of fines and rents collected in 1567. Although death-rates were above average in 1607 and 1612, conditions seem to have been better than they had been previously, for steeper rises in the number of deaths had occurred in 1585-87, 1591-93, 1596-7, and 1600-1602, and the movement of local people, temporarily in many cases, to neighbouring parishes

was considerably higher during the 1530s and 1590s than it was from about 1610 onwards. Indications of a growing resilience in the parish are provided by a study of the register for the years from 1594 to 1597.

There were four bad harvests in succession from 1594 to 1597 and, as a result, the price of all grains and of peas and beans rose steeply. During this period the severest effects of the long years of dearth did not show in Coreley until 1597. Even then there were no signs that the deaths were caused by starvation for it was not mentioned and no vagrants were involved. Those who died were, generally, adults. Although hardship was probably the lot of many people it appears that employment opportunities in Burford, and the wool, quarrying and mining of the parish that enabled them to purchase grain, helped to reduce the risks that were attached, elsewhere, to a too heavy reliance on arable land.

Burford, even without Greete, which had established itself as a separate parish by the seventeenth century, was a large parish of some 6,672 acres. The chapelries at Boraston, Nash and Whitton were dependent on St. Mary's, Burford, and had no burial grounds. The three portionaries, Rectors of Burford, shared the parish duties according to agreements made between them. Their areas, spiritual duties, and other responsibilities were not defined until 1849<sup>1</sup>. Burford parish register does not contain separate lists for the chapelries and does not always give places of origin so it is rarely possible to make comparisons between different parts of the parish.

Although some of its soils were very heavy and difficult to work, Burford contained a higher proportion of land suited to the growing of arable crops and a more favourable aspect than other parishes in the area, but in its higher parts, on and near the ridges that ran down from Titterstone Clee, there were thinner, poorer soils that were more suitable for use as pasture. In other parts of the parish thick beds of heavy clays

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1. Burford Parish Register (1913), pp. xix-xx.

made arable farming difficult. Much of the woodlands had been cleared by the sixteenth century but Dean Park, smaller areas of woodlands, especially in stream and river valleys, and an increasing number of orchards gave a well-wooded appearance to much of the parish.

Settlements, including Burford itself, were small, and scattered hamlets or isolated farmsteads with large holdings of land provided the predominant pattern. The local market was at Tenbury which was owned by the Cornwall family also. Camden described it as 'a small but well frequented mar et-town' <sup>1</sup>. Its market day, Tuesday, which was included in the original grant of 1249, is still the same but Sir Thomas Cornwall, who found it worthwhile to encourage the development of Tenbury at the expense of the old borough of Burford, obtained about 1630 a new grant of two fairs a year <sup>2</sup>. Tenbury Bridge probably had much to do with the prosperity of the borough for roads converged on it from Bromyard, Cleobury, Hereford and Leominster, Ludlow and Worcester, and it attracted trade and travellers. After it had been damaged by severe floods in 1615 the people of Tenbury, in a petition to Worcestershire Quarter Sessions asking that nearby parishes should share the cost of repairs, claimed that the bridge was a great thoroughfare from most places in Wales to London <sup>3</sup>.

Outside the township of Burford the extensive seigneurial powers of the old Barony of Burford had been reduced greatly since 1524 and the wealth of the Cornwalls had been more widely dispersed. Several independent manors, some of which were very small, had emerged and, like many of the larger farmsteads were held by gentry or by yeomen who became gentry during the seventeenth century. Between 1562 and 1600 the parish register refers to the Cornwalls, Barons of Burford, to two esquires and seven gentlemen. During the seventeenth century the families of eleven

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1. W. Camden, Britannia, ed. Gibson (4th ed., 1772), p.462, col.2.
  2. F.W. Joyce, Tenbury, Some Record of its History (Oxford, 1931), p.94.  
The new grant was obtained 'before 1635'. V.C.H., Worcestershire, iv, 364.
  3. Cited in F.W. Joyce, Tenbury, pp.118-119.

esquires, and thirty one gentlemen are mentioned. At least some of the latter, including Stary of the Hemm and Stary of the Redford whose ancestors were assessed on goods valued at £4 and £5, respectively, in 1524, Thompson of the Shear, Fox of Whatmore and Bury of the Fern were described elsewhere as yeomen, indicating the growing prosperity of larger farmers and landowners.

The increase in their prosperity had already become apparent in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when many large houses in the parish were built, rebuilt or extended, including the Hemm, the Shear, the Redford, the Cliffords and Lower Tilsop farm houses in Nash; Burford House and the Rose and Crown Inn in Burford; Lower House, Middle House and the Fern in Boraston; and Stoke House and Whitton Court in Whitton <sup>1</sup>. A late seventeenth century register of cities, towns, parishes and villages which gives details of the residence of gentry shows that Burford, Burford Park House, Boraston, Nash, Stone and Whitton were the seats of gentlemen <sup>2</sup>. Obviously only gentry of some standing were included and there was no reference to the new gentry and their farmsteads. Nor was there a reference to them in Bitterley, where only two gentlemen were noted <sup>3</sup>, although several families, including the successors of William Adams of Cleeton, had prospered and enhanced their status <sup>4</sup>. The new gentry were omitted in Neen Savage, also, for only two gentlemen are shown to have their seats in that parish <sup>5</sup>. There were none in Coreley and Hints <sup>6</sup>.

By about 1590 Burford appears to have acquired a social structure

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1. Plate 4, p.75 and Sketch 2, p.264.

2. John Adams, Index Villaris (London, 1690), pp.62, 64, 251, 320, 384.

3. Ibid., p.38.

4. Plate 5.3, p.76.

5. John Adams, Index Villaris, p.251.

6. Ibid., pp.94, 172.

## PLATE 4

## FARMSTEADS : I.



I. The Redford, Nash, Burford.



2.  
Lower House,  
Boraston,  
Burford.

3. The Rose and Crown,  
Burford.





## PLATE 5

## FARMSTEADS : 2



I. Hints Farm, formerly Orchard Farm, Coreley.



2.  
Nethercott,  
Neen Savage.

3. Cleeton Court,  
Bitterley.



that was nearer to that of Neen Savage than to Coreley's. The parish was dominated by the gentry and other large landholders who provided employment for much of the remainder of the population, as well as for people from nearby parishes such as Coreley, as household servants, resident farm labourers and as day labourers. By-employments and trades such as haulage, weaving, dyeing, tailoring, shoemaking and smithying existed, but not on a large scale, at this time, according to indications in the parish register, and, as they were often carried out at the large farmsteads, they too probably depended heavily on the housing and support provided by gentry and yeomen.

The rise of a class of prosperous gentry closely followed the agricultural changes brought about by the influx some years before of large amounts of cheap grain from nearby Herefordshire. The changes involved the introduction of new crops such as hops and flax, the more extensive cultivation of fruit trees and a greater emphasis on pastoral farming. Camden, writing in the late sixteenth century, noted that the Teme passed through 'rich meadows' in this area and added 'the soil on both sides produceth excellent cyder and hops in great abundance' <sup>1</sup>.

The period of major agricultural and social change was marked, as the early entries in the parish register reveal, by bouts of short but more severe periods of poverty than those that afflicted Coreley. In 1569 the children of five different unnamed 'poor men' were either baptised or buried and the numbers of deaths were noticeably higher than usual in 1586, 1587, 1589, 1590 and 1593, but from this time no great crises seem to have occurred and the period of dearth from 1594 to 1597 had no noticeable effects on the number of deaths. The relative prosperity of the parish from then on is indicated by the movement of people into it from nearby parishes such as Coreley during times of hardship. A steady flow of Welsh

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1. W. Camden, Britannia, ed. Gibson (4th edn., 1772), p.462, col.2.



immigrants also appeared but large numbers did not move into and out of the parish as they did at Neen Savage and there were few signs that the parish attracted large numbers of other poor itinerants for there are few references to beggars or vagrants.

The estimates of population for the parish show a much less rapid rate of increase than had occurred in Neen Savage, or even in Coreley, during the period when the engrossing of land and the decline of labour-intensive arable farming was occurring.

The relatively slow rate of population movement into the parish is indicated by a study of the surnames. The subsidy return of 1524 referred to forty different surnames but during the period 1586-95 only sixty one different surnames were noted in the parish register, and some of these referred to temporary residents who are known to have returned to their own parishes later. By the last decade of the sixteenth century the parish appears to have adapted itself to the new agricultural and social situation and the population began to increase more rapidly, as the estimates of population and the graph based on moving averages indicate. The number of surnames noted in the parish register for the period 1626-35 had increased, from the sixty one noted between 1586 and 1595, to 109. Of those mentioned in the earlier period 57% were present in the parish thirty years later. More people, obviously, were settling in the parish than were leaving it. Among the new arrivals were some of the yeomen who were later described as gentlemen. The growing prosperity of the area was clearly becoming attractive to such people and to more lowly men who often brought their wives with them or married soon after their arrival in the parish and then settled down, as is illustrated by the burial, in 1603, of 'the wife of Griffith of Batch field'.

The increase in population was not entirely due to immigration,

however, for a natural increase became noticeable in the late 1590s at a time when other parishes in the area were passing through a period of hardship. On this occasion Burford does not appear to have been affected by the dearth and remained relatively prosperous for the increase in the number of marriages and baptisms continued and there was a decrease in the number of deaths that was recorded.

The new crops and fruit trees were increasingly adopted in other parishes in the area but not always with the same degree of success for the aspect and climate of Burford were more favourable and this parish is one of the few Shropshire parishes in which hops are still regularly grown. The Earl of Arundel's accounts of 1535<sup>1</sup> refer to only one orchard and that was at Dudnell far down the hillside in the western part of Cleobury parish but references to fruit trees and to orchards were made much more frequently in deeds from early in the seventeenth century. Within a few years concern for them had spread much higher up the hillside. A lease of a messuage in Hints, which was later known as Orchard Farm, included exceptions of orchard trees as early as 1613<sup>2</sup>. This holding was situated within a few hundred yards of the edge of the waste.

Until the middle of the twentieth century, the area was noted for its production, and excessive consumption, of cider and for the potency of its perry. The crop return of 1801 noted that 'The parish of Burford is very extensive and fertile, but its chief produce is Hops and Cyder'. A recent comment on this return referred to the highly fertile land of Burford which could have carried 'excellent crops of wheat' and adds with unintended humour: 'Crops indicative of more enlightened methods, barley, turnips and potatoes, are as one would expect relatively unimportant in this south-eastern region'<sup>3</sup>. They were relatively unimportant because,

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1. See above, pp. 53, 54.

2. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 8445. See Plate 5.1, p. 76.

3. J.P. Dodd, 'The State of Agriculture in Shropshire, 1775-1825', T.S.A.S., lv (1954), 23.

although there were fertile soils, much of the farmland was based on heavy beds of Downtonian clay which were very hard to work. Much of the area had been left heavily wooded until lately for this reason. By the early seventeenth century the farmers of the area had been forced by cheap imports of grain to give up the struggle with their heavy land and the survivors had found that specialisation in pastoral farming, fruit trees and hops was more profitable than large-scale arable farming.

The existence of improving zeal indicated by these adaptations, and by marling and liming, appears to be confirmed by the increasing reference to manuring in leases. In 1627, for example, a lease from John Stary and William Dyke, yeomen, to James ap Bevan, of a messuage in Weston included conditions that required him 'to spend all the fodder compost and mucke which they shall raise', and a moiety of the straw, 'uppon the same premisses' <sup>1</sup>.

James ap Bevan was referred to as 'husbandman' in the lease cited above, but during a period of more than twenty years, when occupations were listed in the parish register later in the seventeenth century, only one husbandman was noted, Richard Brimwell, who was buried in 1635. There were numerous references to yeomen and gentry, and to labourers and others with lowly occupations, during the same period, illustrating one aspect of the economic and social changes that resulted from the increase in agricultural prosperity. Another aspect involved the release of capital for use in industries. Richard Cook of Boraston who established a forge there in 1597 <sup>2</sup> was described as a yeoman and his family farmed the same lands for many years as well as maintaining the forge. There is no sign that the forge employed many workmen for like corn mills, many of which existed in the district, forges were capital-, rather than labour-intensive.

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1. S.R.O., Norris and Miles Coll., 1670/54.

2. See below, p. 98.

There were, however, some groups of people who lived near the edges of the upper townships who had little land and who supplemented their income with industrial work and pasture rights on the small portions of the hill waste that belonged to the parish. Limestone was quarried and burnt at the Knowle in Nash and 'stone-diggers' are mentioned in deeds relating to the purchase of Whitton manor by Sebastian Harvey in 1609 <sup>1</sup>. The most important industrial development in the parish occurred later in the seventeenth century when an iron-smelting furnace was established at Tilsop. Until then Burford had been affected very little by the development of the iron industry by comparison with Cleobury Mortimer.

Cleobury Mortimer was a very large parish of some 7,671 acres. Its western parts were intermixed with Hopton Wafers and Neen Savage and it stretched from Titterstone Clee into the depths of the Wyre Forest <sup>2</sup>. The town of Cleobury was situated roughly halfway between the east and west boundaries. Some of the inhabitants near these boundaries undoubtedly found it more convenient to use the churches of the neighbouring parishes such as Coreley, Hopton Wafers and Neen Savage. However, Cleobury itself attracted people from other parishes, particularly from the parishes of Hopton Wafers and Neen Savage, whose parish centres and churches were sited only about two miles and one mile, respectively, from Cleobury, and it attracted people from the extra-parochial settlement of Woodhouse.

The Mortimers' chief residence in Shropshire had been at Cleobury which received grants of an annual fair in 1226 and 1227 <sup>3</sup>. From 1206 the town was the caput of the newly established honour of Cleobury, which included more than twenty manors, and it became a town of some importance despite its limited size. However, by the early sixteenth century it had

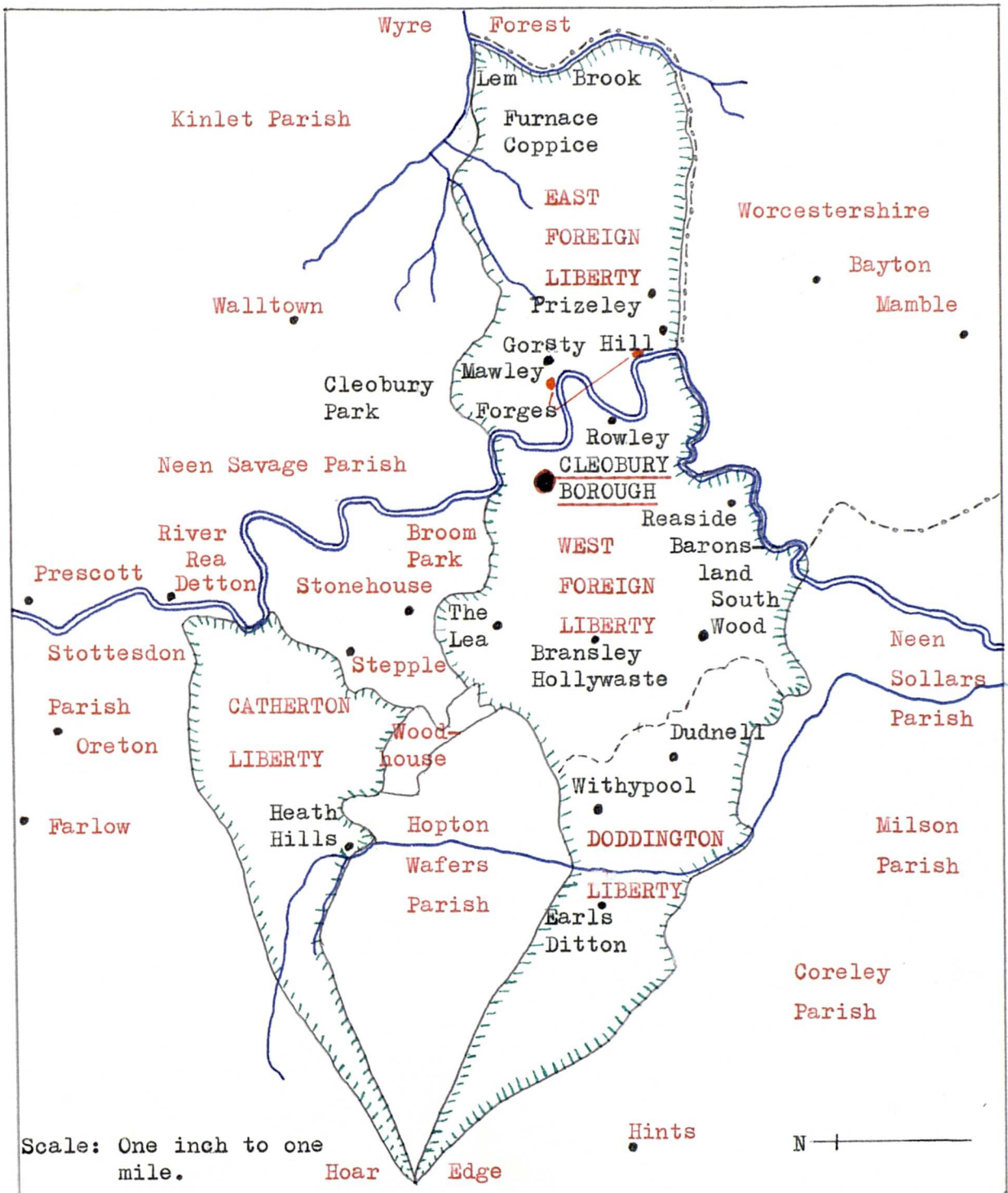
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1. Some Old Shropshire Houses and Their Owners, ed. H.E. Forest (Shrewsbury, 1924), p.152.

2. Figure 10, p. 82.

3. R.W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire, iv, 214.

The Parish of Cleobury Mortimer.



declined in importance following the end of Mortimer power and the absorption of the Earldom of March by the Crown. Leland's description of it as 'a poore village' confirmed the implications of the subsidy returns of 1524<sup>1</sup>. Later he referred to it as 'a village and parke by Wire Forest, yn the way bytwixt Ludlo and Beudeley', and after remarking that there had been a castle in Cleobury in the past he adds: 'There be no Market Townes in Cle Hills'<sup>2</sup>. Camden refers to it as 'a little village called Cleybury' at the bottom of Clee-hill<sup>3</sup>. But by the early seventeenth century its condition had changed again. The Letters Patent which gave Robert Dudley permission to alienate Cleobury in 1608, referred to it as 'burgum de Cleoburie'<sup>4</sup>, and in 1614 Sir Francis Lacon was granted, by Letters Patent, the right to hold a market every Wednesday and three fairs each year in the town. The grant notes that there was a customary weekly market in the borough in ancient times and adds: 'Inhabitantes eiusdem ... nunc in numerum magna accrever(unt)'<sup>5</sup>. The increase in the population and in the importance of the town indicates that considerable economic and social changes had taken place in the parish and its neighbourhood since 1524.

Outside the town of Cleobury Mortimer the parish was divided into the East Foreign Liberty, the West Foreign Liberty and Doddington and Catherton Liberties<sup>6</sup>. The predominant settlement pattern in all parts of the parish was made up of small hamlets and scattered farmsteads. Some of the hamlets had been established in Anglo-Saxon times. Doddington and

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1. See above, p. 45.

2. The Itinerary of John Leland, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, v. 9, 17, 189.

3. W. Camden, Britannia, ed. Gibson (1695), col.542.

4. Cited in T.F. Dukes, Antiquities of Shropshire (Shrewsbury, 1844), p. 244.

5. S.R.O., Childe Family Muniments, 10/o.

6. After the sixteenth century Doddington and Catherton Liberties were treated for most purposes as one liberty.

Mawley were mentioned in Domesday Book and other hamlets and farmsteads indicate through their names that they were probably founded during the same settlement phase. They include Bransley, Brockley, Catherton, Prizeley and Rowley. Few settlements were made in the East Foreign Liberty outside Mawley and Prizeley for most of its area was occupied by park land and by large parts of the Wyre Forest which had been protected from settlement throughout much of the Middle Ages. More settlements had been made in the West Foreign Liberty which was situated, largely, on Downtonian soils, similar to those in Burford parish, and not on the colder, easily soaked Dittonian soils that supported much of the forest in the east <sup>1</sup>. The lower part of Doddington Liberty was similar, but its upper parts, in Ditton township, and Catherton Liberty, contained large areas of hill waste on the sides of Titterstone Clee. The three liberties contained wooded valleys and were separated from each other by large areas of woodland and by Holly Waste, a thin-soiled sandstone ridge. During the Middle Ages settlements were made in the extensive woodlands that separated the hamlets from each other and from neighbouring parishes. Among these were Southwood, Withypool and Woodhouse, where an Austin friary was established shortly after 1230 in the wooded area between Cleobury and Hopton Wafers <sup>2</sup>. Similar settlements were made later in the Middle Ages and some extension of the enclosed lands was made into the hillside wastes and into the poorer land in the lower parts of the parish as is indicated by settlement names such as Broom Park, Gorsty Hill and Heath Hills. However, considerable amounts of woodland and hillside waste were still available in the late sixteenth century for further clearance and settlement. Evidence that new settlements were

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1. See above, pp. 28-30.

2. L.C. Perfect, 'The Austin Friary of Woodhouse', T.S.A.S., lvi (1957-60), 140-141.

being established in the East Foreign Liberty in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is supplied by the many people who acquired the surname 'a Wyer', and by the references in the parish register between 1620 and 1627 to seventeen families settled in the woodlands <sup>1</sup>. Settlement was increasing in the other liberties, also, and in the town itself. These and other aspects of population changes are illustrated by the entries in the parish registers.

The Cleobury Mortimer parish register does not begin until late in 1601, and is seriously defective between 1634 and 1648. Also, it has no references to the members of the families, nor apparently to members of the households, of the Catholic lords of the manors of the parish who, although they had their seats elsewhere, resided at times in the parish.

In spite of these deficiencies, however, the register provides useful information on general population movements and changes and indicates that the population which had numbered about 270 in 1524 had increased, roughly, to 576 in 1606-7, to 668 in 1616-17 and to 700 in 1626-27, thus supporting the claim made in the Letters Patent that the population had increased greatly.

There is evidence that the increase was due, in part, to immigration, some of which was from nearby parishes, such as Neen Savage <sup>2</sup>, as the detailed study of their records of population reveals. Additional support is provided by the great increase in the number of different surnames in Cleobury from forty, referred to in the subsidy of 1524, to 148 recorded in the parish register between 1602 and 1611. However, from the early years of the seventeenth century much of the increase was due, clearly, to an excess of baptisms over burials, for the

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1. See above, p. 57, and below, p. 110.

2. See above, p. 68.



number of different surnames increased very slowly to reach 160 between 1621 and 1630.

The graph based on moving averages <sup>1</sup> indicates that the population growth of the first decade of the seventeenth century occurred during a period of hardship that was suffered, apparently, by at least some of the other parishes in the area <sup>2</sup>. From 1610 to the mid 1620s an increase in the number of baptisms is particularly noticeable but this period was followed by a decline, and by an increase in the number of deaths, that imply the existence of another period of hardship. Although the baptismal figures for the late 1620s and early 1630s show a resumption of the upward trend, defects in the register do not permit any further observation. However, the recovery appears to have been short in duration for there was only a small increase in population over the following thirty or forty years <sup>3</sup>.

During the period from 1622 to 1634, when the register provided details of the status and condition of most of the people referred to, there were very few indications of extreme poverty and very few were described as paupers, although many of them had only recently arrived in the parish <sup>4</sup>. It is apparent from the descriptions of status that were given that most of the newcomers had a trade or occupation which they were able to follow without difficulty or that they were able to acquire land and to support themselves and their families. This, the increases in population, and the new status of the town of Cleobury, are indications of the influence on the area of increased prosperity.

Part of the increase in prosperity was due to changes in the

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1. Figure 9, p. 63.

2. See above, p. 61.

3. See below, p. 257.

4. See below, pp. 110-112.

structure and management of land, to greater agricultural specialisation, to the introduction of new crops, as in Burford, and to the presence, for some years, of land that could be cleared and settled or added to larger holdings, and part was due to the development of trades and agricultural by-employments, but some was due to the development of industry, particularly the iron industry, and of the by-employments that this industry created.

#### 4. INDUSTRY:

##### (a) The Iron Industry to circa 1600

During medieval times local trades and industries reflected the regional character of the area. Ludlow was a cloth-making centre, and fulling mills existed at Cleobury Mortimer, as was noted in 1329 and 1363<sup>1</sup>. Glove-making was an important activity in Ludlow as early as the thirteenth century for William le Gaunter was bailiff of the town in 1297<sup>2</sup>. In the Cleobury area the Wyre Forest, and the chase carved out of it by Roger Mortimer in 1270<sup>3</sup>, provided employment for twenty five harriers and for those who guarded and fed the pack of hounds used by the Mortimers for hunting<sup>4</sup>. The woods of the area also provided the raw materials for the turners who, as in 1329, sent stocks of dishes, bowls, cups and saucers to Ludlow market<sup>5</sup>.

Ironworking was being carried on at an early date on a small scale for before the time of Richard I the smiths of Ludlow, together with fifteen or sixteen related trades, had formed a fraternity of 'smiths and others'<sup>6</sup>. From about 1455 the growing importance of Ludlow first as a

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1. V.C.H., Shropshire, i, 428.

2. Ibid., 420.

3. Ibid., 485.

4. Ibid., 489, footnote.

5. Ibid., 419.

6. Llewellyn Jones, 'The Antiente Company of Smiths and others Commonly called "Hammermen", Ludlow', T.S.A.S., 1st ser., xi (1888), 291.

Yorkist centre and then as a garrison town, and from 1471 as the main seat of the Council in the Marches of Wales, must have benefited the area generally and its tradesmen in particular. The growing wealth and importance of ironworkers is reflected in the grant of a charter to the smiths, or hammermen, in 1511<sup>1</sup>. Supplies of iron probably came from bloomeries based nearby, on the carboniferous measures of the Clee Hills, for these were in existence at an early date on the hillsides<sup>2</sup>. Some of the bloomeries, known as 'wind furnaces', were constructed on the more exposed parts of the hillsides. Surrounding walls were constructed so that they funnelled the strong westerly winds directly into the furnaces where, as a result, the ore was smelted more efficiently. To gain the full benefit of the westerly winds such ironworks would be sited, where possible, on those parts of the hillsides that happen, also, to be nearest to Ludlow. They could, thus, have contributed to the growing shortage of wood to the west of Titterstone and in the neighbourhood of Ludlow. Sir Henry Sidney, who became Lord President of the Council in the Marches of Wales in 1559, requested permission to cut wood from Darvoll, a royal forest west of Ludlow, at some time after this date, as the garrison was forced by lack of wood near Ludlow 'to burn that noxious mineral pit coal'<sup>3</sup>. One can assume that the less wealthy and less influential townspeople of Ludlow were also having to use coal for domestic purposes, as well as for local trades, and had probably had to do so from an earlier date than Sir Henry Sidney and his men.

Outcrops of coal were being mined on the Clee Hills in the

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1. Llewellyn Jones, 'The Antiente Company of Smiths and others Commonly called "Hammermen", Ludlow', T.S.A.S., 1st ser., xi (1888), 293-294.
  2. W. Rees, Industry before the Industrial Revolution (Cardiff, 1968), i, 279-280.
  3. Dr. Bull, 'Mocktree, Brindgewood. History of the Forges' (Hereford R.O., transcript N40/, n.d.). The request is cited in the section entitled 'Downton Castle Estate'.

thirteenth century. Walter de Clifford, in 1260-63, granted to Sir John Halston the licence to dig coals in the forest of La Clie <sup>1</sup>, and among the receipts of the Abbot of Wigmore from his manor of Caynham and Snitton on Titterstone Clee, in 1291, was 'profits from a coal-mine, 5/0'. The mining operations were obviously small in scale, and remained so for many years, for the five shillings profit was small by comparison with the £1/10/0<sup>d</sup> received from a mill, and the sum of £16 received from the rents of other properties in the manor <sup>2</sup>. By the first half of the sixteenth century coal was known to be plentiful in the Clees and was used for burning lime, as was noted by Leland <sup>3</sup>, but there are few local references to coal-mining in rentals, manor court rolls or other documents. Some topographical evidence of early mining still exists on Titterstone Clee in the form of groups of shallow workings. These can be found, approximately twelve to fifteen yards apart in most cases, in the area north of the 'Granite' quarry on Hoar Edge; at the south-west foot of Titterstone peak in Bitterley, where the Gutter Coal outcrops; and, most extensively, on the north-east outcrop of the Gutter Coal between Hill Houses, Farlow, and Lubberland, Catherton. In this area the overgrown or partly erased remains of many bell-pits which are only a few yards apart cover much of the waste land or are included in neighbouring closes <sup>4</sup>. All coal and ironstone appears to have been removed by these workings which are connected by direct tracks and roads with the limekilns of both Farlow and Oretton, situated less than two miles away to the north-east, and with Catherton and Cleobury Mortimer to the south. The large bell-pits in the neck of the waste, known as the Heath Colliery, were still being worked

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1. V.C.H., Shropshire, i, 449.

2. R.W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire, iv, 362.

3. See above, p. 18.

4. Plate 6, p. 91 ; Plate 7, p. 93.

in the first half of the eighteenth century but the intensive mining of most of the area had taken place much earlier and was associated with local developments in the iron industry in the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries. By 1642 encroachments, which have developed since then into the settlements of Lubberland and Crumps Brook, had been made into parts of the waste where the Gutter seam had been exhausted.

Titterstone Clee possessed the main locating factors for the new expanding iron industry of the sixteenth century. It had ironstone and limestone and there were plentiful supplies of wood to the south and east of the hill <sup>1</sup>, and some on the hill itself for Leland noted that there was: 'No great plenty of Wood in Cle Hills, yet there is sufficient Brushe Wood' <sup>2</sup>. He had remarked, earlier, on the situation of 'Theterston Cle betwixt the Forest of Wyre, where is fair Timbre, and Ludlow' <sup>3</sup>, thus indicating that the largest areas of woodland lay to the east of Titterstone. Sir Henry Sidney's request for permission to cut wood in Darvöll indicates that there was a lack of timber on the western side of the hill and in the Ludlow area, by the second half of the sixteenth century, and so one would expect the growing appetite of the ironworks for wood to encourage the establishment of new ironworks further to the east and south. Leland confirms that this movement took place when he describes, obviously from first-hand observation <sup>4</sup>, the ironworks of Titterstone Clee. He indicates, also, another locational factor, the streams of the area, and his description implies that considerable

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1. See above, p. 14.

2. The Itinerary of John Leland, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, v.189.

3. Ibid., v.17.

4. Leland's detailed and exact description of the topography and industry of the area contrasts sharply with Camden's vague and brief remark that the Clee Hills were 'not without some veins of Iron'. Britannia, ed. Gibson (1695), col.542.



## PLATE 6. The Gutter Coal Outcrop.



The remains of numerous tracks and bell pits on Catherton Clee inside and outside the encroachments of Lubberland and Crumps Brook(right). In the distance other signs of mining can be discerned between the island squatter settlements and the regular boundaries of the Farlow enclosure.

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technical developments had taken place in ironworking:

'Ther is another ... (hill) ... cawillyd Cadertons Clee,  
and ther be many Hethe Cokks, and a broket caulyd mille  
brokcet, springthe in it, and after goithe into a  
Broket cauled Rhe, and Rhe into Tende byneth Tende  
Bridge. There be some Blo Shopps to make Yren upon  
the Ripes or Bankes of Mylbroke, comynge out of Caderton  
Clee or Casset Wood' 1.

Surprisingly, these remarks were construed as references to wind furnaces, sited on the hillsides exposed to the westerly winds, by John Randall who wrote the chapter on industry in V.C.H., Shropshire, volume i, published in 1906 <sup>2</sup>, and more recent works have perpetuated the error <sup>3</sup>. However, Catherton lies on the eastern slopes of Titterstone and Leland's description is so precise that it is possible to go directly to the place described, where Mill Brook leaves Catherton Common, formerly called Cassett Wood or Cassett Heath <sup>4</sup>. There, at Heathhills and Knowlebank, between the confluence of Mill Brook and another stream, and the ancient boundary with Hopton Wafers, and only a few hundred yards from Woodhouse, the stream plunges into a deep valley where, in the eighteenth century, place and field names still indicated the site of a furnace. A survey of Catherton taken in 1769 refers to 'Furnace Hill' and to 'Furnace Meadow, House and Garden' <sup>5</sup>, and a perambulation of the

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1. The Itinerary, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, v.190.

2. There are no remains of wind furnaces showing above the surface and none have been investigated or mapped. There appeared to be no evidence that they ever existed apart from suppositions based on the proximity of the Ludlow market for raw iron and on analogy derived from practices said to have been carried out on Brown Clee Hill, and, of course, on the misreading of Leland's account of Catherton furnace. However, after a long series of field visits, which began in 1972 and involved quartering and probing the unquarried parts of the hillside section by section, large quantities of cinders and furnace debris were discovered in 1976 on a site in the windswept area overlooking Cornbrook Dingle. Apart from ascertaining that some of the cinders were blooms which had an iron content of over 90% I have made no further progress. See Figure 19, p. 321.

3. W. Rees, Industry before the Industrial Revolution (Cardiff, 1968), i, 175. T. Rowley, The Shropshire Landscape (London, 1972), p.212.

4. Figure 11, p.94 ; Plate 7, p. 93.

5. S.B.L., MS2481, ii.



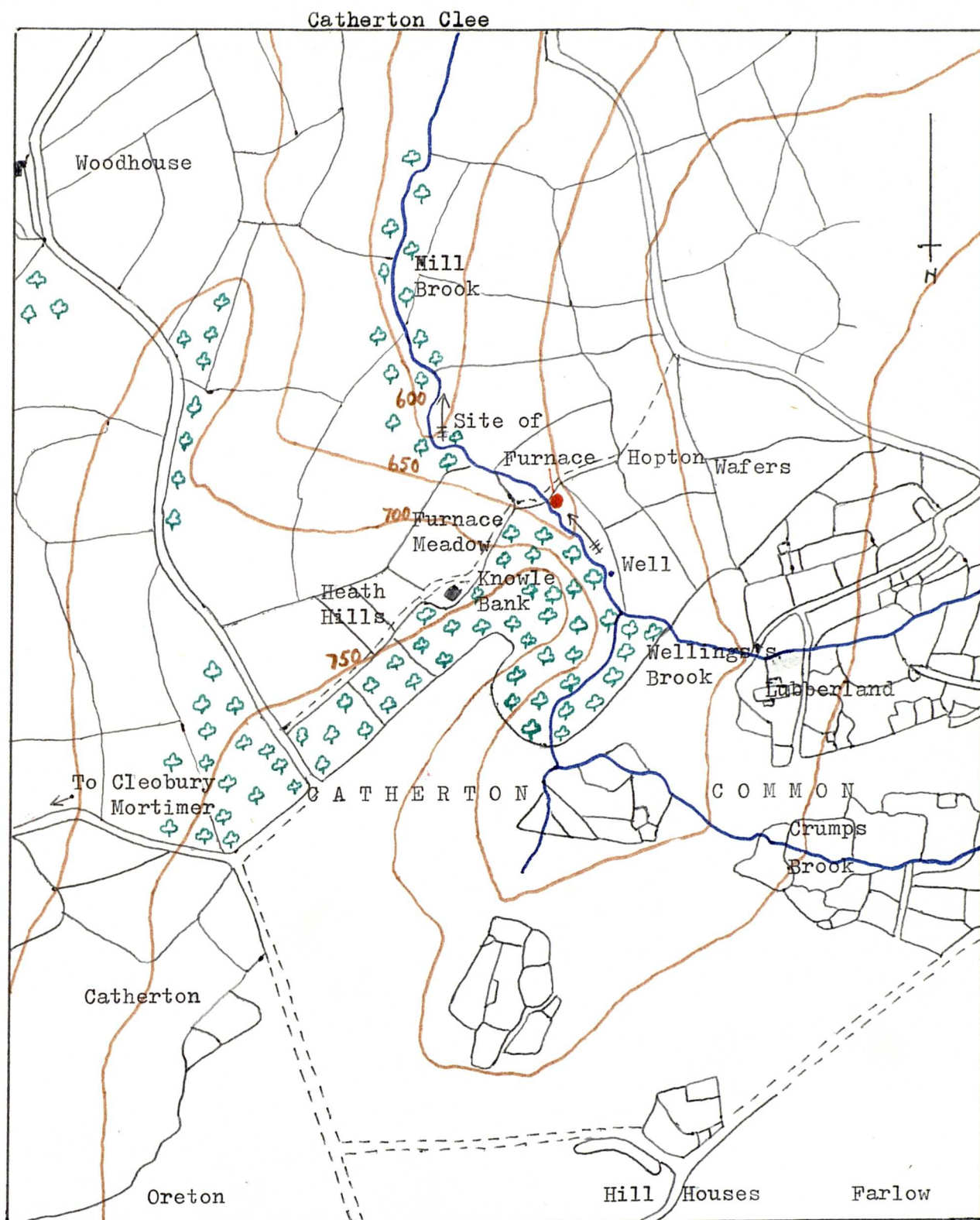
(Cambridge University Collection : copyright reserved).

View across Catherton Common looking SW from near Hill Houses, Farlow.





FIGURE II



Scale: Six inches to one mile.

This map has been aligned so that it conforms as closely as possible with the aerial photograph reproduced on the preceding page.

manor of Earls Ditton made in 1783 identifies a house on the stream, at this spot, as the 'Furnace House' <sup>1</sup>. A few yards upstream from this site heaps of cinders have been discovered and investigated <sup>2</sup>. They have been subjected to very high temperatures, have passed through a molten state and contain little or no iron. Apart from the fact that they are darker, for they contain no trace of the limestone that was introduced as a flux in blast furnaces late in the sixteenth and early in the seventeenth centuries, they are identical with later cinders and are indisputably the by-products of a blast furnace.

Obviously, Leland's blow shops were far more advanced technically than wind furnaces and the power of the water was being used to work the bellows and so provide the 'blow', or blast, to the furnace. So the current general belief that blast furnaces were not introduced into the Midlands until long after Leland's visits, which Schubert puts most bluntly when he states that up to 1560 blast furnaces were completely confined to Sussex and the adjacent districts of Kent and Surrey <sup>3</sup>, is clearly incorrect.

The situation of Catherton furnace on Mill Brook illustrates that among the advantages that attracted the developing iron industry to this area was the presence of streams on which the new techniques could be used. The height of the hills, their aquiferous nature, and the rapid fall to the River Teme gave rise to a series of streams with a good head of water which, in places, passed through incised valleys that could be dammed when it was necessary to create reserves of water. These streams included Corn Brook and Mill Brook, and most important of all, the River Rea which rises on the north side of Brown Clee and then turns south to

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 8119.

2. I would like to express my thanks to the landowner, Major Woodward of Hopton Court, to the tenants of Heathhills for their forbearance on several occasions and to my brother Norman for his company and encouragement.

3. H.R. Schubert, History of the British Iron and Steel Industry from c.450 B.C. to A.D. 1775 (London, 1957), p.175.

run along the eastern edges of the Clee platform, which it cuts through at Prescott before flowing rapidly through Neen Savage and Cleobury Mortimer on its way to the Teme. In addition other streams which rise in Stottesdon and Neen Savage and make their way to the Severn through the Wyre Forest to Dowles provided a sufficient head of water for early iron furnaces.

The first blast furnace in the Midlands is said to have been built by William Lord Paget on Cannock Chase between 1561 and 1563, and an ironworks, built near Cleobury Mortimer by the Earl of Leicester, between 1563 and 1576<sup>1</sup>, included one, and later two blast furnaces which were, it is implied, the first furnaces of that type constructed in this part of the country.

The furnace at Catherton pre-empts both of these claims and its importance must have been considerable for its improved technical processes, and the skills that were acquired locally through working it, would have had some influence on the decision to establish other blast furnaces in the area. The new furnaces were established in heavily wooded areas, one in Cleobury Park, Neen Savage, and the other at the Bank in the Wyre Forest near the boundary with Kinlet parish and although both of them were less than four miles away from Cleobury they were not placed near to each other or to Catherton<sup>2</sup>.

The manor, lordships, park and borough of Cleobury Mortimer were granted to Robert Dudley, later Earl of Leicester, by the Queen on 9th June, 1563<sup>3</sup>. This grant included the manor of Earnwood in Kinlet parish, and large areas of the Wyre Forest, which had been granted to Lord Paget in 1547, alienated by him to Thomas, Lord Seymour of Sudeley,

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1. H.R. Schubert, op.cit., p.179.

2. See below, Figure 13, p. 203.

3. Cal.S.P.Dom., 1547-1580 (London, 1856), p.286.

and then, on the attainder of the latter, resumed by the Crown <sup>1</sup>.

The developments in industry that took place in Cleobury during the second half of the sixteenth century are better known than those that occurred later for some of Leicester's records have survived among the archives of his family. These show that he leased a forge at Rowley, near Cleobury, to Stephen Hadnall in 1571 and leased another forge to John Weston at Cleobury in 1576, and, also, that two furnaces were working in Cleobury Park in 1584, and were still in production in 1596 <sup>2</sup>.

The adoption of blast furnaces led to a great increase in the production of raw iron. Forges to work it were constructed, or were converted from older mills, and joined the furnaces and the remaining corn and fulling-mills on the streams. One of Leicester's forges, or possibly another forge, was sited south of Cleobury village, near the place where Rowley Brook enters the Rea, in the manor of Barnsland (Baron's Land) <sup>3</sup>.

Another forge was established, in 1597, south of Dean Park on the River Teme in Boraston <sup>4</sup>. It can hardly be a coincidence that the only references in Burford parish register to colliers occur in 1598 and 1600, but the sole direct indication of the forge is the burial entry of Gyles Maryan, 'hammerman', in 1600 <sup>5</sup>. The hill on the north bank of the Teme, near the site of the forge, is still known as 'Hammermill Hill'. Richard Cook, who built the forge, died in 1605 <sup>6</sup> but it is said to have been

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1. J.B. Blakeway, 'Notes on Kinlet', ed. Mrs. Baldwyn Childe, T.S.A.S., 3rd ser., viii (1908), 93-94.

2. W. Rees, Industry, i, 279. Schubert, op.cit., p.222, note 2.

3. See below, p. 101.

4. S.R.O., 3137/39. Petition to the Lord Chancellor concerning Cooke's Copyhold, from William Bowles, Esq., Burford, dated 31 May, 1746. I am indebted to Mr. T.C. Hancox of Wellington, Salop, for drawing my attention to this document.

5. Burford Parish Reg., Shrops. Par. Reg. Soc., xvi (Shrewsbury, 1913), pp.16, 17.

6. Ibid., p.21.

worked 'for many years' <sup>1</sup>. Again, there is no contemporary, documentary evidence of the activities of the forge, but its supplies of raw iron would almost certainly have come from the furnaces on the slopes above it. There does not appear to have been any great development of iron trades in Boraston or Burford as a result of the establishment of this forge but its position within one mile of the market town of Tenbury placed it in an advantageous situation to supply the needs of north-west Worcestershire.

The development of local skills in the working of blast furnaces and forges was emphasised in 1589 when John Cross, of Cleobury Mortimer, and John Thornton of Neen Savage, ironmasters, acquired from Sir Robert Sidney, nephew of the Earl of Leicester, who had recently died, a lease to develop a blast furnace and a forge at Coity, Glamorgan <sup>2</sup>.

In Ludlow, the Company of Hammermen included among its Freemasters in 1600 two ironmongers as well as four nailers, two smiths, one card-maker and one roweller <sup>3</sup>. These figures do not reveal a great increase in metal-working in the town and could indicate that the restraints exercised by the Company through its bye-laws, which had been strictly imposed following the approval of a new constitution in 1575, were turning industries away from the town into areas outside its control, such as the Cleobury Mortimer area.

There, until the late sixteenth century, local demand appears to have more than kept pace with the amounts of iron produced by the blast furnaces for bloomeries were still supplementing the supply of iron. Neen Savage parish register has baptismal entries in 1583 for children of Thomas Marshal and Thomas Mathewes, both 'of the Bloomesmithie', and a

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1. S.R.O., 3137/39. The forge site and leat can be traced in a meadow approximately 300 yards north-west of the Peacock Inn at a place where the road to Tenbury and the River Teme converge. During a protracted search only very small amounts of cinder fragments were discovered.

2. W. Rees, Industry, i, 265, 279.

3. Llewellyn Jones, 'Antiente Company of Smiths', T.S.A.S. (1888), 304-305.

burial entry in 1587 for William Cockes, of the same place <sup>1</sup>. Cockes was a member of a family resident in Stepple near Catherton. No later references to bloomeries in the Titterstone Clee area have been discovered. Some of the uses to which the iron of bloomeries and forges was put are indicated by the presence in the area of blade mills in which scythes, hooks, sickles and other edged tools could be sharpened. When John Purslow of Sidbury died in 1593 his property in Neen Savage included a blade mill <sup>2</sup>, but there are few other references to industry in Neen Savage after this date, until the establishment of paper mills in the eighteenth century. Industry became more firmly based on Cleobury Mortimer where the new blast furnaces and forges established by Leicester encouraged the development of a group of ironworks and other industries centred on the Rea and its neighbouring woods.

Leicester, who died in 1588, left his manor of Cleobury and its lands by will to his illegitimate son Sir Robert Dudley who sold them to Sir Thomas Challoner in 1608 <sup>3</sup>. They were purchased from Challoner soon afterwards by Rowland Lacon who had inherited Kinlet in 1581 from his uncle, Sir George Blount <sup>4</sup>. He, and his son Sir Francis, who succeeded him in the same year, owned Willey and other manors and lands in north and east Shropshire but most of these were disposed of by Sir Francis and the family became more closely connected with the Cleobury Mortimer area.

In 1535 another branch of the Blount family, resident in north Worcestershire at Sodington, bought the manor of Mawley, Cleobury Mortimer, from Richard Archer <sup>5</sup>. In 1601 George Blount bought, from Bonham Norton,

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1. Neen Savage Par. Reg., Shrops. Par. Reg. Soc. (Shrewsbury, 1916), xvii, part 1, pp.6, 7, 9.

2. Ibid., introduction, p.iv.

3. Mrs. Edward Childe, 'History of Cleobury Mortimer', T.S.A.S., ii (1879), 46, 48.

4. J.B. Blakeway, 'Notes on Kinlet', T.S.A.S., 3rd ser. viii (1908), 125-126.

5. Mrs Childe, 'History of Cleobury', 50.

the adjacent manor of Barnsland which included parts of the River Rea and an iron forge <sup>1</sup>. This purchase consolidated his estates, which now included large areas of forest and woodlands and much of the lower Rea, and began a family connection with the ironworks of the area which lasted for more than two centuries.

Although the introduction into the district of the blast furnace and the establishment of a large-scale iron industry owed much to the initiative of aristocrats and courtiers such as Leicester, or possibly Hadnall <sup>2</sup> or Paget <sup>3</sup>, control of the industry had, thus, by the early seventeenth century passed into the hands of the local, related families of Blount and Lacon.

(b) Lacons and Blounts: The Iron Industry to circa 1640

The Blounts and some of the Lacons, including Sir Francis, were Catholics. Both families suffered financial penalties for recusancy but the Lacons, three of whom were educated at Douai in the early years of the seventeenth century, seem to have attracted more attention. Sir Francis had married a daughter of the first Lord Montague whose family were prominent opponents of Parliament. As a result he was noticed by Parliament on more than one occasion and in May 1624 he was named as a suspected recusant in a House of Commons petition to the King. He was a Justice of the Peace and in 1612 he became the sixth successive Lacon to hold the office of Sheriff of Shropshire. In 1617 he was fined by the Council in the Marches for negligence in levying recusancy fines during

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 6468.

2. See above, p. 43. As well as the forge at Rowley, Hadnall, who was a groom of the Privy Chamber, had rights of reversion, under a grant of 1554, to wastes in Shirlett manor, which included an iron 'smithy', and to a coal pit in Broseley. W. Rees, Industry, i, 280.

3. See above, p. 97. Lord Paget played an important part in the development of the iron industry at Cannock and elsewhere.

his period of office <sup>1</sup>.

Both families were supporters of the Stuarts to whose treasury they contributed and Sir Francis Lacon is said to have spent what remained of his fortune in their cause <sup>2</sup>. When the time came several Lacons as well as Sir Walter Blount, three of his brothers and four of his sons fought for the King <sup>3</sup>.

The strains on Sir Francis Lacon's finances were revealed as early as 1612, the year of his shrievalty, when he mortgaged lands in Cleobury <sup>4</sup>. In June 1616 he agreed to sell Willey manor and estate for seven thousand pounds to John Weld, and the sale was completed in 1618 <sup>5</sup>. Study of the Willey records has suggested that low rents and long leases were a contributory factor to Sir Francis Lacon's financial difficulties <sup>6</sup>. In 1618 he sold the old family estates near Wem to Lord Gouldesborough and Knightly Hall, Staffordshire, to Sir Edward Cooke <sup>7</sup>, and he leased Ernwood Lodge in Kinlet parish <sup>8</sup>. By 1625 only his lands in the Cleobury Mortimer district remained intact and when he died in 1646 he was reduced to a state verging on poverty. His son, Rowland, was required to find only £66 when he compounded for his estates, which indicated that his income had been reduced to £33 a year <sup>9</sup>. Rowland was

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1. Kinlet Parish Register, Shrops. Par. Reg. Soc., xvii (Shrewsbury, 1917), pp.v-vi. J.B. Blakeway, 'Notes on Kinlet', T.S.A.S., 3rd ser., viii (1908), 129-31. Willey Parish Register, Shrops. Par. Reg. Soc., xvi (Shrewsbury, 1914), p.iv.
  2. Kinlet Parish Register, p.v.
  3. Mrs Edward Childe, 'Cleobury Mortimer', T.S.A.S., ii (1879), 48.
  4. S.R.O., Childe Family Muniments, 10s.
  5. Willey Par. Reg., introduction, p.v.
  6. M.D.G. Wanklyn, 'John Weld', W. Midlands Studies (1969), 89, note 2.
  7. J.B. Blakeway, 'Notes on Kinlet', T.S.A.S. (1908), 131.
  8. Kinlet Par. Reg., introduction, p.v.
  9. Ibid., p.vi. T.F. Dukes, Antiquities of Shropshire (Shrewsbury, 1844), Appendix, pp.lxxix-lxxx.



succeeded by his daughter and her husband Sir William Childe who was not a Catholic and whose own income and position as a Master in Chancery enabled him, through a lifetime of careful management, to restore the family fortunes. By 8 March 1674/75, when he made his will, most of the estates had been redeemed and he had repaid a debt of £200 recently but debts of £3,000 'served by Landes and Mortgages' continued to worry him<sup>1</sup>. He asked his executors to be careful and to pay creditors honestly as he had always done himself which 'alone has kept this estate and family hitherto and all my life past supported me in my most Intangled, Clogged and troubled Fortunes'. In a codicil to the will dated 21 March 1677/78 he was able to make additional bequests, including the manor of Farlow and Cleeton, for he had managed 'since the wrighting of my said will and testament to pay and discharge some considerable part of my debts my selfe ...'<sup>2</sup>. However, he continued to urge that, except for his wife's share and his children's maintenance, no part of the lands, rent and other forms of income should be used for any other purpose than the settlement of his debts and legacies. Although his family continued to own some of the mineral rights on Titterstone Clee<sup>3</sup> the Lacon-Childes appear to have had little connection with the iron industry of the Cleobury Mortimer district from the later years of Sir Francis and there is no reference to such interests in Sir William's will nor in other records left by him.

To a lesser extent the Blounts also suffered from financial strains before and during the civil wars and their seat at Sodington was burned down after the wars by Roundhead soldiers because, so it was said, they had refused to make arms for Parliament in their Cleobury forges<sup>4</sup>.

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1. S.R.O., Childe Family Muniments, 63/3, fos. 1-4.

2. Ibid., fo. 5.

3. See below, p. 121.

4. T. Nash, Collections for the History of Worcestershire (London, 1782), ii, 159.

It is more likely that the arson was an act of retribution for the part that the forges had played in the arming of the Royalists during the wars and for the part that the Blounts had played on the battlefield. Sir Walter, who was created a baronet in 1642, was captured at Hereford in December 1645, and was imprisoned in Oxford and, later, in the Tower of London. He was heavily fined as a Papist delinquent and some of his lands were sold although these were recovered by his son George at the Restoration. Sir Walter died in Devon in 1654 and his widow died at Mawley, Cleobury Mortimer, in 1656<sup>1</sup>. After the burning of Sodington, Mawley increasingly became the main residence of the Blounts. Even after the Restoration their faith, to which they remained loyal, caused them further difficulties. Sir Walter was included in the 1680 return of Papists and in December 1688, when Lord Herbert of Chirbury secured Ludlow Castle for the Prince of Orange Sir Walter, who was Sheriff of Worcestershire at the time, was imprisoned there<sup>2</sup>.

For the period after 1601 no detailed ironworks' accounts exist and there is little information available concerning the number of furnaces and their sites, and still less concerning their capacity, the techniques used and the continuity of production. The impression is given, therefore, that the new iron industry passed through a period of very rapid expansion in its early stages followed by a period, after control of the industry had been acquired by the local gentry, during which progress was slow or was replaced by decline. The emphasis given, through superior documentary evidence, to the impact of Leicester's ironworks in the latter part of the sixteenth century is partly responsible for this impression. Although rapid, the development of the iron industry in the area had been taking place over a longer period of years than this evidence implies, as the existence of the

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1. V.C.H., Worcestershire (London, 1924), iv, 284.

2. T. Wright, The History of Ludlow and its Neighbourhood (London, 1852), p.435.

Catherton ironworks before the middle of the sixteenth century reveals <sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, although there are few direct references to ironworks after 1601, indirect evidence and developments in local communities indicate that the industry continued to expand under the control of the gentry although from about 1630 this period of expansion was followed first by a period of slower growth, which included times when production was interrupted, and then by a period of stabilisation.

Cleobury Mortimer parish register <sup>2</sup>, whose first extant entry is dated 21st September 1601, refers to an unnamed 'forgeman' as early as 1604. Other men whose occupation is not given but who are referred to later as 'forgemen' or 'ffyner' are named in entries in 1603, 1604, 1606, 1609, 1611, 1613, 1615, 1616, 1617, 1618 and 1620. From 1622 the register is more informative and gives frequent references to 'forgeman', 'forgesmith', 'hammerman', 'ffyner' or to the forges themselves. Scythe-makers, nailers and blacksmiths are often mentioned, also, but the only reference to a furnace-man occurs in 1634 in the baptismal entry of a daughter of Richard Maddocke, 'fownder at the furnace'. Francis Keene and his wife were referred to as 'of the furnace' in 1676 and 1677, but a placename only was indicated at this date.

There are no further references to the blast furnaces that had long been established in the Cleobury Mortimer area and it is clear that, shortly after 1634, they ceased to exist and that the forges of the area, which continued to be active, had to depend for their raw iron in future on outside sources. The end of the furnaces may have been hastened by temporary shortages of wood for making charcoal and by the problems that had arisen over the supply of ironstone, but the increasing financial difficulties of Sir Francis Lacon and the slow growth of the local demand

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1. See above, pp. 90-95.

2. Cleobury Mortimer Parish Register, Shrops. Par. Reg. Soc., ix (Shrewsbury, 1904).

for raw iron were the most important influences.

By the 1630s, after many years of work, the Cleobury furnaces must have been worn out, like the furnace that Sir Francis had sold with the Willey estate which had to be rebuilt by Sir John Weld before 1631<sup>1</sup>. The demand for iron had ceased to expand before 1635 and the cost of rebuilding furnaces had increased since about 1610, when larger furnaces, which had a greater output, had been introduced. In these circumstances it seems probable that Sir Francis, considering his already straitened finances, did not feel that large capital expenditure was worthwhile or even possible.

At about this time other Cleobury iron-masters began to extend their interests to areas outside the district. In 1637 Bringewood ironworks was leased by Lord Craven's representatives, Lord Lindsey and others, for a period of twenty one years beginning at Michaelmas, 1638, to Francis Walker, 'of Cleobury Mortimer, gent.'<sup>2</sup>. At about the same time Bouldon furnace was erected on the western flanks of the Brown Clee, for it was already well established in 1644 when it was ordered to supply a gun for the defence of Ludlow Castle<sup>3</sup>. In 1647 Bouldon furnace was in the hands of Sir Walter Blount who purchased ironstone for it from the Bishop of Worcester who owned the mineral rights in Clee St. Margarets. This furnace remained in the possession of the Blount family until 1795 when it was sold by Henry Blount. It was noted for producing a high quality, tough pig-iron, some of which was supplied to forge masters outside the district<sup>4</sup>. No forge was established nearby and the destination of

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1. M.D.G. Wanklyn, 'John Weld of Willey 1585-1665', West Midlands Studies, iii (1969), 92, 96.

2. The lease is referred to in Hereford R.O., Gatley Coll. F76/II/353 (Articles of Agreement, dated 30 Dec., 1637, between Sampson Eure and Francis Walker, for the supplying of wood to Bringewood ironworks).

3. V.C.H., Shropshire, i, 473.

4. Trevor Rowley, 'Bouldon Mill', Shropshire Magazine (Feb., 1966, Shrewsbury), 28-29.

most of the pig-iron has not been recorded but it would be reasonable to assume that the Blounts supplied their own forges at Cleobury with some of this iron.

The movement of local iron-masters to areas outside the district appears to mark the end of the period of steady expansion in iron-smelting and ironworking. However, the Cleobury forges were still active during the Civil Wars and the bulk of their pig-iron, supplemented by supplies from Bouldon was still smelted, probably, in local furnaces that have not left a record. One such furnace, hitherto unrecorded, is now known to have been in existence from about the middle of the seventeenth century at Tilsop in Burford parish. This furnace received most of its supplies of ironstone from Lord Craven's lands on Titterstone Clee <sup>1</sup>.

#### (c) Employment and By-Employment

Evidence of the growth of the iron industry, and of its impact on some of the local communities, is provided by the great changes that occurred in the woodlands of the area from about the middle of the sixteenth century.

Leland referred to the 'fair Timbre' of Wyre Forest <sup>2</sup> but sixty or seventy years later Drayton had a very different view:

'When soon the goodly Wyre, that wonted was so high  
Her stately top to rear, ashamed to behold  
Her straight and goodly woods unto the furnace sold  
(And looking on herselfe), by her decay doth see  
The misery wherein her sister forests be; 3.

Leland had also referred to Cassett Wood on Catherton Clee where the 'Blo Shoppes' were established <sup>4</sup>. By 1629, when ownership was disputed, doubtless

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1. See below, pp. 214-15.

2. See above, p. 90.

3. The Poly-Olbion, Song vii, 223.

4. See above, p. 90.

it had been sold 'unto the furnace' for John Boughton, who had known the area 'for 60 years more fully', and others who could swear for forty or fifty years, testified that Sir Rowland Hayward had sold the trees from the land in question 'first cropps then bodys and then roots' <sup>1</sup>.

Complaints of destructiveness in the early years following the adoption of the new ironworking techniques are too widespread to be dismissed and Drayton's description of the Wyre Forest, although it contains more than a hint of sentimentality, implies a heavy destruction of old woodlands similar to that which occurred elsewhere. Late in the sixteenth century the tenants and copyholders of Leintwardine manor complained to Lord Essex that their common rights in Mocktree Forest, which included rights to 'great timber', had been injured following the erection of an ironworks 'about two yeares past' <sup>2</sup>. The forest had consisted of large oaks and other timber and a great growth of underwood but was 'already in this short time greatly spoiled and decayed'. They added that within two more years the forest would be wholly 'cut down and destroyed', and complained, also, that sixty acres of the land in the forest had been enclosed and that cottages had been erected there.

The spoliation of woods was soon recognised as a danger to future profits, however, and the replanting of trees and the development of coppices became necessary parts of good husbandry. A coppice, or valett, called 'the Graveley' and another called 'the Rowlde' existed in 1577 in the Wigmore area according to the record of an inquest held at Leominster <sup>3</sup>, and in 1619 when Edward Vaughan of Bultad acquired the lease of Bringewood ironworks he was required to preserve all the

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 9758.

2. Hereford R.O., N40/. See above, p. 42, note 3.

3. Ibid.

timber, 'replacing any tree felled or destroyed' <sup>1</sup>. Francis Walker of Cleobury Mortimer acquired the lease of the same ironworks on 30 December 1637, and on the same day Sampson Eure agreed to supply him with at least 3,000 cords of wood and roots each year for the first seven years of the lease from areas within six miles of Bringewood <sup>2</sup>. For his own needs Walker was to be allowed to 'toppe, cropp and loppe' only the trees assigned to him by Eure 'and none other', but the articles of the agreement show that some timber trees were to be felled and were to be taken by Eure who would then compensate Walker for the work carried out. Also, Eure agreed to be responsible for the digging out of the roots in the areas that were between three and six miles from Bringewood ironworks. All other trees that were to be cut down were to be felled only 'in seasonable times' and as near the ground 'as conveniently they may', and Eure reserved the right to keep in each hagge such 'standells or trees to stande and remaine there' as he or his assigns thought fit.

Small coppices had already been established in the Wyre Forest near Cleobury by about 1576, and by 1665 thousands of acres <sup>3</sup> were supporting the coppice-wood that helped to ensure supplies of charcoal to the iron industry of Cleobury until it ceased to exist in the early years of the nineteenth century.

Later agreements show that, in general, coppice-wood in this area was not cut until it had attained seventeen years of growth. The gradual recognition of the need to husband wood, and the foresight and skill required to provide sufficient supplies in time for the future demands of industry would only be acquired through experience. It is probable, therefore, that there were periods, following the destruction of

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1. Hereford R.O., Cal. Gatley Coll., F76/II/351.

2. Hereford R.O., Gatley Coll., F76/II/353.

3. H.R. Schubert, Iron and Steel, p.222, note 3.

the old woods, when coppices could not provide sufficient wood to supply the forges and furnaces with charcoal. This situation may have occurred in the Cleobury Mortimer area for a few years during the 1630s.

Coppices would not, of course, in Drayton's eyes replace the tall, mature, stately timber of the old forest. However, he probably puts too much blame for the destruction of the woods on to the furnaces for many of the trees had been felled to make room for settlements or to extend agricultural land. Neighbouring manors had increased their lands in this fashion for many years and some, like Ernwood, a member of Cleobury manor but in the parish of Kinlet, had been formed entirely by encroachments into the forest<sup>1</sup>. For the years from 1620 to 1627, during which Cleobury parish register entries often give places of residence within the parish, seventeen families were described as 'of the Forest' or 'of the Wood'. Seven of these were yeomen, three were husbandmen, two were labourers, one was a glover, one was a weaver and one was a scythe-maker. The other two were not described. The number of yeomen and husbandmen indicates that large areas of agricultural land had been cleared in the old forest and that settlement was not limited to the huts or cottages of squatters on the commons. The land attached to the cottages was probably more than the usual four or five acres in area, and clearance was probably continuing during this period, at least on a small scale, for Francis Bishop, one of the two labourers mentioned above, was described in 1628 as 'husbandman, of the Wood'.

A rough estimate of the balance of economic activities in the parish, and of the relative importance of trades and industries, can be obtained from the occupations noted in the baptismal and burial entries in the parish register, which are given, in a large number of cases, between 1622 and 1634. It has to be assumed, however, that the occupation

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1. J.B. Blakeway, 'Notes on Kinlet', T.S.A.S., 3rd ser., viii (1908), 90-96.



that is noted is the one in which the person concerned was mainly involved, for many who worked in trades or industries had some land and many who were primarily landholders had some other source of income or were involved in some other activity. Those described as gentry, bailiff of Cleobury Liberties, vicar, and lay deacon, who formed a small, early professional group were also landholders and have been included as such with the yeomen and husbandmen.

Between 1622 and 1634 a combined total of 610 baptisms and burials were recorded in the parish register. Occupation or status was given in 426 cases, that is, in more than two thirds of the entries, but included widows and spinsters. Some of the widows are known, from other sources, to have been landholders or to have been otherwise occupied but in these cases they were usually associated with one or more sons. The spinsters were probably single women for the word appears to have no occupational significance and some entries have been interpolated into this class where illegitimate births have been recorded. Some of the spinsters could have been maid-servants as could some of the 184 entries for whom no occupation is given. No servants are referred to in the register at this period although it is known from other sources that it was the practice to employ servants both in the farmsteads and in the houses of some of the tradesmen <sup>1</sup>. If the widows and spinsters are discounted, 369, over 60% of the entries remain with a useful description of the occupation or occupational status of the persons concerned.

Of these, 152 were yeomen or husbandmen and twenty four were described as gentry, bailiff, vicar or lay deacon, a total of 176, nearly 48%. Only seven men, less than 2%, were described as labourers, and nineteen, about 5%, as strangers or wanderers <sup>2</sup>. The remainder, 168, about 45%, were

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1. See below, pp. 254-55.

2. A minstrel, Francis Penson, has been included in this group.

involved in trades, services and industries. The largest group of them, sixty two, about 17%, were involved in agricultural trades and industries and included millers, thatchers, hemp-dressers, weavers, felt-makers, glovers and, most numerous, leather-workers - corvisors, curriers and tanners. Some other trades which might properly be included with the agricultural trades, as their raw materials had been derived from the land, have been counted as 'services and other trades'. They include carpenters, coopers and joiners some of whom probably carried on the traditional woodworking crafts in direct succession to the men whose products were sold in Ludlow market during the Middle Ages <sup>1</sup>. Others in this group, which contained forty eight, about 13% of the total, included shoemakers, a tiler, a mason, tailors, a butcher and a 'barbar surgin', who was described elsewhere as a yeoman, a musician, a chapman and a grocer.

There were fifty seven men, about 15½%, connected with the metal industries and trades, some of which obviously served mainly agricultural interests. Among them was a plowmaker whose place of residence at Mawley near the forges has encouraged the assumption that, as the most important aspect of his work was probably that which involved the coulter and plough-share, he should be included among the metal-workers. Apart from a founder, hammermen, finers and forge-smiths, who were directly concerned with the smelting and refining of the iron, several blacksmiths were referred to. The nature of their work was not defined but, as they were increasing in number at this time, it is probable that some of them had begun to specialise. John Bach who was described as a scythe-smith in 1651 was the son of William Bach, blacksmith, who was buried in 1627, and was himself described as a blacksmith in 1631 when his daughter, Joyse, was baptised. As well as scythe-smiths there were nailers, a collier, a tinker and only one miner, who was described as a 'carbon hewer'.

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1. See above, p. 87.

Although its woods, ironworks, other industries and mineral resources ensured that industry had greater importance in Cleobury Mortimer than in any of the other parishes of the area, the parish register entries for 1622-34 suggest that its influence, measured by the number and variety of the full-time or main occupations that were recorded, was not very great and that agricultural interests were still overwhelmingly predominant.

The Cleobury Mortimer area was still relatively remote in 1640 and was still hampered by bad communications and, although population and industrial activity had increased greatly since the early years of the sixteenth century, early levels had been so low that changes appeared to be more important than they were. By 1640, in spite of the increases, the population of Cleobury Mortimer parish was probably only about seven hundred in an area of over 7,600 acres, indicating a population density of about one person to every eleven acres <sup>1</sup>. Neen Savage, and some of the other nearby lower parishes for whose people Cleobury was attractive, probably had a lower density than this, as did upper parishes such as Coreley, where the population was probably about 166 in an area of more than 2,200 acres <sup>2</sup>. The general sparseness of population in the area limited severely the local market, particularly for the metal industry which had at that stage a smaller range of products than it had later in the seventeenth century when substitution for traditional materials had proceeded further. Nearby areas were also sparsely populated and, further afield, the old metal-working centres of Ludlow to the west and of north Worcestershire to the east and south allowed little scope for opening up new accessible markets for metal goods outside the district.

The effects of the limitations imposed by the lack of easily

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1. See above, pp. 86.

2. See above, Table 2, p. 61.

available markets once the small local markets had been supplied is revealed by the study of occupations between 1622 and 1634. Although coal was readily available, for it was mined with the ironstone from the Gutter seam, it did not attract metal-workers in large numbers as happened in roughly similar circumstances elsewhere <sup>1</sup>.

Nonetheless, without disputing the predominance of agriculture, and the largely localised nature of industry, it can be accepted that its impact, particularly in the case of the iron industry, on economic and social life was much greater than it appeared to be and many of those who were primarily concerned with agriculture, or who preferred a description that gave that impression, benefited from the by-employments that it provided or from other interests that they had in it.

It is likely that many of the recent settlers and other landholders in the forest had other occupations that increased their income and helped to raise their status. None of them were referred to as colliers or charcoal-burners and only one collier is referred to among the other residents of Cleobury before 1650. Other parishes in the area have few references to colliers, also, but, as their life was peripatetic and generally isolated, lack of references to them in parish registers is not unusual and cannot be taken as an indication that they did not exist. More notable is a complete absence of references to other woodland occupations in the Cleobury area which must have been in existence.

Iron-masters provided their own charcoal then, and later, by purchasing an agreed number of cords of wood, usually uncut at this period, from the owners of woodlands. They had it charked on the site and then transported it to their ironworks. The responsibilities of iron-masters and the employment that their activities created early in the seventeenth century in the woodlands of the Cleobury are probably accurately portrayed in the articles of the agreement concluded between Sampson Eure and Francis

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1. Marie B. Rowlands, Masters and Men in the West Midland Metalware Trades before the Industrial Revolution (Manchester, 1975), pp.1-13.

Walker of Cleobury on 30 December 1637<sup>1</sup>. Walker, the iron-master, was responsible for felling~~timber~~ trees and barking them, for all cutting of wood and the digging out of roots within three miles of Bringewood and for the cording and coaling of the wood. He employed the charcoal-burners and had to provide them with cabins as temporary homes and he was responsible for the transport of all wood, bark and charcoal which he was allowed to carry away 'with horses, carts or caryages ... by the most usuall and convenient way ...'.

Iron-masters such as Walker must have provided work for many different people in the wooded areas of parishes in the Cleobury district. Records made earlier by another iron-master reveal that many men including overseers, keepers of saws, carpenters and labourers, were needed to crop, fell, bark and cord the wood, to wheel it to the colliers' pits and act as assistants or 'carers' while it was charked, to measure and carry the charcoal and other materials to the furnaces and forges, and to transport pig-iron and bar-iron to and from the forges<sup>2</sup>. Much of the work was of a seasonal nature and could have been undertaken by people, described as yeomen, husbandmen or labourers in the parish register, whose farm work, being largely pastoral, allowed them time to undertake additional occupations.

The provision of ironstone for the furnaces, the mining of coal and the quarrying of limestone gave similar opportunities for part-time employment in the upper parts of the district.

The manor of Cleeton-Farlow, which was a member of Cleobury Mortimer and part of the property of Sir Francis Lacon, included a small section of the carboniferous rocks of Titterstone Clee. This was mined by Sir Francis Lacon but the largest and richest deposits of coal and ironstone lay to the south and west of his property in another part of the

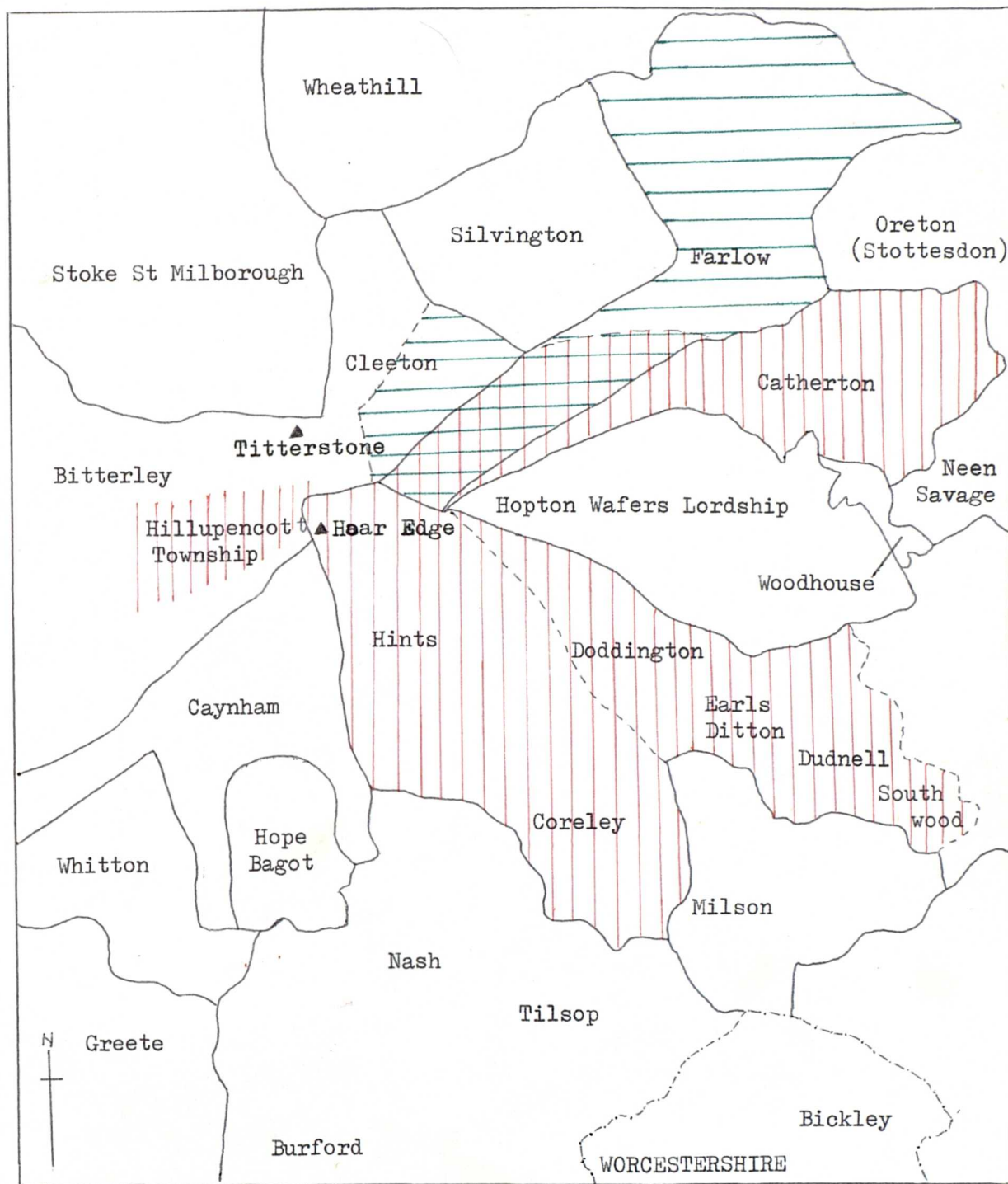
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1. See above, pp. 109.

2. I am indebted to Dr. C. Harrison of the University of Keele who allowed me to see the transcript of The Cannock Chase Ironworks, 1590 while it was being prepared for publication. A.C. Jones and C. Harrison, eds., 'The Cannock Chase ironworks, 1590', Eng. Hist. Rev., xciii,<sup>(1978)</sup> 1795-810.

FIGURE 12

The Manor of Earls Ditton alias Doddington and the Manor of Farlow-Cleeton



Scale: One inch to one mile

Earls Ditton Manor  
Farlow-Cleeton Manor  
The Disputed Area



old honour of Cleobury <sup>1</sup>. This part had been removed from the Earldom of March following the execution of Roger Mortimer, the first earl, and had been given to the Earl of Arundel by Edward III. It included Doddington, Earls Ditton and Catherton (in Cleobury parish), as well as the manor of Hints and Coreley in Coreley parish, the township of Hillupencott in Bitterley parish and a large part of Farlow chapelry in Stottesdon parish. It passed into the hands of Sir Rowland Hayward, merchant and citizen of London, about 1560, and was administered as the manor of Doddington-Hints. Sir John Hayward, son of Sir Rowland, sold it, about 1621, to Lady Elizabeth Craven, the widow of Sir William Craven, a rich London merchant-taylor who had been Lord Mayor in 1610-11 <sup>2</sup>. Lady Elizabeth purchased many estates including several in Shropshire, for her sons William and John. Doddington-Hints manor, generally known as Doddington, or as Earls Ditton manor afterwards, was bought for William who was born in 1608 <sup>3</sup>. In 1627 he was created Baron Craven and between 1630 and 1660 he spent much of his time abroad serving, and largely financing, the cause of Elizabeth, widow of the Elector Palatinate. He contributed large sums of money, also, to the cause of Charles I, and at least £50,000 to Charles II during his exile.

An act for the sale of his estates was passed on 4th August 1652 <sup>4</sup>, but after the Restoration he recovered them, completely in the case of the manor of Earls Ditton. During the remainder of his long life (he was nearly eighty nine when he died in 1697), he maintained his loyalty and devotion to the Stuarts. He was created Earl of Craven in 1665, was made a Privy Councillor in 1666, and received many other

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1. Figure 12, p. 116.

2. D.N.B. (London, 1888), xiii. Sir William Craven.

3. The Complete Peerage (London, 1913), iii, 500-501. D.N.B., xiii. The First Lord Craven.

4. Cal. S.P. Dom., 1651-52 (repr. 1965, Vaduz), p.355.

honours which he lost in 1689 as a result of his loyalty to James II.<sup>1</sup>

His absences abroad and his national and international interests, his closeness to the Court, and the proximity to London of his large estates in ~~Berkshire~~ must have made him a remote figure to his Shropshire tenants whose affairs were administered by bailiffs and stewards. His seat in Shropshire was at Stokesay Castle but this was let on a long lease to the Baldwin family, from about 1648, and they remained there for nearly a hundred years<sup>2</sup>. There is no indication that he ever resided in, or visited, the area. His titles, Baron Craven of Hampsted Marshall, Berks., Viscount Craven of Uffington, Berks., and Earl of Craven, Co. York, contained no reference to his Shropshire estates. There are few records dealing with the affairs of these estates between 1621 and 1660<sup>3</sup>.

Much of Doddington -Hints, alias Earls Ditton, was situated high on the hillside and included a high proportion of poor agricultural land and the largest part of the waste lands. These wastes coincided closely with the carboniferous measures and contained rich deposits of coal, ironstone and limestone. The Gutter seam, which contained coal and ironstone in association, provided the most easily accessible source of these minerals, for it outcropped, or was relatively near the surface, over a large part of Cassette, alias Catherton, Heath. The location of ironworks on Mill Brook in Leland's time near the outcrops, and nearby in Cleobury later in the sixteenth century, indicates that the local ironstone was being mined at this time.

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1. The Complete Peerage, iii, 501.

2. Dr. J.F.A. Mason, Stokesay Castle Official Guide (English Life Publications, 1966), p.6. Charles Baldwin paid £20 for the half year's rent to Ladyday, 1728 (Craven Salop Estates Rental, Stokesay, S.R.O. 407/12).

3. Although my searches for these records were in general unsuccessful, I am grateful for the assistance given to me by Miss A. Green, Berkshire County Archivist, Reading; Mrs. M. Halford, Salop County Archivist, Shrewsbury; Miss M. Jancey, Archivist, Hereford; and, in particular, Miss Honor Williams of Shrewsbury Borough Library Local Collection.



Each furnace owner probably made his own arrangements with the manor lord as was the case later in the seventeenth century when Lord Craven granted Job Walker freedom 'to dig for ironstone and hearthstone in the manor of Earls Ditton, Hints, and Coreley, paying the same rates as others do' <sup>1</sup>. The leases of land granted in this manor by the previous owners, the Haywards, had included from 1613, at the latest, exceptions of 'all and singular coales and coale mynes and mines of ironstone' <sup>2</sup>. This indicates that the value of the minerals was recognised and that attention was being paid to safeguarding the profits of exploiting them. That they were still being mined in the Catherton area well into the seventeenth century is revealed by a quarrel that, from about 1628, was pursued on Lord Craven's behalf by Sir Walter Pye, the Attorney of the Court of Wards and Livery, with Sir Francis Lacon. The latter considered that he had the right as lord of the manor of Cleobury, to mine the coal and ironstone of that part of Cassette, or Catherton, Heath that lay in the chapelry of Farlow. The quarrel reveals that he had exercised his right for some years <sup>3</sup> and that he and his servants had used physical violence against those whom they considered to be interlopers. One of the items in the interrogatory administered to him by the Attorney indicates that, on the 23rd of February 1629, he and others had disturbed and beaten Lord Craven's servants and labourers that 'then wrought there ... by warrant from and under this Lordship' <sup>4</sup>.

Further questions imply that a large number of men were labouring in the mines at that time and that they were equipped with 'working tooles or engines to worke' which had been taken away, or damaged, by Sir Francis

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1. Hereford R.O., Cal. Downton Coll., Bundle 598. Lease of Bringewood ironworks dated 11 April 1690.
  2. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 8445. Lease of lands in Hints to Taylor dated 10 September, II Jac. I.
  3. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 9756.
  4. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 9757.

and his men. Clearly the workmen involved in mining were far more numerous than is implied by the descriptions of occupations given in the Cleobury Mortimer parish register and they must have had other work that was considered to be their main concern except, possibly, in the case of the very few described as labourers. The fact that the attack on the miners took place in the month of February indicates that mining was most active during a period of the year when the demands of farming would be at a minimum and small landholders would be free to take up other work. Apart from mining itself there would be opportunities for people to carry ironstone and coal using farm vehicles and animals, and timber, tools, other equipment and provisions would have to be found and supplied. Of the eight men who gave replies to the interrogatory, that favoured the case of Lord Craven's miners, six were referred to in Cleobury register as yeomen and another, Humphrey Mantle, was a man of substance who had married Margaret Stary at Coreley in 1601 and been a churchwarden there in 1618-19. Also, other men must have been involved, at least from time to time, on behalf of landowners or iron-masters on supervisory duties, probably required of them as tenants, or as servants, bailiffs or stewards. After Sir Francis Lacon had attacked the miners at Catherton in February 1629, the names of four such people, who had helped him during the attack, were given in the interrogatory.<sup>1</sup>

As well as the Lacons and Blounts, other landholders appear to have contributed capital or managerial skills to the iron industry and to have benefited from their contribution. Among the families of the early iron-masters who still owned substantial amounts of land in Cleobury or Neen Savage parishes in the middle of the seventeenth century were those of John Weston, who had leased a forge from the Earl of Leicester in 1576, and John Thornton, who with John Cross, had gone to Coity in 1589

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 9757. They were: Edward Harper, John Fewtrell, Nicholas Gibbons and Charles Adams.

to establish an ironworks there. In both cases their descendants were described as 'gentleman' in the parish registers. The Walker family was represented in Cleobury by Richard Walker, who was described as gent. in 1651 when his daughter Joyse was buried, and by John Walker, yeoman, 'of the Wood'. Naturally, the parish register entries do not show this type of participation in industry.

The financial difficulties of Sir Francis may have added desperation to his actions, but it is not known why the dispute became serious at that time. However, as it concerned the area of the outcrop, near the settlement now called Hill Houses in Farlow, which was furthest from the site of the old Catherton ironworks, and, therefore, likely to be the last area to be exploited, it is possible that by this time there was very little of the Gutter seam remaining near the surface. The sites of Leicester's furnaces had been included in the land sold to the Lacons in 1608 and the desire to secure the remaining supplies of ore for his furnace at Cleobury could have caused Sir Francis to act when he did. The dispute was not settled for many years, but Sir Francis appears to have remained in occupation of the land, for Lord Craven's leases of mineral rights on the hillside do not include the disputed area until after 1673 when most of it was acknowledged to be Lord Craven's in return for a payment of £200<sup>1</sup>. The protracted legal proceedings must have increased the financial problems of the Lacons and probably ensured only a limited supply of ironstone to their furnaces, if the violent acts of 1628/29 indicate, as they seem to do, that the supplies of easily mined ore in the Catherton area were nearly exhausted. The exhaustion of the ore in the disputed area might help to explain the decline of the Cleobury furnace in the late 1630s. Similarly the exhaustion of the associated easily mined, and therefore cheap, coal probably influenced adversely the development of other industries in the area at least for a time.

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 8514.

The dispute affected only a part of Lord Craven's mineral bearing land. The Gutter seam existed, but at greater depths, in the upper parts of Catherton where it was known, later, as the 'bluestone'. It was near the surface in Cornbrook dingle, also <sup>1</sup>. Ironstone existed with other coal seams, or near to them, but not in the quantities that existed in the Gutter seam. It was also accessible in the form of nodules in the shales and clays above and between the coal seams particularly on the steeper slopes on the south side of the hill in Doddington and Hints townships, but in none of these areas were there outcrops as large or as easily mined as those that had been found earlier in the Catherton area. The mining of the upper areas of Catherton and of the areas outside Catherton must have begun to pose serious problems as soon as the seams near the surface had been exhausted for drainage systems would have been required. The cost of these, and the lack of the technical skills required, probably retarded production for some years and encouraged wasteful mining including, in places, the abandonment of pits before they were worked out. Nonetheless, the supply of ironstone from Doddington-Hints manor increased greatly in the years that followed the dispute over Catherton Heath. A rental of the manor for 1662 shows that 494 dozens of ironstone had been mined in that year alone <sup>2</sup>. Such large quantities indicate regular, widespread, mining activities that could have been built up only over a period of many years.

A large quantity of coal must have been mined at Catherton when the ironstone from the Gutter seam was removed, and smaller amounts were mined elsewhere on the hillside during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but there are fewer references to it than there are to the ironstone. A rental of the manor of Doddington-Hints for 1567 shows that £1/6/8<sup>d</sup> was received from William and John Ersland 'for the coale

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1. See Plate 13, p. 343.

2. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 7450. See below, p. 214.

mynes' <sup>1</sup>, and a rental of the property of Edward Foxe of Ludford for 1583 notes that 5<sup>s</sup> had been received from Thomas Addams 'for the colemynes' in Bennettsend and Snitton <sup>2</sup>. In 1612 Charles Fox of Greete paid an annual rent of twenty shillings to Richard Fox, Edward's successor, for the coal-mines in the same manor <sup>3</sup>. There are few other references to coal although it was used in large quantities, as Leland indicated, to burn the lime that was supplied to surrounding districts. The practice of the manor of Doddington-Hints was, usually, to charge rents for limekilns as in 1616 when Thomas and Roger Oseland paid 6/8<sup>d</sup> and John Richards paid 3/4<sup>d</sup> 'for a lyme kyln' <sup>4</sup>. No royalty was charged either on the limestone or on the coal used to burn it, indicating that both were included in the charge made for the kilns.

As timber supplies diminished, other industries made increasing use of coal when possible. Such industries included candle-making, for many candles were needed in the mines, where they provided the only source of light <sup>5</sup>. Coal was used, also, in soap-boiling, in brewing, and in cloth-making and in wood- and leather-working which were still very important industries in the Ludlow and Cleobury areas during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The ironmongers, smiths, goldsmiths, armourers, brasiers, cutlers, spurriers, pewterers, plumbers, nailers and 'brygand iron makers' of Ludlow and the growing number of scythe-smiths, blacksmiths, nailers and other metal-workers in the Cleobury area probably used coal also, as did the glass-makers, Richard Season and Robert Harvie who, by

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 8384.

2. H.T. Wakeman, 'Some Account of the Foxe Family', T.S.A.S., 2nd ser., xii (1900), 131.

3. S.R.O., 20/Box 13.

4. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 7449.

5. J.U. Nef, The Rise of the British Coal Industry (2nd impr., London, 1966), i, 212. A son of Humphrey Newall, chandler, was baptised at Cleobury Mortimer in 1655.

1600, were members of the Ludlow company of 'Hammermen'<sup>1</sup>. Their industry was established in Cleobury before 1648, when the daughter of William Newell, 'glazier', was baptised, for the son of Robert Harvie, William, who was baptised in Ludlow on 16th December 1584, was living in Cleobury from 1614 at least. He was described as a glazier when he was buried there in 1655<sup>2</sup>. In addition<sup>3</sup> coal was probably used, on a smaller scale, by many of the tradesmen, such as carpenters and coopers, to prepare their materials, and by the few early brick-makers<sup>4</sup>.

The early use, in Ludlow, of coal for domestic fires was implied by Sir Henry Sidney's reference to the 'noxious mineral' early in the reign of Elizabeth<sup>5</sup> and many other people probably used it, especially in the areas closer to the mines where the costs of transport would be less, or where farmers and others could use their own carts and wains during the periods when agricultural activities were limited. In 1658, the Vicar of Cleobury, Robert Goodwin, noted in his accounts under the heading 'Housekeeping' the purchase of 'five tunne of coales, 4s. the tunne I. O. O.'<sup>6</sup>. This indicates that he was using a considerable amount of coal during the course of a year and his later accounts show that he purchased coal regularly for his own household and from time to time for his church as well. Another indication of the use of coal locally for domestic purposes is provided by a map, made about 1663, of the parts of Catherton and Farlow concerned in the dispute between Lord Craven and Sir Francis Lacon and his successor Sir William Childe. The

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1. Llewellyn Jones, 'Antiente Company of Smiths', T.S.A.S. (1888), 305.
  2. Cleobury Mortimer Par. Reg. (1904), p.105.
  3. For the probable extent of the use of coal in industrial processes at this period see Nef, op.cit., i, 200-223.
  4. Much of Whitton Court was rebuilt in brick. The initials 'S.H.' (Sebastian Harvey), and the date '1621' exist on the south front.
  5. See above, p. 88.
  6. See below, p.143, note 1.

map includes drawings in elevation of houses and squatters' cottages in the area and all are shown to possess a chimney either in the centre of the building or at one end of it <sup>1</sup>.

Many hundreds, possibly thousands, of tons of coal must have been used for industrial and domestic purposes each year by the early part of the seventeenth century and the mining of it and of ironstone, the quarrying and burning of limestone <sup>2</sup>, and the transport of these products and the use made of them in other industries provided many opportunities for employment particularly in the parishes that included the mining areas of the upper slopes.

Entries in other parish registers that still exist for the period before 1650 rarely refer to the occupations involved or to labourers, so it appears that much of the work of quarrying, mining and haulage in the upper parishes, as with the work in the new industries and occupations in the lower parts of parishes such as Cleobury Mortimer, was undertaken as part-time employment by people who were still considered to be, primarily, small landholders and farmers.

For many years before the sixteenth century some small landholders in the area had supported themselves and their families with the help of by-employments such as weaving, leather-working, wood-turning, small-scale ironstone- and coal-mining, and ironworking. The conditioning of workers that was a consequence of such work must have made a great contribution to the expansion of industry from the second quarter of the sixteenth century. This contribution increased during and after the seventeenth century as the number of men who could no longer support themselves and their families on the land increased as a consequence of

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1. S.B.L., Deeds and Charters, 9762.

2. It has been estimated that about half a ton of coal was probably used in the making of a chaldron of lime to be used for building mortar or for agricultural purposes. Nef, op.cit., i, 206.

population growth, changes in landholding patterns and management and a great decrease in the land that was available for clearance and settlement.