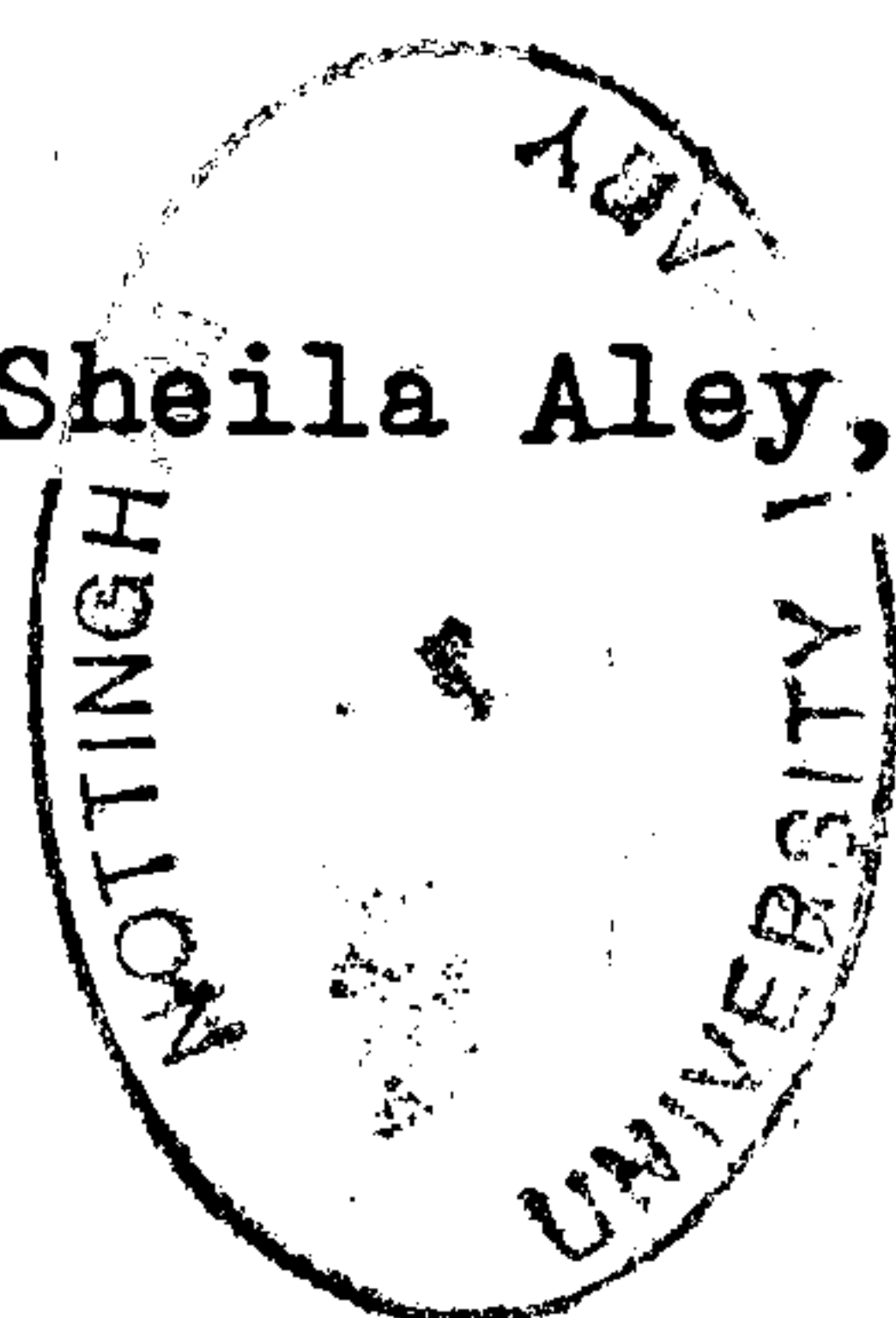


THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LANDOWNERS AND THEIR ESTATES

c.1660 - c.1840

by

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ABSTRACT: The Nottinghamshire landowners and their estates, c.1660-c.181

Chapter 1: Sets out the present nature of the Landownership debate and outlines the aspects still in contention which will be subject to reappraisal.

Chapter 2: Discusses the problems of defining a historical region, and presents an assessment of what are thought to be the old historical regions of Nottinghamshire, followed by a brief description of the economy.

Chapter 3: Introduces the social structure of the data set families which comprise the stable core of landowners with which the study is concerned.

Chapter 4: Discusses the social and geographical distribution of property and some of the factors which contributed to the changes experienced in the local pattern of landownership.

Chapter 5: Outlines the contentious nature of the strict settlement debate, and assesses how the demographic implications affected the chequered patterns of inheritance, the form and timing of the settlement device, and the cumulative burden of indebtedness.

Chapter 6: Factors influencing the level of activity on the local land market are presented, and compared with the findings of other regional studies.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9: Present a series of three family histories bringing together the principal lines of argument, and setting them in the wider context of estate economics. These chapters emphasise the contrasting responses of individuals to crises and challenges in order to maintain continuity of both family and estates.

Chapter 10: Points the way towards a new model which could form the basis for future interregional comparisons, as it is essentially from an understanding of the regional variations that an appreciation of the changing patterns of landownership will emerge.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

N.U.	Nottingham University Library
N.C.R.O.	Nottinghamshire County Record Office
S.R.O.	Sheffield Record Office, Central Library
Ec.H.R.	Economic History Review
Eng.H.R.	The English Historical Review
J.B.S.	The Journal of British Studies
T.R.H.S.	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society

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NOTE

For the sake of expediency during the discourse, Sir H. J. Habakkuk is simply referred to as Habakkuk, which is the method usually adopted for other contributors to the debate.

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CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION(i) The Landownership Debate

The social distribution of landed property in England has been the focus of historical debate since the nineteenth century, when concern was registered over the apparent concentration of property in the hands of a small, elite group of landowners. The 'Return of Owners of Land' compiled in 1872-3 confirmed that out of a total population of 30,000,000, only 30,000 were landowners, and that of these the most substantial 7,000 proprietors owned four-fifths of the total acreage.¹ This generated much public debate on the causes and consequences of such a phenomenon which set England apart from European countries, and centred on those who stoutly defended the established structure and functions of landownership; and their radical antagonists who attacked the principle of primogeniture and the practice of strict family settlements, which were the customary legal means by which landowners kept their estates intact. They claimed that such estate agglomeration had serious social, political, and economic consequences, for it was achieved at the expropriation of the very small occupiers; it preserved the political power base of this landed elite; and it reduced the level of new capital investment in land.²

The debate has generated numerous studies to assess the nature of the changing patterns of landownership, and necessitated tracing back the chain of causes and effects to earlier periods. One line of enquiry has reappraised the landed gentry in the century or so before 1660, which concludes that the impact of property turnover during the Interregnum was much less catastrophic on the old landed structure than originally supposed.³ Indeed, an appreciation of the events of the middle and later decades of the seventeenth century is crucial to an understanding of the wider ramifications which the landownership debate has developed. The practices of primogeniture and strict

settlement were issues for public concern during the later seventeenth century,⁴ as well as forming the crux of the nineteenth century arguments, but by the nineteenth century they were compounded by their apparent long-term effects on society and the economy.

New impact was given to the landownership debate when it was taken up by Habakkuk in 1939,⁵ although hindsight suggests that his original stance was influenced by some of the more persuasive economic theorists of the nineteenth century, and his interest was kindled by the Tawney study of seventeenth century gentry. Habakkuk based his study on Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire landed families, among whom he discerned a drift of property after 1690 in favour of the large estates, at the expense of the smaller owners. This was due, he argued, to several factors: the course of legal and social changes which the introduction and implementation of strict settlements and easier mortgage facilities effected, in response to the turmoil of the 1640s and 1650s, making landowners more secure. The wealthiest families made greater use of these practices than the smaller owners. Their estates were among the most advanced in English agriculture. Many of them were founded on merchant or legal fortunes made in the sixteenth century, and their estates were well managed, maintained, and profitable. They had access to a wider range of new investment opportunities, including the Public Funds, which supplemented their income from agricultural sources, and helped to buffer them against the slow movement of rents and heavy taxation, particularly during war years. The position of the smaller owners was weakened by war taxation, and their lack of financial buffers, forcing them to sell. As the wealthier families gradually acquired most of the property available, their estates were consolidated by enclosure; and leases for lives were converted into leases for a term of years, in an attempt to attract more substantial tenants who could pay the doubled rents, thereby further weakening the position of the smaller occupiers.

Habakkuk argued that these developments effected a major change in the social distribution of property.

The basic concept of his argument received greater delineation by Habakkuk between 1950-1968, and he extended the period under review to 1800 to highlight further the significance of events during the years 1690-1720.⁶ A subsequent study by Mingay, whilst largely supporting the Habakkuk line of argument, tentatively suggested that there may have been the tendency towards concentration of property earlier than the later seventeenth century, and that the profits of office and overseas adventuring were a secondary cause of land concentration in the hands of a few.⁷ Thompson has argued more positively that the trend towards greater estates may be traced from the later fifteenth century to the late nineteenth century, but that it was unlikely the rate of the relative shift ever exceeded five per cent of the total acreage in a century, with some periodic interruptions.⁸ He claimed that peasant owners did not disappear because there was an industrial revolution, but because they had gradually failed to survive over the preceding centuries; and he contended that the pattern of land distribution in England, with the great longevity of its essential outlines, is important in that it furnished one strand in the basic framework within which industrialization and uninterrupted economic growth could occur, built up as it was by nearly 300 years of political social and economic pressures. Whilst accepting the general trend of Thompson's argument, that the share of land of the greater owners was roughly constant from the later Middle Ages to 1700, Cooper suggested that the composition of this elite did not necessarily remain the same. He envisaged long-term changes in which some small, homogeneous group was replaced as owners of the major part of the land by some other group with different social or economic characteristics, due to a complex process of change within and between the groups.

The increasingly contentious nature of the debate during the 1960s stimulated a rash of research in the 1970s, which further weakened the original argument of Habakkuk. Several criticisms of his methodology have emerged, such as his limited range of source material, and his practice of formulating national conclusions based on particular regional phenomena.¹⁰ Additionally, the internal logic of his model has been seriously put in doubt, and therefore his conclusions are open to reappraisal.¹¹ Yet Habakkuk implies a defence of his method in ^{saying} that a model 'provides a source of expectations and it may be as illuminating to the historian when the expectations confound as when they are confirmed'.¹² The model was broken down by these other researchers for closer scrutiny and greater definition of its constituent parts, which have subsequently evolved as complex issues. They emphasised firstly the social structure of landowners from the late sixteenth century; and stemming from the discussion on the social distribution of landed property, they have stressed the factors influencing land market activity at specific periods, and their impact on the composition of landowners. In particular, they have illustrated how the patterns of inheritance traceable through settlements and demographic factors, and the burden of indebtedness due to political, economic and legal pressures contributed to this activity and its social consequences. Additionally, they have concentrated on the economic functions of landowners, with particular reference to their role in agrarian developments and the effect of these on the apparent decline in the number of small farmers and on the sizes of farms.¹³

Clay was one of the first to reappraise the theoretical core of the argument, which rests on Habakkuk's contention that marriage and inheritance were crucial factors in the build up of great estates during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It was originally argued that landowners with the largest gross rentals, who

could therefore offer substantial jointures, could command brides with the largest portions; and a wealthy marriage in one generation put a family in a financially stronger position to make another wealthy marriage in the next generation, thus accelerating the rate of growth of great estates. But since portions were usually raised by mortgaging the family estates, the extension of estates was effected by the landowning class as a whole 'raising itself by its own bootstraps'.¹⁴ However, Clay suggests that the importance of marriage portions in extending the estates of the landed class as a whole has been exaggerated, as marriage and inheritance can explain the rise of individual families at all levels of society and at most periods of time. He posits that any advantages of the great territorial landed magnates in obtaining wealthy wives was significantly offset by the disinclination of some landowners to see their estates swallowed up by another family; and also by the unpredictable element of fate, such that whilst the processes of marriage and inheritance built up some estates, others were being broken up at the same time by the same factors. As it was not the universal practice of landed families to enlarge their estates by spending their wives' portions, for sometimes these were used to make provision for the children's portions in the next generation, the landed class as a whole neither gained nor lost from this interchange of capital between families. Furthermore, the direct effects of marriage and inheritance worked more or less impartially on all groups within landed society. Yet as a distinct impression persists that these factors were of particular significance in the rise of both great and small landowning families during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, some additional force must be exerting its influence on these features. Clay's evidence, in compliance with Hollingsworth's demographic study¹⁵ of the period, suggests that this force came from indirect inheritance through either the female line or a collateral branch; and that this

was a most important factor in bringing land on to the market, usually associated with some pressing individual circumstances, particularly the fact that many estates of inheritance carried such heavy financial encumbrances which led directly to sale. This was especially so in the second half of the seventeenth century, when the usual interest rate payable on mortgages or portions charged on real property was down to 5 or 6 per cent, and capital invested in land yielded about 4 per cent. An estate indebted by £1,000 per annum in interest repayments could be freed by selling off land worth considerably less than £1,000 per annum rental income. Thus, despite the notion attaching great social prestige to landownership, there were financial pressures, not always offset by the profits of office, to be rid of inherited burdens. Additionally, daughters may be free to dispose of an inherited estate as they wish, or a collateral branch may inherit land at such a distance as to be too inconvenient and expensive to administer economically. Clay suggests that an enormous volume of land must have come on to the market as a result of indirect inheritance. This possibly affected lesser gentry and freeholders more frequently than the greater landowners, as a large unit of property could be properly and economically managed by an absentee landlord more satisfactorily than a small one. Therefore the vast quantity of land which changed hands due to indirect inheritance must have eroded the holdings of the lesser gentry and freeholders to a greater extent than those of the greater landlords, at a time, as Habakkuk has indicated, when some of the latter could benefit from the process. Clay argues that owing to a biological failure on the part of the landlord class during this period, which Hollingsworth discerned for the peerage, and which Jenkins has supported in his study of the Glamorgan gentry,¹⁶ more families were dying out in the male line, with more estates therefore passing to

heiresses or collateral relatives than either before or afterwards. This gives an explanation for the prominence of marriage and inheritance in the rise of so many landowning families during the period 1680 to 1750, and was originally seen as a supplement to other explanations;¹⁷ but Clay has since assumed a stronger stance which favours the demographic factor in the concentration of property into fewer hands, and a continuation of this trend during the eighteenth century.¹⁸

More recent demographic studies by Wrigley and Schofield have concluded that there was indeed a general demographic crisis in England between 1650-1740, which has been attributed to a delayed Malthusian response to a decline in real wages some forty years earlier.¹⁹ The crisis affecting the landed elite, first observed by Hollingsworth, has been attributed more specifically by Stone to a difference between the demographic behaviour of the elite and that of the lower classes in nuptiality and age of marriage, but resulting in a similar failure to reproduce. Drawing evidence from landed elite families of Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, and Northumberland, Stone suggested that this had serious social consequences. Fewer than half of the fathers survived to see their sons married, therefore exerting no influence on their sons' choice of bride. The median age at which a son and heir would inherit the estate was reduced from 29 years in the late sixteenth century to about 19 in the late seventeenth, slowly rising again over the next 150 years. Therefore an exceptionally youthful society resulted in the eighteenth century, with men often inheriting power and estates as soon as they reached their majority. Thus the principle of primogenitural descent was severely threatened by worsening demographic conditions in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries - a crisis which landed elite families in these counties survived by adopting the practice of indirect inheritance by relatives,²⁰ to effect continuity and

preservation of their estates.

If, as Clay has argued, so much land was coming on to the market through indirect inheritance, especially from the smaller landowners, such that the greater landowners could aggregate their holdings by purchase, how does this square with the notion that the preservative nature of strict settlement prevented estates from disintegrating? Bonfield was prompted to re-evaluate the proffered connection between settlement and the rise of great estates between 1680 and 1740, particularly in view of the mounting evidence of a demographic crisis. He believed that for the principle of strict settlement to be properly effective it could only operate within particular demographic circumstances, which the evidence for Kent and Northamptonshire families suggested did not exist.²¹ Ideally, settlements are thought to have operated in this way: a landowner would be the owner in fee simple of any newly purchased property which, when settled on his son in the direct line of descent, would make the son a tenant for life. This would entitle the son on his succession only to the income from the estate, and he would be debarred from selling, mortgaging, despoiling, or leasing it unless specific powers to do so were conferred upon him in the settlement. He was also usually granted a power to provide portions for his wife and children out of the rents or proceeds of the property. The original owner's grandson, if born at the time of the settlement, would become the next successive life tenant; or if still unborn, the prospective 'tenant in tail'. Thus, a settlement was usually sanctioned for only a limited period, which satisfied the law's dislike of perpetuities. The interests of the heir to an estate would be subordinate under the settlement to those of his father. A continuous chain of settlement and resettlement was required for each successive generation, effected at a mutually

agreed time when the son would join with the father in making a new settlement. This has traditionally been regarded as the time when the son reached his majority, or at the time of his marriage, but this point is still in contention.²² This model of settlement therefore provided no absolute owner but only a series of life tenancies with limited powers, in order to promote the continuity of estates. Settlement procedures were necessarily complicated because perpetuities were abhorred by the law, although this was a maxim not a statutory provision until the rule against perpetuities in 1833. However, the continuous pattern of resettlements which this provision necessitated provided landowners with a degree of flexibility; for resettlements afforded the opportunity to break entails on estates, giving a freer hand in their disposition. This could also be achieved by a private Act of Parliament, or by deliberately leaving land out of settlement. Thus, settlement in practice was not nearly so restrictive as has been suggested. However, Bonfield's evidence indicated that a combination of demographic factors such as late marriage, high mortality, and too few male children generally precluded resettlement in the manner suggested above. And with so many fathers dying before the marriage of their sons, the next male heir would therefore come into possession of his patrimony with a free hand. Even though marriage and inheritance brought land into numerous families, the serious demographic difficulties in many landed families would demand the basing of settlements on a different strategy of heirship. Thus these estates must have been preserved by factors other than strict settlement; and he suggested that the impact of settlement on great estates may prove to be illusory.

Was the nexus between settlement and landownership illusory, or exaggerated, or simply misunderstood? Our understanding of the workings of strict settlement is still incomplete and imprecise, so its effects are open to competing interpretations, despite more recent research

which has focused on the timing of strict settlement, that is the occasion on which it was most likely to be made; and on the form which the settlement took. Although these issues may be treated separately, they constitute two strands of the same thread. Bonfield has extended his ideas by tracing the history of the development and adoption of strict settlement; but the usefulness and credibility of his work is seriously undermined in that he chose not to apply the ramifications of the legal processes he traced to further the development of the landownership debate, but decided to sidestep these issues and merely act as a 'legal antiquary'.²³ But in so doing he has misled historians by perpetuating the common misconception that marriage settlements usually equate with strict settlements, although their separate distinction had already been recorded. Whereas the purpose of a strict family settlement was to preserve land, the marriage settlement was simpler, and determined how property was to be enjoyed by a husband and wife.²⁴ However, Bonfield continues to contend that a strict family settlement was executed upon the marriage of the eldest son, and remained the prevailing means by which landed wealth was transmitted between the generations until the twentieth century. His authoritatively legal stance tends to deflect attention from what remain two of the central issues: that marriage settlements were only one occasion on which a full family settlement could be made, for they could also be made when the heir came of age, or when sudden or particular family circumstances dictated: but most importantly, settlements could be made by will, at any time, although they would not become effective until the testator died. A number of writers are aware that some settlements were made by will,²⁵ but the impact of this aspect has not received due attention until recently, when English and Saville compared the form and structure of the legal model with its actual implementation by selected families. Their evidence

suggested that despite the undoubted tendencies to dispersal that threatened all large and middling estates, the legal developments associated with the many forms of strict settlement encouraged and fostered their cohesion through time.²⁶ Thompson also supports the argument that the capital purpose of strict settlement was to keep the family estates intact,²⁷ but with land remaining out of settlement and capable of being sold, the workings of this device may still require more precise interpretation. However, some of its effects have been estimated. It is not known exactly how much land was settled at any time, but in 1847-8 a rough assessment was given of between a half and two-thirds of the land of England; and by the 1870s it was thought that the number and extent of settled estates under 1,000 acres probably balanced the area of larger estates or portions of them kept out of settlement. This notion partly fuelled the nineteenth century debate over the social distribution of landed property.

One principal aim of settlement was to protect the interests of the family from the devastating effects of profligacy by making provision for all its members. It has been argued by Habakkuk that this practice, pursued over several generations, frequently led to financial difficulties due to the extent of such provision to be made out of a family estate, and often resulted in forced sales of property.²¹ He promoted Locke's argument that debt was responsible for the great majority of sales;²⁹ and basing his evidence on the number of private Acts of Parliament sought to permit sales of settled land to discharge debts, he concluded that landed families suffered particular financial difficulties during the period c.1670 to 1720. These difficulties arose from a number of sources, particularly the provision for younger sons and daughters. Wartime circumstances increased the difficulty of sustaining a given level of debt, due to a sharp rise in land tax and lagging rental income, making it more difficult to meet fixed charge

In years of heavy government borrowing, especially 1694-7 and 1708-11, the financial position was aggravated by the diversion of Funds away from the mortgage market - which he has argued was the principal means of providing for children. But it was mainly the minor gentry and many substantial gentry families, rather than the greater landlords, who were under most pressure. The effect on the land market was to bring relatively small properties up for sale. The social composition of purchasers centred on existing landowners and their younger sons, farmers, and wealthy men from the county towns. It was not until after 1717 that monied men featured on the land market. The reduced number of Acts after 1714 has been regarded as an indicator of a substantially lower level of debt-enforced sales, resulting in a relatively inactive land market throughout most of the eighteenth century, as the more vulnerable families had already succumbed, and the devices of strict settlement and mortgage facilities enabled landowners to bear a higher level of debt. Interest rates had fallen from 10 per cent in 1625 to 5 per cent in the 1680s, and mortgages could occasionally be obtained at 4 per cent. With significant regional variations in timing, the annual value (not income) of land rose from the mid-sixteenth century to c.1620, then fluctuated, until it started to rise again about the middle of the eighteenth century, becoming pronounced by the 1770s, before collapsing at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Thus, Habakkuk argued, by the 1760s Acts were much more likely to be undertaken for sales to increase net income, rather than to reflect cases of desperate financial difficulty. However, Cooper has suggested that compared with the greater European landowners, the economic effects of settlement on English landowners were less severe. The latter could draw on a wider range of resources to offset financial difficulties than was available elsewhere. These included the breaking of entails to alienate property as a prelude to sale; the post-1650 fall in agricultural profits was less severe

than in many countries; and they could draw on a wider range of non-agricultural sources of income. Ultimately, success in overcoming financial difficulties very much depended on the policies and abilities of individual landowners.³⁰ This latter notion is supported in an analysis by Stone of changes undergone in family structure among the English upper classes from 1500 to 1800.³¹ More recently Stone has picked up the line of argument about Acts indicating the incidence of forced sales by landed families in financial difficulties; but he has suggested that these were sought to sell off outlying estates, not family seats; and that due to the option to sell off portions of their estates, the great landowners were rarely wiped out altogether. He therefore concluded that the financial crisis claimed for the period c.1670 to 1720 is illusory.³² Additionally, the precise role of mortgages is still in some doubt. It is claimed that they helped to support a heavy load of debt, particularly that of providing for younger children; but it emerged from a study of Cumbria that the lesser gentry could not always obtain a mortgage, although they were found to be more plentiful in Lincolnshire.³³ This may have been a regional problem due to local factors. To their advantage, mortgage debts could remain outstanding for years, if the interest was paid regularly on them; but regular repayments were a problem for the more financially vulnerable estates, as happened in Lincolnshire where several lawyers rose to be landowners, benefiting from those families who were unable to keep up the repayments. Even the more financially robust landowners would limit the extent of this outlay.³⁴

It has been argued above that land was coming on to the market through indirect inheritance as a result of demographic failure, and through indebtedness. These sales were possible because the combined effects of wealthy marriage alliances, strict settlements and mortgage facilities did not always operate in a preservative way. Other

factors have emerged which also contributed to forced sales. These processes had an impact on the social distribution of property which is subject to different regional influences. Mingay has argued the central place of the effects of wartime taxation and agricultural difficulties in the demise of smaller owners during the eighteenth century, with their land passing into the hands of the larger owners and newcomers, whilst the majority of substantial owners were able to maintain their position.³⁵ However, it was found that the financial difficulties of the lesser gentry who were selling out in Cumbria between c.1690 and 1750 were not specifically attributed to the level of taxation, which was considered to be low even at 5 per cent in war years; nor to the effects of agricultural depression, as the impact of this is now thought of as less severe and less widespread than was formerly asserted. Their problems stemmed more from the difficulty of obtaining short-term loans as an aid to estate development or exploitation.³⁶ The Glamorgan gentry held their own at this time, but where sales were forced, this was due to a combination of extravagance, bad luck, failure of the male line, the effects of the Civil Wars, and difficult economic conditions in the years after the Restoration.³⁷ In Yorkshire property was sold due to demographic failure and to economic decline. The effect of the latter on the more substantial landowners was far from negligible, and is attributable to the generally slow rate of improvement in agricultural conditions within the county, and to the capabilities or otherwise of the individual landowners.³⁸ Thus there was no single cause of difficulties resulting in sales of property.

However, financial strain appears to have been fairly widespread, affecting all ranks of landowners between c.1680 and 1750. The effect this had on the social composition of landholders has been debated. Habakkuk has argued that whereas more than two-fifths of the land changing hands in Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire

in 1680 went to newcomers who were building up large territorial aggregations out of the fortunes they made in law or government, by 1750 a much higher proportion came to families who already owned large estates.³⁹ However, Thompson contended that a large number of new families were founded during the eighteenth century, some by marriage but most by purchase, because when old landed families were obliged to part with their estates, they were not necessarily being swallowed up by a neighbouring great estate.⁴⁰ Regional differences have emerged from a number of studies. It is suggested that a degree of weakness on the part of the squirearchy in Lincolnshire throughout the eighteenth century was in some way responsible for the continued intervention of monied newcomers among the landed gentry, who were drawn from the ranks of merchants, lawyers, politicians and other professions.⁴¹ In Cumbria between 1680 and 1750 there was some infiltration of newcomers from trade, commerce and the law, although it does not seem to have been in large numbers.⁴² Although both lesser and greater landowners experienced financial difficulties in Glamorgan, there were no obvious changes in the structure of local landed society between 1660 and 1760, perhaps due to the relative remoteness of the county; but by mid-eighteenth century there was some infiltration by lawyers and estate agents.⁴³ New families benefiting from the economic difficulties of established members of the gentry and aristocracy in Yorkshire between 1640 and 1760 were mainly drawn from the great merchants of Leeds, Hull and London.⁴⁴ In the somewhat disparate counties of Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire and Northumberland it was found that only 8 per cent of all inheritors between 1540 and 1880 were affected by financial difficulties causing sale or status decline, which did not significantly alter the composition of the landed elite, except very slowly over a long period of time. By the eighteenth century Hertfordshire was most open to rich newcomers

from London and elsewhere, whilst Northamptonshire was more deeply entrenched in the conservatism of its established elite and was more remote from any major centre of industrial wealth. Northumberland was becoming more open to new entrants, as it was belatedly forming its squirearchy and recovering from economic backwardness, which stemmed from its border troubles.⁴⁵ Thompson has concluded that in the nineteenth century the rise of new gentry was roughly balanced by the fall of older gentry, although the processes of rise and decline were gradual; but the state of flux was more likely caused by internal factors of individual circumstances rather than external forces such as uncertainty over the economic viability of estates.⁴⁶ However, the general consensus of data suggests that monied newcomers formed a less significant proportion of landed society overall than originally suggested. They invested only part of their wealth in land, usually purchasing smaller estates. Only an exceptional few purchased on a grand scale.⁴⁷

The debate has been extended to consider the factors which influenced whether it was a sellers' or a buyers' market for land at any given time. Several economic theories have been presented. Habakkuk initially advanced the public discussion of the later seventeenth century between Sir Josiah Child of the East India Company and John Locke.⁴⁸ Child argued that land would be a more attractive financial proposition if the legal interest rate was reduced from 6 to 4 per cent, as land would then sell at 30 years' purchase instead of the usual 20. (That is, 30 times the annual value or rack rent). Locke countered that the price of land did not follow the current interest rate, for when the rate dropped from 10 to 6 per cent during the seventeenth century, the return on land had remained stable. Locke further argued that the price of land, like any other commodity, responded to the natural law of supply and demand. As his evidence supported Locke's theory, Habakkuk contended that Child misinterpreted the whole

history of land prices in England.⁴⁹ Clay's evidence for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries supports the notion that land prices were primarily dictated by the level of demand, but that a complex interplay of economic and political factors influenced that level. He contends that 20 years' purchase may have been the accepted standard rate in the home counties in the seventeenth century, but that 14 to 18 was more usual elsewhere, indicating again the importance of regional variation. During the eighteenth century the number of years' purchase rose to over 40 in the 1720s and again in the 1760s, with periodic fluctuations which reflected expectations about the future level of income from land. These expectations were influenced by the prevailing level of land tax or rent increases or higher grain prices. In addition, the rates of years' purchase were also firmly linked to the price of government stock, and as such became very sensitive to political events, particularly to a state of peace or war.⁵⁰ The influence of war years on the land market has been stressed by others. Habakkuk argued that in the early eighteenth century money available for credit was diverted into the Funds, which then carried high returns, just at a time when more land was being forced on to the market. The difficulty in raising mortgages tended to limit land demand, as the wars against Louis XIV shifted preferences for investment away from land and mortgages, causing the great merchants and financiers to postpone their establishment of landed families.⁵¹ But Thompson claimed that during the Napoleonic Wars the special influence of war finance depressed the price of Consols at a time when it was much more expensive for newcomers to enter the gentry group. The capital cost of a typical 1,000 acre estate might have grown from £12,000 to over £30,000, due to high demand at a time when rents per acre were double their pre-1790 figure.⁵² Thus the evidence indicates that wars had a variable impact on land demand, and that other factors must also

be at work. It has been suggested that demand increased, pushing up prices, as the economic value of land increased. Mingay has argued the case for the economic value of land proving to be an attractive alternative to investment in the Funds, even though the improved security of the Funds invited heavier investment, as the rise in land values became more marked after the middle of the eighteenth century due to increased agricultural profitability and a sharp rise in rents.⁵³ But land prices also reflected the privileges of social status and political power attached to land-ownership, which ensured that there was always some demand for land, even in economically depressed periods.

It has emerged that variability in the impact of these and other factors is crucial to an understanding of the different levels of land market activity experienced at different times. Habakkuk's theory that following the spate of activity after the Civil Wars demand was relatively low for most of the eighteenth century due to the combined effects of settlement, mortgages and low interest rates operating in favour of existing landowners is not substantiated. The doubts over the impact of these devices have already been outlined. Added to which Thompson provided evidence from auction sales that the land market did remain active in the eighteenth century; and the regional studies confirm this, but with local differences reflecting the influence of prevailing circumstances, especially the factors affecting supply and demand presented above. Motives for purchase appear to have changed over time in response to these prevailing conditions, and to individual needs. Social prestige and family security motivated purchasers in the seventeenth century; and there was some speculation by South Sea Company directors in the 1720s; whereas economic considerations, particularly as the value of land increased, became

the principal attraction for established landed families during the eighteenth century: although social prestige continued to influence newcomers. Estate aggregation was an important motive in the nineteenth century, not only because these carried a much higher market value, but because they also provided a territorial basis for power and influence in the local community.⁵⁴ At any period it was found that purchasers included a significant proportion of established local landed families. It has been claimed that the larger owners in particular were consolidating their properties out of the profits of their substantial estate revenues, often augmented by office holding and other non-agricultural sources of income. To what extent did this aggregation actually take place in the regions, and how far was this influenced by local conditions? A shift towards oligarchy after the Civil War was discerned in Lincolnshire, but the great estates were not monolithic; and the high proportion of absentee owners among them who held tenaciously to their land for its economic value is a particular feature of this county. However, the lesser gentry did not disappear as a major social force, although their composition altered due to the many opportunities to buy land, fostered by the rising social and economic expectations of a sizeable wedge of rural society.⁵⁵ In Cumbria an overall drift of property towards the greater gentry and newcomers was discerned between 1680 and 1750, resulting from economic conditions which squeezed out the lesser gentry without seriously affecting the yeomanry. The lesser gentry were affected by the difficulty in borrowing money, and by attempts at mineral exploitation. The absentee peers were less inclined to acquire property in the region unless it was to consolidate their existing estates or to add further strength to an electoral interest.⁵⁶ In Glamorgan land prices reflected a lower level of demand than elsewhere due to the county's remoteness and local economic difficulties stemming from low rents and

agricultural prices, except in those areas which depended on stock raising and dairying. The situation improved during the later eighteenth century when a primarily agrarian area was transformed by industry; by the 1760s the number of years' purchase rose to 25 to 30, catching up with the rate in southern England: but due to the prevailing conditions between 1660 and 1760 the lesser gentry remained as a major social force, except in the south-east of the county where the larger estates held a monopoly.⁵⁷ A general drift of property favouring the landed elite was discerned in Yorkshire between 1640 and 1760, due to demographic failure and a local commitment to piecemeal consolidation. Here land purchase was considered a major avenue of productive investment, leading to strategic expansion; but as this study featured baronets, the overall position of the lesser gentry is uncertain.⁵⁸ Thus, it would appear that local economic conditions contributed to the level of supply and demand on the land market, but it is not abundantly clear to what extent political factors affected the situation. Wartime taxation was variable, and was not found to place an excessive strain on any but the most financially vulnerable estates. Wartime uncertainties might temporarily reduce demand, inhibit borrowing, and deflect investment into the Funds; but they have not been given the same significant prominence in regional studies which difficulties of an economic or personal nature have received. For this reason, and the fact that existing theories suggest that wars did not always exert the same stress on the country, this issue remains open to debate.

Landed estates have not usually been regarded as units of economic utility, which is the line of argument adopted in this study. Habakkuk has supported the general notion that they were principally units of conspicuous consumption; and that they were

mainly purchased for motives of social prestige and political power.⁵⁹ Kingay discusses the country house as 'the theatre of hospitality';⁶⁰ whilst Thompson contends that an estate had always been held as indispensable for the support of the dignity of an hereditary title, and the influence exerted through the institutions of the House of Lords and the House of Commons.⁶¹ Stone discusses them as seats of administration and sociability in addition to being displays of local power.⁶² Estates acquired legal definition as defensible realty, as distinct from personalty, by the early seventeenth century.⁶³ Despite this emphasis on social status, the role of landed proprietors in economic changes, particularly through improved estate management, has been acknowledged; but they have been regarded not so much as leaders in promoting agricultural improvements, more as agents of the institutional changes necessary for the rapid introduction of the improved methods by providing the necessary capital for them. Additionally, some landowners exploited the minerals on their estates, or were involved in urban development or overseas trade, and often played a leading part in promoting turnpike trusts and canal construction. Although partly reflecting the generally small scale of industry before the nineteenth century, landowners were not usually inclined to entrepreneurial functions unless this was promoted by strong self-interest, and an inclination for risk-taking, backed by substantial capital. Vital though their financial role was to economic advance, Habakkuk suggests that these activities were a response to pressures, particularly by tenants.⁶⁴ Thompson considers that the most decisive contribution by landowners to economic growth was through the creation of a large body of tenant farmers, which they then helped to sustain through the eighteenth century by forcing or encouraging them to command good-sized incomes, thus providing a framework for agricultural growth.⁶⁵ Kingay argues that the provision of capital necessary to the agricultural system was

subject to certain influences and limitations, such as the degree of personal interest by landowners in estate development, and the limitations imposed on their particular circumstances by strict settlement.⁶⁶ Bonfield also maintains that the restraints imposed by settlement must have had a profound effect upon the economy.⁶⁷ Essentially, agricultural innovations in the eighteenth century were pioneered by country gentlemen, owner-occupiers, large tenant farmers, and publicists; whereas the large landlords' major contribution to innovation was in the financing of enclosure which eroded the ancient open field system of cultivation, facilitating more efficient methods of cultivation, and extending these to the wastelands. However, the role of enclosure should not be overstressed, as its economic advantage in terms of agricultural revolution, together with its social impact which is said to have contributed to the decline of the peasantry, has been exaggerated.⁶⁸ The lack of uniformity in administrative arrangements and the absence of a business-like approach on many estates was interpreted in part as a reflection of the persistent idea that an estate was primarily a unit of consumption rather than a unit of management. Yet on many larger estates management was a very cooperative enterprise between the landowner, his agent, steward and lawyer. It was on the smaller estates, where the gentry tended to be more personally involved, that a wide variety of administrative arrangements prevailed. The effectiveness of landlords as efficient estate managers was influenced by their degree of personal and political interest, the geographical dispersion of their estates, and the ability of or necessity to employ estate stewards, as well as being limited by their personal circumstances and degree of restrictions imposed by settlement. Collectively, the landed interest exerted a most direct influence on the economy of the country as a whole; but ultimately interest in estate

development rested on the possibilities offered for improving rentals. These were linked to the nature and situation of lands comprising an estate, the possibilities for enclosure and the changes in enlarged farm sizes and methods of cultivation this procedure would bring, and to the state of the agricultural markets. As rental income was the principal economic foundation of many estates, maintaining financial buoyancy through the difficult years of agricultural depressions or wartime uncertainties was an important feature in the stability and continuity of families and their estates, and influenced the level of activity on the land market. Rental movements, as they impinge on landownership, have been the focus of debate, and have produced different interpretations of the factors affecting these movements and the significance of overall trends. The evidence for Cumbria supports Habakkuk's contention that rents were static for about thirty years from 1690, but was at variance with Mingay's argument for extending the period to 1760. Rents remained stable in Yorkshire for long periods and were occasionally reduced.⁶⁹ After 1760 rents on unenclosed land are said to have risen nationally by 40 to 50 per cent, whilst rents on enclosed land rose considerably more. During the Napoleonic wars rents doubled again, at a time of agrarian difficulties. The Board of Agriculture's enquiries indicated that many landlords suffered from unpaid rents and farms falling into hand, despite rent abatements averaging 20 to 25 per cent. By the early 1820s some landlords were obliged to make considerable permanent rent reductions; and by the mid-1830s while some landlords maintained their wartime rent levels, others had reduced them by up to 25 per cent, at a time when they were providing more fixed capital outgoings in the way of repairs, fencing, gates, new buildings, drainage and other improvements, and were also liable for outgoings such as tithes, land tax, drainage and local rates, management expenses and miscellaneous payments.

On the whole, a good deal of landlords' capital was sunk in farm improvements in the middle years of the nineteenth century, and estates owned by the leading statesmen and political figures were among the most progressive: but after such investment there was a long delay before rents rose substantially again between 1850 and 1879. Overall, rents rose on average 25 to 45 per cent between 1815 and 1879, but with wide variations. The most important permanent gain came from the doubling of rents during the war years 1793 to 1815, achieved only by heavy capital outlay, which was also a considerable inducement for landowners competing in the market for good tenants. The wide variations within rent rises determined by landlords was due to individual conditions, and some landowners had an altogether easier financial passage than others, depending on the level of personal involvement and competence in estate management, on geographical location, on land use, and on the incidence of enclosure. In the latter case, increases were determined by the level of return anticipated from the investment, and the level of that investment. Ultimately, levels of rental income and financial buoyancy were linked to wider opportunities for estate expansion and development, such as the availability on the market of good quality agricultural estates, or those capable of being improved, sought as additions to or replacements for existing ones, indicating that estates were operated more on the basis of units of economic utility than the literature sometimes suggests.⁷⁰ But as with so many other features of the landownership debate, this aspect is open to different interpretations, which leaves the debate open until more regional studies have been concluded which will help to determine an overall pattern.

(ii) Aim and Method

Recent research has indicated that the way forward still requires more detailed regional studies, which take time to prepare. This study of Nottinghamshire has therefore been conducted to test the current lines of thought. Although the present trend is to present county studies, there are some reservations about counties being rather arbitrarily defined units which may tend to obscure the influence of naturally occurring regions which extend beyond their boundaries. To somewhat mitigate this problem, some account has been taken of the extension of these geographical areas beyond the Nottinghamshire county boundary.

A more extensive time span than is usual has been selected for the period under review, covering c.1660 to c.1840, which enables significant historical movements to be better isolated and placed in context; but as important threads of continuity affecting the findings run beyond these dates, these are briefly included where they impinge on the analysis, that is from the Civil War to the 'New Domesday' survey of 1873. The starting date of 1660 was taken as the strict settlement was being implemented then against a more stable political background, seemingly producing important effects on land-holding patterns and the social structure. The progression of this movement gave rise to such public concern that after the 1840s political measures were being mooted to mitigate their apparent restrictions on the availability of land on the market; but to trace the ramifications of these measures during the later nineteenth century would probably have rendered the project unmanageable.

The landownership debate has become very diverse and complex since its origin through major contributions from the related disciplines of legal, economic and social history, and historical geography, which have not only scrutinised the existing model but have also introduced new theories and a scholarly appraisal of many

new facets. It has therefore required a constant reappraisal of the structure and composition of the debate, and its methodology. Accordingly, the field of research undertaken here has been broadly conceived to allow a holistic but unified approach, with the various elements under review being presented as part of a continuous exposition, to illustrate and assess the many inter-related issues which make up the whole.

Particular emphasis has been placed in this study on those aspects of the debate which are still in contention, or which are open to various interpretations, necessitating a redefinition of the processes which may have contributed to the local pattern of land-ownership. These hinge especially on the notion of a 'demographic crisis', which has received perhaps a too literal treatment by some researchers in pursuing the composition and strength of the landed classes. An alternative interpretation is put forward, tracing a historical association with a particular estate, which enables a fuller understanding of the workings of strict settlement to emerge. The form and timing of strict settlement is assessed as a direct response to the demographic changes which affected virtually every family. The flexible yet protective and preservative role of strict settlement is illustrated, and the buffers it provided which run contrary to the argument that settlements frequently carried a cumulative burden of debt which could place an undue strain on those families already in a vulnerable financial position, and force them to sell their estates. The role of mortgages as a financial buffer, which could provide extended credit to meet family provisions, has perhaps been overstressed: for this interpretation rests on the notion that the terms of strict settlement were mainly implemented through the mortgage device, but as mortgages were frequently the cause of forced sales their function was more of a handicap than is usually acknowledged. Strict settlements must therefore depend on

other factors for their full implementation, suggesting that the precise role of mortgages is still imperfectly understood. The importance of regional variation is restressed in assessing the factors influencing the state of the local land market during the eighteenth century. Perhaps too much emphasis has been placed at times on general economic theories, which have become established principles, and have tended to obscure the more fundamental impact of local conditions and customs, and individual family circumstances and preferences on regional land markets. The latter impinge particularly on chance demographic patterns, the workings of strict settlement, mortgaging practices, and the role of the individual. An assessment of how landowners maintained their position as a social force is a pointer to the need to redefine the devices they adopted to build up, preserve, and economically develop their estates, and to reaffirm their motives for doing so; for it may be said that collectively they played a vital role in both regional and national economic expansion.

Each aspect of the argument is first developed against the background of the county families comprising the data set; then selected families are highlighted to present a more in-depth study, illustrating features which cannot adequately be brought out in a general overview. Collectively, this approach raises the question of whether Nottinghamshire experienced changes in its landowning structure in the general manner indicated by the different regional studies, or whether a unique local pattern emerged. Finally, there has been a move towards setting up an alternative model for tracing the patterns of landownership in England since the seventeenth century,⁷¹ for which pointers are suggested.

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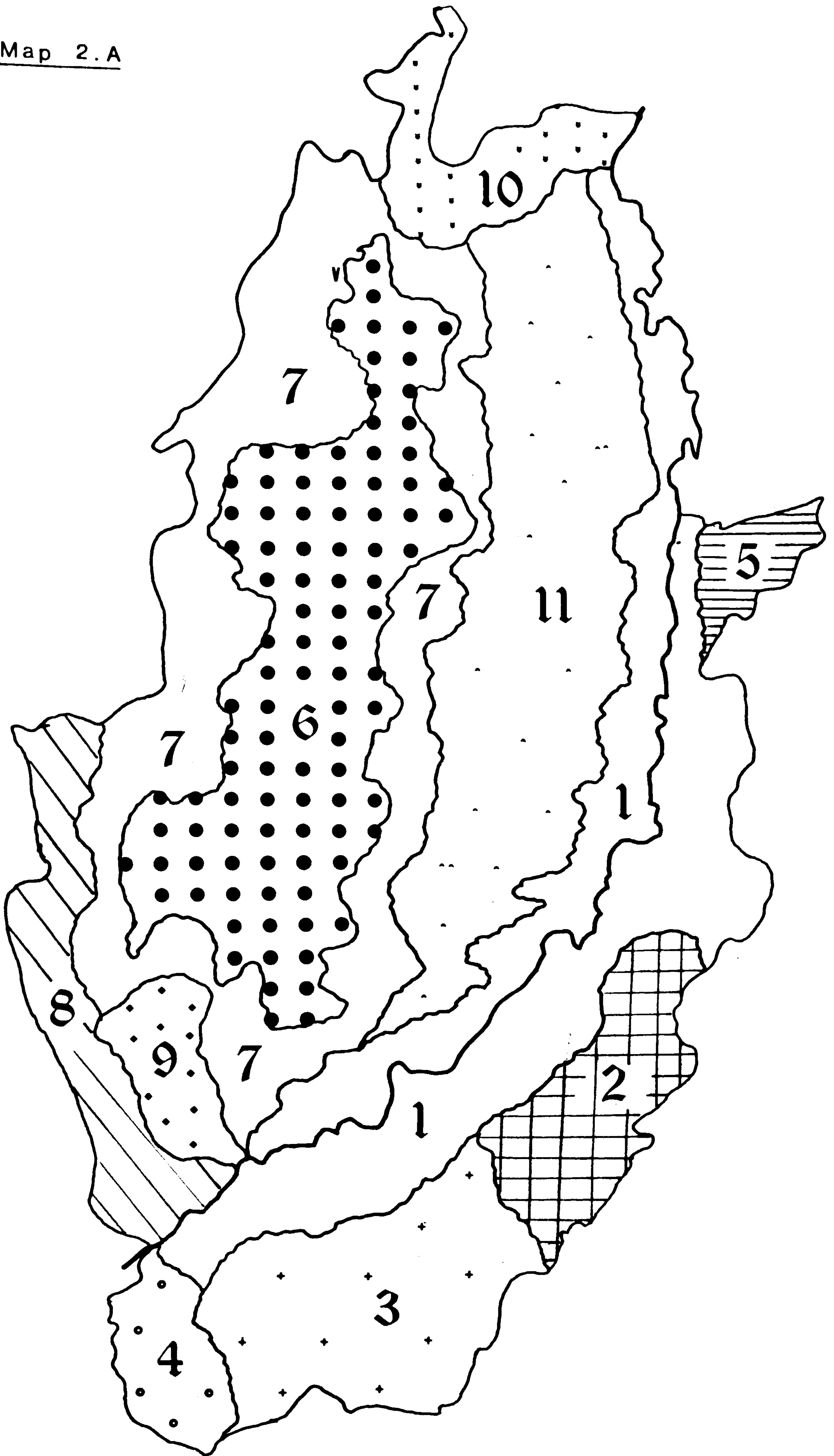
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Map 2.A



Nottinghamshire

Days

2.B Key to Map 2.A, Nottinghamshire Pays

1. Vale of Trent
2. Vale of Belvoir
3. Southern Wolds
4. Soar Valley
5. Eastern Lowlands
6. Sherwood Forest
7. Forest Borders
8. Erewash Valley
9. Western Uplands
10. Northern Carrs
11. Central Clays

CHAPTER TWOR E G I O N(i) Problems of definition

A study of Nottinghamshire landowners relevant to the present nature of the landownership debate was lacking, although the county has formerly been subjected to a more piecemeal treatment of selected areas and topics. These have concentrated on the Vale of Trent, which has been defined as 'an economic axis' running across the county from west to east;¹ the Erewash Valley, which provides a natural boundary between Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and shifts the focus to a bi-county one, but which presents the industrial face of more recent formation;² Bassetlaw Hundred, through which has been illustrated the innovations of the agricultural revolution;³ and the farming regions which evolved within the county.⁴ In keeping with this more fragmented local approach, it was originally considered that Sherwood Forest should form the basis of a small, regional study of landownership: but the area was dominated by the nobility during the period selected, whereas a wider perspective was subsequently proposed. The county was finally selected as providing the most suitable region for treatment, as it affords a more profitable basis for comparative analysis in terms of the present nature of the debate.

This initially caused problems as the region selected for study had to meet other criteria: it should form a cohesive entity, for illustrating patterns of continuity and change over time, by having a sense of identity of its own, quite separate and distinct from its neighbours - a characteristic more likely to be found in a naturally-occurring region than in an arbitrarily defined administrative unit. Concentration on 'Hundreds' or 'Wapentakes' would create a similar artificial subdivision. It was therefore necessary to define the 'natural' regions within the Nottinghamshire

area, but these are not all easy to determine. Some of the problems arise because geographically England is characterised by an infinite variety of topography, soil types, underlying geological structure, and natural resources. Where these features cohere a natural region may be distinguished, such as a vale, or the undulating wold country; but elsewhere these characteristics may overlap at certain, sometimes many points, producing vast areas of land of relatively indeterminate character, such as can be found in parts of the extensive clay tracts of the Midlands, and indeed in the central clay arc of Nottinghamshire.

It was thought that a geographical approach would help to clarify the less distinguishable regions within the county, but difficulty over precise definition was encountered stemming from the tradition of regional delineation being based on the principles established by sixteenth century chorographers.⁵ They produced a series of county topographies variously describing antiquities, natural history, economic resources and practices, and local society - among whom feeling for their own locality was strong, and 'my country' held much the same meaning that mon Pays still has in France.⁶ To give greater distinction to the different physical features of these 'countries' the Royal Society promoted the need for a soil or mineral map in 1683. Subsequently, William Smith (1769-1839) mapped the soils and sub-strata and applied this knowledge to his interest in farming problems, a trend which continued through the series of County Surveys sponsored by the Board of Agriculture between 1783 and 1815. As it was found that soil typing was impossible because the varieties were greatly intermixed, the survey maps were not uniform: some depicted soil types, others land use, others topography, and yet others were of mixed nomenclature. The same mixture of labels still persists.

During the eighteenth century confusion over the definition of a region became more marked. William Marshall's survey of the rural

economy of England was based on the uniformity of soil or surface, to which he related agricultural districts which could be distinguished by uniformity or similarity of practice;⁷ but with the advances of the agricultural revolution, more accurate soil typing, and the effects of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosures, these accordances became more muted. A greater similarity of patchwork fields changed the face of rural England, making both the agricultural practice and social structure of communities more homogeneous. Thus, it is more difficult to peel back the layers to uncover earlier historical regions, particularly on the clays. Confusion over the criteria to be used for regional definition continued during the nineteenth century. The Royal Agricultural Society (founded 1838) sponsored thirty eight Prize Essays on agricultural subjects, some of which illustrated the close connection between geology and land utilisation; but most presented stratigraphical divisions transmuted into generalisations about soil texture. By the 1850s maps of geological strata were no longer considered helpful to farmers; what they needed was a knowledge of the surface. Soil was so unequally distributed that even the same field could contain different types, and geological maps did not illustrate the widespread deposits of 'drift'. Advancement in the classification of soil types, which became increasingly linked with changing agricultural practice, brought many alternative economic divisions into sharper focus, eroding the boundaries of the large, old 'countries', and forming the basis of more modern regions.

The earlier regional studies of Nottinghamshire were based on the modern geographer's concept of an area of 'economic unity'; but this method imposes one set of criteria on another which is less than appropriate, for it is still rooted in the tradition of geological definition tempered with land utilisation, when what is sought is a historical region relevant to the analysis of historical

issues. These problems suggested that the early topographical descriptions would probably provide the best criteria for delineating the old 'countries' or Pays in Nottinghamshire. These are thought to have been sharply divided regions, presenting contrasting societies, economies, even cultures; although Everitt has argued that the county came to have a meaning and coherence for the gentry, who often formed an extended community of county families, which it could rarely have had for the lower orders.⁸ They are not necessarily the old farming regions, for these followed an evolutionary pattern of changing land use. A basic blueprint giving a broad classification of types of countryside has been offered by Everitt, which was used as a basis for Nottinghamshire. He isolated fielden or champaign areas, forest, fell or moorland, fenland as distinct from marshland, heathland, downland, and wold.⁹ At many points these lands may overlap, and there are other problems of distinction: vales are not separately defined, but included in the fielden areas; sometimes writers use moorland and heathland interchangeably, and also marsh and fenland.¹⁰ The blueprint uses mixed nomenclature - a fundamental problem of regional definition - for the classification is based on herbage, soil type and geological structure; but despite its drawbacks it is a useful point of departure.

(ii) The Nottinghamshire Region

Nottinghamshire occupies a significant geographical position in the north-east Midlands, positioned close to the south-easterly margin of the Pennines where the hill country of northern England gives way to the lowlands of the English Plain. A characteristic of Nottinghamshire is the degree of topographical variety and contrasting features to be found in its geographical setting, which had an important bearing on both the landownership patterns and the general economic diversity which evolved. Much of the continued importance of the county town of Nottingham is derived from its role as a place of exchange between the different resources and economies which these contrasting environments have produced; and because for centuries it was the effective limit of navigation on the Trent.¹¹ The size of the county is estimated to be 50 miles long, 25 miles wide, covering an area of 837 square miles, or 535,680 acres. In the mid-eighteenth century Defoe commented on the stark contrast between the rich and most fruitful soil in the south of the county, and the wild, barren wasteland in the north.¹² In 1693 the county was rated twenty-fourth out of forty English counties in terms of economic growth. In 1769 it was still given a poor representation by one of its larger landowners, Sir George Savile, who described it as comprising 'four Dukes, two Lords and three rabbit warrens, which, I believe, takes in half the county in point of space'.¹³ But the economic capacity of the county was something rather more than this, especially through the activities of the landowners during the period under review.

From the variety of topographical evidence, eleven old 'countries' or Pays are distinguishable in the Nottinghamshire region which are thought to have had relevance as socio-economic regions in their own right during the eighteenth century. Due to the nature of the evidence they utilise mixed nomenclature in their definition.¹⁴ The Trent is

perhaps the most striking feature of the county, making an unequal physical division which produces several small, distinct, naturally-occurring regions in the south-east, and large, less determinate regions in the north-west. The 'Vale of Trent' provides an extensive lowland region, with its variety of soils contributing to this region's mixed economy. Although mainly based on agriculture, the twenty-mile stretch between Nottingham and Newark is over one mile wide, and provides gravel workings away from the commercial and industrial centre of Nottingham. This was a popular settlement area due to its communication system. To the south of the Trent lie the 'Vale of Belvoir', the 'Wolds', and the 'Soar Valley', all of which geological formations continue into Leicestershire. The broad Lias Clay region of the Vale of Belvoir was devoted mainly to pasture farming, particularly dairying, as the Trent and its tributaries provided drainage. The Dukes of Rutland dominated the area by their presence and influence. There were few villages, but these were prosperous and possessed great resources. Almost due south of Nottingham, the Wolds are formed by a sheet of boulder clay masking the underlying Lias Clay. This more exposed region was mainly a livestock and dairy-farming district, with a settlement pattern of small, nucleated villages whose individuality is indicated in their names, such as Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, or Wymeswold. The Soar Valley, on the Nottinghamshire-Leicestershire border, provided both rich arable and meadow land, and a communication corridor to more distant market towns. Several rural communities developed along the upper reaches of this valley. To the east of the Trent lies a 'Lowland' area, drained by streams, which features more prominently in Lincolnshire. Although it provided access to Lincoln it was sparsely populated, and was dominated by the agricultural interests of one or two landed families who resided near it. North of the Trent the lozenge-shaped 'Sherwood Forest' is the more dominant region, once forming a much more extensive tract of woodland in all

directions, and spreading into Derbyshire. It has played a central role in the geographical and socio-economic division within the county. During the eighteenth century the Forest extended over nearly one-fifth of the county, being nearly twenty miles long and up to seven miles wide. Much of it had been anciently enclosed and it had a long association with royal hunting parks and monastic property. Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the transfer of monastic property into lay hands, this region became traditionally known as 'the Dukeries' for its long association with the seats of the nobility. Its economic history is one of more radical change than that experienced in most other parts of the county. During the seventeenth century large-scale deforestation was permitted by its owners, resulting in a wasteland. By the end of the eighteenth century the only remains of ancient woodland were to be found in the enclosed Parks of the nobility, where extensive replanting was undertaken in the early nineteenth century. The rest remained largely unimproved, providing extensive sheepwalks until the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth, when it underwent revolutionary land use changes, bringing most of the former sheepwalks into cultivation. Small communities settled along the river valleys intersecting the northern part of this region. The 'Forest Borders' form an important sub-region, evolving from the ever-diminishing tract of Sherwood Forest. This area was partly influenced by neighbouring regions, the proximity of market towns, and the communication systems north either through Mansfield and Worksop, or through Tuxford and Retford. This region is particularly influenced by the extent to which man has modified the landscape. Nevertheless, it made its own contribution to the settlement pattern and to economic changes. The 'Erewash Valley' region developed a dual agrarian-industrial economy, based on arable and pasture farming, the expansion of coalmining, ironworks, and framework knitting for the

hosiery trade, but the economic fortunes of the region fluctuated according to the state of development of its transport system. Its settlement pattern became more concentrated around the industrial centres. The Forest once extended further south, towards Nottingham, covering a small but distinct 'Upland' region, bounded by three rivers: the Erewash, Leen, and Trent. Its proximity to the county town, and to the former prestigious royal hunting park of Bestwood, and its location on the coal and limestone belt which encouraged exploitation, made this a favoured settlement area with some of the more notable county families. Most northerly is the 'Carr' region, once an extensive tract of boggy ground extending into Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, where it fringes the Isle of Axholme. This region was characterised by a tradition of independent, self-contained rural communities, which felt the impact on its customarily pastoral economy and society when the land was drained, and a new arable economy was developed by the early seventeenth century. One of the more difficult regions to define is the central 'Clay' area, due to its mutable nature. It is bounded by the Carrs to the north, and the Trent to the south and east; but it merges with the eastern flank of the Forest Borders, a sub-region which itself evolved from the changing form of the Forest. It is an extensive arc of loamy clay on the Keuper Series, dissected by numerous streams and water courses, forming gentle valley slopes. This contrasts with the Bunter Sandstone of the Forest area which produces thin, poor soils on very porous sandstone. Much of the central Clay region itself was anciently wooded; but whereas the Forest region was relatively barren and sparsely populated, and villages very rare, the Clay region was traditionally fairly well populated with an abundance of villages and farms. It was also a fairly prosperous rural region, served by the important north-south trading route, as well as having access to the Trent waterways system.

In essence, Nottinghamshire contained both upland and lowland territory,

distributed unequally across the county. The lowland vale regions, although each possessing its own characteristic features, were generally more densely populated and more prosperous than the highland regions; but the northern Carrs and the eastern Lowlands did not fit this pattern. The upland regions, comprising the Forest and Borders, western Uplands and southern Wolds, reflected their varied geology in their individual socio-economic structure. In the lowland regions communities were generally more open and independent, but in the upland regions they were more directly influenced by the location of seats of the county families. However, this feature was also true of the Vale of Belvoir, indicating the degree of regional variation and local influences within the county.

The nature of these 'countries' had a different significance for the 'farming regions' which evolved. The former correspond more with settlement patterns and the communities which emerged. These were subject, by a greater or lesser degree, to the power and influence of the greater landowners. The latter were more directly linked to the landowners' more extensive holdings, which provided the economic foundation of their wealth; and they determined the course of economic expansion within the county. Two farming regions had evolved in Nottinghamshire by the end of the eighteenth century. The pasture district developed where this type of agriculture could more profitably utilise the soil than elsewhere in the county. It covered the Trent and Soar Valleys where the alluvium and marl created productive cattle pasture and rich meadow land; and the Wolds, a high, bleak region whose stiff boulder clays were difficult to work for arable purposes, but created permanent pasture for sheep rearing; and the Vale of Belvoir, with its stiff, rich clay, which in places mixed with marl and alluvium from the Smite and the Devon, producing good pasture land for fattening sheep

and cattle. The arable district covered the central arc of marl clays, with an admixture of sand, and with numerous streams crossing the area, thereby aiding drainage. However, a larger district was wasteland, covering the marshy Carr in the north, the sandy Forest area, the small, sandy eastern Lowland region, and a strip of land along the Derbyshire border on the coal and limestone belt. Here the soil characteristics of alluvium, sand, limestone, shale or gravel operated against ease of cultivation. These patterns of agriculture had been evolving from the early seventeenth century as soil types were adapted to the type of farming for which they were best suited, including the margins of the sandy Forest region where experiments took place in root crops and large-scale plantations for timber by aristocratic lessees of the Crown. These changes are thought to have been facilitated by capital accumulation as copyhold leases changed to leasehold, and rents were raised when leases fell in; and also as the process of enclosure facilitated improvements. Old enclosures before 1700 within the county comprised 55,000 acres (10.3 per cent) of commons and 10,000 acres (1.9 per cent) of permanently enclosed waste. Between 1700 and 1800, 133,000 acres (24.8 per cent) of commons were enclosed by Act of Parliament, and 220,000 (41.1 per cent) by private Act. In 1800 50,000 acres (9.4 per cent) of commons remained open, plus 68,000 (12.5 per cent) of waste land and forest. Before 1700 enclosure affected the pasture district most, with the enclosed townships frequently dwindling in size, while farm sizes grew larger. In the eighteenth century enclosure rapidly progressed in both arable and pasture districts, but with nearly one-third of the arable still remaining open in 1800. The slower process in the arable area is attributed to the cost and trouble it involved outstripping its practicality; for open field agriculture could be improved by petty consolidation of strips, a practice which continued in many areas until the mid-nineteenth century. Enclosure of the

Forest and Carr regions was a steady process before the era of Parliamentary enclosure, and was largely undertaken by private agreement of the proprietors. Plots for cottagers living on the outskirts of market towns also made inroads upon the Forest, with a similar process taking place in the lime and coal district on the Derbyshire border. Reclamation of the sandy waste in the eastern Lowlands brought 700 acres of moorland into cultivation, with another 200 acres for plantation. Apart from the area of Forest brought into cultivation, a slightly smaller area was also enclosed for plantation and deer parks, or for extending existing parks, at Bestwood, Clumber and Newstead. One factor contributing to the different rates of enclosure in the pasture, arable and waste districts was the nature of tenure. Parishes owned mainly or wholly by a single proprietor were enclosed earlier, often before 1700, by a private agreement; but those of multiple ownership were more likely to be delayed until an arrangement either privately or by Act of Parliament could be agreed. One line of argument contends that enclosure had a serious effect on the peasantry, greatly reducing their numbers. However, it was found in Nottinghamshire that their total numbers did not appreciably diminish, although their property underwent rapid changes of ownership, and their social position as owner-occupiers had been weakened. This happened because a large number of semi-proprietors became tenants as copyhold tenure was replaced by leasehold, except on Crown and Church lands, thereby allowing the landlord greater flexibility to align rents with fluctuating agricultural prices. Additionally, fewer tenants were required as pasture farming involved engrossing of farms and was less labour intensive; but these processes can be traced from the end of the fifteenth century up to 1780, when the tendency seems to have been checked. The greatly increased grain and meat prices made their position sufficiently buoyant that their numbers actually

increased, and, alongside the larger and more enterprising yeoman farmers and the large landowners, they were able to consolidate their properties by buying out their smaller neighbours. They were more numerous in the Clay region, although their farms were very small and their income could be as low as £20, with few exceeding £300 per annum. By the end of the eighteenth century yeomen were recorded in many villages, especially in the Clay region, a number of whom rose from the ranks of the peasantry by the slow process of acquisition, forming a network of substantial farmers who were influential in the villages.¹⁶

Industrial developments within the county centred around framework knitting and coalmining; and there were the minor industries of brewing, brick-making, tanning and pottery. Their economic expansion depended on lines of communication and market centres. Out of a possible total of thirty markets in the county, only nine remained by 1600, located in settlements which had developed into towns. These were at Newark, Nottingham, East Retford, Bingham, Blyth, Mansfield, Southwell, Tuxford and Worksop. The two principal communication routes through the county took a north-south direction parallel to the system of hills which lie in Derbyshire to the west and in Lincolnshire to the east. One traversed the east of the county, connecting Nottingham with the north via Bingham, Newark and East Retford. On the western side, the route to the north passed through Mansfield and Worksop. The former was the more important route, giving prominence to Newark, which had provided the only passing place over the Trent east of the Pennines. Here cotton factories and breweries developed, although many of the population were tradesmen and inn-keepers. East Retford, the third borough in the county, was noted for its considerable river trade in lead from Derbyshire, timber from Sherwood Forest, and wheat from the surrounding Clay region. On the western route, Mansfield and Worksop were thriving

agricultural market towns, largely comprising yeomen farmers. By the end of the eighteenth century Mansfield also contained several cotton and woollen spinning factories, with more vigorous trade in building materials and stocking manufacture. The population of the borough of Nottingham was roughly estimated to be 8,000 in 1685, and had risen to 17,711 in 1779. This was partly attributed to natural increase, and partly to migration of rural workers to the framework knitting industry. This industry had expanded from two master knitters in 1641 to fifty employing 1,200 frames in 1739. Villages near Nottingham, Newark and Mansfield, which became semi-industrialised with the introduction of the stocking industry, experienced an increase in population, whilst the purely agricultural villages remained more static. The mining villages of Nuttall, Trowell and Teversall only underwent a slight population increase. However, Nottinghamshire was essentially an agricultural county until the economic changes of the nineteenth century took place.¹⁷

The continued economic expansion of Nottinghamshire was due in part to transport developments. There was little turnpike activity in areas remote from the metropolis before the mid-1720s, when a boom in trust investment began. Between 1738 and 1826 there were twenty-eight turnpike Acts created for Nottinghamshire, extending the network within the county, and linking Nottingham with Kettering, Grantham, Derby, and Mansfield; Mansfield with the Derbyshire market towns; Worksop with Chesterfield, Sheffield and other Yorkshire market towns; and improving communications with Newark and beyond into Lincolnshire. Factors which contributed to the turnpike, and later the canal investment boom, were based on a growing need for improved communications due to population increase, growing industrialisation and urbanisation, expansion of the domestic market, and export growth. Higher agricultural prices and the increased rate of enclosure, continuing low interest rates (4 to 6 per cent between

the 1720s and 1815), and improved agricultural conditions enabled landowners, who were the largest single group of trust investors, to finance road improvements; although the capital invested varied considerably, as a turnpike created in East Anglia was less costly than a road of similar length over the Pennines or through the Midland clays.¹⁸

Industrial and agricultural expansion demanded an increased scale of transportation greater than could be provided by turnpikes alone: indeed, their contribution to economic growth was overshadowed by the establishment of a canal network. Before the canal age the Trent had only two navigable tributaries, the Idle and the Derwent: both were granted improvement Acts in 1720. The opening of the Trent and Mersey canal brought more traffic up the Trent, necessitating the improvement of a channel near Newark in 1772. The Erewash canal was completed in 1779 at a cost of £21,000, providing nearly twelve navigable miles from the Trent through Ilkeston Common to Langley Mill. Before 1794 the heavy industries of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire were served only by the Erewash canal and the Trent, but in the next three years five canals were opened to Cromford, Nutbrook, Nottingham, Derby and Grantham, at a cost of £400,000. These provided the collieries, ironstone mines, ironworks and stone quarries of the Derwent and Erewash valleys with water carriage to the growing towns of Nottingham, Derby and Grantham, or on to the Trent and Mersey. Coal production rapidly increased, finding ready markets along the waterway route, with a considerable secondary traffic developing from the stone quarries on the Cromford and Nottingham canals. Indeed, the Cromford canal extended the Erewash canal to Pinxton, enabling an extra six-mile stretch of coal in the Erewash valley to be worked. The canal also served several Derbyshire market towns as well as Mansfield. Linking the Cromford with the Erewash

canal brought fears that the Trent's coal traffic would decline at this monopoly; a navigable cut was approved by Lord Middleton to link the Cromford to the Trent at Nottingham, and also a branch from Lenton to Beeston, thus bringing trade to Nottingham wharves. As the main Nottingham canal was being built between 1796 and 1800 several small branches were also constructed, including one serving the Duke of Newcastle's property near the Castle, another serving Earl Manvers' property at Sneinton, and one serving Lord Middleton's and the Edge's coalmining interests: for above Wollaton locks the Bilborough cut ran to a wharf in Bilborough Wood, with tramroads from there to Bilborough and Strelley collieries. The latter was a private canal, built at the expense of the landowners, but open to others on payment of a toll, and probably opened about 1799; but by 1813 this part was already falling into disuse. The Robinetts cut near Cossall, again supporting Lord Middleton's mining interests, was built in 1796; and in 1800 the Greasley cut was built, serving the Duke of Rutland's collieries at Greasley and Fillingham. These cuts were served by tramroads from the collieries. Upwards traffic on the Grantham canal, opened in 1797, carried coal, coke, lime and building materials: the downwards traffic carried corn, malt, beans and wool. In 1799 the downwards traffic on the Trent river carried lead, copper, ironware, coal, cheese, salt, beer and pottery; the upwards traffic carried Scandinavian iron and timber, hemp, flax, malt, flints and groceries. The coal trade down the Trent, into the Fossdyke, grew steadily, but in competition with the Leicester line of canals; but with the coming of the Leicester and Swannington railway in 1832 the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire trade was driven backwards down the Soar, and forced to seek other markets. The Erewash canal had particularly fluctuating fortunes: from a near-monopoly position, it had to compete with the Trent canal after losing a battle to build the Beeston cut. A rate war ensued which, combined with diversion of the traffic itself, reduced

their takings from £10,784 in 1796 to £5,110 in 1799, lowering the dividend from 30 per cent to 20 per cent. The opening of the Grand Union canal in 1814 gave the Erewash Valley's coal a chance to compete further south, against that from Warwickshire and Staffordshire.¹⁹

Thus, coalmining developed along the western edge of Nottinghamshire, in the Erewash Valley and the Upland regions. The exploitation of mineral deposits was an important feature of estate development, and a common practice, but was not available to every landowner. There were fifteen collieries and their owners recorded in this Nottinghamshire area in 1739:²⁰

<u>Colliery</u>	<u>Owners</u>
Selston	Sir Wolstan Dixy and Sir Robert Sutton
Wansley	Sir Wolstan Dixy and Mr. Savile
Brinsley	the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Savile
Eastwood	Mr. Plumtre and others
Nuttall	Sir Charles Sidley
Denby	Mr. Lowe
Kimberley	
Sough	Lord Stamford
Smalley	Mr. Richardson
Teversal	Molyneaux (and later Lord Carnarvon)
Skegby	John Dodsley
Pinxton	Edward Thomas Coke
Greasly	(Unwrought)
Kimberley	Mr. Barber & Co.
Bilborough	Mr. Barber & Co.
Wollaton	Lord Middleton

In addition there were four collieries on the Derbyshire side of the valley:

<u>Colliery</u>	<u>Owners</u>
Denby	Divers gentlemen
Smalley	W. Richardson, esq. and Messrs. Fletchers
W. Hallam	Sir Windsor Hunlock
Ilkeston	the Duke of Rutland

The landowners had a commercial coal competitor in the Fletcher-Barber, later the Barber-Walker partnership, which also developed mines at Denby, Codnor and Shipley; but their pits were usually small and sales levels were low. The landed colliery proprietors traditionally regarded mining as an extension of their estate activities, with profits often treated as current estate income, whereas the Fletcher-Barber-Walker partnership became a specialised occupation. Fletcher and

Barber were originally yeomen families whose partnership started in the late seventeenth century, and developed as an adjunct to farming out of their own domestic production and consumption. They undertook leasing rights from landowners who were less inclined to superintend the business themselves. Their commercial competitor, the Butterley Company, was founded in 1792 like a joint stock company to extensively exploit iron ore and coal measures on the Butterley Hall estate. A failed commercial competitor was North-Wakefield, a partnership already established by the 1830s. After a promising start with small pits in Babbington, Greasley, Newthorpe and Awsworth, North later experienced difficulties in obtaining leases, being hemmed in by other leaseholds and the Barber-Walker workings. Thus, North's underground workings were widespread, which made production very expensive.²¹

Through their coalmining activities the Fletchers became a family of substance. The Fletchers and Barbers had worked coal at Newthorpe before 1700. John^{Fletcher} acquired Stanesby estate in 1712 and was granted arms in 1731. He became sheriff of the county in 1732. It is thought that his daughter Elizabeth, being the last of the Fletcher line, married Francis Barber. John's assigns sold Stanesby estate in 1783 to Sam Buxton, (who resold it to the Sitwell family in 1785), whereafter the Barbers sought a new partnership with the Walkers. The Walker family were living in Bilborough in 1599, a parish with a mixed agricultural and coalmining economy. The new Barber-Walker partnership was in existence in 1787. The two families resided near the Bilborough coal wharf, and were involved in canal projects to improve their shipment facilities to market outlets. Thomas and John Barber were appointed commissioners under the Erewash Canal Act of 1774-6; and Thomas Barber and Thomas Walker were two of the proprietors of the canal company formed under the Act of 1790 for making a navigable cut from Cromford canal through Lord Middleton's

lands to Bilborough. By the 1790s they were regarded as Coal Masters. The two partnerships undertook leases with several coal-owning landowners, including Sir Robert Sutton, Ralph Edge, the Earl of Stamford, Reverend Barlow Evetts and Lord Middleton, for terms ranging from twenty-one to ninety-nine years. Certain landowning families also owed something of their positions of substance to coal exploitation. In the sixteenth century the Willoughby family (later Lords Middleton) were mining coal at Wollaton, and the Strelleys at nearby Strelley. Indeed, exploitation is deemed to have been so profitable that Sir Francis Willoughby, who died in 1596, is thought to have built the family seat at Wollaton Hall mainly from the profits of his mines. But whereas the Willoughbys prospered, the Strelleys declined. Demographic problems and marriage patterns brought about estate disposal and redistribution. They had been the principal owners of Strelley parish since at least c.1100, with the original Hall being built there c.1356. Due to family circumstances, a group of London merchants became interested in the Strelley mines in 1620, but it was not until 1678 that the estate was purchased by the Edge family, who built a new mansion on the site. Although they continued to exploit coal on the estate at Bilborough, and therefore continued as the Willoughbys' main competitors in the area, they preferred to lease the rights to the Fletcher-Barber-Walker partnership, rather than retain production control themselves as the Willoughbys did. Although the Willoughby family leased their Cossall colliery to Barber-Walker in 1805, it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that they preferred to leave the business risks to the commercial company, and rely instead on the certain income from royalties. This transition had already been made by most other landowning families in the district, as uncertain coal profits did not warrant the great production expense incurred. Additionally, professional expertise and technological innovation were increasingly necessary. The Molyneux family mined at

Teversall, in the north of the region, although the pit was exhausted by 1806. After the estate had passed by marriage to the Carnarvon family the pit finally closed, and the machinery was sold in 1856. Competing with Molyneux for limited local trade was John Dodsley, who was lord of the manor of Skegby and owned Skegby colliery. The pits here were shallow and output small, but demand and production remained constant. In contrast, the Coke family, who were lords of the manor of Pinxton, produced on a fairly large scale in the middle of the region. Old Pinxton colliery started working in 1780, closing in 1844. In 1847 Coke formed the Pinxton Coal Company with James Salmon and George Robinson, operating at Langton, Sleighton and Carnfield collieries.²²

Few landowners made large profits out of coalmining during the period under review: income from this source was more generally a useful supplement to normal estate revenue, in a good year of operating and selling, rather than a source of great wealth. The whole operation of coal-getting was both dangerous and costly, involving a financial outlay on mineral surveys and production estimates, pit sinking, water course digging, pumping machinery, the erection of colliery buildings, winding gear, and the building of waggonways. Timber was required - usually from elsewhere on the estates - for the shafts, and to post and rail the pit entrances or adits to prevent injury to cattle grazing nearby. The building of storage yards was necessary at the pits; and wharves and canal cuts had to be made for transportation. Fire bricks were necessary for the furnaces to operate some of the machinery, necessitating the building of brick kilns to make them and yards to store them. Sometimes new access roads had to be made and gated. There was the cost of using horses, and the hiring of labourers, often in a 'gang' under the direction of an over-seer; although before the mechanisation of the industry labourers often worked on a part-time and seasonal basis, taking time

off in the summer months to work in the fields, and in the winter months because the pits were liable to flood and become inoperable. Before the middle of the nineteenth century coal was usually mined from shallow pits due to the flooding problems. To aid drainage of the water from the workings soughs or tunnels were driven into adjacent hillsides, or pumping machines were used for raising the water. Due to the shallowness of the pits, they could be exhausted in a number of years, incurring regular expenditure in the sinking of new ones. Litigation was not uncommon, as pits could be flooded by neighbouring ones, either accidentally or wilfully; or mineral rights may be contested; or leasing terms flaunted. Years of losses had to be borne, and operations had to be suspended, sometimes for many years, awaiting the necessary capital investment. Some landowners shared the costs of outlay and development, since they could be a heavy burden on their estates; but others preferred to retain a separate identity, although their mines were adjacent: such was the nature of local competition. In comparison with the capital outlay, the average annual colliery output was usually modest. It has been estimated that the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire output increased from 80,000 tons in 1750 to 300,000 tons in 1795 compared with an increase in national production from 4,230,000 to 9,570,000 tons during the same period. By 1835 output had increased to 1,900,000 compared with 29,560,000 tons nationally. These can only be rough estimates, as a rationalised national system of measurement was not introduced until 1824. Measurement denominations changed over time, and were also subject to much local variation. There was a preference for measurement by volume rather than weight, being recorded as horse-, cart-, or waggon-'loads', with so many heaped loads comprising a 'stack'.²³ This method of accounting was used in Nottinghamshire. In view of the seasonal nature of both mining and demand for coal, existing 'stacks' were often accounted for

in the books by their potential value rather than the profits they had actually made: indeed, they may be carried over from one accounting year to the next. The progress of coalmining was slow, and it was still considered to be a technologically backward industry in the 1840s. Nevertheless, landowners were contributing to the economic development of Nottinghamshire by their expansionist policies in this sphere, and even more so to agricultural progress through estate improvement,²⁴ although the growth of the textile industry was left to the entrepreneurs. In essence, the economic capacity of the county was underestimated by eighteenth century commentators. Its strength was due to the exploitation of available resources, and to the county's favourable geographical situation, which encouraged the opening up of trading routes: but not least, it owed much to the stability of the gentry as a social force - an aspect which will be argued in the next chapter - whose means contributed to its momentum.

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CHAPTER THREETHE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE DATA SET FAMILIES

The concern generated in the nineteenth century by the notion that the peers and greater gentry were consolidating their property in large blocks focused attention on the social structure of landowners. In his 'New Domesday' compilation, which appeared to quantify this drift, Bateman recorded six categories of proprietors based on acreage, and supported by income. The first and second of these were the greater landowners, either peers or non-titled, possessing over 3,000 acres, yielding more than £3,000 a year. Next were the squires with estates of 1,000 to 3,000 acres, or with larger estates, but whose rentals were less than £3,000 a year. Then there were the greater yeomen possessing between 300 to 1,000 acres: but this group also embraced certain professional categories, 10 per cent of whom were 'Reverends'. The lesser yeomen owned 100 to 300 acres; and lastly were the small proprietors owning 1 to 100 acres each. Of these last three groups it is thought that only a minority were involved in farming, the majority being small landlords holding land as an investment; but in the upper reaches some of the greater yeomen were close to squire status, whose estates might comprise three or four tenanted farms and a country residence.¹ Collectively these six groups comprised the 'landed interest', denoted in descending social order, and were distinct from the monied or 'commercial interest', such as industrialists, with a large gross annual value put upon only a few acres of factory or business premises. This hierarchy is based on the traditional concept of a broadly based social pyramid depicting finely graded ranks which formed the basis of the social and economic analyses of Wilson, King, Massie and Colquhoun between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. Their statistical tables are still used as standard works of reference for depicting the social degrees of English

society and the changes this structure experienced, despite the critiques emphasising the analytical flaws and degree of mis-interpretation contained within them.² A study of eighteenth-century landowners made greater use of social categorisation by income, with slightly different labelling of the groups. It has been suggested that in 1790 there were 400 great landowners whose income ranged from £5,000 to £50,000 a year. The gentry were sub-divided into three groups: wealthy gentry with an annual income of £3,000 to £5,000; squires with £1,000 to £3,000; and gentlemen with £300 to £1,000. Lastly, a group of freeholders consisting of yeomen and owner-occupier farmers: the better sort had an annual landed income of £150 to £700; and the lesser sort had £30 to £300.³

Social categories and income groups may vary from one analysis to another in their interpretation, due to the nature of the survey. They are therefore subject to revision and reappraisal. One inherent problem is that economic groupings may overlap social groupings. For example, the 'great landlords' usually included both peers and non-peers, but some peerage families in financial difficulties only had incomes on a par with the 'wealthy gentry'. In 1790 the Dukes of Bedford, Bridgewater, Devonshire and Northumberland had landed incomes in excess of £50,000, whereas the Earl of Clarendon's was only about £3,000. Of those great English landowners with an income from property of £10,000 a year, recorded by Bateman, about half were not peers; and about a quarter of those with landed incomes over £30,000 were commoners. Lower down the scale, some of the lesser gentry were indistinguishable from the greater yeomen in economic terms. Thus, income is not necessarily an indication of social rank, nor does social rank necessarily indicate the range and composition of annual income, as this was a very individual concern. Nor does rank indicate the extent of

acreage owned, as this varied over time according to family circumstances; and acreage was not a reliable indicator of income, as land values varied according to regional conditions. Whether defined economically, as owners of estates of a certain size or with a certain income; or socially, as men with a degree of local power, prestige, and influence, the landed interest in 1790 comprised an estimated maximum of 125,000 families. Despite the flaws, the statistical tables of King and Massie still provide a suitable point of departure for analysis.⁴

Indeed, they have contributed to detailed assessments of the structure and nature of landed society during the period under review, tracing their lifestyle and role within society, their institutions and the management of their estates. These have been presented elsewhere and are only briefly introduced here to give an outline of the principal characteristics. The 'landed aristocracy', comprising the greater landowners whether peers or non-titled, were distinguished by their wealth, opulence, territorial ownership, political power, social influence and prestige, as well as their acceptance and discharge of authority and responsibility, whether locally within their region or county or within the broader compass of the nation. Their position as landed magnates could be strengthened over the generations by being part of a select group from which were drawn the leading figures at Court or in politics; or they might be appointed foreign ambassadors. They were often granted higher honours, as well as profits, for these offices, by which means they improved their social status. The gentry were more circumscribed in their activities, having smaller estates, a narrower range of income, and fewer opportunities to assume authority and discharge responsibility. The greater gentry were more usually involved in local public office, serving voluntarily on Quarter Sessions as Justices of the Peace, or occasionally acting as Crown Commissioners. Some represented their

county in the Commons. The lesser gentry were influential in their own neighbourhood, perhaps serving their Hundred or Wapentake, or merely their parish or village. The gentry as a group were probably more personally involved with the running of their estates, and less likely to employ land agents and stewards, except for occasional valuation purposes. They depended on agricultural profits and farm rentals as their main sources of income, and lived more modestly than the landed aristocracy. Ancient lineage or noble blood was an important attribute of these groups. The yeomen and small owner-occupiers lived more directly off the land, although some would combine agricultural with industrial activities, such as part-time involvement with framework-knitting or coalmining. They had a simpler life-style, and were more susceptible to fluctuating market prices and seasonal problems, being less buffered financially against periods of adversity.⁵

Analyses of the structure of English society between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries have generated debates beyond the scope of this study; but they are touched on here as they impinge on the suggested origins of local landed society and its possible changing composition over time, and therefore provide a background to the processes of continuity and change which the Nottinghamshire landowners experienced. One principal line of argument stemming from nineteenth century commentators has focused on the concept that upward social mobility reinforced the strength of numbers and the social buoyancy of the landed interest, because they were readily able to absorb monied newcomers into their ranks. However, more recent evidence has suggested that the total number of newcomers and their level of social penetration, particularly into the upper stratum of landed society, has been exaggerated. It is now argued that the assumed degree of upward social mobility was based on a self-perpetuating myth fuelled by the psychological nervousness which a minority of such spectacular

social ascents from within the monied interest generated among the more conservative landowners.⁶ The landed interest has also been discussed by some researchers in terms of a 'county community', that is a group of families native to the county who were at the heart of local society, and had become an integral part of the county over the centuries. It has been argued that through the frequent practice of intermarriage with one another these families were united into a single county community, although their numbers, as well as their origins, varied greatly from shire to shire. This county feeling was thought to be particularly prevalent in seventeenth century Kent, where there was a high proportion of intermarriage among local gentry families. It was also found among the Glamorgan gentry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but here the remarkable cohesion of the county community was based more on a social ideology which emphasised duty, patriotism and loyalty. It was a community of belief, rather than a community of close-knit families, for families could be split by adherence to political factions, which gave way in the 1760s to new party cliques. A nineteenth century study indicated that the landed gentry comprised the county families, who were distinct from the magnates - a group of peers, baronets and armigerous landed gentlemen. Essential points of difference were detailed between the magnates, squires and farmers, militating against a homogeneous society; but common interests and shared aims are thought to have provided the cohesion likely to be found among this extended and more inclusive structure of a county society.⁷ These two lines of argument will receive greater amplification in the next chapter, but the Nottinghamshire evidence tends to suggest that monied newcomers among the ranks of the magnates or greater landed gentry were in the minority, and were not quite so readily accepted into landed society as the literature indicates. In general, families tended to marry within their own social strata,

but with some degree of social mobility through marriage among the ranks, particularly among the gentry. Their intermarriage practices tended to produce more of an inter-county network of families, as Nottinghamshire landowners sought out their counterparts in other, particularly neighbouring counties, as well as in their own county. If it can be said that a county community of the landed interest existed, then it was not exactly based on the principle suggested by Everitt, for it still retained a social hierarchy within it; and a family's identification with it was just as likely to be based on their role and prestige within the county as on bonds of kinship. The Nottinghamshire data set families are presented against the outline of the foregoing discussion, and at the same time promote one of the principal themes of this study.

From the evidence available, it is argued in this and subsequent chapters that the Nottinghamshire landowners comprised a conservative element at the core of local landed society during the period under review which prevented any substantial alteration of its composition, such as has been described as the experience of South Wales, despite the earlier radical political activities in which some of the families engaged, and despite the circumstances affecting individual families through demographic factors and patterns of marriage or inheritance, or economic difficulties.⁸ The landed interest in Nottinghamshire is represented by 100 families during the period c.1660 to c.1840.

These have been distinguished (and presented in Table 3.1) as those 60 which comprise the 'stable core', that is they were in existence throughout the whole of the eighteenth century, and often much longer: two-thirds of them span at least 200 years from the end of the seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth centuries. Additionally, there is a 'non-core' group of 42 who were Nottinghamshire landowners for part of the period under review (presented in Table 3.2). At least 3 of these were old families which disappeared. Of the 'new-comers', 13

remained for at least 100 years, being still recorded in the county at the end of the nineteenth century. These two groups comprise the data set. The tables indicate the longevity of families within the county, the tracing of which is crucial to the central theme of continuity and stability among local landowners. They also indicate the social position of the landowners within county society, based on a three-tier system of peerage families, the greater or 'county' gentry (those who were more substantial and wielded greater influence within the county), and the lesser or 'village' gentry (whose range of influence was more localised, and whose numbers included the greater yeomen families). These gradings present a viable basis for discussion, and afford comparison with other regional studies. The tables were compiled by cross-referencing a wide range of source material. The social groupings were determined partly by pedigrees, which indicated intermarriage patterns; partly through lists of county officials; or through collections of family archives; partly through histories of certain county families; and also through returns of landowners compiled for particular statistical purposes, such as the 'Return of owners of land'. These illustrate an individual family's sphere of activity, influence and prestige, and tend to confirm its solidity within the established network of landowning families by determining the range of families into which it married, or with whom it had business, financial, or social dealings.⁹

Social distinctions are not difficult to determine. The hierarchy of the peerage is grounded in ancient lineage and noble pedigree, and social competition was an important feature of this group, based on public acknowledgement. This came either through the acquisition of titles for services rendered to Court or country, or sometimes through their purchase, with further promotions being gained as more honours were bestowed upon the family. Lord Ferrers' first title was acquired in the thirteenth century, later becoming

Lord Compton in the sixteenth century, followed by Baron then Viscount Townshend in the later seventeenth century, finally becoming Earl Ferrers, Earl of Leicester and Marquess Townshend in the eighteenth century. The Duke of Newcastle received the titles of Baron, Viscount, Earl and Marquess, before being created Duke of Newcastle in 1707. The Willoughby family moved up the ranks from knights to baronets during the seventeenth century, and were created lords in 1711. However, not all families successfully achieved upward social mobility within the peerage: some had only a brief encounter with that class. There were only two Barons Rancliffe in the Parkyns family, as a cousin succeeded; and only three Viscounts Chaworth, as an illegitimate son inherited. Some families were knighted several times, but never assumed a hereditary title, such as the Nevilles of Thorney. Others, like the Cliftons, who held a hereditary title from at least the thirteenth century, never sought to rise above the grade of baronet. Families such as these in the lower peerage or nobility were more catholic in the range of landowning families with whom they associated, particularly in marriage; whereas the more prestigious peerage families were more likely to intermarry, thereby acquiring additional titles through the process of inheritance which increased their social prestige. The gentry sons mainly followed the occupations associated with their rank: many became clergymen, or members of parliament, or undertook military or naval careers; but physicians were recorded in the Disney and Plumtre families, and barristers in the Bathurst, Sherbrooke, Vere and Wasteney families. The Vere family (descended from the Earls of Oxford) also branched out into banking and the silk merchant business. The Wright family also developed a banking business, and acquired the Butterley works in Derbyshire. Although some degree of involvement with trade is recorded, sons mainly followed professional occupations, and there does not appear to be from the evidence the degree of downward social mobility usually

associated with the younger sons of landed gentry. Several sons undertook academic pursuits, becoming noted antiquarians, philosophers or naturalists, including the Willoughby, Thoroton, Sedley, Monckton and Parkyn families. The Byron and Sedley families produced poets of note. The wider sphere of influence and prestige which the individual peerage and gentry families had, and their degree of prominence in the county, is supported by the evidence of their inclusion in the rolls of Knights of the Shire and Burgesses of Nottingham in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Lord Lieutenancies were confined to the peerage, whereas the roll for Sheriffs of the county between 1701 and 1850 was drawn from a wider social spread, although very largely comprised of the landowners featured in this study. The roll for the Mayors of Nottingham between 1701 and 1850 featured a much wider social range of families, depicting the more urban interests of those listed, and virtually devoid of any landowning representatives except among the lower strata, such as the Lowe and Wilson families, a branch of the Smith banking family, the Oldknows (who are known to have purchased small parcels of farming land), the Barber and North coal merchant families, and the Felkins, whose interests were in framework-knitting. These families were in the main more commercially or industrially orientated, with only a short leg up the landowning ladder. Early nineteenth century listings of Justices of the Peace illustrate less of a closed circle of the landed elite in running the county; for although many of the same names of old landed families recur, there were many newcomers, illustrating a more democratic representation of interests. Of course, some of the 'new' landowning families were represented here, too, but they were often only new to the region, being branches of old-established landowning families whose roots were elsewhere.

The scale or grandeur of family dwellings or 'seats' can be misleading as a guide to rank, if taken in isolation, as they could be

more a reflection of wealth than an indicator of status. Similarly, a state of improvement, neglect or decay related more to an individual family's financial situation at any point, or indicated whether they had resident or non-resident interests in their estate, rather than being a pointer to rank. Nevertheless, this evidence provides some general guidelines to distinctions between the social groups, but this had to be cross-checked with other data for individual families to obtain a more accurate assessment of their placing within the three social strata specified. Peerage families were more likely to erect splendid new seats on a grand scale, built of stone, and reflecting the Classical influence. However, the impressive Wollaton Hall was built in the sixteenth century, reputedly from the proceeds of coal-mining, and rebuilt in an even more magnificent style following a fire in the seventeenth century, long before the Willoughbys were raised to the peerage. It ranked alongside the Byron's seat at Newstead Abbey, the Duke of Kingston's residence at Holmpierrepont, the seats of the Duke of Newcastle at Welbeck Abbey and Clumber Park, and the Duke of Norfolk's residence in Worksop Manor, in its degree of opulence. Many county families, unlike the peers or landed magnates, preferred a mansion of magnitude rather than of splendour; and few gentry families had the resources to completely rebuild old mansions at any one time. They often enlarged small, old Tudor or Jacobean mansions, rather than erecting completely new ones. These extensions, or alterations, were usually preferred in a plain style, and more red brick was used. As a result, most of them were an admixture of styles and periods, determined by the rate of extensions, improvements or even demolition which were done on a piecemeal basis as requirements or finance dictated. By the end of the eighteenth century many family seats and pleasure grounds were said to be in an improving state. Indeed, parks and pleasure grounds were a strong feature of the county seats: Annesley, owned by the Chaworths, and close to Newstead Abbey in

what had been the ancient environs of Sherwood Forest, was surrounded by an impressive Park containing twelve 'ridings' cut through the woods. The Clifton's seat at Clifton, standing high on an alabaster rock, was extensively adorned with plantations along Clifton Grove. The Eyres' family seat at Grove Hall was situated in a former deer park of considerable antiquity. The seats of the county gentry could be distinguished from those of the village gentry more by the size of the mansion and surrounding parkland rather than by style, antiquity, or situation. Indeed, the village gentry were not outdone in their dwellings. These were often conveniently located on the edge of a village, close to road networks, and were characterised by being small but with distinguishing features. They were quite likely to retain much of the original (possibly Tudor) style of the old building. For example, Thrumpton Hall owned by the Emmertons, was a small, old but much repaired dwelling of elegance set in an attractive 'close' village. But some village gentry built on a grander scale than their status implies, such as the Pocklingtons, who erected mansions at Winthorp and North Carlton out of the proceeds of their banking interests. The large and prosperous-looking farmhouses of the better yeomen families were usually distinguishable from the country mansions or 'Halls' of the gentry by the complex of farm buildings attached to them. Yet the social distinctions could be blurred as younger sons of the greater landowners sometimes resided in small country houses normally associated with squires, or in large farmhouses of the better yeoman type, possibly due to the low level of building. Not until the later decades of the eighteenth century was a spate of new or re-building witnessed. A similar rash of building activity occurred in Hertfordshire at this time, but in Northamptonshire and Northumberland it began earlier in the century.¹⁰ These differing regional patterns have been attributed to both local and personal circumstances which impinged on the financial standing of landed families.

Categorising the families on an economic basis was more difficult due to the absence or incompleteness of documentary evidence; and because there can be problems in equating economic status with social status this cannot always be presumed. Nevertheless, by working backwards from Bateman's evidence, and utilising certain known financial data, then checking this against the information depicting family and estate activities, the general impression tends to support rather than define the social categories presented;¹¹ although of course some degree of social mobility has to be accounted for during the period. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 indicate the families' financial position as recorded by Bateman, (but not every family was listed by him). Where families held land in more than one county a total income figure is given as well as that for their property in Nottinghamshire. These figures may seem to present some anomalies in the social categories: for instance, the Dixies had only an income of £666 per annum, but this was for their Nottinghamshire property only. They were more substantial landowners in Leicestershire, where the core estate was situated, and also possessed land elsewhere, yielding a total annual income of over £11,000. The Parkyns family, with only an income of £207 recorded, were having their affairs investigated through the bankruptcy court. Although several other county gentry, including the Mellish, Sedley and Vere families, received less than £2,000 annual income from their Nottinghamshire property, their social position is based on the evidence for the period under review, not on the situation pertaining in the 1870s. Similarly, some of the village gentry, such as the Masons, appear to have ^{had} landed incomes higher than those of certain county gentry; but this may indicate a degree of subsequent social mobility; and of course the figures do not include incomes from other sources, which would help to sustain social position. As expected, the peerage families present a wide spread of annual

landed income, from as low as £3,729 to £180,750, drawn from their Nottinghamshire acreages ranging from less than 100 to over 52,000. Other landed magnates include the Savile, Sutton and Edge families, but only the Edges were entirely unconnected with the peerage. The gentry acreages ranged from less than 100 to over 33,000 yielding incomes from over £200 to more than £52,000. Some idea of fluctuating financial conditions among the families may be obtained by a comparison of their estate values over time. In 1717 the Clifton's estate income was estimated at £3,000,¹² and despite not insubstantial land sales for rationalisation purposes, it was worth £8,682 in the 1870s. The Earl of Newcastle's estates were valued at £40,000 in 1690, and his only daughter had lands worth £100,000,¹³ by 1883 the Duke's landed income was £74,541. In 1814 the Duke of Norfolk held estates in Sussex, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire worth £123,082.¹⁴ By 1883 his income was £75,596, and his holding in Nottinghamshire was negligible as the core estate was centred around Arundel Castle. The Parkyns' state of bankruptcy in the 1870s may be compared with their unencumbered property worth £21,000 in 1800.¹⁵ The Byrons were also bankrupt at this time, yet the poet had sold the principal seat at Newstead Abbey for £95,000 in 1817, and his wife's will was worth £60,000. A marriage contracted in 1747 had brought £70,000 into the family.¹⁶ A combination of continuing troubles and profligate individuals brought these two families on to the rocks. The total value of the Bridgeman-Simpson's estates in 1883 was £41,982, of which £7,810 was yielded by their Nottinghamshire holdings. Twenty years earlier the total estate was valued at £140,000, but this included personalty.¹⁷ Personalty is an important factor in economic standing. Earl Howe's will was worth £120,000 in 1820,¹⁸ yet the landed income in 1883 was only £17,859. The Denisons were worth £700,000 in 1782, most of which had been acquired through their wool merchant business.¹⁹ The Manners-Sutton family had personalty of £25,000 in 1842,²⁰ but held only

2,000 acres of land in 1883. Estate value data, including rentals and acreages of land owned, is only one source of information indicating a landowning family's economic status. Detailed analysis of estate and personal accounts, land transactions, family provisions made in settlements and wills, or any legal disputes brought through Chancery, provide a fuller appraisal of each individual family's financial situation at any given time, which may or may not impinge on their social status. It has only been possible to do such an in-depth study of a few families. Nevertheless, as the gentry were estimated to require at least £1,000 to £4,000 a year to support them, their families, and lifestyle in 1790; and as the greater magnates required something over £10,000 a year to retain their powerful positions, it is thought that the financial data available tends to support the social categories presented.²¹

Drawn from a wide range of source material, the Nottinghamshire landed interest during c.1660 to c.1840 is therefore defined as those families who owned an estate (that is, a family seat set in several acres of parkland, plus usually a substantial acreage of land either adjoining or elsewhere which could be economically exploited); held social esteem; were possibly arms bearers; had county interests and influence; performed Court or country service; had marriage and business connections with other landowning families;²² and whose financial resources could sustain the lifestyle of a landed gentry family. Their longevity is recorded, and the following chapter indicates that many were of old landed stock. In establishing the stable core of families which comprise the data set, it is fruitful to trace the history of a particular estate, for many estates remained as separate entities for generations, even centuries. They may perhaps be somewhat altered in shape and size, and seem to be under different ownership; but a new name does not necessarily indicate ownership by a totally different family: it is often just a different

branch of the same family, brought about by the patterns of marriage or inheritance. The incidence of double- or multiple-barrelled surnames among the data set families is a pointer in this direction, as is the tradition of passing down surnames as Christian names, even among collateral branches. Something of this trend in name-changing has been indicated in other regional studies.²³

In essence, this study does not argue whether or not the smaller owners were in decline; nor that 'new monied' families did not emerge; nor that these factors did not affect the social composition of landowners, for examples can be quoted to support all these contentions:²⁴ but it argues that, despite a more obviously traceable pattern of mobility among landed society - as evidenced by the list of families who disappeared from the records between the end of the seventeenth and the end of the eighteenth century, and the even larger number of additional families recorded at the end of the nineteenth century -²⁵ there was a stable element of conservatism and continuity at its core which was strong enough to sustain its traditional characteristics and ethos. A core which, as will be seen, neither totally absorbed the new monied families, nor was absorbed by them; but which continued to set the standards, and maintain the values of its heritage, even after the ultimate loss of its traditional political power, such that these may still be evidenced today. Also, that this core of families, far from being mere symbols of conspicuous expenditure as contemporary myth may suggest, had an important role to play in the economic developments of the county.

Table 3.1 The core group of Nottinghamshire landowners, depicting social categories and longevity.

Family	1662	1689	1790s	1873	
				Income Notts.	Total
<u>Peerage</u>					
Duke of Newcastle of Clumber Park		*	*	£73,098	£74,547
Earl Manvers of Holmpierrepont (formerly Duke of Kingston)	*			32,962	51,649
Lord Middleton of Wollaton Park	*			20,326	54,014
A Earl of Chesterfield		*		14,500	
A Duke of St. Albans of Bestwood Park 1677				4,489	10,955
A Earl Howe of Langar	*		*	3,975	37,032
A Duke of Rutland		*	*	1,479	97,487
Lord Byron of Newstead Abbey		*	*	1,453	3,729
A Duke of Devonshire		*		130	180,750
A Duke of Norfolk of Worksop Manor		*	*	39	75,596
<u>County Gentry</u>					
Bridgeman-Simpson of Babworth		*	*	7,810	41,982
Charlton of Chilwell	*	*	*	2,111	
Chaworth of Annesley	*		*	13,787	
Clifton of Clifton	*	*	*	8,682	
Cooper of Thurgarton	*	*	*	1,992	
Disney-Fytch of Flintham			*		
Dixie of Willoughby		*	*	666	11,115
Edge of Strelley		*	*	7,244	14,199
Eyre of Grove	*	*	*	2,982	
Gregory of Lenton	*		*	9,356	
Holden of Felley Priory and Nuthall Temple			*	7,204	
Kirke of East Markham		*	*	1,218	
Manners-Sutton of Kelham		*	*		
Mellish of Hodsock	*	*	*	1,801	
Molyneux of Kneveton	*	*	*		
Musters of Colwick		*	*		
Nevile of Thorney		*	*	2,263	5,586
Parkyns of Bunny	*		*	207	(Bankrupt)
Pegge-Burnell of Sibthorpe		*	*	3,903	7,299
Pendock-Neale of Tollerton	*		*		
Plumtre of Plumtre & Nottingham	*	*	*	515	
Savile of Rufford Abbey	*		*	17,213	52,213
Sherbrooke of Oxton	*	*	*	6,242	

Table 3.1 Continued

Family	1662	1689	1790s	1873 Income	
				Notts.	Total
<u>County Gentry continued</u>					
Smith-Bromley of East Stoke	*		* £	4,086	£
Staunton of Staunton	*		*		
Sutton of Norwood Park			*	1,500	15,500
Thornhaugh-Foljambe of Worksop	*		*	12,902	20,140
Thoroton of Screveton	*		*	3,721	6,650
Warren of Stapleford			*		
Whetham of Kirklington			*	4,187	
Wright of Mapperley		*	*	Multiple entries	
<u>Village Gentry</u>					
Ackom of Wiseton		*	*		
Bristowe of Beesthorpe	*	*	*	1,507	
Dickinson-Rastall of Muskham			*	520	
Fillingham of Syerston		*	*	1,818	
Grundy of Bleasby	*	*	*	293	
Hacker of Flintham	*	*	*	432	
Hinde of Laxton	*		*	456	
Hutchenson of Owthorpe	*		*	1,048	
Knight of Warsop		*	*		
Laycock of Woodborough	*		*	1,827	6,867
Lowe of Lenton & Beeston		*	*	880	
Mason of Eaton		*	*	3,383	
Palmer of Southwell	*		*	668	
Pocklington of Winthorp			*	301	
Rolleston of Watnall	*		*	998	
Wescomb-Emmerton of Thrumpton			*		
White of Tuxford		*	*	1,852	4,423
Wood of Woodborough	*		*	305	
Wylde of Nettleworth	*	*	*	1,063	

KEY: A = Absentee landowner; * = Name recorded

SOURCES: As Table 3.2

N.B. Several of these families are not recorded on the 1662 or 1689 lists, but there is other documentary evidence of their longevity which permits their inclusion among the core group.

Table 3.2 The non-core group of families who were Nottinghamshire landowners during part of the period c.1660-c.1840. Some old names disappeared during the course of the eighteenth century; others were new to the county and, where indicated, were still recorded in the 1873 returns.

Family	1662	1689	1790s	1873	
				Income Notts.	Total
				£	£
<u>Peerage</u>					
A Earl Bathurst of Langwith			*		
A Lord Belper				5,532	11,302
A Earl of Caernarvon				23,825	37,211
A Earl Cowper				8,242	60,392
A Earl Ferrers			*		
A Earl of Gainsborough			*		
Viscount Galway of Serlby			*	5,969	10,557
A Marquis of Halifax			*		
A Lord Houghton				1,169	11,787
A Duke of Leeds			*		
A Earl of Londonderry			*		
A Earl of Mexborough				1,157	34,565
Duke of Portland of Welbeck Abbey			*	35,752	88,350
A Count de Pulley				1,712	
A Viscount St. Vincent				11	6,039
A Earl of Winchilsea				2,288	18,216
<u>County Gentry</u>					
Atkinson of Newark			*		
* Bainbrigge of Woodborough			*		
**A Curzon (Earl Howe)				3,975	
* Francklyn of Gonalston				2,400	
*A Sir Henry Humlake (or Hunloke)					
Montagu of Papplewick				3,796	
Newdigate of Hawton					
* Newton of Bulwell			*		
** Sedley-Vernon of Nuthall				1,524	
Smith of Nottingham				801	
Stanhope of Stoke			*		
** Vere of Carlton				1,844	
** Vere-Dashwood of Stanford				2,947	
* Villa Real of Edwinstow					
Wastneys of Headon			*		
* Welby of Muskham					980
** These were offshoots of peerage families, whose main estates were elsewhere					
* Similarly, these were county families in neighbouring counties.					

Table 3.2 Continued

Family	1662	1689	1790s	1873 Income	
				Notts.	Total
<u>Village Gentry</u>				£	£
Carterwright of East Markham					
Cartwright of Ossington (Denison)	*	*			
Emerson of West Retford					
Frost of Holme					
Levinz of Sturton			*		
Neal of Flintham					
Widmerpool of Widmerpool	*				
Wilson of Elston					143

KEY: A = Absentee landowner; * = Name recorded

SOURCES: K.S.S. Train, ed., The Nottinghamshire Visitation, 1662-4, Thoroton Society, Record Series, 13 (Nottingham, 1950); G. Marshall, ed., Nottinghamshire Subsidies, 1689 (Worksop, 1895); Throsby's Thoroton... (1972 edn.); Parliamentary Papers, Return of owners of land, 1873 (1875); J. Bateman, The great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland (Leicester, 1971); supplemented by other source material drawn from Reference 9 (p.75).

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PART TWO

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CHAPTER FOURTHE SOCIAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY

Patterns of social and geographical distribution of property in Nottinghamshire, c.1660-c.1840, were affected by the degree of social and geographical mobility experienced among landowners. Assessing the factors which influenced these patterns highlights the importance of tracing the history of individual families as well as the history of individual estates. Ultimately this two-pronged approach enabled the principal theme of continuity and stability to be consolidated, rather than emphasising the more superficial appearance of change.

The 1873 'Return of owners of land' estimated that out of a total population in Nottinghamshire of 319,758 in 1871, there were 14,519 owners of land. Of these, 4,628 owned upwards of one acre each. The total acreage of the county was estimated at 508,786, including 1,449 acres of waste, producing a gross estimated rental income of £1,560,852 a year. Bateman's analysis of this Return estimated that there were nine peers owning 156,754 acres in Nottinghamshire, twenty-one greater landlords possessing 123,313 acres, twenty-five squires with 42,500 acres. There were 109 greater yeomen with 54,500 acres and 282 lesser yeomen with 47,940 acres. The small proprietors totalled 3,838, owning 61,108 between them. Taking the five upper tiers of peers to lesser yeomen, which comprise the 'landed interest', these totalled only 446 owners possessing 425,007 acres - a sharp contrast with the 9,891 cottagers owning only 1,266 acres, and the 344 public bodies possessing 19,956 acres. If only the peerage and gentry families are isolated, down to the greater yeomen, a total of 164 landowners of any substance emerges. This contrasts with the 108 gentry families listed in the 1662-4 Visitation, but these were determined

more by pedigree than by acreage. By the end of the eighteenth century 66 of these 108 gentry families were no longer recorded as Nottinghamshire landowners; and by 1873 many new names were listed. Several factors are thought to have contributed to this process. Some families experienced gradual decline and extinction through financial difficulties or demographic failure; others were affected by the patterns of marriage or inheritance. While some families were facing obscurity, others were rising socially to take their place, so the argument goes.¹ But evidence suggests that these more obvious surface changes mask the underlying core of continuity, which can be assessed by tracing the early association of the core families with their Nottinghamshire property. The Cliftons had been associated with Clifton since the thirteenth century, and held the manor since the fourteenth century.² Also dating from the thirteenth century, the Suttons were at Averham (Aram);³ the Thorotons could be traced at Thoroton;⁴ and the Willoughbys held Willoughby manor, but moved their family seat to Wollaton in the fourteenth century when this was acquired together with Cossall.⁵ The Plumtres held Plumtre manor in the fourteenth century,⁶ and the Neales were at Tollerton.⁷ The Stauntons had been linked with Staunton since Domesday.⁸ In the sixteenth century the Coopers acquired Thurgarton Priory,⁹ the Neviles were at Thorney,¹⁰ the Parkyns at Bunny,¹¹ the Sherbrookes at Oxton,¹² the Whites at Tuxford,¹³ and the Rollestons at Watnall.¹⁴ Additionally, the Burnells were associated with Winckburn,¹⁵ the Charltons with Chilwell,¹⁶ the Chaworths with Annesley, as well as holding land at Wiverton.¹⁷ The Bristows owned land in Maplebeck, Caunton and Elton, as well as Beesthorpe, where one of their seats was situated.¹⁸ The Disneys were at Flintham,¹⁹ and the Gregorys had settled in Nottingham, acquiring property at Lenton in the seventeenth century.²⁰ The Molyneux family held land at Teversall, Hawton and Aslacton,²¹ and the Hackers had acquired land at East Bridgford.²²

By the end of the seventeenth century the Ackloms were at Wiseton,²³ the Edges at Strelley,²⁴ the Emmertons at Thrumpton,²⁵ the Smith-Bromleys in East Stoke,²⁶ and the Saviles were at Rufford.²⁷ The Dixies had acquired the Willoughby's ancient family seat at Willoughby, and also held land at Norwell and Flintham.²⁸ The Musters were at Colwick,²⁹ the Thornhaughs at Sturton³⁰ and the Kirkes at Eaton.³¹ The Holdens acquired Nuthall Priory in the early nineteenth century, already possessing Felley Priory in the seventeenth.³² Among the peerage families, Lord Byron possessed Newstead Abbey in the sixteenth century,³³ and in the seventeenth the Duke of Newcastle owned Clumber Park and Thoresby Park,³⁴ and the Duke of St. Albans acquired Bestwood Park, the former Crown property.³⁵

Pedigree was important to the gentry, and keeping records of their ancestry helped to confirm their standing among contemporaries. From these pedigrees can be traced the county of origin of many of the core families. A significant number could date their roots back to a much earlier period in other counties, intimating quite a degree of geographical mobility over time. A number were recorded in the Home Counties, with only a few from the more northerly Lancashire and Staffordshire; but a significant proportion of them can be traced to the neighbouring counties of Yorkshire and Derbyshire. However, there were fewer links than one might expect with Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. This feature is not so easy to explain, unless it has to do with the county's north-south communication system. The Nottinghamshire families did not feature so significantly on the London scene, where gentry from all over the country could meet during 'the season'. They tended to have more parochial interests, particularly during the earlier part of the period under review. However, the peerage families tend to have earlier associations with a wider range of counties, indicating that they operated within a much wider sphere of connections. Indeed, many of the peerage families were either

non-resident or semi-resident as their principal interests traditionally lay elsewhere. They tended to have a more transitional interest in Nottinghamshire property. Of the core gentry families, the Bristows could trace their roots back to the twelfth century in Surrey,³⁶ the Charltons were in Middlesex in the fourteenth century,³⁷ the Mellish family came from London,³⁸ and the Parkyns were in Berkshire in the sixteenth century.³⁹ Further afield, the Wrights were in Suffolk in the sixteenth century,⁴⁰ the Rollestons in Staffordshire in the fourteenth century,⁴¹ and the Edges were there in the early seventeenth century.⁴² The Gregorys⁴³ and the Byrons⁴⁴ were in Lancashire in the early sixteenth century. Among the neighbouring counties, the Disneys⁴⁵ were in Lincolnshire in the thirteenth century, and the Dixies were prominent landowners in Leicestershire in the early seventeenth century.⁴⁶ The Ackloms held land in Yorkshire in the early seventeenth century,⁴⁷ the Burnells were there in the fourteenth century,⁴⁸ and the Pegges in the sixteenth century.⁴⁹ The Saviles were a prominent old Yorkshire landowning family.⁵⁰ From Derbyshire came the Simpsons, who were recorded there in the seventeenth century;⁵¹ and the Coopers were there in the sixteenth,⁵² as were the Sherbrookes.⁵³ The Eyres can be traced there from the thirteenth century,⁵⁴ and the Holdens from the early seventeenth.⁵⁵ Of the non-core families, the Sedleys were in Kent in the fourteenth century,⁵⁶ and the Newtons in Gloucestershire in the early seventeenth.⁵⁷ The Welbys were an ancient Lincolnshire family, traceable there in the eleventh century.⁵⁸ The Francklyns⁵⁹ and the Denisons⁶⁰ were both in Yorkshire in the fifteenth century, and the Bainbrigges⁶¹ and the Humlakes⁶² came from Derbyshire. The Curzon,⁶³ Vere,⁶⁴ Vere-Dashwood,⁶⁵ and Montagu⁶⁶ families all had peerage connections across a wider range of counties. Thus, the data set families present continuity of lineage. It is their incidence of geographical mobility which tends to obscure this continuity, and which has contributed to the notion that the social composition of

the gentry classes was constantly changing.

Upward social mobility took several forms among the data set families. Some were drawn into landownership from the professions, or from trade; but many were existing landowners enhancing their position. Four families descended from wealthy merchants: the Burnells were located in London, and also served at Court.⁶⁷ The Francklyns produced several London merchants, but was also a distinguished ecclesiastical family producing several Deans, Archdeacons, Deacons and Chancellors.⁶⁸ The Mellishes were also London merchants;⁶⁹ and the Denisons were wealthy woollen merchants from Leeds.⁷⁰ Three families descended from prominent lawyers: The Edges produced an attorney at law in Nottingham;⁷¹ there were several local barristers in the Holden family;⁷² and the Emmertons were descended from a London lawyer.⁷³ Both the Whetham⁷⁴ and the Eyre⁷⁵ families had a reputation of considerable military distinction; and the Wrights were also militarily orientated, later adding banking interests.⁷⁶ The Smiths rose through their banking interests, but originated from yeoman stock.⁷⁷ The Fillinghams, also of yeoman stock, rose through their activities as land agents to the Duke of Rutland and various other local families.⁷⁸ Several landowners enhanced their position by service at Court, or by loyalty to the Crown during war years, or for an outstanding political career, for which they received public rewards. Among them were those who received knighthoods, such as the Acklom,⁷⁹ Bainbrige,⁸⁰ Disney,⁸¹ Knight,⁸² Musters⁸³ and Nevile families.⁸⁴ Baronetcies were created for the Clifton,⁸⁵ Molyneux,⁸⁶ and Sedley families in 1611;⁸⁷ for the Foljambes and Wasteney⁸⁸ in 1622;⁸⁹ the Curzon,⁹⁰ Warren⁹¹ and Williamson⁹² families in 1641-2; and for the Newtons,⁹³ Hildyards⁹⁴ and Willoughbys in 1660.⁹⁵ There was a later batch of baronet creations which included Smith-Bromley⁹⁶ in 1757, Sutton⁹⁷ in 1772,⁹⁸ Warren in 1775,⁹⁹ Welby in 1801,¹⁰⁰ and White in 1802. The peers received additional honours and titles to those already held. Lord¹⁰¹ Byron's title was created in 1642. The titles of Baron and Viscount

were conferred on the Chaworths¹⁰² in 1627/8; and Viscount Galway received his title in the same year.¹⁰³ Earl Ferrers was a very early creation.¹⁰⁴ Earl Howe¹⁰⁵ was created in 1701, and Earl Manservants¹⁰⁶ in 1806. Baron Rancliffe was the title conferred on the Parkyns family in 1795,¹⁰⁷ and Lord Middleton was conferred on the Willoughby¹⁰⁸ family in 1711. The Duke of Newcastle received his title in 1694,¹⁰⁹ and the Duke of Kingston¹¹⁰ in 1715. The title of Viscount Ossington was briefly assigned to the Denison family between 1872-3,¹¹¹ and Viscount Sherbrooke¹¹² was created in 1880. Taking together the evidence of longevity, origins, and foundation of wealth, the picture emerging tends to suggest that the majority of the data set families were of old landed stock, either of Nottinghamshire or elsewhere. Not so many families rose socially and economically on the proceeds of business as the literature has suggested. The profits of office enabled the larger landowners to become more substantial; and opportunism facilitated the upward social mobility of the smaller owners. These processes evolved over a long period of time, with the families gradually strengthening their landowning, and consequently their social position over the generations. The evidence goes some way to dispelling the myth of a constantly changing composition of the landed interest, even among the gentry families.

Financial difficulties are thought to have led to the disappearance of some old landed families. Several Nottinghamshire families suffered severe financial strain and put their estates 'at risk' through their Civil War activities, but this was not necessarily a precursor to ultimate decline and forced sales. Only the Williamsons are known to have been forced to relinquish their Nottinghamshire estates. Sir Thomas, created a baronet for his fidelity to the King, had to pay £3,400 to the sequestrators of estates. Additionally he lost £30,000 for the royal cause, ruining his estate in East Markham. His son married an heiress who left her husband the estate of Monk

Wearmouth in County Durham, which became his principal seat and continued there into the twentieth century.¹¹³ Several of the core families survived this period of financial strain, which suggests that its effects were not so severe as has been suggested. Indeed, subsequent compensations could help to redress the financial balance. Sir Roger Cooper, whose family had been granted Thurgarton Priory at the Dissolution for service to Henry VIII, took a prominent part in Charles I's wars, and thereby ruined the fortunes of what had once been a prominent county family. But their prospects were not diminished as a descendant was made Carver to the King in recognition of the family's services. By the 1790s a new house had been built on the site of the old priory, and the family had an income of £1,992 a year from their 903 Nottinghamshire acres in 1873.¹¹⁴ The Cliftons had a fine of £12,120 compounded on their estates for loyal service to the King, but this was later considerably reduced. This family of great antiquity continued to flourish, despite their Catholic beliefs, such that in 1873 they still owned 4,288 Nottinghamshire acres with a yearly income of £8,682.¹¹⁵ Robert Sutton of Averham and Kelham had his estates sequestered and his house at Averham burnt by rebel troops, but as a reward for his loyal services Charles I recreated the old family title of Lords Lexington.¹¹⁶ Some of the data set families were able to acquire financial redress after this period of severe strain through propitious marriages, or by engaging in trade. Sir William Borlase was fined £6,800 and imprisoned, but his heiress daughter married into the Warren family of Stapleford, and her daughter became Baroness Vernon.¹¹⁷ The Stauntons, a landed family of great antiquity, suffered quite severely. The family were already in straitened circumstances following the wardship of Anthony Staunton to the 5th Earl of Rutland, whose neglect and ineptness impoverished the estate. This was compounded by their losses in the royal cause. His grand-daughter married into the Charlton

family, who had themselves once been very large proprietors, but suffered reversals over the Battle of Bosworth. Later generations regained the territorial position their remote ancestor forfeited.¹¹⁸ Sir William Vere, descended from the Earls of Oxford, had been fined for supporting the royal cause, but his grandson and great grandsons became mercers, silk merchants and bankers to redress their financial problems. Peter Vere married the Egginton heiress of Nottingham during the later eighteenth century, and their daughter Isabella married into the peerage family of Masserene and Ferrard.¹¹⁹ The Molyneux family were in financial difficulties before the Civil War troubles; a flamboyant lifestyle forced much of the Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire estates to be alienated, but their social position was sustained by marriage into other gentry families, including Viscount Howe's.¹²⁰ Severely straitened circumstances did not diminish a family's marriageable opportunities: ancient lineage and social prestige still enabled them to marry within their own ranks and so maintain their status. Periods of financial difficulty could also be sustained by a policy of retrenchment, particularly during the eighteenth century, as will be discussed in Part Three. By the end of the nineteenth century only two of the core families were facing financial disaster: the Parkyns and the Byrons, who both recorded bankruptcy.¹²¹ Thus the data indicates that the disappearance of families must be due to factors other than financial difficulties, except in extreme cases.

The phenomenon of demographic decline has been demonstrated as affecting the social fabric of gentry communities in several other regions.¹²² The Nottinghamshire data indicates that failure of the male line played a significant part in the apparent disappearance of landed families of antiquity, particularly before the development and implementation of the strict form of settlement enabled families to protect their interests and estates for posterity by devising them to

collateral branches. This feature receives fuller treatment in the next chapter, but it is relevant here as demographic trends impinge on the social and geographical mobility which landowners experienced. The Strelley estate was split and disposed of by four co-heiress daughters;¹²³ and the four co-heiress Cartwright sisters divided the proceeds of the sale of their Ossington estate, which was sold to the Denisons;¹²⁴ but these dispersals were probably brought about because there were several competing female interests to consider. Henry Gally-Knight sold the family's Firbeck estate in the 1840s, due to lack of issue, and the proceeds went to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for building churches, parsonage houses, and for augmenting livings;¹²⁵ but this was a more unusual practice for the period when it had become more common to include a wide spread of collateral branches in the inheritance pattern. When the Molyneux baronetcy became extinct in 1812 the estates passed to a collateral branch;¹²⁶ and when the Warren baronetcy also became extinct in 1822, the estates passed to the only surviving daughter, who had become Baroness Vernon. On inheriting both her father's estates and those of Sir George Warren of Cheshire, she retook the Warren name so as to retain a separate identity for her family estates.¹²⁷ Whilst demographic circumstances may be interpreted as endangering the sense of continuity within landed communities, this study proposes that continuity of both families and estates was maintained through intermarriage and inheritance. By this process some old names became subsumed and 'disappeared'. By marriage the Dand estates passed to the Stauntons, who later married the Charltons.¹²⁸ The Widmerpool estate passed into the Barnes family.¹²⁹ The Willoughbys of Selston's estate passed by marriage to the Dixie family, who later became Dixie-Godolphin; but the ancient seat at Willoughby was retained.¹³⁰ The Lascelle's estates passed into the Disney family of Lincolnshire,¹³¹ and the Leek estates into the Sherbrooke family.¹³² When the Wasteney baronetcy became extinct in 1742 the estate passed to a

great niece who married into the Eyre family.¹³³ The Acklom estate passed into the Laycock family.¹³⁴ However, in an attempt to retain estates as a separate entity the assumption of a wife's family name could be a condition of acquisition. The incidence of complex names among the landed interest is significant, such as Penn-Assheton-Curzon¹³⁵ and Strelley-Pegge-Burnell,¹³⁶ and the even more complex pedigree of the Duke of Newcastle which linked the Fiennes, Holles, Clinton and Pelham families.¹³⁷ Such a commonly occurring phenomenon as name changing played a more important role than financial embarrassment in the 'disappearance' of families, and this practice can create problems in tracing them. But the process of marriage and inheritance which caused some family names to be lost from the records also contributed to the stable core of continuity of the landed interest.

Another factor causing the apparent 'disappearance' of families from local records is the degree of geographical mobility they experienced as a result of demographic factors, marriage and inheritance practices, financial circumstances, or social mobility. A comparison of the geographical distribution of property of the data set families during the period under review with the situation pertaining in 1873 will illustrate this feature, and at the same time reinforce continuity among the stable core. Table 4.1 indicates the location of family seats within the old regions of Nottinghamshire, and the social composition of each region is indicated. Sherwood Forest was exclusively a peerage domain consisting of three resident and two semi-resident peers, and one family with peerage connections. Along the Forest Borders were settled one peerage and ten gentry families. A steady infiltration process of settlement had long been a feature here. In the comparatively small region of the Western Uplands there were five gentry seats and one peerage. From here the Lords Middleton exerted their position of influence. Along the Soar Valley and in the Eastern Lowlands only one gentry family settled in each region. The Southern

Wolds was the location for seven gentry seats. The Duke of Rutland dominated the Vale of Belvoir. Here nine gentry families were settled. Along the Vale of Trent, where perhaps one would expect to find a predominance of landowners due to the economic importance attached to the region, twenty gentry seats and one peerage were located. In the wide central arc of heavy Clay lands there were fifteen gentry seats. The Denisons were briefly elevated to the peerage in 1872-3, and the Suttons had peerage connections. On the edge of the Northern Carrs, where one would not perhaps expect to find any landowners due to the history of reclamation of this marshy area, one gentry family settled. Along the Erewash Valley none of the data set families had seats. Taking the upland regions together - the Forest, Borders, Western Uplands and Southern Wolds - there were seven peerage and twenty-three gentry families located. In the lowland regions - the Vale of Trent, the Central Clays, the Eastern Lowlands, the Vale of Belvoir, and the Northern Carrs - one peerage and forty-seven gentry families settled. The peerage families preferred to be sited in the uplands, particularly in the environs of the Forest, whilst the gentry settled in a wide arc to the east and south. As might be expected, transport networks did influence this settlement pattern, and there was a heavier concentration around the two principal towns of Nottingham and Newark. Nevertheless, this is essentially a pattern of rural settlement. Changes over time in the geographical distribution of seats are indicated when comparing the eighteenth century pattern with that of 1873, as illustrated in Table 4.2. By the later date not only had the number of landowners increased, but their geographical distribution was more widespread. There was a heavier concentration around the expanding market towns, and greater penetration had been gained into the traditionally peerage domain in the Forest and its environs. Nevertheless, continuity of some data set families is indicated,

although a number had gravitated to other regions within the county. From a comparison of the two sets of data a series of regional gains and losses in landowning families emerges, which are presented in Table 4.3: but the figures give impressions of mobility which are somewhat superficial, for they do not indicate the variety of changes experienced. In the Forest, only the semi-resident Duke of St. Albans retained his property. Both Newstead Abbey¹³⁸ and Worksop Manor had been sold.¹³⁹ By marriage Welbeck Abbey passed to the Duke of Portland,¹⁴⁰ Rufford Abbey to the Lumleys,¹⁴¹ and Thoresby Park, the second seat of the Duke of Kingston, to Earl Manvers.¹⁴² Four 'new' families settled near the expanding market towns, especially Worksop. The greatest change was perhaps in the social composition, with gentry families gaining penetration into what had been a Ducal stronghold. One difficulty here is that it has not been possible to determine the social origins of all the new families listed in 1873, but they are known to have had an annual rental income from land in excess of £1,000. In the Borders six old families remained at their seats, and five old families had transferred there from elsewhere in the county, including the Whites who had owned land at Tuxford since 1545.¹⁴³ Of the old families which 'disappeared', the Bristows had moved to London, the Wylde to Southwell, and the Laycocks became absentee owners residing in Newcastle.¹⁴⁴ Many of the 'new' families settled around the market towns, especially Mansfield. This region experienced the largest increase in the settlement of landowners. The attraction of the Forest and Border regions may be due to the social prestige attached to this 'Dukeries' area, as well as to the proximity of many small market towns, and the increased economic value placed on land in the vicinity of urban centres. In the Western Uplands Nuthall Temple had passed from the Sedleys into the Warren family,¹⁴⁵ and two 'new' families were attracted to Nuthall, the Vernons being an old landed family of Derbyshire.¹⁴⁶ Thus little overall change was effected here.

The position in the Eastern Lowlands and the Soar Valley remained static. The Nevilles continued at Thorney on the Nottinghamshire-Lincolnshire border, and the Vere-Dashwoods continued at Stanford Hall. Only one old family remained in the Wolds. Of those who 'disappeared', the Dixie's main seat was in Leicestershire,¹⁴⁷ the Parkyns experienced succession and bankruptcy problems,¹⁴⁸ the Hutchensons had moved to the Clays, the Curzons married into Earl Howe's family,¹⁴⁹ and the Neales had sold Tollerton.¹⁵⁰ The 'newcomers' were spread geographically across the Wolds, and this region retained its gentry structure. It was an attractive location for social prestige coupled with agrarian functions. In the Vale of Belvoir only two of the nine old families retained their seats. Of those who 'disappeared', the Burnells moved to the Clays, the Neals and Wilsons to the Vale of Trent, and the Hackers had transferred to Yorkshire.¹⁵¹ This is the only region to record an overall loss (of four families), although three 'new' ones had moved in. The social structure of gentry families remained the same, although their geographical settlement was more widespread, and they retained the 'one village, one squire' pattern. The Vale of Trent retained seven of its old families, although with some changes of residence within the region. Of the old families who 'disappeared', several intermarried: Chaworth with Musters and Atkinson with Holden.¹⁵² Several families moved to other regions: Dickinson to the Carrs, Pocklington to the Borders, Plumtre to the Erewash Valley, Newton to the Clays. The Duke of Kingston's estates passed to Earl Manvers, who removed from Holmpierrepont to Thoresby Park in the Forest.¹⁵⁴ The Welbys were based at their Lincolnshire estate and the Manners-Sutton had moved to Hampshire.¹⁵⁵ The 'newcomers' mainly settled around Nottingham, Newark and other small market towns. Of this group the Pagets were an old Leicestershire family.¹⁵⁶ In the Central Clays seven old families remained, although two had a change of residence. Four old families had transferred

here from other regions within the county. Of the old families who 'disappeared', the Coopers had moved to the Forest Borders, and the Hindes and the Cartwrights to the Vale of Trent. Of the 'newcomers', the Beechers were prominent in the Nottinghamshire Poor Law re-organisation of the 1830s,¹⁵⁷ and the Vernon and Fitzwilliam families¹⁵⁸ were of old landed stock with peerage connections.¹⁵⁹ The social structure of landowners in the Clays and the Vale of Trent remained fairly constant. It was the domain of gentry families, particularly the less significant members. Small proprietors were also more numerous in the Clay region. The more notable county families favoured the traditional strongholds in the uplands, except for the Sutton family who settled within the more elite ecclesiastical domain of Southwell, under the aegis of the Archbishop of York. In the Carrs the Ackloms had 'disappeared' through marriage.¹⁶⁰ Two minor old families had moved there from elsewhere in the county, but there were no total 'newcomers', which is not surprising in view of this region's relative remoteness and unattractiveness. The Erewash Valley had contained no family seats in the eighteenth century. Situated on the Nottinghamshire-Derbyshire border, its northern area became the location for coalmining and the iron industry. The Fletcher-Barber-Walker entrepreneurs were active there throughout the period under review, and by the end of the nineteenth century the Walkers were resident there. A branch of the Plumtre family had also settled there; but, like the Carrs, it still remained an unattractive location for the true gentry. Because of the easier availability of land in the Clay region, and as the nature of society was more open to infiltration, one would perhaps expect more than the moderate rate of increase experienced here.¹⁶¹ Additionally, in view of the economic significance attributed to the Vale of Trent, it is surprising that even larger numbers of landowners did not settle: their greatest concentration in this region was between Nottingham and

Newark. But the location of a family seat was determined by criteria other than purely economic advantage. This factor was of greater concern in the situation of landholdings which supplied annual income¹⁶², the patterns of which are indicated in Table 4.1. A prestige site was more important in the location of family seats, and these were often associated with old settlements dating back to the Roman or Anglo-British periods.¹⁶³ Among the greater landowners the Dissolution, or the disposal of Crown and Bishops' lands determined the location of their mansions in the Forest or near Southwell.¹⁶⁴ These sites correlate with the old socio-economic structure of the Pays already depicted. Antiquity and tradition seem to be important and continuing elements in the ethos attached to a landed seat and its core estate, such that the county landowners of the nineteenth century were still frequently located at these old sites. Few new seats were established in other situations, even by newcomers to the county. Where new mansions were built these were often at or near the site of an old one.

From the foregoing evidence it is suggested that the 'disappearance' of old families should not be overstated. Few were 'lost' through financial strain. Failure of the male line led to an incidence of female or collateral inheritance and intermarriage. By these processes family names may be subsumed, but the extended family could still be associated with a seat under the new name, although on occasions geographical mobility may result from these processes. When these factors are collated the pattern emerging is of landowners effecting continuity although in a somewhat altered form in response to individual circumstances. The legal devices adopted to secure this process are explored in the next chapter.

Table 4.1 The distribution of property, c.1660-c.1840

Location of Family Seats	Overall Pattern of Landholdings
<u>Forest Region</u>	
C Lord Byron of Newstead Duke of Newcastle of Clumber Duke of Norfolk of Worksop Duke of St. Albans	Nucleated Scattered Nucleated Nucleated
NC Duke of Portland of Welbeck Montagu of Papplewick	Scattered Tightly nucleated
<u>Forest Borders</u>	
C Bridgeman-Simpson of Babworth Bristowe of Beesthorpe Chaworth of Annesley Laycock of Woodborough Mellish of Hodsock Sherbrooke of Oxton Thornhaugh-Foljambe of Osberton Wood of Woodborough Wylde of Nettleworth	Nucleated Scattered Mainly nucleated Two nuclei Two nuclei Part nucleated, part scattered Nucleated
NC Bainbrigge of Woodborough Viscount Galway of Serlby	Nucleated Nucleated
<u>Western Uplands</u>	
C Edge of Strelley Holden of Nuthall Lord Middleton of Wollaton Rolleston of Watnall Warren of Stapleford	Mainly nucleated Two nuclei Three principal nuclei Mainly nucleated Nucleated
NC Sedley of Nuthall	Probably nucleated
<u>Soar Valley</u>	
NC Vere-Dashwood of Stanford	Probably nucleated
<u>Southern Wolds</u>	
C Clifton of Clifton Dixie of Willoughby Hutchenson of Owthorpe Parkyns of Bunny Pendock-Neale of Tollerton Wescomb-Emmerton of Thrumpton	Two nuclei Scattered Tightly nucleated Scattered Nucleated
NC Widmerpool of Widmerpool	Nucleated
<u>Vale of Belvoir</u>	
C Disney-Fytch of Flintham Fillingham of Syerston Hacker of Flintham Molyneux of Kneveton Pegge-Burnell of Sibthorpe Staunton of Staunton Thoroton of Screveton	Nucleated Tightly nucleated Tightly nucleated Scattered Scattered Probably nucleated Tightly nucleated
NC Neal of Flintham Wilson of Elston	Nucleated Tightly nucleated

Table 4.1 Continued

Location of Family Seats	Overall Pattern of Landholdings
<u>Vale of Trent</u>	
C Charlton of Chilwell	Tightly nucleated
Dickinson-Rastall of Muskham	Two nuclei
Gregory of Nottingham & Lenton	Tightly nucleated
Grundy of Bleasby	
Lowe of Lenton & Beeston	
Manners-Sutton of Kelham	Nucleated
Earl Manvers of Holmpierrepont	Mainly nucleated
Musters of Colwick	Tightly nucleated
Plumtre of Nottingham & Plumtre	Scattered
Pocklington of Winthorp	Tightly nucleated
Smith-Bromley of East Stoke	Mainly nucleated
Wright of Nottingham & Mapperley	Scattered
NC Atkinson of Newark	Nucleated
Frost of Holm	
Newdigate of Hawton	
Newton of Bulwell	
Smith of Nottingham & Wilford	Nucleated
Stanhope of Stoke	
Vere of Carlton	
Villa Real of Edwinstow	
Welby of Muskham	Nucleated
<u>The Clays</u>	
C Cooper of Thurgarton	Nucleated
Eyre of Grove	Tightly nucleated
Hinde of Laxton	
Kirke of East Markham	Tightly nucleated
Mason of Eaton	Nucleated, but away from seat
Palmer of Southwell	
Sutton of Norwood	Nucleated
Whetham of Kirklington	Nucleated
White of Tuxford	Nucleated
NC Carterwright of East Markham	
Cartwright (later Denison) of Ossington	Scattered (both)
Emerson of West Retford	
Franklyn of Gonalston	Probably nucleated
Levinz of Sturton	
Wasteney of Headon	
<u>Northern Carrs</u>	
C Acklom of Wiseton	Nucleated
<u>Eastern Lowlands</u>	
C Nevile of Thorney	Nucleated

KEY C = Core families NC = Non-core families

N.B. The data relates to the resident and semi-resident families

Table 4.2 Geographical distribution of family seats, 1873. Those data set families who were still recorded are differentiated from the 'newcomers'. The location of the data set seats remained the same unless otherwise indicated.

Data set families	'Newcomers'
<u>Forest Region</u>	
Manvers	Garside of Worksop
Duke of Newcastle	Hodgkinson of Blidworth
Savile	Machin of Worksop
Duke of St. Albans	Duke of Portland of Welbeck Abbey
	Ramsden of Worksop
	Webb of Newstead Abbey
<u>Forest Borders</u>	
Bridgeman-Simpson	Bland of Warsop
Chaworth-Musters	Dowager Carnarvon of Teversall
Cooper of Bulwell	Chaloner of Oldcoates
Viscount Galway	Dodsley of Mansfield
Mellish	Hall of Mansfield
Parkyns of Mansfield	Hollins of Mansfield
Pocklington of Walesby	Thackeray of Arnold
Sherbrooke	Walker of Mansfield
Thornhaugh-Foljambe of Worksop	Whitaker of Harworth
White of Wallingwells	
Wood	
<u>Western Uplands</u>	
Edge	Godber of Nuthall
Holden	Vernon of Nuthall
Lord Middleton	
Rolleston	
<u>Soar Valley</u>	
Vere-Dashwood	
<u>Southern Wolds</u>	
Byron of Thrumpton	Barrow of Normanton
Clifton	Burnside of Normanton
	Davis of Tollerton
	Forteach of Bunny
	Robertson of Widmerpool
	Wild of Costock
<u>Vale of Belvoir</u>	
Fillingham	Davy of Colston Basset
Thoroton-Hildyard of Flintham	Hall of Whatton
	Marshall of Orston

Table 4.2 Continued

Data set families	'Newcomers'
<u>Vale of Trent</u>	
Cartwright of Dunham	Bayley of Lenton Abbey
Charlton	Birkin of Aspley
Gregory of Bramcote	Buck of Farndon
Hinde of Bleasby	Forester of Gedling
Lowe	Freeth of Nottingham
Kneale of Kneeton	Godfrey of Newark
Palmer of Newark	Handley of Newark
Smith of Wilford	Hole of Carlton-on-Trent
Smith-Bromley	Lutton of Newark
Vere	Manson of Nottingham
Wilson of Newark	Paget of Ruddington
Wright of Nottingham	Thorpe of Newark
<u>The Clays</u>	
Denison	Beecher of Southwell
Eyre of Rampton	Cane of Southwell
Franklyn	Fitzwilliam of Maplebeck
Hutchenson of Retford	Milward of Southwell
Kirke	Vernon of Retford
Mason of Retford	Warrand of Southwell
Newton of Retford	
Pegge-Burnell of Winkburn	
Sutton	
Whetham	
Wylde of Southwell	
<u>Northern Carrs</u>	
Dickinson of Kisson	
Grundy of Misterton	
<u>Eastern Lowlands</u>	
Nevile	
<u>Erewash Valley</u>	
Plumtre of Eastwood	Walker of Eastwood

Table 4.3 Comparison of regional distribution of seats.

Region	Total number of seats		
	c.1660-c.1840	1873	Gain/Loss
Forest	6	10	+ 4
Forest Borders	11	20	+ 9
Western Uplands	6	6	No change
Soar Valley	1	1	No change
Southern Wolds	7	8	+ 1
Vale of Belvoir	9	5	- 4
Vale of Trent	21	25	+ 4
Clays	15	17	+ 2
Northern Carrs	1	2	+ 1
Eastern Lowlands	1	1	No change
Erewash Valley	-	2	+ 2

Sources for Tables 4.1 to 4.3:

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34. Throsby's Thoroton, II, 23.
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36. R. Mellors, Men of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire...(1924), 192, 263.
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38. Transactions of Thoroton Society, 5, Supplement (1901).
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45. Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 161.
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47. Throsby's Thoroton, III, 310.
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51. The Complete Baronetage, III, 26.
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53. Burke's Landed Gentry, I (1965), 628.
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55. Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 303-4.
56. The Complete Baronetage, I, 73, 173.
57. The Complete Baronetage, III, 111.
58. Debrett's Illustrated Baronetage (1944), 831.
59. Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 217.
60. R. Mellors, Men of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire...(1924), 303-5.
61. Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 26.
62. Wotton's English Baronetage (1741), II, 378.
63. The Complete Peerage, III, 582.
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68. Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 217.
69. Me/2/104 (Pedigree); Transactions of Thoroton Society, 5, Supplement (1901).
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72. Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 303-4.
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75. E. Walford, Walford's County Families...(1895), 346; L. Jacks, The great houses of Nottinghamshire...(1881), 57-9.

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89. The Complete Baronetage, V, 213.
90. The Complete Peerage, VI, 596; III, 582.
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92. The Complete Baronetage, V, 179.
93. The Complete Baronetage, III, 111.
94. Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 294-6.
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97. DDM/103/31 (Pedigree); L. Jacks, The great houses of Nottinghamshire ...(1881), 60-4; 80-4.
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105. The Complete Peerage, VI, 596.
106. The Complete Peerage, VIII, 394.
107. The Complete Baronetage, V, 115.
108. Transactions of Thoroton Society, VI (1902), 43; Throsby's Thoroton, I, 12; II, 209.
109. The Complete Peerage, IX, 521; Throsby's Thoroton, III, 358, 406-8.
110. The Complete Peerage, VIII, 394; Throsby's Thoroton, I, 176, III, 345.
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113. The Complete Baronetage, V, 179.
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129. NCRO/DD/WD.
130. The Complete Baronetage, III, 85.
131. Throsby's Thoroton, I, 338.
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135. The Complete Peerage, III, 582; VI, 598.
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137. The Complete Peerage, IX, 521.
138. The Complete Peerage, II, 454.
139. SRO/S/423, Estate Act of Parliament, sought 1802, for the sale of property, including Worksop manor.
140. The Complete Peerage, X, 582.
141. The Complete Baronetage, I, 49.
142. The Complete Peerage, VIII, 394; L. Jacks, The great houses of Nottinghamshire...(1881), 139-43.
143. E. Walford, Walford's County Families...(1895), 1083; L. Jacks, The great houses of Nottinghamshire...(1881), 151-6.
144. Return of owners of land, II (1873).
145. The Complete Baronetage, I, 73, 173.
146. The Complete Peerage, XII, 260-5.
147. The Complete Baronetage, III, 85.
148. The Complete Baronetage, V, 115.
149. The Complete Peerage, III, 582; VI, 596.
150. Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 33-4.
151. Return of owners of land, II (1873).
152. Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 463.
153. Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 303-4.
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155. Return of owners of land, II (1873).
156. Burke's Landed Gentry, III (1972), 695-6.

157. R. Mellors, Ken of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire...(1924), 133-5.
158. The Complete Peerage, XII, 260-5.
159. The Complete Peerage, V, 521-7.
160. L. Jacks, The great houses of Nottinghamshire...(1881), 174.
161. This region was not dominated by the peerage estates, nor by the 'close' villages of the squirearchy.
162. That estates were run as units of economic utility is illustrated in Part Three.
163. H.C. Darby, The Domesday geography of Midland England...(1954); K.C. Edwards, Nottingham and its region...(1966); M.L. Faull, 'Place names and the historic landscape', Nomina, 2 (1978), 26.
164. J.D. Chambers, Nottinghamshire in the eighteenth century...(1966), 4-5; 'In 1683, the Second Charles, by royal letters patent, granted (Bestwood Park) to Henry Beauclerk, Duke of St. Albans, and it has since that date remained in the hands of the Beauclerks', quoted from L. Jacks, The great houses of Nottinghamshire...(1881), 16; the Suttons acquired Norwood Park from the Archbishop of York, 1778, DDM/103/191.

CHAPTER FIVESTRICT SETTLEMENT

Strict settlement was the legal device which landowners adopted ostensibly to preserve their estates. However, the preservative nature of settlements has been contested.¹ Indeed, the precise role of this legal device continues to be misunderstood and still generates much debate.² Consequently, theories based upon it are flawed and their conclusions continually eroded as new interpretations are presented. The Nottinghamshire data illustrates settlements in practice, against which current conflicting arguments are tested.

(i) Demographic circumstances and the chequered pattern of inheritance.

Individual circumstances indicate that compliance with the prevailing rule of primogeniture caused most families belonging to the landed interest to experience a chequered pattern of inheritance. Survival of the male line for more than a century or two was considered to be exceptional; and to maintain direct descent from father to son for more than a few generations was unusual.³ As a result, several devices were employed by landowners to ensure the continuity of their estates as a separate entity, and, so far as possible, to continue their family name and its association with their estates in order to preserve social prestige. Such devices were at the core of maintaining stability among the Nottinghamshire landed families as a whole. Some researchers interpret the end of a direct line of male descent from father to son as the end of a family and the dispersal of their estates;⁴ but the Nottinghamshire evidence illustrates the important roles of younger sons, and daughters, as well as of collateral branches of a family. By incorporating them in the inheritance pattern family continuity could be maintained. This practice was adopted among the lesser and greater gentry as well as the peerage. There was a certain degree of chance or luck in any inheritance pattern. Some prospective inheritors

died in childhood. Some inheritors could die unmarried; some died in early adulthood either before reaching marriage status or before producing an heir. Other inheritors had infertile marriages, or their heirs pre-deceased them in adult life. Second and subsequent marriages were not uncommon in an attempt to offset any earlier failure, but they did not always produce an heir. The frequency with which younger sons inherited as a direct result of these events is a remarkable feature of the Nottinghamshire landed families. The evidence is drawn from pedigrees and family histories, supported by settlement data where available, extending over three-quarters of the data set during the period under review. Over 80 instances are recorded of younger sons inheriting, almost equally divided between those who had become the first surviving son at the time of inheritance, and those who inherited from an elder brother. Just a few examples will illustrate the demographic complications which could affect the rule of primogeniture. Philip Meadows was a third son whose second son Charles was created Earl Manvers in 1806. Charles's first son died unmarried aged 26, his second son died young: succession passed to the third son, through whom the line continued.⁵ When Viscount Galway died in 1772 his eldest son had predeceased him, unmarried; his second son died two years later, aged 24 and also unmarried. The line continued through the third son, Robert.⁶ John Vere produced eight sons, two of which died in infancy, and five were unmarried, including the second and third sons who lived to advanced years. Only the fifth son married, through whom the line continued.⁷ Sir Gervase Clifton was predeceased by his eldest son George, aged 20, and was succeeded by his second son, Sir Gervase who married seven times before his death in 1666. The three sons produced by the first, second and sixth marriages of Sir Gervase were brought either directly or indirectly through their own sons into the line of inheritance. A direct line of descent then continued from 1731 to 1837 when Sir Robert died

unmarried aged 70, to be succeeded by his brother, whose own son produced no male issue and the baronetcy became dormant.⁸ A significant, though common and accepted feature of the demographic process was the frequency with which prospective inheritors died in infancy or childhood or in early adult life. What is remarkable, in view of this threat to family continuity, is the incidence of inheritors who remained bachelors. Forty inheritors who reached maturity died unmarried, about half of these surviving into middle or old age. All three social groups of landed families were affected. The distribution of bachelor inheritors over time is significant, in view of the demographic crisis which is accorded to the period 1650 to 1740. Five of this group died in the later seventeenth century, seven between 1700 and 1740, totalling twelve during this crisis period. Sixteen bachelor inheritors died between 1741 and 1799, and twelve between 1800 and 1844, indicating that bachelor inheritors was not a phenomenon particular to the earlier period. Inheritors who married but left no surviving male offspring, or whose marriages were infertile could also seriously affect the future pattern of inheritance. Fifty-nine married male inheritors had no son to succeed them. Using the same time scale for comparison, twenty-two inheritors suffered this drawback in the later seventeenth century, seven from 1700 to 1740, sixteen between 1741 and 1799, and fourteen between 1800 and 1842. Taking the figures together for bachelor inheritors and married inheritors with no son to succeed them, the data indicates that during the later seventeenth century there were twenty-seven occasions when a direct line of male descent was frustrated through demographic failure, fourteen such occasions during 1700 to 1740, thirty-two occasions during 1741 to 1799, and twenty-six between 1800 and 1844. These figures are all based on the condition pertaining at the date of death of the inheritor. During the 90 years of the demographic crisis period of 1650 to 1740 there were forty-one such

instances, compared with fifty-eight during the next century. Over the whole of the eighteenth century there were forty-six instances. In view of this evidence should we regard the failure of inheritors to produce an heir as constituting a demographic crisis among the landed interest which was particular to and of especial significance for the period 1650 to 1740 as Hollingsworth and Stone claim?⁹ For the indication is that this was a naturally occurring phenomenon at any period. Perhaps the demographic decline argument is too narrowly focused on the principle of primogeniture, but other factors could counterbalance demographic problems which can be illustrated through settlements in practice.

In his will of 1672 Sir Francis Willoughby settled on his second son Thomas lands in Muskham and Carlton¹⁰ which were inherited from his cousin Sir William of Selston.¹¹ This was a life interest in fee simple which would then descend to Thomas's sons: but if Thomas or his heirs were driven out of these lands, the second family seat at Middleton New Park in Warwickshire was to be entailed instead. The eldest son Sir Francis succeeded his father but died unmarried aged 22 in 1688, whereupon Thomas succeeded to the entire estate which extended over numerous counties with its principal seat at Wollaton Park. The pattern was to be repeated. Sir Thomas's own son Francis succeeded, but his son Francis died unmarried when the second son Thomas inherited, but dying without issue inheritance passed to the heir of Sir Thomas's second son, also Thomas, whose own second son provided the heir to the sixth baron.¹² Sir Thomas was created Baron Middleton in 1711. The second baron settled the manor of West Leake on his second son Thomas,¹³ plus £30,000 as stipulated in his marriage settlement,¹⁴ but as outlined above Thomas eventually succeeded, becoming the fourth baron. Sir Robert Sutton (1671-1746), whose father was a third son, established his line as the principal representatives of the Sutton family when failure of the male line caused the family title of Lord Lexington to

become extinct.¹⁵ His first son Robert probably died young, and his second son John succeeded but left no issue. His third son, Sir Richard, consolidated the family's position. Both John and Richard were given a life interest in the estate.¹⁶ Sir Richard married three times and from his second marriage produced four sons, the youngest of whom died young, and three daughters. His eldest son John predeceased him by one year, and John's infant son Richard inherited. During his long minority the estate was jointly administered by Sir Richard's second and third sons, the Reverend Richard and Robert Nassau, both of whom held estates in their own right. As a second son, the Reverend Richard was entitled to the family's Down Hatherley estate in Gloucestershire, which was settled on him in his father's Deed of Appointment of 1782.¹⁷ He rented out this estate (a farm with 242 acres) for £308.10s.0d. a year and resided at the family's second seat at Brant Broughton, near to the principal seat and core estate. He sold Down Hatherley in 1806 for £13,000, which had been valued at 26 years' purchase. Robert Nassau married his cousin Mary Georgiana Manners-Sutton, and through his family maintained another branch of this landowning hierarchy. Both Richard and Robert Nassau had been left £40,000 each in their father's will of 1798, but Richard's Down Hatherley estate (then valued at £5,000) was included in his figure, so that both sons would be treated equally.¹⁸ This evidence runs contrary to Stone's contention that in the eighteenth century strict settlement presented an economic crisis for younger sons as this device preserved, even increased, inequality between sons as they got a raw deal after partibility declined.¹⁹

When there was no first-born or younger son to succeed, or no grandson if the intended heir predeceased his father, the practical implementation of the rule of primogeniture often brought collateral branches of a family into the pattern of inheritance, usually through a nephew or a cousin, or great nephew, or unspecified 'kinsman'.

Collateral inheritances could take two forms: those inheritors descended from a younger son of an ancestor, and those descended from an ancestor's daughter. In the case of the former, no change of surname was usually necessary, but in the latter case, as decreed by will, the inheritor had to apply for a Royal Licence to change his name to, and where appropriate take up the arms of his predecessor as a condition of inheritance. There were at least eighteen patrilinear inheritances among the data set, seven of which occurred during the demographic 'crisis' period. Both Eileen Spring and Stone contend that estates were settled on collateral males in preference to daughters,²⁰ yet at least twenty-seven instances of direct or indirect female inheritance were recorded among the data set. Female inheritance could take several forms, either directly, or indirectly through their children, particularly sons. In the direct line of descent the husband of an heiress daughter would be required to adopt her family name by Royal Licence as a condition of inheritance. This could result in double-barrelled names, and affected at least fifteen of the data set families at some time. Over a period of time one name could become subsumed as the old prestige associated with it became lost in history, or because a series of name adoptions made excessive use of multiple surnames unmanageable, as in the case of Pendock-Neale-Otter-Barry, where only the latter name was retained.²¹ Former surnames were often used as Christian names to retain family links. Several heiress daughters married their cousins, thereby strengthening collateral links with the main branch, as when Margaret, daughter of the Duke of Newcastle, married John Holles, George Neville married Catherine Neville, Sophia Disney married John Disney, and Mary Edge married James Hurt.²² Females could inherit directly from a brother: Anne Mellish succeeded her brother Henry in 1817, and Sir George Savile's Rufford Abbey estate was inherited on his death by his sister, the

Countess of Scarborough, in 1784.²³ Contrary to Eileen Spring's contention that strict settlement ensured estates descended in accordance with titles, which invariably went to males, it was found that among peerage families daughters could also inherit titles. On her father's death in 1717, Elizabeth Shirley became Baroness Ferrers, the title then passing to her daughter Charlotte.²⁴ When Earl Howe died in 1799 the barony of Howe was succeeded to by his daughter Sophia.²⁵ In the Byron family the estates became separated from the title in 1824, on the death of the poet. His sister, who had married the first Earl of Lovelace, inherited the family estates, but the title passed to a male cousin.²⁶

Settlements in practice drew several daughters in the Edge family indirectly into the line of inheritance. Ralph Edge built up a good estate, but produced no issue. His will of 1684 devised his estates to his sister's sons, provided they took the Edge surname; but if they refused, or if they should die without male issue, then his 'kinsman' Richard Conway should succeed.²⁷ Richard is thought to have descended from an aunt or great aunt of Ralph, the sister of a predecessor, and ultimately succeeded to the Edge estate. His son Ralph produced four daughters: the first died young; the second and fourth produced no issue, although they featured in his will of 1765.²⁸ He settled a life interest in his Staffordshire property in his daughters Jane, Margaret and Mary successively. Margaret also had a life interest in his Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire property, then to pass to her son Thomas Webb in tail male, providing that anyone inheriting from his daughters took the Edge surname. Thomas Webb Edge did inherit, and produced three sons and three daughters. His second son and second daughter died in infancy, and further demographic problems affected the family. Although his eldest son Thomas inherited he died unmarried, by which time his second younger brother had died leaving no issue, his eldest sister had also died producing an only

daughter who was heiress to the Moore family estates, which brought his youngest sister Mary into the line of descent. His will of 1830 gave her a life interest in the Edge estates, which were then to descend to her sons James or John in tail male.²⁹ This settlement also brought his nieces into the line of inheritance, and the daughters of his nephews and nieces. In fact daughters and nieces were usually featured in the line of inheritance in Edge settlements, as in the full family settlement made by Richard and his wife Rebecca in 1712, when his daughters, or the daughters of his eldest son Ralph, could succeed as tenants in common but not as joint tenants.³⁰ This pattern was again specifically set out in Ralph's marriage settlement of 1714, that descent should pass from Ralph to his younger brothers Richard, William and Walter, and then to his sisters Catherine and Martha.³¹ This is in contrast with the marriage settlement of Richard and Rebecca, made prospectively in 1688, which settled property in default of sons on daughters, to be equally divided between them, or to be equally shared between the survivors.³² During the period under review daughters did not feature in the inheritance pattern of the Willoughby family, but the mother of Sir Francis (d.1665) was the eldest of six daughters who married Sir Percival Willoughby d'Eresby through whom the principal line continued.³³ The will of their grandson Francis, made in 1672, stipulated females in the settlement pattern.³⁴ If neither of his sons Francis and Thomas should leave male heirs, then the first or second daughter of Francis, or in default the first or second daughter of Thomas should succeed, on condition that the inheritor married with her friends' approval, and did not marry a Roman Catholic. If these conditions were not performed by the eldest daughter then she should forfeit the estate to the next in remainder that should perform them; and also on condition that whoever she married took by Act of Parliament the name of Willoughby without alias. In default, his own daughter Cassandra was to inherit, on

the same terms, then descend to her sons, or to her daughters under the same conditions. At least one branch of the Willoughbys were Catholics, and they were only brought into settlement patterns on condition that they renounced the Popish faith.³⁵ There seems to have been no shortage of males to inherit within the Willoughby family, and later settlements featured portions for daughters in lieu of a place in the line of succession.³⁶ The will made in 1722 by Robert, the second and last Lord Lexington devised all his estates immediately after his decease and failure of male issue to trustees during the life of his only surviving daughter Bridget, Duchess of Rutland. They were to receive all the rents and profits of his estate and pay them to his daughter for her sole use, or any other person whom she appointed to receive them without the consent of her husband or any future husband. After her death his estates were then to descend to her second son, Lord Robert, then to Lord Robert's sons and their sons successively, 'it being my intention that a younger son shall succeed', provided they took the Sutton surname and coat of arms in lieu of Manners, and all the children should bear the Sutton surname, not Manners, and in all deeds and writing use the name Sutton.³⁷ In fact, Manners-Sutton was the name customarily adopted until Bridget's grandson Thomas, a fifth son, was created Baron Manners of Foston in 1807.³⁸ Daughters did not usually feature in the inheritance patterns set out in the settlements of the Suttons of Norwood branch. Because there was no shortage of male heirs they were assigned portions out of inherited fortunes.³⁹

Where estates might descend, or did descend through the female line, preserving the separate identity of their estates, and where possible, the association with them of a family name, was a prime consideration of landowners; although future circumstances could subsequently lead to their name being subsumed. Hence the stringent conditions for inheritance stipulated. This was a practice among all

three social groups, but lesser families were more susceptible to being swallowed up, and the name structure of peerage families was most frequently affected. The Suttons were an ancient and distinguished family, and the will of the second Lord Lexington evoked a strong desire to keep the Sutton estates separate from the Duke of Rutland's, and to promote the continuity of the family name in perpetuity. Sir Francis Willoughby directed his executors to erect a monument to his parents commending them for 'the recovery of the estate that was utterly ruined in the eye of the world'.⁴⁰ Furthermore, if he should die leaving no heirs, his Warwickshire estate would descend to one sister and his Nottinghamshire estate to the other. If they only produced daughters the estates should not be further subdivided, but the entire moiety of each estate should fall to the eldest daughter of each sister, on condition that the Willoughby name be kept up. As one sister already had a young son on whom his father's estate in Leicestershire had been entailed, Sir Francis directed that if a second son were to be born the Leicestershire property should devolve upon him, leaving the first-born to inherit the more prestigious Willoughby property from his mother under her family name. His other sister was not so strictly bound, but he left it to her discretion to contrive a way through the next two generations of severing her husband's estate from her own, so that both family names might be kept up. Both sisters were given the freedom of choice in selecting either the Nottinghamshire or the Warwickshire estate, should circumstances actually bring them into the line of inheritance. In fact, Sir Francis's son succeeded him, but the two sisters played a major role as guardians and trustees after Sir Francis's early demise. His young widow married Sir Josiah Child who took up the reins of the Willoughby estates for some years, but the two sisters wrested them back after a legal contest.⁴¹ Indeed, women could be afforded more power under

settlements than is generally realised.

In view of the different devices which landowners adopted to counteract demographic circumstances - drawing on their large families, often from several marriages, by bringing younger sons and daughters into the line of inheritance, supplemented by collateral branches and name changes - should we talk about a demographic 'crisis' at all? From the numbers and records quoted, landed families were reproducing in sufficient numbers to retain their strength as a social force between c.1660 and c.1840 by encouraging intermarriage both within and between their social ranks: but to counteract one effect of this expedient practice, they strove to retain the separate identity of their estates through the device of strict settlement whenever marriage or inheritance threatened to absorb them. Perhaps the notion of demographic decline needs looking at in a new light. Stone has based his demographic argument on the rules which primogeniture and patrilinear descent dictated;⁴² but settlements in practice illustrate that freedom of choice was exercised by the individual, who would naturally prefer his estate and the upholding of the family name to pass to his closest kin wherever possible instead of to more distant male collaterals. Habakkuk and Eileen Spring have interpreted the role of strict settlement as central to the concept of the patriarchal family which subordinated its members to the authority of its head.⁴³ Stone has suggested that the patriarchal family was replaced during the eighteenth century by the affective family as strict settlement limited a father's power and promoted the interests of all the family.⁴⁴ Yet what we see in practice in individual settlements is the rule of primogeniture operating flexibly through the extended family in such a way that patriarchy is not self-exclusive of affection.

(ii) The form and timing of strict settlements

The Nottinghamshire evidence indicates that there were various occasions for making a strict settlement which influenced the form which it took and the conditions which it contained. Settlements were made on the occasion of a son's marriage. Sometimes a full pre-nuptial settlement was made on the couple, but on occasions only an Agreement was undertaken, with the full marriage settlement taking place after the wedding, even several years later after the birth of one or many sons. But contrary to the generally held opinion, many of these marriage settlements were not fully comprehensive settlements directing the course of the future inheritance pattern of a landowner's property:⁴⁵ they were merely interim settlements making immediate provision for the newly married couple and their prospective children. As each son married, a settlement would be made on him and his prospective family; but in view of the demographic circumstances which affected many families, the inheritance pattern was often rationalised by a full family settlement whenever the occasion demanded it. However, the most significant form of comprehensive strict settlement was employed in wills, which could be made on any occasion, but would not be effective until the death of the testator. The will would supersede or subsume the previous partial settlements, or temporary agreements undertaken by Deed. Nevertheless, a marriage settlement could be a full settlement in its own right, as in the settlement made prior to the marriage of Francis Willoughby in 1723 which was merely confirmed in his brief will of 1758.⁴⁶ A marriage settlement could be a full settlement if decreed by Chancery, as in the case of Robert Clifton in 1724. His father Sir Gervas had to apply for an Act of Parliament in order to make this settlement on his son and heir. The family were of the Popish faith and Sir Gervas was restricted from making any settlement changes without such an Act. The situation was complicated by the fact that the son relinquished his faith in order to marry a Protestant, and possibly because the

family sought greater security.⁴⁷ A Settlement by Appointment was undertaken by Digby the 7th Lord Middleton in 1848 as there was no direct heir but a proliferation of potential male heirs among collateral branches. Digby, who had succeeded his cousin, remained unmarried and settled the estates on his cousin Henry, then his son Henry junior, and Henry junior's sons, Digby the elder and his male heirs, then Godfrey the younger and his male heirs, then any subsequent sons of Henry junior and their male heirs. In default the estates were to descend to Charles, the second surviving son of Henry senior, then to Charles's elder son Adolphus, and to the first and every other son of Adolphus, in birth order. In default, to Percival, the third son of Henry senior, then to Percival's sons in succession.⁴⁸

Thus the pattern was set out for three named generations. What is particularly interesting here is that each named successor was given a life interest in the estates, and succession was to proceed by will or deed of appointment. Thus among all the possible contingencies there was unlikely to be anything but a life tenant. In the event, the seventh baron did not die until 1853, to be succeeded by Henry junior. In 1815 Thomas Webb Edge undertook Articles of Agreement to resettle estates on his son, Thomas Webb Edge junior, following sales of their Lowdham and Gunthorpe estates to raise £21,000. Any part of these estates remaining unsold was to be the property of Thomas junior; but a full and final settlement, to include the core estate and other property in Nottinghamshire as well as in Warwickshire was subsequently made by will.⁴⁹

Wills played a significant role in the settlement process, and were for many families across the three social groups the most comprehensive and binding form of settlement. There seems to have been a long tradition of making settlements by will⁵⁰ which incorporated 'the entail' and 'the trustees to preserve contingent remainders' as these devices evolved. This was obviously the most effective form in certain demographic situations. William Willoughby

of Selston produced two illegitimate sons. In his will of 1674 he divided his estates in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Kent between his sons, his sister, and his cousin Francis of Wollaton. The old family seat at Willoughby descended through his sister, but the manors of South Muskham and Carlton, plus certain unspecified lands, mills and farms in Yorkshire, were brought into the main line of the family. Numerous servants were to retain a life interest in parcels of land they occupied or farmed in Nottinghamshire, then these were to revert to Francis and his heirs. The terms under which property was inherited were strictly limited.⁵¹ Stephen Rothwell's will of 1716 specifically devised his Lincolnshire estates to Thomas Willoughby, the second son of his niece Elizabeth, Lady Middleton. This was a life interest with remainder to Thomas's sons and their heirs; in default, to the third, fifth, and lastly the first sons of Lady Middleton, and their sons in succession, in an endeavour to retain a separate identity for the Rothwell estates.⁵² But the settlement omitted to give any of the named heirs the power to make a jointure settlement, for which an Act of Parliament was passed 5^o Geo. I making it lawful for Thomas at any time to limit and appoint any part of this estate to the use of any future wife, not exceeding £350 in value, as all or part of her dowry, and making the same provisions for the other sons who might inherit, but subject to an existing annuity of £16 a year stipulated by Stephen Rothwell.⁵³ The sixth Lord Middleton produced no heirs and his will of 1834 followed the directives laid down in his father's will of 1793.⁵⁴ The fifth Lord Middleton was the son of Thomas, specified above, and had two younger brothers, Francis and James. By these two wills, Digby the son of Francis was to inherit the Nottinghamshire and Gloucestershire estates, and Henry the son of James was to inherit the Yorkshire estates. Both cousins were given a life interest in their estates, as also was Henry's eldest son, with younger sons succeeding in tail male. The 1722 will of the second and last

Lord Lexington specifically settled his estates on and through a younger son to retain a separate identity, and, what was probably unusual, settled a total of £15,000 on his only grand-daughter in compensation in the event of the estates being inherited by a cousin instead of her younger brother.⁵⁵ Demographic circumstances influenced two settlements made by wills in the Edge family. In 1684 Ralph settled his estates on collateral branches providing they took the Edge surname; otherwise they would descend to a more distant male relative, but without involving a name change. The 1830 will of Thomas Webb Edge covered a wide range of inheritance contingencies through his brother or sister, or by drawing on nephews or nieces.⁵⁶ Yet wills were usually the preferred form of a comprehensive strict settlement even when not directed by demographic circumstances. Marriage settlements were treated as a temporary or intermediate settlement, making immediate or short-term provision. They related more tenuously to a prospective situation, whereas wills were better able to reflect an actual one which made them better equipped to provide for the widest possible range of contingencies in the future inheritance pattern. Sir Francis Willoughby's marriage settlement of 1668 made an interim settlement on himself and his future wife Emma Barnard and their prospective children, which was superseded by a full family settlement in his will of 1672.⁵⁷ This covered every contingency in the future pattern of inheritance if his two sons and daughter should die without heirs, bringing in both of his sisters and their offspring, or reverting to his male cousin or his offspring. But all were subject to the most stringent conditions for retaining the Willoughby estates as a separate entity. His wife Emma was encouraged to relinquish her jointure estate of Wollaton, specified in their marriage settlement, for the Middleton estate, presumably to facilitate the next inheritor of the core estate. The 1688 marriage settlement of Richard Conway Edge and Rebecca Buxton

was superseded by a full family settlement in 1712 naming each of his four sons in the line of descent, and then his two daughters as tenants in common not as joint tenants to avoid a possible break up of the estate.⁵⁸ Two years later a settlement was made on the marriage of Richard's eldest son Ralph to Elizabeth Wright, which again stressed the three younger sons and two daughters in the inheritance pattern.⁵⁹ Elizabeth subsequently died and a second settlement was made on Ralph on his marriage to Jane Saunders in 1719 which made provision for her jointure and their prospective children, but was subject to the uses of the full family settlement made in 1712, which operated until Ralph made a new full settlement in his will of 1765.⁶⁰ This marriage produced only daughters, and they and their offspring took precedence in the line of descent. The will confirmed the portions advanced on the marriages of his two youngest daughters, which were in excess of the sum limited in his marriage settlement. His daughters were entitled to a third share of £2,500, but it is known that his youngest daughter Jane received a marriage portion of £2,000.⁶¹ A marriage settlement was made on Edward Mellish and his wife Sarah in 1743, to be superseded by a comprehensive settlement in his will of 1755, which had not been altered at the time of his death two years later.⁶² Leaving no issue, he devised property to his wife for life extra to that stipulated in their marriage settlement, and set out the pattern of descent through his brothers or nephews. He included details of property to be purchased from Sir Robert Clifton, and indicated how this was to be settled on his nephew Charles to provide a jointure estate for any prospective wife. Subsequently a marriage settlement was made on Charles and his wife Judith in 1779, and a Deed of Revocation and Appointment to new uses was undertaken in 1788 to raise £10,000 for the portions of their three younger children, and to provide for any future children, as Charles by will or deed declared.⁶⁴ A final strict

settlement rationalising the position was made in his will of 1794.⁶⁵ Sir Richard Sutton married three times. His first two wives were heiresses with a considerable fortune, and both of these marriage settlements were unusual (in general but perhaps not for the Sutton family) in that they concentrated on how the fortunes should be invested, and what portions the children should inherit, rather than relating to the settlement of land.⁶⁶ The settlement process was complicated by a series of Acts of Parliament which the family undertook to raise portions, reduce encumbrances, or alter the terms of land then under settlement,⁶⁷ requiring an interim family settlement in 1792 to clarify the situation and bring newly purchased property into settlement.⁶⁸ A settlement was also made on the marriage of his eldest son John to Sophia Chaplin, with a subsequent settlement made on them of newly purchased land.⁶⁹ In the same year a full and final settlement was made in Sir Richard's will which became effective at his death in 1802,⁷⁰ by which time his eldest son had predeceased him, leaving an heir. But this contingency was fully covered in the will, which set out the current position regarding the fortunes to be inherited by his three sons and three daughters, as well as how their portions should be raised, and included settlement of an additional estate in Middlesex which had been inherited. Sir Richard's father, Sir Robert, also undertook an unusual marriage settlement when he married Judith, widow of Charles, Earl of Sunderland, for this settlement made no provision for any future children.⁷¹ This was probably because he was about 54 at the time and did not anticipate any heirs, and his estate had already been promised to his brother's children. However, between 1724 and 1731 the marriage had produced a daughter and two sons, and a settlement was made on them.⁷² A third son was born subsequently, who thereby had the misfortune to be entitled to a reduced portion, but demographic chances ultimately brought the whole estate to him, requiring a series of interim settlements before

the situation was finally rationalised in his will of 1798, as indicated above.⁷³ Thus, wills played a significant role in the settlement process, and were for many families the most comprehensive and binding form of settlement. In view of the incidence of bachelor inheritors and inheritors who left no offspring, marriage settlements were not always applicable and could not therefore be the principal settlement device. A will could take full account of existing rather than prospective circumstances. It could bring together all existing temporary or partial or intermediate settlements; it could include any property purchased or inherited since a previous settlement, and set out its uses. It could indicate any increase or decrease in a wife's jointure or children's portions which had been brought about by changed circumstances since the last settlement. If it had been necessary to seek Acts of Parliament or employ Deeds of Revocation since the previous full settlement, a will could elucidate the current situation. Wills could be made at any time during an owner's lifetime, and could be amended by codicils, or be destroyed and rewritten. The final version set out not only the future pattern of direct or indirect inheritance, but also included provision for the extended family by way of gifts or annuities, and often set out bequests to servants. Details of personal as well as real estate could be included. They could indicate the nature and degree of financial encumbrances and gave powers to the trustees and the family to offset these. Hence the will as a strict settlement device was much more comprehensive, whereas a marriage settlement could serve a much more restricted purpose; and as already indicated, wills could direct the future pattern of inheritance over several named generations, extending over a considerable period. This was not purely a local practice. Dame Emma Willoughby became the third wife of Sir Josiah Child. He adopted the same principle of superseding a marriage settlement, made on the occasion of the marriage of

his eldest son, with a will made immediately afterwards.⁷⁴ This was a far more comprehensive settlement which included the two young sons he had by Emma. The will received three codicils to take account of altered circumstances.⁷⁵ The first was to settle newly purchased lands on his three sons in succession, or descend to their heirs. The second settled newly purchased lands on his third son Richard. The third codicil resettled lands, since his second son Barnard had died. This indicates the flexibility which wills could offer as a settlement device by providing immediate reaction to altered circumstances. The Nottinghamshire evidence bears out the contention of English and Saville that wills were of far greater importance in settlement patterns than has usually been recognised.⁷⁶

Marriage settlements and strict settlements have usually been regarded as one and the same device, and the two terms have come to be used interchangeably. Habakkuk did much to perpetuate the myth that arrangements for strict settlement were normally repeated whenever the eldest son married,⁷⁷ but Bonfield contended that this practice could only operate if the requisite demographic climate existed.⁷⁸ A further check of the data set families was made to reinforce the validity of the above argument emphasising the significance of wills, and this was set against Bonfield's 'intergenerational settlement' model.⁷⁹ Among the data set families there were thirty-seven instances of fathers dying before the marriage of their son and heir. Of these seven occurred during the later seventeenth century, nine during the period 1700-1740, fourteen between 1741-1799, and seven between 1800-1840. A total of sixteen occurred during the 'demographic crisis' years compared with twenty-one over the next hundred years, with a total of twenty-three for the eighteenth century overall. Compared with this there were forty-eight instances where the father survived until the marriage of his eldest son and successor. Nine occurred during the later seventeenth century, eleven between 1700-1740, fifteen between

1741-1799, and sixteen during 1800-1840, making a total of twenty occasions during the 'crisis' years of 1650-1740, compared with thirty-one occasions during the next hundred years, with a total of twenty-six during the whole of the eighteenth century. This indicates once again, as with the numbers of bachelor inheritors and those married inheritors who left no male heir, that failure to survive until the marriage of the eldest son and heir was not a phenomenon particular to the 'demographic crisis' years, but was a continuing factor to be accounted for in future patterns of inheritance.

Bonfield's evidence indicated that about one-third of the fathers in his sample died before their eldest son's marriage.⁸⁰ In the Nottinghamshire sample between 1650-1740 the number of fathers who did not survive to their eldest son's marriage was just about equal with those who did. Without the requisite demographic climate to effect successive resettlements on the occasion of marriage, Bonfield contends that the eldest sons came into succession of their patrimonies as tenants in tail.⁸¹ Settlements in practice among the data set families reveal a different pattern, bearing in mind the variety of occasions on which they were undertaken. Ralph Edge's will conveyed his estates to Richard Conway and his sons 'for always'.⁸² A family settlement gave Richard's son Ralph a life interest, which was confirmed in his subsequent marriage settlement.⁸³ In his will Ralph devised the estates to his grandson for life, following the life interest of his daughter. Thomas Webb Edge gave his sister a life interest. She was succeeded by her son James in tail male.⁸⁴ Lord Lexington placed his estates in trust during his daughter's lifetime, which then descended to his grandson for life.⁸⁵ Sir Robert Sutton's settlement gave both his sons John and Richard a life interest.⁸⁶ Sir Richard Sutton gave his two younger sons a life interest in part of his estate.⁸⁷ Sir Francis Willoughby's will gave both his sons a life interest.⁸⁸ The will of the second Lord

Middleton devised estates to his two sons 'for ever',⁸⁹ and that of the fifth Lord Middleton gave his son and several possible collateral inheritors a life interest.⁹⁰ Edward Mellish gave both his brother and nephew a life interest,⁹¹ whereas Charles Mellish's will devised all his property to his wife for life before his son Henry had a life interest.⁹² The will of Viscount Galway gave his brother Robert a life interest, with his sons succeeding in tail male.⁹³ As expected, where a marriage settlement was the principal mode of settlement, the successor was usually given a life interest.⁹⁴ In each of these cases the data used was the settlement by which the inheritor succeeded, not an interim agreement. What the evidence indicates is that there was no hard and fast rule about the form or direction which a strict settlement should take; it was left to the discretion of the individual: but because so many contingencies were prepared for there was a reduced likelihood of a successor inheriting in tail male. Even when this did occur resettlements were facilitated by a Deed of Appointment, an Estate Act, a fresh will or a marriage settlement, indicating the flexibility of strict settlements in practice, as well as their variety.

Before leaving the controversy over the demographic crisis, one further point is relevant here. Stone contends that one effect was to reduce the median age at which a son and heir could expect to inherit, resulting in an exceptionally youthful society in the eighteenth century, with men often inheriting power and estates as soon as they reached their majority.⁹⁵ Among the data set there were thirty inheritors during the eighteenth century aged 21 or under, and forty-five inheritors aged 22 or over, thirty-four of whom were aged over 30. The age of majority or inheritance is itself a moot point, as settlements often indicated whether this would be at the age of 18 or 21, or even delayed, in the case of one inheritor, to the age of 25.⁹⁶ In essence, as a significant number of settlements were made by will, devices were employed to counter the ramifications of demographic circumstances, such that inheritors did

not have such freedom of hand in the disposition of their estates which the literature has bestowed upon them. Strict settlement in practice was flexible yet preservative.

(iii) Strict settlement and 'the cumulative burden of indebtedness'

One function of strict settlement was to make future provision for wives and children. One line of argument contends that such provision affected family fortunes by the burden of debt it incurred, and that such debts could accumulate over several generations; but during the eighteenth century landowners had an increased ability to withstand debt due to the lowering of interest rates which facilitated mortgaging practices, (which in itself fostered the adoption of strict settlement), and increased estate revenue; yet ultimately an intolerable debt load forced the sale of a family's estates.⁹⁷ However, the Nottinghamshire data indicates that the financial impact of successive settlements on estates need not be severe unless the process was mismanaged, or if the provisions made were more lavish than the estate could sustain. Perhaps the role of mortgages as a financial buffer has been overstated. Financial buoyancy was maintained through propitious marriages, by utilising Estate Acts to free settled land or to alter the terms of existing settlements, or by deliberately leaving some land out of settlement to facilitate disposition; and the terms of strict settlements contained inbuilt buffers to limit financial outlay.

Thirty-five Estate Acts were sought by the data set families between 1710 and 1838.⁹⁸ The majority were undertaken to alter the terms of existing settlements to accord with changed circumstances. Only thirteen of them specified the sale of estates, and many of these sales were to effect rationalisation of landholdings. An Act was sought for Viscount Galway in 1786 to release for sale his Nottinghamshire estates which had been entailed by will in 1774.⁹⁹ These comprised land at Serlby, Farworth, Torworth, Harworth, Blithe, Ranscall, Mattersey,

Wieston, Stirrup, Old Coates, Norney and Scrooby. The sale money was to be put into the Bank of England until it could be used to purchase other lands more contiguous to the settled core estates in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and these were to be settled to the same uses as the north Nottinghamshire property which had been charged with raising £6,000 portions for his two daughters and £800 a year as a jointure for any future wife of his son. An Act was passed in 1802 enabling the Duke of Norfolk to sell his estates in Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and Norfolk, free of any limitations of the 1767 settlement, and put the proceeds (expected to be a considerable sum) into the Bank of England, or invest it in Navy, Victualling, Transport of Exchequer Bills, and eventually use the money to purchase other estates more conveniently situated to the principal seat.¹⁰⁰

William Mellish sought an Act in 1762 to sell estates settled by will in 1755 which were some distance from the family's capital seat at Blyth. These estates at Skegby in Nottinghamshire, and in Yorkshire, were to be replaced by other property more conveniently situated, which would then be settled to the same uses and limitations as directed in the will.¹⁰¹ By Estate Act property already settled could be released and exchanged for other property of a higher value, and settled to the same uses to provide increased income to meet commitments. Sir Richard Sutton exchanged his settled land in Lincolnshire, which was also at a distance from the core estate, valued at £355 rental per year, for his estate at Bleazby in Nottinghamshire, which was valued at £372 rental per year.¹⁰² Only four Estate Acts are known to have been specifically undertaken to discharge encumbrances. Isaac Knight sought an Act in 1710 for the sale of North Leverton manor in Nottinghamshire and Letwell manor in Yorkshire to raise a £5,000 portion plus interest for his niece, the only daughter of his deceased elder brother. She had been entitled to her portion for some four years, being over 21 and married. An annuity of £100 a year to Isaac's younger brother

Dickenson was in arrears to £1,000. It was claimed that the burden of providing two great jointures for Lady Knight and Mary Knight, who were then only recently deceased, plus the £60 a year for maintaining his niece before her portion became due, had forced the annuity into arrears. The total sum outstanding of £6,000 could only be raised by the sale of some part of the estate; and as Dickenson's annuity was charged on Letwell, this was to be transferred to another part of the Yorkshire estate.¹⁰³ An Act was undertaken in 1806 to comply with the settlement made in Charles Mellish's will to provide £15,000 portions for his two daughters and younger son by the sale of part of his estate. The leasehold property held on mortgage in Manchester Square, Middlesex was to be retained during the lives of his wife and younger son, but be sold after their deaths, using the proceeds to pay off any remaining debts, and adding any surplus to Charles's personal estate.¹⁰⁴ Sir Robert Sutton sought an Act in 1744 to release certain of his settled estates in Lincolnshire for sale to go towards discharging several mortgages and incumbrances. These included a £20,000 mortgage plus interest on his Nottinghamshire estates, and two mortgages of £10,000 and £4,000, both plus interest, on his Great Coates estate. In addition there were portions totalling £22,000 to be raised for his three younger children.¹⁰⁵ Two of these portions were still outstanding in 1771 when John Sutton sought a further Act for more Lincolnshire property to be released for sale to raise £8,000 for one of the portions, leaving the final portion of £6,000 as an outstanding charge on the estates.¹⁰⁶

Habakkuk has argued that estates could stand being mortgaged for the provision of portions because under the terms of strict settlements they were not easily mortgaged for other purposes.¹⁰⁷ However, the evidence indicates that only if mortgages were well-monitored might they act as a financial buffer in preventing the sale of estates, and they could only operate effectively in conjunction with well-constructed

strict settlements. As a device mortgages promised more potential than they could actually fulfil and encouraged landowners to overreach their financial capacity, such that they were a common cause of land sales.¹⁰⁸ Not infrequently estates were purchased which were still subject to an existing mortgage, and when a second mortgage was undertaken to facilitate a fresh settlement the estate was put in jeopardy, as in the case of Sir Robert Sutton's Act for the sale of his Lincolnshire property, cited above, which was used to buffer his Nottinghamshire estate.¹⁰⁹ Mortgage debts were as much a prime cause of forced sales as were the pressing claims of portions. Sir Gervas Clifton sold his Bilby and Ramby manors c.1695, which had been his wife's jointure estate, to reduce his debts, and c.1725 his Barnby Moor estate was sold to pay off the £6,900 mortgage on that estate.¹¹⁰ Overgenerous provision was not uncommon. The fifth Lord Middleton overburdened his estate, leaving his son to inherit the debt charges and face a court case to raise £20,000 for his surviving daughter.¹¹¹ When the sixth lord died his wife Jane was advised by Counsel to release all her dower estates for mortgage or sale to offset her late husband's debts.¹¹² But once serious financial difficulties occurred, families were more inclined to sell than to mortgage, as there was a limit to the extent which an estate could withstand such a burden,¹¹³ particularly as the gap widened between the rate of interest payable on mortgages and that yielded by capital invested in land.¹¹⁴ Freedom to sell tracts of land which were less profitable or outlying, or which were too difficult or too costly to administer, was a buffer in offsetting excessive financial commitments, and was facilitated by releasing land from settlement or by deliberately leaving some property out of settlement, or by taking advantage of an occasion to resettle.

Estates could receive a supplementary financial buffer through propitious marriages and additional inheritances. However,

the incidence of heiress marriages among the landed interest should not be overstated. The term 'heiress' may have in practice more legal than financial connotation, for it is a term which indicates the right to succession, not what or how much is inherited.¹¹⁵ But there does seem to be a link between some heiress marriages and certain mortgage practices. When Ralph Edge married Elizabeth Wright in 1714 her portion and inheritance amounted to £3,000, which was used to reduce the Edge's mortgage commitments on Strelley and Bilborough, their principal estates, which were already heavily mortgaged when purchased.¹¹⁶ By being able to reduce such a principal financial commitment, and through a second marriage to an heiress, he was able to make much better provision for his family. Whereas his mother's jointure had only been £50 a year out of Bilborough and Gunthorpe at a time when the same estates had been charged to provide £90 a year to Ralph,¹¹⁷ his second wife Jane commanded a jointure of £2,500 a year out of specified tenements in Strelley and Lowdham.¹¹⁸ Subsequently Ralph and Jane were able to provide each of their three daughters with a £2,000 portion. In general the Edges were careful not to overburden their core estates with excessive family provision. When the second Lord Middleton married Mary Edwards in 1723, her portion was £10,000, inherited through her mother's family, which was used as a mortgage on Sawnby manor, worth £450 a year.¹¹⁹ This estate was to be initially conveyed to Francis for his life, providing the couple with an income until Francis succeeded his father, and was ultimately to be settled on Mary and her issue. But only a part-settlement was made on them at their marriage, despite Mary inheriting a further £8,000, until the £10,000 mortgage was paid up by her father, which was to be spread over two years. Such delays in obtaining inheritances were often due to meeting the terms stipulated by the testator. Sir Richard Sutton

married two heiresses. His second wife Ann benefited from the wills of her grandfather, Peter Seignoret, and her uncle, Stephen Seignoret. Her fortune was £3,000 in New South Seas Annuities, and the money raised from them was to be equally divided between her younger children; but if any younger son should hold the Down Hatherley estate, then he should be deemed to have received £2,000 towards his portion of the fortune. The portions were to be paid at the age of 21 for sons, and 21 or at the time of marriage for daughters. The eldest son was not to benefit. Ann was also entitled to a further £3,750 of Old South Sea Annuity stock on the death of her mother. There were five surviving younger children to benefit from this fortune.¹²⁰ Sir Richard's first marriage was to Susanna Champion Crespigny of Camberwell, Surrey, who was entitled to several inheritances of £6,000, £4,000 and £1,000 Bank Annuities at 3 per cent interest, plus an annuity of £21 a year. In addition she had a one-fifth share of £2,213 Bank Annuities and £2,100 Bank Stock. The £6,000 Bank Annuities were settled on Richard absolutely, and the £4,000 Bank Annuities on him for life, then to revert to Susanna. The residue would go to Susanna's mother Anne for life, then revert to Susanna, then descend to her issue equally. Provision for future children was to be made out of the £6,000 and £4,000 Annuities which would be kept in trust. One child would benefit at the age of 21, otherwise the £10,000 and its interest would be equally divided between two or more, to be received at the age of 21 for sons, or 21 or marriage for daughters.¹²¹ The terms of this marriage settlement would have helped to reduce the financial strain on the Sutton estate at a particularly vulnerable period.¹²² However, Susanna died the following year, leaving no children.

In addition to these external financial buffers, there were also buffers built into the terms of settlements. To begin with there was a time delay factor. Portions were intended to start off sons or daughters in adult life, or be used as the basis of provision for their own children.

But they were not payable until the sons reached the age of majority, at either 18 or 21, or until the daughters reached the same age or married, whichever came first. The trustees were charged with raising the portions out of the rents or profits of the estates, or by sale or mortgage of property; and they were usually given an extended period of time, which could be anything from 100 to 1,000 years, in which the discharge could be effected. In effect, a portion could be held over from one generation to another, and remain as an existing charge on the estate. Sir Richard Sutton was entitled to a £6,000 portion as a third son, but through demographic circumstances he inherited his sister's £8,000 portion, and ultimately succeeded to the whole of the family estates, and opted to leave his own £6,000 portion as an existing charge on the estates.¹²³ Time delays could also be acquired by paying portions in instalments. The Articles of Agreement on which the marriage settlement of Sir Francis Willoughby and Emma Barnard was based stipulated that her father would pay Emma's marriage portion by two initial instalments of £2,000 on the Feast of St. John and the Feast of the Nativity, and by the end of Trinity her father would supply a security, in land or otherwise, that the final £2,000 would be paid after 10 years if Emma was still alive, or if she had any issue then living; otherwise the payment would be void.¹²⁴ The fortune which was to contribute to the portions of his children was paid to them in instalments by Sir Richard Sutton. In 1787 he advanced £1,100 in New South Sea Annuities to his eldest son John to purchase a commission in the First Dragoon Guards.¹²⁵ His daughter Elizabeth received £1,200 in 1789 and a further £600 in 1792.¹²⁶ In 1794 £932 of Old South Sea Annuities were to be sold for the benefit and advancement of his young son, Robert Nassau;¹²⁷ but the full settlement for all his five surviving younger children was not set out until 1798.¹²⁸ Limits were set for the total amount of portions or jointures which it was thought a family's estates could support, but

were subject to alterations according to circumstances. The wife of the first Lord Middleton was to receive a jointure of £1,500 a year, but this was to reduce to £1,000 if he died without issue.¹²⁹ In 1672 there were two concurrent jointure charges on the Willoughby estate;¹³⁰ but the fifth Lord Middleton would not permit this occurrence. He agreed to a jointure of £1,000 a year for his cousin's wife, but later decreed that with so many legal charges against him inherited from his predecessor such an agreement 'would be a considerable forfeiture to myself and my heirs'.¹³¹ At this time his wife Dorothy was entitled to a jointure provision of £4,000 a year.¹³² Sir Francis Willoughby agreed that if a younger child should die, his or her £2,000 portion should revert to his wife 'to compensate her for my too rashly accepting of conditions to her disadvantage at marriage'.¹³³ A resettlement of the Sutton estates undertaken in 1841 limited the number of jointures to be charged to the estates at any one time. Sir Richard could make a jointure settlement of £3,000 a year on any future wife, whilst any wife of his son John was limited to £800. Additionally, if such a future marriage produced any further younger children, their portion was limited to £10,000, whilst John had the power to raise portions for his younger children to the value of £20,000.¹³⁴ In 1775 Ann Sutton's jointure was reduced from £800 a year to £500, to be raised subsequently to £600 on the death of the Dowager Lady Sutton.¹³⁵

If settlements were carefully constructed, the burden of financial commitments could be spread over time, with different parts of the estates charged with providing jointures or being stipulated as part-settlement of a portion or as an interim settlement on marriage. Obligations were often met by instalments which could be drawn from investments or trust funds, as well as from rents or profits, or by sale or mortgage of property. The burden of providing for a newly married couple, whatever their position in the family hierarchy, was usually divided between the two families: the husband's family made an

interim settlement on them for their immediate provision, and the wife's dowry or inheritance usually contributed to the provision for their future children. Nevertheless, those provided for in settlements usually had to fulfil a series of conditions which almost amount to the successful completion of an 'obstacle course' before their claims to entitlement would even be considered. This was perhaps one of the most significant inbuilt financial buffers of the strict settlement device. Cassandra Willoughby was to receive £5,000 on the day of her marriage, provided she married with the consent of her family; without their consent she would only receive £100, with the remaining £4,900 being kept and improved by the executors for the good of her children, and distributed to them at the executors' discretion.¹³⁶ In the 1670s twenty-five was considered to be the coming of age. Sir Francis Willoughby decreed that after his son was 25, and all debts and portions paid, he would leave it to the prudence of his executors whether they retain the trust themselves or resign it to his son Francis in full possession of the whole estate. The executors were to do what was most expedient for the family, and for upholding the name.¹³⁷ Under the 1793 settlement of the fifth Lord Middleton, his two daughters Dorothy the elder and Henrietta were each to receive a £10,000 portion on condition that they survived their father.¹³⁸ If either daughter died, her portion was to be equally divided between her younger children, otherwise the surviving daughter would inherit it. Dorothy married Richard Langley, but in 1803 her portion was placed in trust to her brother, then the sixth Lord Middleton, as an existing charge on his estates in favour of her husband.¹³⁹ Henrietta married Richard, the Earl of Scarborough, and in 1807 they also agreed that her £10,000 portion should remain as an existing charge on the Willoughby estates, for the benefit of her brother, but they were not to be hindered from recovering the sum which she had been entitled to receive in 1800.¹⁴⁰ Dorothy subsequently died without issue, and Henrietta was entitled to

receive the full £20,000, which carried 5 per cent interest, and was raisable under a 500 year trust. Yet on the death of her brother the sixth baron without issue in 1835 the sum still remained as an existing charge on the estate, and Henrietta was then widowed.¹⁴¹ The second Lord Lexington settled a £5,000 portion on Lady Carolina Manners, should her younger brother inherit his estates; but if her elder brother, Lord Granby, were to inherit them her portion would be raised to £10,000. However, if they should descend to her cousin Sir Robert Sutton, she would receive a total of £15,000, and although she would be entitled to the full sum at the age of 18 or on the occasion of her marriage, the total was to be paid out of the rents of the estate on an instalment basis, and such money would be put out to interest for its improvement as it was raised, until the whole amount was paid. The total amount of the portion she received depended partly on the willingness or otherwise of her brothers to inherit the Lexington estates on the terms stipulated, or on subsequent demographic factors.¹⁴² The two sisters of Henry, Viscount Galway, were each entitled to £20,000 on the death without issue of their second brother, the Honourable General Robert Monckton, but if either or both of the sisters should predecease Robert, then their portion should not be raised.¹⁴³ Charles Mellish settled £9,000 on his two daughters, to be paid at the age of 21 or on the occasion of marriage provided they married with the consent of his wife; but if either should marry without consent, or die under age, other younger children - including sons - should benefit from her portion.¹⁴⁴

It has been argued by Habakkuk that in the provision of portions fathers tended to favour daughters more than younger sons because they were regarded as dynastically more important;¹⁴⁵ but Eileen Spring's 'feminist persuasion' inclines her to contend that fathers have never provided more generously for daughters than for younger sons: they were either treated equally or the younger son got more.¹⁴⁶ The

Nottinghamshire evidence indicates that daughters and younger sons usually received equal shares, and if any one of them died before their portion was due it would be equally divided among the survivors. Provision for maintenance during their minority was also usually on an equal basis, including the eldest son.¹⁴⁷ But as with so many aspects of strict settlements individual choice and individual circumstances produced variety in practice. Sir Thomas Willoughby, a second son, was to receive part of his father's estate, whilst his only sister Cassandra, who married James, the Duke of Chandos, received £5,000.¹⁴⁸ The second Lord Middleton settled a term of 200 years on his trustees to raise £10,000 for the portions and maintenance of his younger children; but if there was no male issue the term was extended to 500 years to raise £18,000 for his daughters.¹⁴⁹ Sir Robert Sutton settled £8,000 each on his second son John and only daughter Isabella, but only £6,000 on any children born after the settlement. In fact, he subsequently produced one more son, Richard.¹⁵⁰ Sir Richard Sutton settled £10,000 on each of his three daughters, but £40,000 on both his second and third sons, all of which were to be raised out of a trust fund.¹⁵¹ Richard Edge settled £3,000 on his younger children, to be equally divided, payable to sons at the age of 16 and to daughters at 20. The portion of any child dying was to be equally divided among the survivors, but if only one child remained his or her portion was not to exceed £2,000.¹⁵²

Conclusion

Strict settlement was preservative in its aim, but the format of the device was necessarily required to accommodate demographic realities, which rendered it quite flexible in practice. Yet its essential flexibility was also its weakness. As often as the device assisted families to keep their estates intact, or as separate entities, through the strategy of the extended family, the same process could be adversely affected by demographic circumstances of chance, leading to estate

dispersal. The data set families illustrate a continuous practice of intermarriage with other landed families right through the period under review, which led to changing patterns of estate consolidation, diffusion or dispersal, reacquisition, change of form, or territorial domination by several branches of one family. That is to say, most families experienced periods of estate expansion or contraction influenced by the processes of marriage or inheritance. The Disneys made a series of propitious marriages. In the sixteenth century Daniel married the daughter of Sir Edward Molyneux, Sir Henry married Barbara Thornhaugh of Fenton, and John married Barbara Lee of Norwell Hall in the seventeenth century. His son Daniel married a granddaughter of the second Earl of Lincoln and the Reverend John married Mary Woodhouse of North Muskham who brought the Flintham property into the family. John married Frances, one of the Cartwright heiresses of Ossington, in 1730. His second brother Henry succeeded to the Roebuck estates, and his third brother Gervase eventually inherited the Baronies of Burgh, Strabolgt and Cobham. Lewis married Elizabeth Ffytche in 1775 and assumed this ancient name. Their elder daughter married Sir William Hilary. Although Flintham was their principal seat, they also owned Syerston Hall. The family moved to Essex in the nineteenth century, and continued marrying into lower peerage or upper gentry families.¹⁵³ A more chequered pattern of consolidation and diffusion is illustrated through the Pegge-Burnell family. William Burnell, a London merchant and auditor to Henry VIII, received a grant from Edward VI of the manor and rectory of Winkburn in exchange for an estate in Surrey. Winkburn continued in this family until 1774 when, on the death of Darcy Burnell without issue, it descended to his nephew Peter Pegge of Beauchief Abbey. Peter's grandmother was Gertrude, the daughter of William Strelley, a descendant of that ancient family who resided at Beauchief. Peter Pegge assumed the Burnell name, but dying unmarried in 1836 his sister's son assumed the names and arms of both Pegge and

Burnell in compliance with his uncle's will, and inherited both the Winkburn and Beauchief Abbey estates. Thus the diffuse estates of the Burnell, Strelley and Pegge families were brought together, and the Strelley name disappeared.¹⁵⁴ Both the Willoughbys and the Suttons illustrate a pattern of territorial landholdings by families. The principal branch of the Willoughby family resided at Wollaton Hall, but Sir William Willoughby still retained the ancient family seat at Willoughby in 1674 as well as owning land in Derbyshire and Kent. The Manners-Sutton branch held estates at Kelham and Averham, and the Suttons at nearby Norwood, with a secondary seat just over the Lincolnshire border at Brant Broughton. Aggregation and dispersal of estates within one family can be demonstrated. Sir William Willoughby cited above divided his estates as he left no legitimate heir. His only legitimate son died in infancy, but he produced two illegitimate sons, Hugh and Richard Revell, who each inherited estates; but the old family seat descended to Sir William's sister, and the remaining Nottinghamshire estates to his cousin Sir Francis.¹⁵⁵ Sir Francis settled these inherited estates at South Muskham and Carlton on his second son Thomas,¹⁵⁶ to keep them separate from the core estates, but Thomas eventually succeeded to the whole of the Willoughby estates. The sixth Lord Middleton divided his estates between two collateral branches. The principal estates in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire were settled on the son of his father's younger brother, and a secondary family seat and estates in Yorkshire were settled on the son of his father's other brother.¹⁵⁷ Essentially, what we are seeing is a continuous process of redistribution of property within and between landed families through marriage and inheritance patterns which does not exactly square with the theory of 'the rise of great estates'. That this process was part of a wider redistribution of property through sales and purchases is illustrated in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER SIXTHE LAND MARKET.

Different regional studies have illustrated local variations in land market activity, particularly during the course of the eighteenth century.¹ To assist comparison with the findings of these other regions the Nottinghamshire evidence is presented through a series of Tables (6.1 to 6.4), which are discussed thematically to illustrate some of the factors which contributed to the levels of activity experienced. Then the findings are set within the wider context of the landownership debate.

Tables 6.1 to 6.3 indicate the land transactions of three families with a different background. They also include their sales and purchases of property in other counties which indicates a wider level of activity among families than at the purely local level, which was an integral part of the activities of many families, and which frequently impinged on the development of their core estates in Nottinghamshire, and on maintaining continuity and prestige. Their implications receive fuller treatment in Part Three, but they are briefly touched on here where they affect the local picture. Table 6.4 gives some impression of the scale of transactions in larger estates among the landed interest generally. The evidence indicates that all types of property were available on the Nottinghamshire land market, from large, medium and small estates to parcels of land. Indeed, there were two fundamental levels of landowner activity on the land market: those interested in securing family seats, motivated by pressures for security and prestige; and those seeking properties which could be run on an economic basis. The social status of those undertaking property transactions largely determined their particular fields of activity. In general, the titled families and the wealthier owners were engaged in transactions for the prestigious family seats and larger estates; the lesser

gentry, families with a professional inclination, merchants and other petit bourgeoisie were more involved with transactions for small to medium estates, with or without a small seat. The lesser and greater yeomen and farmers were more interested in farms and small parcels of land. However, the greater owners would negotiate for any type of property, from a large estate to a tiny parcel, as illustrated through the Willoughby, Sutton and Edge families.

Various reasons for the sale of properties are indicated in the Tables, but two principal factors emerge: properties were either sold due to the ramifications of the marriage or inheritance processes; or to raise capital. The processes of marriage and inheritance could force sales through an alteration in the geographical base of a family.² Sales could result from divided inheritances,³ or be forced because inherited financial commitments were too burdensome.⁴ Property may be sold by trustees or inheritors for reasons specified in individual strict settlements,⁵ to rationalise a family situation,⁶ or because there were no heirs.⁷ Lack of ready capital induced sales to facilitate the purchase of other estates,⁸ to finance enclosure,⁹ or to permit the purchase of Funds.¹⁰ In particular, there was a lack of liquid assets to meet mortgage commitments,¹¹ the payment of portions and other encumbrances,¹² and to offset debts.¹³ Factors which motivated the purchase of property were also dominated by marriage and inheritance considerations, or by financial ones. A wife's dowry might be used to acquire property which would form the basis of provision for her and her offspring;¹⁴ or to secure sole ownership of a manor rather than divide it up among the family,¹⁵ or to consolidate an estate which was charged with raising portions or a jointure.¹⁶ The economic development of estates was essential to the continuing financial support of families. This encouraged replacing an estate with one of higher economic value,¹⁷ and also the systematic piecemeal acquisition of a manor over an extended period of time.¹⁸ This could facilitate enclosure

and enable the sole owner to develop the estate in the way he wished. Such piecemeal acquisitions could afford better access to property, and contribute to expansion of economic activities, particularly in coalmining, as well as in agriculture.¹⁹ What emerges here is a lack of cash flow, an inadequate supply of readily available capital to meet the commitments of estate development and family provision.

This aspect is emphasised when considering how property purchases were financed. On occasions, but perhaps not as a frequent practice, a wife's dowry may finance an acquisition, as when Saundby and Wheatley Woods were purchased for the immediate benefit of Francis and Mary Willoughby between 1721-3.²⁰ An inherited fortune may be thought to have assisted the process, but the fortunes inherited by the Sutton and Edge families were put in trust for the future provision of children.²¹ A common practice was to sell off certain parts of an estate to finance the purchase of others.²² The sole intention of these transactions was either to purchase estates more conveniently situated,²³ or of a higher economic value;²⁴ but sometimes any money left over after the settlement of outstanding debts would be used to purchase a smallish estate of good title.²⁵ It is not generally emphasised that mortgages could be undertaken to finance the purchase of property during the earlier part of the period under review, as Habakkuk's view tends to prevail, that the principal function of mortgages during the early years of its practice was to finance family provision under strict settlements.²⁶ However, Sir Francis Willoughby's purchase of the Trowell estate in 1662 was effected by mortgaging some of his property in order to raise Bonds. The estate was purchased to extend his coalmining activities, and the purchase price of £5,000 was met by instalments. There was an initial payment of £2,000,²⁷ and a further £1,000 to be paid within six months.²⁸ Further Bonds were undertaken for £600 and £1,000,²⁹ and receipts for £400 and £100 were recorded.³⁰ In 1666 £900 of the purchase price was still outstanding,³¹

a debt which his son inherited. Pocklington's Bank in Newark seems to have been a fairly ready source for acquiring mortgages during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the Pocklingtons were frequently named as parties to land transactions.³² Problems arose when the regular payment of interest on mortgages could not be met. In essence, assets were tied up and not easily realisable. They were vested in land, in trust funds, in Government Stock, and in the rents and profits of estates which were largely committed in strict settlements. To convert to more liquid assets would undermine a family's social and political status as landowners. Thus families were forced into debt, against which there were two principal buffers. They frequently borrowed sums of money from each other, particularly within their own social sphere;³³ or they left some land out of settlement,³⁴ or released it from settlement,³⁵ in order to raise large lump sums. As a result of their activities, most families had a regular history of estate expansion and contraction, by purchases and sales.

Taking together the evidence for Estate Acts and the land transactions depicted in the Tables, inability to repay mortgages, either the principal or the interest, was a not insignificant feature in the forced sale of property.³⁶ Looking at this process from the inside illustrates the kind of problems some families faced, and indicates the type of burdens some estates carried, which would deflect certain would-be owners, or account for a degree of transitory ownership. Ralph Edge went to very great lengths to purchase two very encumbered estates, Lowdham with Gunthorpe in 1668,³⁷ and Strelley with Bilborough in 1675.³⁸ Locke observed in 1691, 'what makes plenty of sellers? ... general ill-husbandry, and the consequence of it, debts. What makes a scarcity of purchasers? ... doubtful and ill titles'.³⁹ Perhaps the family's legal background as prominent Nottingham lawyers encouraged Ralph Edge to tackle what would have daunted lesser men, and possibly kept away competitors. Only by astuteness and tenacity could he

acquire, extend and maintain both his position and his estates, but he was not typical of the core of Nottinghamshire landed families; he was one of the extreme examples of 'newcomers' on which landownership research has tended to focus,⁴⁰ resulting in a tendency to obscure the more mundane activities of the more conventional landed families. The nature of the encumbrances on the Lowdham and Gunthorpe, Strelley and Bilborough estates precipitated their disposal. It required something rather more than the attraction of social prestige and political power, with which landownership has mainly been attributed, in order to sustain ownership. The Lowdham and Gunthorpe estate was the first estate of any importance which the Edges acquired, but it was dogged with problems of a divided inheritance and financial strain, which the family in possession were unable to withstand. In 1647 a triple division of the manors of Lowdham and Gunthorpe had taken place between William Mullins, Dame Elizabeth Rearsby and Sir William Dalston, effected by Dorothy, Lady Wharton.⁴¹ In 1659 Dame Elizabeth Rearsby settled part of her portion on her grand-daughter Tamworth Horner, (daughter of Dame Elizabeth Foljambe, Viscountess Monson), comprising 287 acres. She settled the other part of her share on her two sons, Tamworth and Leonard Rearsby, totalling 290 acres, comprising a farm of thirty-two acres, another of fifty-seven acres, and a third farm of forty-nine acres, plus four cottages with six acres, two water corn mills, Spring Wood extending over 66 acres and Skithorne Wood extending over 80 acres.⁴² In 1668 Dame Tamworth, the grand-daughter, and her husband Sir Roger Martin sold her half share of the original triple division to Ralph and William Edge for the consideration of £1,700, this sum to be paid in three parts comprising £600 at the sealing of the agreement, £400 by the following Michaelmas, and £700 by a 1000 year lease to Sir Roger Martin. The whole was paid off by 1681,⁴³ indicating once again the shortage of ready capital. This contrasts with William Fillingham, a land agent, who purchased Syerston manor

for £12,000 in 1792 without raising a mortgage.⁴⁴ In 1678 Ralph Edge contracted with Thamworth Rearsby, the son, to purchase his share of the manors for the consideration of £725,⁴⁵ and at the same time contracted with his brother Leonard to purchase his share for the consideration of £725.⁴⁶ These negotiations were followed by a Chancery Petition⁴⁷ by Ralph Edge, as each brother alleged he was owner of a moiety of an absolute estate in fee simple; but Ralph discovered that Thamworth's moiety was mortgaged for £300 to Arthur Kettleby for 1000 years in 1674,⁴⁸ and Leonard's moiety was mortgaged to John Bright for £1,450 in 1672 in lieu of Leonard's debts.⁴⁹ The brothers were charged to set forth the encumbrances on the estate, which were revealed thus. In 1672 Leonard was rescued from a debtors' prison by John Bright and William Tyndall after they had satisfied his creditors, as security for which he conveyed to them his Lowdham and Gunthorpe property; but he was unable to repay them within the year specified.⁵⁰ During these transactions a £300 mortgage was taken out with a Mary Nott.⁵¹ During 1674 his brother Thamworth subsequently ran into financial difficulties and was forced to take out a mortgage on his share. The Chancery Bill was not subsequently filed, so it appears that the matter was settled between the two families.

The purchase of Strelley and Bilborough followed in 1675. Again this estate was heavily encumbered financially, and suffered from contentious rights of ownership;⁵² and the ultimate gain of a prestige family seat, coupled with the legal ability to disentangle competing claims of ownership, must have seemed insufficient compensation for the hassles which ensued. The Strelley family had been associated with Strelley manor from at least c.1100-35, being the principal owners. Strelley Hall was built c.1356, and coalmining had been associated with the area since at least the thirteenth century. Indeed, exploitation became so profitable in the Strelley, Bilborough, Wollaton and Cossall area that it led to bickering over rival

interests between the two neighbouring ancient landowning families, the Strelleys and the Willoughbys; but whereas the Willoughbys survived economic and demographic crises by safeguarding their line of inheritance buffered by - on the whole - good estate management,⁵³ the Strelleys precipitated their decline by their more eccentric behaviour. In 1608 Nicholas Strelley, son of Sir Philip, seized the manor of Strelley by common recovery to his own use for life, then to the use of his male heirs, with remainder over to his two uncles George and Francis Strelley and their male heirs.⁵⁴ Nicholas died without issue; George took possession and bequeathed the estate to his base son Nicholas Strelley Martyn, with remainder to the heirs of another relative, Sampson Strelley. But dying without a legitimate heir, George's brother Francis became the legal heir, and he mortgaged the property for £1,950 to someone named Savis in 1615. However, Francis died without issue before the first day of payment. Elianor, the sister of Sir Philip, George and Francis, was the next legal inheritor. She had married Sir John Mirrell, and he and his son John junior entered and took possession of the manors. A marriage settlement was made on John junior and his wife Judith to succeed to the property after John's father. The Mirrells, however, were only able to pay off part of the £1,950 mortgage, so Savis took possession of the property with its coalmines. Soon after, Nicholas Strelley Martyn, George's base son, claimed possession; and meanwhile Savis, by the appointment of Nicholas Strelley Martyn, had made a 1000 year lease of the mortgaged property to Gervas Rossell. But Nicholas devised the estate to his wife Elizabeth, to be held in trust for 21 years from his death for the use of his son and heir George (then a six-weeks old infant); and declared that he had bought and taken in several estates in the lands and coalmines and devised them to friends and trustees. One week later Nicholas Strelley Martyn died (1631): his son being an infant, the estate was held in Knight Service, whereby

the King was entitled to the Wardship. Countermanding the competing claims of Savis, and Nicholas, Sir John Mirrell and his son took out an Injunction and sought the protection of the Court of Wards so long as they both lived, but his son died c.1645. Meanwhile, George, the son of the base claimant Nicholas, died in France without issue aged 18, making a will in which he bequeathed all the residue of his estate to William Byron. After George's death, Katherine, the sole daughter and heir of John Mirrell junior, claimed the estate as heir at law; and one Nicholas Strelley also claimed as next heir male by the grant of reversion made by George Strelley to his bastard son Nicholas Strelley Martyn. John Mason, the surviving executor of Nicholas Strelley Martyn deceased, claimed by a prior agreement the repayment of £1,800 by £300 yearly instalments for the lease on the lands and coalmines. The agreement contained a proviso for re-entry on non-payment. He tabled a Statute which put him in possession of the whole estate in 1649, after which Katherine (the daughter of John Mirrell junior) took possession; and by a trial in the Easter Term of 1651 she recovered and repossessed all the estate, except the Park and coalmines, being the mortgaged premises. Katherine had first married John Balston, and produced three daughters, Dorothy, Judith and Mary, and secondly married George Weldon. In 1651 Katherine and George Weldon settled Strelley and Bilborough manors on her three daughters. Nicholas Strelley, the heir male arising from the settlement made by the bastard line, being ousted by Katherine, failed to pay the stipulated £300 a year on the mortgaged Park and coalmines, upon whose default John Mason and William Byron took possession, under the terms of George Strelley's will. The co-heiress Balston daughters, being descended from the legal line, sought release against the 1000 year lease which had been granted by Savis the mortgagor to Rossell for a redemption of the premises. In 1653 it was decreed that the three daughters should have such a

redemption. The total amount remaining unpaid on the mortgaged Park and coalmines was £1,956, which the magistrate ordered to be paid by Nicholas Strelley (defendant in the case) to Rossell, John Mason and William (then Lord) Byron. In 1660 Lord Byron brought a Bill of Review, and the opinion of the Lords Chancellor, Chief Justice and Chief Barron was sought. In 1664 the trial of the title and dispute was referred to the Lord Keeper and Serjeant as several suits were arising. Soon after Katherine Balston had repossessed the whole estate, her mother Judith Mirrell claimed possession by virtue of the 99 year settlement made by her husband and father in law in her marriage settlement. By Indenture in Chancery, all matters in difference as well as in point of law and equity were referred to a hearing and ending. The Order and Award decreed that George Weldon (the second husband of the legal heiress Katherine) should pay to her mother Judith the sums of £200 and £50 a year, being her jointure and life annuity. Judith should demise the manor and park to George Weldon for 63 years. The 1000 year lease made by Savis to Rossell was assigned also to George Weldon. Under the terms of the settlement made in 1651 by George Weldon and Katherine, he would be seized of a moiety in tail after Katherine's death, with the remainder in fee to Katherine's three daughters, with the other moiety to the said daughters. In 1670 George Weldon leased his moiety to John White for 60 years, which was subsequently vested in trust to Mr. Ralph Edge. In 1671 George Weldon together with Dorothy and Mary (the eldest and the youngest of the Balston daughters) conveyed their share of the estate to a Mr. Morris of London, who in 1675 sold it to Ralph Edge. Thus he possessed three of the four parts. Judith, the middle daughter, married John Thynne, esquire; she possessed the fourth part in her own right. A Writ of Partition was brought by Ralph Edge against the Thynnes, to set out ownership of the divided estate.⁵⁵ The estate comprised the manors of Strelley

and Bilborough, Strelley Hall, the enclosed Park, coalmines and rights of common, the advowsons and right of patronage and presentation of Strelley and Bilborough churches, plus Martyns Farm. The estate was purchased for £4,500, and the mortgage on the Park and coalmines was conveyed to Edge, which stood at just under £1,000. Ralph Edge kept the Deeds and accounted to the Thynnes for their share of the rents and profits, their place of dwelling being 'remote'. He promised to 'care to serve the whole estate as it had been wholly his own'.⁵⁶ He had purchased the estate being fully acquainted with its history of litigation and encumbrances, having been engaged as an attorney by the Balstons to defend their claim as legitimate heirs to the title and estate.⁵⁷ He took up the case in 1652, but even after purchasing the estate in 1675 litigation and accountability were to prove a continuing burden. Privilege of ownership alone could not have been sufficient compensation for the years in which Ralph was engaged in all the ensuing legal battles, for the Edges had prestige enough as a prominent attorney family. The prospect of owning a potentially economically viable estate must have been a strong motive. The previous owner, John Morris, had only a transitory interest in the estate. Its distance from his base in London must have been an inhibiting factor in its administration, further complicated by the divided ownership with the Thynnes. The complicated saga of this divided estate of inheritance with its concomitant legal wrangles over right to title and its chequered mortgage history would probably have proved too much for most prospective purchasers of this prestigious estate.

The Tables indicate that there was a low level of activity on the Nottinghamshire land market from c.1720s to c.1760s, which tends to support Habakkuk's findings.⁵⁸ He has argued that this was due to the effects of strict settlement and mortgaging practices, lower interest rates, fluctuations in the supply of funds, and that generally the

ability of landowners to carry debt had improved. But it has been illustrated that the flexible nature of strict settlements in practice, and the lack of liquid assets in general which tended to encourage landowners to over-commit themselves with mortgages and other debts, could have a contrary effect to the preservation of estates. Therefore other factors must be at play. Mingay suggested that the evidence of depressed conditions in agriculture was remarkably widespread between 1730 and 1750.⁵⁹ However, these were years of good grain harvests, particularly in the 1730s and 1740s when there were high exports of wheat, barley, malt and rye; and in 1750 nearly a quarter of that year's total wheat crop was exported.⁶⁰ Dr. Beckett's evidence suggested that the scale of the depression was less intense and widespread than has been supposed, and therefore the effects on the rest of the economy would have been reduced. He confirmed that corn-growing areas were less likely to be affected, but the group which suffered most was the open field farmers on the heavy Midlands soils who were more subjected to the Parliamentary enclosure movement.⁶¹ The Vale of Trent and the Vale of Belvoir were involved in this process, which converted open fields to grasslands. Generally, however, Nottinghamshire exercised a mixed agrarian economy, and landowners tended to own different types of land which enabled them to operate a mixed farming economy. It is suggested, therefore, that the impact of these years of agrarian difficulties would have had a variable impact on the different landowning families. Mingay discovered that farmers on the Duke of Kingston's estates suffered from poor remuneration during these years, which caused the Duke heavy rent arrears.⁶² However, Fowkes illustrated considerable variation in the rental structure across his different regions.⁶³ The heavy burden of taxation which fell on landowners during war years may be thought to have affected the land market during those years;⁶⁴ but the Dutch and French wars, and the wars of the Spanish succession

coincided with a peak of activity on the local land market between the 1670s and the 1720s; wars may have contributed to the depressed level of activity during the mid-eighteenth century, especially as local landowners were engaging in the expense of enclosure at this time; but the combination of wartime taxation and years of agrarian difficulties produced the opposite effect at the turn of the nineteenth century, when there was another spate of local land market activity. This actually took off in the 1780s. This variability tends to suggest that wartime uncertainties in themselves may not have been such a vital factor, but were important when they coincided with periods of economic difficulty. Yet even here they produced contrary effects, at one time depressing land market activity, at another stimulating it, which suggests that other influences were also involved. Based on his 'preservative' notion, Habakkuk argued that shrinking supply dictated land prices.⁶⁵ However, Clay contended that land prices during the eighteenth century were primarily dictated by the level of demand, both in the long-term and in the short-run fluctuations.⁶⁶ Thompson, in extending and applying the argument to the nineteenth century land market, also supported the notion that demand on the whole called the tune. Land changed hands according to the value put upon it. He traced a pattern of land supply drying up after a flood of forced sales in post-war years. Post-1815 many small farmers were forced to sell because of falling incomes and fixed charges, but he claimed that demand was also reduced due to the agricultural depression and uncertainty over rents, which was compounded by the corn laws controversy.⁶⁷ However, the Nottinghamshire land market indicates no shortage of interest in all types of property at this time. It was a particularly buoyant time for both sellers and purchasers. Thompson suggested that in the 1870s land transfers reached the highest peak of the nineteenth century, occurring in the years just before the agricultural depression; but during this later

depression it was the greater landowners who were selling, due to falling rents, mounting rent arrears, and unlettable farms, which forced them to put parts of estates on to the market. The sale of family seats by the greater Nottinghamshire landowners, many of which they had a long association with, seems to have been a continuous process during the nineteenth century; and these sales were brought about by a variety of reasons. Several, like the Eyre, Mellish and Pendock-Neale families, moved their geographical base.⁶⁸ The Byron family experienced recurring demographic and financial difficulties.⁶⁹ The Kearsley and Mellish families were short of liquid assets, either to finance estate developments, or to raise portions.⁷⁰ Perhaps only the Duke of Newcastle's sale of Worksop manor, less than fifty years after this prestigious estate had been purchased from the Duke of Norfolk, gives some indication of the problems Thompson indicated. He asserted that forced sales around the 1880s were accompanied by a significant drop in demand by all categories of purchasers. The sale of Worksop manor in 1890 raised only £106,022 against its purchase price in 1843 of £380,000, and its prestige disappeared with its division into 45 lots.⁷¹ What seems to be indicated here is that personal circumstances played as much a part as any other factors in the level of land market activity. However, other indicators seem to suggest that prevailing local agricultural conditions also had an effect on the land market in determining land prices, measured through the number of years' purchase prevailing, and in regulating the level of supply and demand, and the lowered interest rate must have contributed favourably to this process. One further point is significant here. It is suggested from the evidence of this study that the factors which contributed to the low level of activity in the land market from the 1720s to the middle of the eighteenth century must have been those tending to promote the circumstances for stability and continuity among landowners, which were not present later in the

century. Among those factors was the psychological impact of two periods of great social turbulence, the Dissolution and the Civil Wars, the memory of which would create the right climate of opinion for the operation of a period of stability. Such a period of stabilising elements is described by Speck.⁷² In addition, Walpole's long ministry must have been a stabilising factor, which he characterised through a reconciliation of interests between the monied interest and the landed interest. He brought the Duke of Newcastle into office in 1724, primarily, it has been suggested, because the Duke presided over the biggest electoral empire of the period with his possession of extensive interests in constituencies in Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, and Sussex. The Duke held high office for nearly 50 years. This must have had some stabilising influence on the county where he had his family seat and principal interests, as well as on the country as a whole. But the later decades of the eighteenth century were more politically volatile, with the search for a return to a more stable administration in the 1760s, the American war of the 1770s, the impact of the French revolution, and uncertainties over the Constitution, and the long years of the French wars.⁷³ The nineteenth century continued the unsettled pattern of political disputes at home, with the movement for political reform, and what has been termed the social cleavage which the movement for the unity of the working classes is thought to have stimulated.⁷⁴ These were part of the more radical climate of opinion which seemed to prevail during the nineteenth century, which also focused on land reform.⁷⁵ Thus, the factors supporting stability no longer combined in such force after about the middle of the eighteenth century, and a more active land market ensued, until the retarding influence of the period of transition which was experienced during the nineteenth century, when the political balance was shifted away from the landed interest and more in favour of the monied interest. A detailed discussion of these political

features is beyond the scope of this study, but it is suggested that the political climate which prevailed at both the local and the national level was a contributory factor to the level of activity which the Nottinghamshire land market experienced.

It was suggested at the end of the previous chapter that marriage and inheritance patterns produced a continuous process of redistribution of property within and between landed families, and that this process was part of a wider redistribution of property created through sales and purchases. Tables 6.1 to 6.4 indicate the regularity with which landed families transacted with each other, and it has been suggested that these transactions centred around the ramifications of the marriage or inheritance processes, or a low level of financial liquidity. What emerges from the evidence is that cycles of expansion and contraction in the size and distribution of estates were a common feature, and reflected over-reaching in one generation which had to be compensated for by a later period of retrenchment or rationalisation. The Mellish family were descended from London merchants, and owned land at Dunham, Ordsall and Nornay in 1689. They established a family seat at Blyth, but on acquiring the Hodsock estate (the site of a former priory) from the Cliftons in 1765 transferred their seat there. The purchase was made by William Mellish out of the profits of his post as Receiver-General of Customs. By the 1790s they experienced financial difficulties and released Blyth, their old seat, from settlement for subsequent sale in 1806. They were still at Hodsock at the end of the nineteenth century owning 1,382 acres worth £1,801 a year.⁷⁶ The Clifton family built up two nuclei of estates, one around Hodsock in the north of the county, and one in the south around their seat at Clifton. Fortuitous marriages contributed to this aggregation, but their estates also underwent periods of contraction. The Willoughbys purchased Kinoulton manor from them in 1688, and Bilby and Ramby were released for sale in the 1690s. Edward Mellish had purchased estates

in north Nottinghamshire and nearby Yorkshire from Sir Robert Clifton in the 1750s which carried a £5,000 encumbrance.⁷⁷ Due to fluctuating fortunes the Coopers reduced their landholdings. Descended from Derbyshire landowners, they held land at Fiskerton and Moreton in the 1670s which was subsequently sold. Their Hoveringham estate, held from at least 1689, was sold in the 1790s; and their prestige seat at Thurgarton Priory, purchased c.1537 on which they had built a mansion, was sold in 1794. By the end of the nineteenth century they held a more modest seat at Bulwell Hall, possessing 903 acres of Nottinghamshire land worth £1,992 a year.⁷⁸ Despite a lack of financial stability, rationalisation afforded them continuity. The Edges consolidated by purchases at the end of the seventeenth century as 'newcomers', but it was not until the 1780s that further aggregation took place, enhanced by inheritances, but more than offset by sales, such that by 1815 they held a reduced total acreage but their estates were more conveniently situated. By the end of the nineteenth century they still held 2,758 acres worth over £5,000 a year.⁷⁹ Sir Robert Sutton, following a career as a foreign ambassador (a family tradition), consolidated his inheritance by excessive purchases of heavily mortgaged properties in the 1720s which, together with generous provision for his children to accord with their status, grossly overburdened the estates financially, leading to a severe reduction in their size in the 1750s. A period of relatively minor expansion and contraction by purchases and sales followed, until another reduction took place for financial reasons in the 1790s, to be followed by a period of piecemeal consolidation of the core estate, then further sales during the financially difficult years at the turn of the nineteenth century. They were left with an estate reduced in size, less diffusely spread, but of a higher economic value per acre.⁸⁰ Although the Willoughbys appear to typify the magnitude of aggrandizement by the landed aristocracy and landed magnates as depicted in the literature, this process underwent periods of checks and

balances. Steady aggregation, with trimming off of more distant estates which had been acquired through inheritance or propitious marriages, was evidenced between 1665 and 1774, with a period of rapid expansion between 1781 and 1835, when some of the Lincolnshire estates were forfeited so that the three family seats at Wollaton, Nottinghamshire, Middleton, Warwickshire, and Birdsall, Yorkshire could be consolidated with piecemeal purchases more contiguous to those estates. A lot of the piecemeal consolidation around their Wollaton estate facilitated the expansion of their coalmining interests. They became the most important coalmining landowners at the southern end of the county's coalfield, and were very active in improving canal and turnpike transport routes to assist the marketing of their coal, the scale of which is reflected in their many transactions for tiny pieces of land. Many of the larger estates purchased contributed to the expansion of their agricultural interests, or increased their annual rental income to provide more working capital. The family also engaged in coalmining on their Warwickshire property; but the seventh Lord Middleton, who succeeded in 1835, had to somewhat curtail this programme of estate development and economic expansion due to the accumulation of debts and charges on the estate he inherited as a result of over-reaching by the fifth and sixth barons. At the end of the nineteenth century they owned land in Ross, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire, as well as retaining their principal seat at Wollaton, totalling 99,576 acres worth £54,014 a year, of which 15,015 acres were in Nottinghamshire worth £26,157 a year.⁸¹ At this time they ranked fifth in the county hierarchy of landed magnates, below the Duke of Portland with 43,036 acres worth £35,752, the Duke of Newcastle with 34,467 acres worth £73,098, Earl Manvers with 26,771 acres worth £36,788, and the Saviles (formerly Viscounts, Earls and Marquesses of Halifax) with 17,820 acres worth £17,213 a year.⁸² Some of the lesser families aggregated their

landholdings in territorial groups, such as the Eyres who spread across Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire; the Bristowes in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, the Smiths, during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and the Holdens who spread across Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire.⁸³ These families appear to have perpetuated the tradition of younger sons possessing and consolidating estates of their own, a pattern which was also discerned in the Sutton and Willoughby families.⁸⁴ The Knights of Warsop were an unusual example of a family whose estates were dispersed due to an abrupt decline through failure of the male line.⁸⁵ More usual were the Dickinson-Rastalls who experienced continued decline. These two families came together through marriage: the Rastalls held a seat at Crumwell, and the Dickinsons owned land in South Wheatley and Scraftworth, and also purchased Muskham Grange from the Pocklingtons. By the end of the nineteenth century they were residing at Misson and possessed only 363 acres in Nottinghamshire worth £520 a year.⁸⁶ The Byrons typify a more spectacular decline, having more in common with established views of families in eclipse, especially among the peerage, but theirs was compounded by a series of profligate individuals. The sixth Lord Byron, a great nephew, was also the poet, whose personal life and political affiliations forced him to live abroad. He squandered his inheritance and was forced to sell his ancestral home. The estate contained c.3,200 acres. In 1812 a sale contract worth £140,000 had been made, but was abandoned when only £25,000 had been raised on it. In 1817 it was sold to Colonel Wildman for £95,000 (and sold again on his death in 1861). He was succeeded in 1824 by a wealthy cousin, whose will was valued at £30,000, but his son died intestate worth only £800, and he was succeeded by a nephew who went bankrupt. At the end of the nineteenth century a branch of the family resided at Thrumpton Hall and still possessed 2,099 acres in Nottinghamshire worth £3,364 a year.⁸⁷ What the available evidence seems

to indicate is that the aggregation of estates was not the smooth passage which the literature suggests, but was constantly subjected to checks and balances. Even the greatest landed magnates reduced the size of their holdings, either by sales or by divided inheritances, which suggests that excessive aggrandizement was economically untenable, and therefore became self-curtailling.

Conclusion

A comparison of the Nottinghamshire data with the evidence of other counties indicates that the influence of local factors produced regional variations in land market activity, but with some basic similarities emerging. In his Yorkshire study Roebuck found that between 1640 and 1760 the land market was increasingly dominated by the wealthiest purchasers. The supply of and demand for land remained relatively high throughout the period among the peerage and gentry groups, and included a number of leading Yorkshire merchant families. Inability to discharge debts was seen as a prime cause of forced sales, with the purchasers sometimes being the former creditors of the vendors. The disposition of property following the failure of heirs was another factor contributing to sales. A local commitment to piecemeal consolidation, underpinned by the motives of established families to purchase property as a major avenue of productive investment, facilitated the growth of many existing large estates and the emergence of new ones during the period. The 1730s and 1740s were years of high land prices, which attracted vendors, although the market could be affected by the agriculturally depressed decades. ⁸⁸ The lull experienced in the Nottinghamshire land market was at variance with the continued activity in Yorkshire, and there was a somewhat different social composition involved in the transactions: but as the Yorkshire conclusions were only tentative in the absence of a more comprehensive study of the county, only superficial comparisons are possible.

In his study of the land market in eighteenth century Lincolnshire, Holderness discerned many of the underlying factors which Habakkuk construed as operating in favour of oligopoly after the Civil War, such as the economic pressures upon the lesser gentry, the advantages conferred upon settled estates by large farms, by entail and strict settlement, and the exploitation of marriages of convenience among the magnate families, but these did not result in a major shift towards oligopoly in landed power by 1750. The lesser gentry did not disappear as a major social force, as their numbers were continuously recruited from new arrivals in the land market, from Lincolnshire and elsewhere, motivated to consolidate their position or even to migrate to the county. There were no monolithic settled estates as a considerable number were broken up or reduced in size. There was a high incidence of 'newcomers' among the purchasers, and a large proportion of absentee landlords. The short term fluctuations in price responses to economic depressions, war emergencies, or movements in interest rates did not appear to be particularly powerful influences of overall demand. Although prices rose during the eighteenth century, land itself had not acquired a scarcity value by the turn of the nineteenth century. The peaks of activity occurred between 1700 and 1720, and between 1790 and 1800. The unprofitability of land as a form of investment was thought to have contributed to these peaks. Purchasers were drawn from Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire as well as Lincolnshire, and covered a wide social cross-section: lawyers, merchants, clergy, speculators and officials competed with landed proprietors. The market for land among local farmers and graziers was highly diverse and very extensive, with a steady change of personnel within the yeomanry and lesser gentry ranks, who were interested in extending their grazing potential, or in consolidating in a minor way. Several similarities with the Nottinghamshire land market emerge, particularly the timing

of the peaks of activity during the eighteenth century and the fairly wide social cross-section of purchasers and sellers, and that the lesser gentry did not disappear as a major social force. Absentee landlords, particularly among the peerage, was more a feature of nineteenth century Nottinghamshire. A more significant difference was that the Nottinghamshire land market was more responsive to the prevailing economic and political climate. Holderness explained the high degree of activity in the Lincolnshire land market in terms of a degree of weakness on the part of the squirearchy: persistent opportunities for land dealing among the less wealthy permitted the continued intervention of newcomers. However, based on the experience of Nottinghamshire landowners who transacted for property in Lincolnshire, an alternative hypothesis is suggested: that land in Lincolnshire was of lower value per acre than in neighbouring Nottinghamshire. From the limited data available, none of the Nottinghamshire families paid high prices for their Lincolnshire properties compared with their Nottinghamshire transactions, and once acquired the Lincolnshire estates were less likely to be held on to. It is suggested that because the Lincolnshire estates did not have the same degree of prestige or economic value, few large territorial units were built up in that county. Thus the market there dealt more in modest estates and smaller parcels of land, which frequently changed hands; and because these were unattractive possessions for the greater gentry, this opened up the market to other social groups. Hence the lack of aggrandizement in Lincolnshire by the landed aristocracy, and the continued social force of the lesser gentry, but drawn from a frequently changing composition. This contrasts with the more stable and conservative situation in Nottinghamshire, where properties could be sold for considerable sums, and where the social composition retained its continuous core. Among studies of more distant counties, Joanna

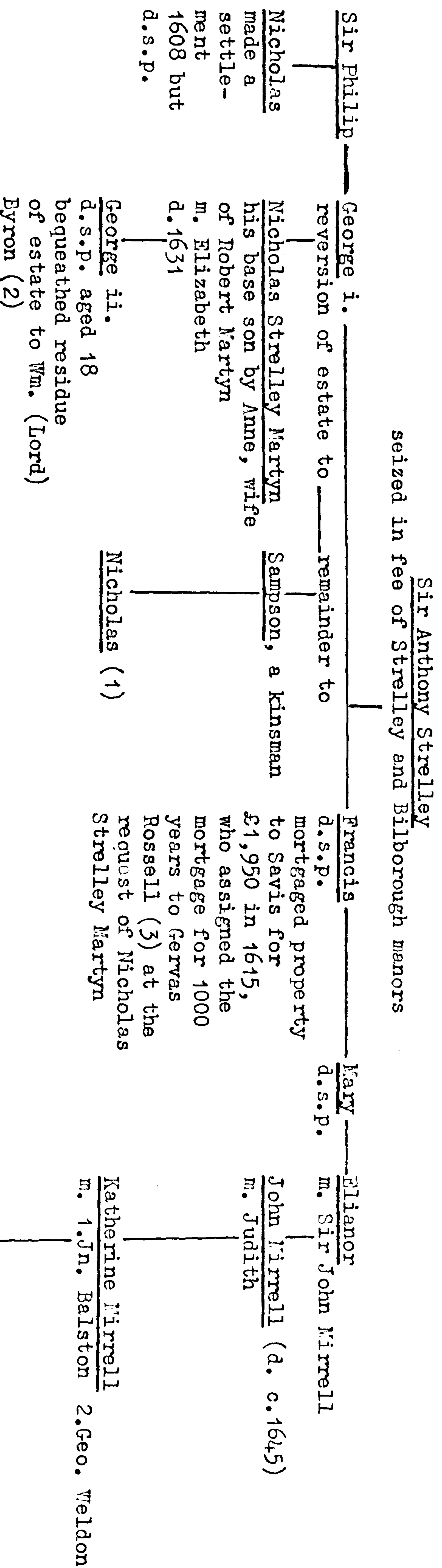
Martin's evidence for Glamorgan between c.1660 and 1760 emphasised that the remoteness of the county contributed to a low turnover of land compared with that experienced in counties nearer to London, but throughout the period both large and small pieces of land came on to the market, and were mainly purchased by those living within the county. Only a quarter of the larger estates were sold during the period, but smaller pieces of land probably changed hands more frequently, although with few opportunities for wealthy men to establish large landed estates by piecemeal acquisition. Professional and mercantile interest in land purchases was less significant here than in Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. It was claimed that the low level of demand in Glamorgan in the early eighteenth century reflected the low land prices despite comparative agricultural prosperity, and it was not until the 1760s and 1770s that outsiders pushed land prices up. These peaks and troughs of activity were similar to those experienced in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. In Glamorgan, this pattern was interpreted as reflecting uncertainty about land as an investment during this period, through fluctuating agricultural conditions which affected rent levels, at a time of more attractive and more secure investment alternatives in funds and mortgages. But it has been argued from the Nottinghamshire evidence that the security of mortgages was deceptive and regularly precipitated sales by encouraging families to over-reach themselves financially, and increased the widespread level of indebtedness. It was thought that the Glamorgan landowners suffered from a shortage of ready money and ran up debts, which tended to keep land market activity low; but the lesser gentry kept their position buoyant through their coalmining activities which, unlike the Nottinghamshire experience, were concentrated more in this group than in the greater landowners. Thus they were less in competition with the larger proprietors who contributed to a more active land market by breaking

up their estates on the English borders through intermarriage and infiltration processes which more directly affected the social composition of this area of Glamorgan. Here the lesser gentry had little chance of preventing a monopoly of landownership by the great estates.⁹⁰ In Nottinghamshire the Forest and Western Upland regions were monopolised by the larger proprietors, and Lincolnshire also displayed regional differences: Kesteven experienced the consolidation of larger estates, whilst the open market for land in Lindsey offered scope for rising families, and absenteeism in Holland led to the break up of estates which afforded an increase in the number of small owner occupiers. In his study of Cumbria between 1680 and 1750, Dr. Beckett found that local peerage families displayed a lack of interest in Cumbrian property, stemming partly from natural reluctance and partly from financial difficulty, such that they were not often in competition with the gentry when land came on to the market. The relative poverty of the Cumbrian gentry group produced a high turnover, particularly amongst the lesser gentry. Although a drift of property towards the greater owners was discerned, this was more particularly to the substantial gentry and to newcomers who derived their incomes from trade or the legal profession. Land also changed hands frequently within the yeomanry, but their decline as a social group did not accelerate until the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In contrast with the Cumbrian experience, the greater social mix of purchasers and sellers in the Nottinghamshire land market, where a healthy rivalry seems to have been displayed, may have stemmed from the local emphasis on a mixed agrarian and industrial economy, coupled with the county's favourable geographical position which facilitated communication routes. Thus there was perhaps more inducement for purchasers to seek estates there as an economic investment. However, this did not seriously affect the conservative core of landed families, as monied newcomers tended

to have a more transitory interest in landed property. Only a very few wealthy families joined the Nottinghamshire landed aristocracy, such as the Edge family with their legal background, the Denisons whose wealth was accumulated as Leeds woollen merchants, and the Strutts, who were Derbyshire cotton manufacturers. The Edges bought their way into landed society at the end of the seventeenth century, and the Denisons and Strutts during the nineteenth century. It would seem therefore that, as in Lincolnshire and Glamorgan, Cumbria experienced more social change within local landed society than was the case in Nottinghamshire. This was partly due to the degree of absenteeism among Cumbrian landowners (which was not a significant feature in Nottinghamshire until the nineteenth century, and then towards the latter part), and to the lack of peerage interest; and was partly attributed to economic conditions which squeezed out the lesser gentry, but without seriously affecting the yeomanry. Financial strain in Cumbria was attributed to the difficulty of borrowing money, and there appeared to be a connection between impoverishment and attempts to exploit minerals.⁹¹ Whatever the similarities or differences of these regional studies, two significant features have emerged. For whatever reasons, financial difficulties seem to have been a prime factor in bringing estates on to the local land markets, fostering differing degrees of change within the social composition of the landed gentry. Secondly, prevailing local economic conditions played no small part in the level of land market activities: and these two factors were not infrequently related. A variety of causes have been presented for the general and significant lack of readily available capital which was needed to keep families buoyant: that the return on land was low compared with other forms of investment; that Land Tax was too great a burden for all but the larger landowners to sustain (although the Cumbrian evidence does not support this contention); that the unstable course of rents diminished the economic prospects of landowners. It has also been

suggested that landowners lived extravagantly beyond their means, but further research revealed that few families faced extinction through financial ruin. And it has been illustrated that the cumulative burden of debt attributed to the continuous process of resettlement need not be severe unless the process was mishandled. Nevertheless, capital lump sums were regularly required to facilitate estate development, or to meet settlement responsibilities, or to finance the everyday functions of landed families, which was simply not readily available, as liquid assets had been absorbed into what were seen as long term investments, making families more vulnerable to the prevailing economic and political climate. Families therefore needed to be able to sell off parts of their estates as required to raise these capital sums, and by these means managed to retain financial buoyancy. Indeed, the evidence confirms Stone's contention that most landed families of any stature were protected by legal, institutional, and psychological barriers against the more serious crises of demographic attrition, financial misfortune, or mismanagement.⁹² How several families responded to the challenge of estate management and maintaining financial buoyancy is discussed in detail in the next Part. In essence, the evidence of Part Two suggests that the very individual circumstances of each landed family, coupled with the markedly different local practices and conditions, produced significant regional variations within the principal trends of landownership during the extended period under review.

Pedigree of the Strelley family relating to contested ownership and divided inheritance



*Base line claimants:

- (1) Nicholas Strelley, claimant through George's settlement, i.
- (2) Lord Wm. Byron, residue of George's estate, i.
- (3) Rossell, claimed through non-payment of mortgage

*Legal line claimants:

Divided inheritance between the Balston daughters, remainder to Geo. Weldon of his wife's interest.

Source: DDE/5/65, Abstract of Title of Strelley and Bilborough whilst in the Strelley's possession.

Table 6.1 Willoughby/Lords Middleton of Wollaton Park - Land Transactions

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
1.	1662	Trowell	22 oxgangs	P	Mr. Powdrell		£ 5,000
2.	1666	Trowell	469 acs.	P	Sir John le Hunt		900
3.	1687/8	Kinoulton manor		P	Clifton family		25,000
4.	1692	S. Muskham cottage		P	Jn. Saxon & Jn. Rollinson, Yeomen of Muskham		
5.	1699	Walkeringham manor	part	P	Earl of Kingston		22,550
6.	1721	Saundby and Wheatley Wood		P		Purchased with wife's inheritance to provide for her and her issue	10,000
7.	Between 1729-58	Muskham and Little Collingham		P			
8.	c.1732	Nottingham County Hall	-1	P	Mr. Hutchinson		
9.	1742	The Combs, Beeston	3	P	Jn. Moore, Beeston, Sheriff & J.P.		16
10.	1749-52	Beeston land	26	P	Rev. Abson		
11.	1750	Lenton and Radford	House & lands, 60 acres	P	Thos. Wood, Yeoman of Lenton	Unable to pay £500 mortgage & interest	490
12.	1752	W. Leake	1,316	P	Mr. Bird, J.P., & Col. Chatwick	A mortgaged property	15,749
13.	1759	Manor of N. & S. Somercotes		S	Mr. Wm. Loft		3,800

Table 6.1 continued

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
14.	1765	Manor of Broxtowe, incl. woods, houses in Nottingham and Assembly Room		P	Widow of Rev. R. Eyre	To facilitate coal getting; woods contained 4,739 trees valued at £1,346	£ 6,000
15.	1768	Stubbins Wood, Bilborough	24, a pt. share	P	Thos. Barber, coal master	To facilitate coal getting	2,300
16.	1782	Stubbins Wood, Bilborough	A part share	P	Thos. Edge	To facilitate coal getting	500
17.	1782	S. Muskham	1 rood	P	Richard Holmes, J.P.		
18.	1783	Stubbins Wood	A part share	P	Mr. Chris. Colclough	To facilitate coal getting	850
19.	1783	Lenton	Slip of ground	P		For a road and basin to take coals to Erewash Canal in Lenton	
20.	1783-4	Strip of land to Erewash Canal, nr. Stapleford		P		For a coal wharf	
21.	1784	Stubbins Wood	A part share	P	Mr. Chris. Colclough	To facilitate coal getting	
22.	1784	S. Muskham	Cottage and garden	P	Hy. Huggins		
23.	c.1784	Newark	House	P			105
24.	1786	Trowell estate and advowson	336	P	Mrs. D. and Mr. F. Evans, J.P.	To extend ownership of manor, and to facilitate coal getting	16,000

Table 6.1 continued

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
25.	1787	Stanton by Dale	c.2	P	Wm. Day, Yeoman of Trowell	For wharf and road at Erewash Canal	£ 69
26.	1788	Radford and Bramcote Moor, incl. coal mines	c.35, several closes	P	Mr. Jos. Stubbins (Sheriff) and son Nathaniel	Also leased Mr. Gregory's coal rights to gain access to Stubbins's	4,000
27.	1788-90	Awsworth		P	Mr. Harvey Aston		6,825
28.	1789	Piece of land taken from Old Road at Saundby		P	Trustees of Beckingham Turnpike Road		
29.	1793	Aspley estate	c.113	P	Collateral branch: Mrs. Margaret & Robert Willoughby, esq., Bristol	Financial difficulties	29,000
30.	1793-4	A group of properties: Dunston Nettleton Brigsley Scrooby Woodborough Kirton Clethorpe Thorsby Bassingham		S	Jas. Rollitt Robert Laming Mr. Johnson, J.P. Mr. Anderson Mr. Hollins, (Mayor) Mr. Evo & Hon. H.W. Brigsley Mr. Evo Mr. Evo Mr. Arrowsmith		1,000 900 500 2,200 270 600 300 250 450
						(Total £6,470)	
31.	1793	Cossall & Trowell (Notts.); Kingsbury & Attenborough (Warwicks.)		P	Robert Willoughby senior and Robert Willoughby junior	Financial difficulties; estates mortgaged for	21,000 £6,700

Table 6.1 continued

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
32.	c.1794	Thurganby, Croxley, Binbrooke, Rothwell		S			£
33.	1796	Land in Gainsborough		S			
34.	1796	Stanton		P			
35.	1799	Bole		S			385
36.	c.1800	Cheetham's Farm on Derby Road		P	Duke of Devonshire		12,000
37.	c.1800	Fields adjoining Wollaton Park		P	Dr. Storer & Mrs. Wylid	Expansion of core estate	7,000
38.	c.1800	Land adjoining Wollaton Park		P	Mr. Gregory	Expansion of core estate	60,000
39.	1800	S. Leverton	3	P	Mr. Parsons, J.P.		96
40.	1803	Dunstone		S			1,400
41.	1803	Little Carlton estate		P	Sketchley & Godfrey		
42.	1805	Lenton	Piece of land	P	Mr. Edge		400
43.	1806	Grimston estate		P	W. Langley, J.P.		30,000
44.	1806	Beeston	1 close	P	Dr. Storer, J.P.		600
45.	1806	Collingham	several closes	S	Sam Beckett, J.P.		660
46.	1807	Land near Wollaton Park		P	Stubbins		4,000
47.	1807	Coombs close, Beeston	5	P	Jn. Storer		630

Table 6.1 continued

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
48.	1807	Remainder of Collingham estate		S	Mr. Jas. Sykes, J.P.		£ 5,500
49.	1807	Bramcote Moor	3½ cowgates	P	Barber, Walker & Co.	To facilitate coal getting	
50.	1808	Bramcote Moor	1 cowgate	P	Mr. Jos. & Mr. Sam Garton	To facilitate coal getting	100
51.	1808	Bramcote Moor	1 cowgate	P	Jn. Garton	To facilitate coal getting	100
52.	1808	Lenton	2 lots of land	P	Mr. T.W. Edge		230
53.	1809	Bull Piece, Lenton, with public footpath	3,629 square yards	P	Mr. T.W. Edge and son	Adjoining Lord Middleton's land, giving access to River Leen	230
54.	1810	Beeston, near close bought from Dr. Storer (1806)		P	Rev. Bigsley		600
55.	1812	Small piece of land near church at Gaunton		P			60
56.	c.1813	Lenton Firs		P	Mrs. Watson		11,000
57.	1813	Lenton	1 meadow	P	Mr. Gregory		523
58.	1818	Radford, incl. coal	8 acs.	P	Bingham	Expansion of coal mining activities	967
59.	1818	Radford, house and land		P	Staniforth	Expansion of coal mining activities	
60.	1818	Lenton wharf, with house and land		P	Staniforth	Expansion of coal mining activities	500

Table 6.1 continued

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
61.	1819	Lenton and Radford		P	Gregory	Expansion of estate	£ 20,100
62.	1820	Toll Bar house and garden near Canal Bridge Wharf, Lenton		P	H.F. Henbarrow	Expansion of coal mining activities	800
63.	1821	Lenton	1,225 square yards	P	Mr. Hy. Attenborough	Bordering Nottingham Canal	547
64.	1821	Lenton, weighing house and machinery	1,035 square yards	P	Mr. Hy. Attenborough	Bordering Nottingham Canal	250
65.	1822	Ale house and land adjoining Lenton Firs		P	Mr. Wright	Cottage pulled down and new road made where it stood	237
66.	1822	Part of Godacre's Croft, nr. Lenton Lodge		P			370
67.	1823	Kineton Land		P			
68.	1824	Mill Gate house and land	S				
69.	1826	Settrington estate; 2 fields there		P	Miss Bill		170,000 600
70.	1826	Farm near Beilby at Emiston		P			2,000
71.	1827	Beeston	c.20	P	Mrs. Wylde	Adjoined land purchased from Dr. Stern	4,046
72.	1829	Bramcote Moor	2 beastgates	P	Bensey		350
73.	1830	Bramcote Moor	2 cattlegates	P	Stubbins' trustees		
74.	1830-1	Lenton Priory		P	Mr. Green (Mayor)		12,600

Table 6.1 continued

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
75.	1831	Balderton, house and land		P	Wm. Welch		£ 480
76.	1832	Kineton		S	Mr. Wheatley		2,500
77.	1833	Farm at W. Leake	157	P	Matthew Wylde		7,800
78.	1834	Langford and Winthorpe, nr. Newark		P			110,000
<u>Other property</u>							
79.	1665	Middleton New Park, Warwicks., incl. 70 acs. wood valued at £1,000	469	P	Sir John le Hunt		4,200
80.	1781	Westerleigh, Gloucs.	2 farms	P			1,160
81.	1783	Ilkeston, Derbys.	$\frac{1}{2}$ acre	P	Duke of Rutland	For a coal wharf	
82.	1783-4	Ilkeston, strip of land at the bottom of Cossall Common		P	Jn. Collingham	For a coal wharf	
83.	1788	Westerleigh, Gloucs.	2 Farms	P		On Gloucs. Warwicks. border, to consolidate secondary seat	
84.	1793	Sherrold Farm, Drayton Bassett, Middleton, Warwicks.	50	P	Robert Peele, esq.		
85.	1794	Little Carlton, Lincs.	4	P	Joshua Hawksley of Handley, Derbys., yeoman	Hawksley inherited property with a £30 mortgage which was in default	84

Table 6.1 continued

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reasons for Sale or Purchase	Price
86.	1794	Matthew Horsley's Farm adjoining Birdsall estate, Yorks.		P	Sir W. Houghton	To consolidate a secondary seat at Birdsall	£ 3,000
87.	1799	Carlton le Moorland, house and close		P	Mr. Anderson		400
88.	1803	Wharram le Street and Leavening, Yorks.	1,310	P	Major Topham	£10,000 mortgage remained to be paid	27,341
89.	1806	Leavening and Birdsall, Yorks.		P	W. Langley		6,000
90.	1806	Farm at Wharram Percy, Yorks.		P	Lord Fitzwilliam		8,000
91.	1814-16	Kenilworth, Warwick, houses and land		P			
92.	1820	Ilkeston, Derbys.	1	P	Mr. I. Flamstead	Adjoined Cossall hospital lands	79
93.	1823	Kenilworth, Warwick, land and buildings		P			
94.	1829	Kenilworth		S	Loaden		3,200
95.	N.D.	Lincolnshire estates		S			120,000

Table 6.2 Sutton of Norwood Park - Land Transactions

Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
1.1752	Greasley estate and other Notts. property		S		1744 Estate Act to reduce encumbrances	£ 48,000
2.1764	Land in Halam Field and Norwood Sick	1½	P	Mrs. Becher	Remainder of a 21 year lease; adjoined Seat	
3.1773	Hazleford Ferry, with boat and fishing rights in Trent	5	P	Richard Becher	Access	520
4.1782	Norwood Field	3	P	Wm. Clay, esq. (Sheriff)	Adjoined Seat	102
5.1786	Halloughton manor and mansion house		P	Jn. Prescott, merchant of Halifax	Unable to pay £6,500 mortgage	7,500
6.c.1792	Several closes adjacent to Norwood Park	c.20	P		Adjoined Seat	1,700
7.1793	Farmar, Cotsmoor and Radley		P	Geo. Hodgkinson		5,000
8.1794	Thurgarton estate	c.789	P	Jn. Gilbert Cooper, esq.	Carried a £5,400 mortgage and several short-term leases	11,000
9.c.1794	Hoveringham manor		P	Jn. Gilbert Cooper, esq.	Acquired residue of term of lease from Trinity College	
10.1805	Thurgarton estate	c.789	S	Jn. Brettle, esq., Thurgarton, & Jn. Milward, gent., Hockerton		14,000

Table 6.2 continued

Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
11.1806	Several parcels of land around Norwood Park	40	P		Adjoined Seat	£ 1,757
12.1824	Two parcels of land contiguous to Norwood	c.6	P	Mr. Norton	Adjoined Seat; worth £125 per acre	750
<u>Lincolnshire Property</u>						
13.1720	Eddlington estate, incl. Thimbleby, Poleham and Bagmoor	300	P	Wm. Wenman, esq., Wm. Welby		3,255
14.1720	Thurlby estate		P	Sam. Rastall, apothecary and alderman of Newark		
15.1720	Brant Broughton, Gowshill, E. Hallaton, Thornton, Killington, Auber, Bassingham, Skellingthorpe, Gavelston		P	Wm. Somerville, esq.; Sam Rastall; Wm. Welby, Wm. Wenman		
16.1752	Two farms at Brant Broughton		P		For sons, after settling £40,000 mortgage debt	2,360 and 900
17.1778	Easthorpe	216	P	Phillip, Earl of Chesterfield		
18.1779	Easthorpe Street Land	$2\frac{1}{2}$ $2\frac{1}{2}$ 1 1	S S S S	Mr. Jn. Jackson Mr. Sam Jackson Sam Wadkin Paul Bright		45 45 20 58
19.1791	Eddlington estate		S	Francis Milnes, gent	To reduce encumbrances	26,200

Table 6.2 continued

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
182	20.1792	Edlington estate; Thornton manor; newly erected farm, and lands at Thornton Curtis		S	Geo. Uppleby, esq. & his mortgagee; Wm. Curtis, farmer	To reduce encumbrances (sold in lots)	£ 28,931
	21.1792	Cottage and croft in Brant Broughton		P		Adjoined secondary Seat	100
	22.1793	Thurlby estate, including messuages and sheep walk		S	Jn. Straw, mercer & draper, Lincoln		5,000
	<u>Other Property</u>						
	23.1768	Pavenham estate, Beds.		P			4,700
	24.1774	Pavenham estate, Beds.		S			
	25.1805	Down Hatherley estate, Gloucs., including a mansion house and two farms		S	Jn. Turner, esq., Gloucs.		13,000

Table 6.3 Edge of Strelley Park - Land Transactions

Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
1. 1654	Southwell and Upton	c.50	P	Jn. Palmer, esq., J.P., Southwell	Carried a £1,000 mortgage	£ 490
2. 1660	Kinoulton		P	Sir Gerwase Clifton		
3. 1661	Radcliffe on Trent	a moiety of the Rectory & advowson	P	Phillip, Earl of Chesterfield		200
4. 1668	Lowdham and Gunthorpe	Several farms c.287	P	Sir Roger Martin	Half share of a third portion	1,750
5. 1675	Strelley and Bilborough plus Martyns Farm, incl. coal rights	two parts of the manors	P	Jn. Morris, London, who had purchased it 4 years earlier	Encumbered with mortgages and long-term litigation over divided family ownership since c.1615 by Strelley descendants	4,500
6. 1678	Lowdham and Gunthorpe	the other half share totalling 290 acres	P	Thamworth & Leonard Rearsby (kin of Sir Roger Martin)	Unable to repay mortgage	1,025
7. 1681/2	Southwell and Upton		P	Viscount Chaworth and Wm. Palmer	Lands adjoining purchase of 1654	
8. 1742/3	Radcliffe on Trent	as (3) plus a fourth pt. of manor	S	Duke of Kingston	Remainder of a 21 year lease, from 1736	
9. 1782	Strelley and Bilborough, incl. Stubbins Wood	Farms & messuages c.24	P	Mr. Bradley & Mr. Whitaker	Piecemeal acquisition of the third part of these manors	1,100

Table 6.3 continued

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
10.	1782	Land in Bilborough Manor	1/27th pt. S c.177	S	Thos. Barber, coal master	To facilitate coal getting under Stubbins Wood	£ 240
11.	1785	Bilborough - several premises	7 parts of 9 shares	P	Thomas Barber, coal master	Piecemeal acquisitions to facilitate complete ownership of manor	2,700
12.	1788	Strelley and Bilborough advowsons	a share	P	Sam Colclough, esq.	As above	2,000
13.	1799	Southwell and Upton, Arnold, Lenton, and land in Nottingham		S	Sold in lots, but not all sold	To facilitate purchase of Funds worth £3,070	2,930
14.	1807	Bilborough	Mansion house with stables, orchard & croft, 140 acres	P	Robert Barber, coal master	Mortgaged to Pocklington's Bank, Newark by Barber	10,500
15.	1811	Farms in Kirkby in Ashfield	233	S			
16.	1815	Lowdham and Gunthorpe	Farms, cottages, mill, plus 600 acres of oaks	S	Sold in 42 lots to sundry small purchasers		21,249
<u>Other property</u>							
17.	c.1780	Sherborne, Warwicks.	31 acres of marshland	P		Adjoined an estate they acquired through marriage	3,000
18.	1790	Warwick town	2 houses in Blacksmith West Street	P			110
19.	1791	Ullenhall, Warwicks.	small estate	S			400

Table 6.3 continued

	Date of Transaction	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
185	20.	1808	St. Nicholas estate, Warwicks.	Farm, Pub, cottages, & 66 acs.	S	Sold in 25 lots to sundry purchasers	£ 12,720
	21.	1811	Marston Montgomery estate, Derbys.	60	S		Valued at 3,454

Table 6.4 Land transactions of Nottinghamshire landowners during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries

	Date of Transaction	Family	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
1.	c.1620	Charlton	Chilwell	1,421	P	Pymme		
2.	1658	Smith	Nottingham		P		To establish a mercer business	
3.	c.1660	Musters	Colwick Hall	1,271	P	Lord Byron		
4.	c.1670s	Acklom	Wiseton Hall	1,045	P	Nelthorpe		
5.	c.1681	Bristowe	Willoughby	one moiety	P	Godolphin	Disposed of through Willoughby-Dixie-Godolphin marriage process	
6.	c.1690	Pendock-Neale	Tollerton	1,211	P	Neale	Secured from co-heirs, to procure sole right to manor	
7.	between 1636-95	Thoroton	Screveton	1,152	P	Whalley	Reacquisition of family lands sold in early 16thc	
8.	1696	Emmerton	Thrumpton	979	P	Pigot's executors		
9.	Late 17thc	Cooper	Fiskerton & Moreton	1,547	S			
10.	end 17thc	Levinz	Grove	1,324	P	Sir Ed. Neville		
11.	c.1700	Bodham	Kirklington	1,977	P	More		
12.	1704	Charlton	Sandiacre				Relinquished on death of Nicholas Charlton	
13.	c.1710	Knight	N. Leverton	2,404	S		To discharge encumbrances	
14.	1717	Holden	Hawton	2,168	P			

Table 6.4 continued

	Date of Transaction	Family	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
15.	1727	Viscount Galway	Serleby	507	P	Vincent of Yorks.		
16.	1727	Smith	Broxtowe		S			
17.	1762	Eyre	Grove	1,324	P	Levinz		
18.	1764	Bristowe	Earlshaw		P			
19.	1766	Clifton	Hodsock	4,211	S	Wellish	To finance commitments	
20.	1768	Denison	Ossington	2,403	P	Cartwright	Sold by four co-heiress daughters	
21.	1773	Smith-Bromley	Owthorpe	1,639	P	Hutchinson		
22.	between 1728-73	Pendock-Neale	Mansfield Woodhouse		S			
23.	1789	Dickinson-Rastall	Muskham Grange		P	Battle		
24.	1789	Thoroton	Flintham House	2,169	P			
25.	1790s	Cooper	Hoveringham	900	S	Sir Richard Sutton		
26.	1790s	Welby	N. & S. Carlton		P	Jos. Pocklington, esq.		
27.	1792	Disney	Syerston Hall	768	S	Fillingham		£12,000
28.	1794	Cooper	Thurgarton	2,572	S	Sir Richard Sutton		
29.	1796	Holden	Felley Priory	413	S			

Table 6.4 continued

	Date of Transaction	Family	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
30.	1806	Mellish	Blyth	1,320	S		To discharge encumbrances	
31.	c.1808	Pendock-Neale	Thorpe by Newark	713	S	Fillingham		
32.	1810	Kearsley	Widmerpool	2,102	S	Viscount Galway	To finance enclosure of WYsall	
33.	1817	Lord Byron	Newstead Abbey		S	Col. Wildman	Financial difficulties	£95,000
34.	1818	Lord Howe	Langar		S	Jn. Wright of Lenton Hall	Acquired by marriage and sold following a fire	
35.	1819	Holden	Nuthall Temple	1,222	S			
36.	c.1820	White	Tuxford & E. Markham		S			
37.	1832	Vere	Carlton Hall		P	Jos. Pocklington, esq.		
38.	1843	Duke of Newcastle	Worksop Manor		P	Duke of Norfolk	Sold to facilitate purchase of other estates more convenient to Seat	£380,000
39.	between 1786-1848	Knight	Firbeck		S		Proceeds to Ecclesiastical Commissioners	c.£70,000
40.	1870	Kearsley-Starling	Wysall	1,553	S			
41.	1874	Pendock-Neale	TOLLerton	1,211	S			

Table 6.4 continued

	Date of Transaction	Family	Property	Acreage	Sale/ Purchase	Party to Transaction	Reason for Sale or Purchase	Price
42.	1890	Duke of Newcastle	Workshop Manor		S		Divided into 45 lots	£106,022
43.	19thc	Smith-Bromley	Thorpe by Newark	713	P	-Fillingham		
44.	19thc	White	Wallingwells	601	P	Mr. Galley-Knight		
45.	mid-19thc	Duke of Leeds	Kingston on Soar	1,312	S	1st Lord Belper		
46.	1893	Eyre	Grove		S		Moved their base to Lincoln	

Table 6.1 References: Willoughby/Lords Middleton Land Transactions

1. Mi/F/12
2. Mi/6/173/224 and Mi/2/62/176
3. Mi/4/126/3-4
4. Mi/4/126/4
5. Mi/3/113/11, 13
6. Mi/LM/36, Mi/1/10/1, Mi/Da/52
7. Mi/4/139/11-18
8. Mi/4/153a/13
9. Mi/2/50/43
10. Mi/2/50/47
11. Mi/1/26/24-5, Mi/1/31/4
12. Mi/3/94/6-8, Mi/3/95/4, Mi/3/97/1-2, Mi/3/99/1
13. Mi/LM/36 (An extensive Family Diary)
14. Mi/1/36/1, Mi/1/28/1
15. Mi/1/29/1-11
16. Mi/1/29/6
17. Mi/LM/36
18. Mi/LM/36
19. Mi/3/80/1-2
20. Mi/LM/36
21. Mi/LM/36
22. Mi/LM/36
23. Mi/LM/36
24. Mi/2/67/1-10
25. Mi/2/72/61-5
26. Mi/1/22/34-9
27. Mi/LM/36, Mi/3/81/4, 7
28. Mi/LM/36
29. Mi/1/20/1-3
30. Mi/Av/90, Mi/LM/36

31. Mi/2/78/9, 15, 16
- 32-46. Mi/LM/36
47. Mi/2/53/38
48. Mi/LM/36
49. Mi/LM/36
50. Mi/1/22/44
51. Mi/LM/36
52. Mi/LM/36
53. Mi/2/54/1-3
- 54-62. Mi/LM/36
63. Mi/1/42/2-10
64. Mi/1/42/2-10
- 65-70. Mi/LM/36
71. Mi/2/52/8
- 72-77. Mi/LM/36
78. Mi/3/G/3
79. Mi/F/12
80. Mi/Ac/128
81. Mi/3/80/1-2
82. Mi/LM/36
83. Mi/S/9-12
84. Mi/LM/36
85. Mi/5/127/12-17
86. Mi/LM/36
87. Mi/LM/36
88. Mi/Da/165
89. Mi/LM/36
90. Mi/LM/36
91. Mi/Av/136
- 92-95. Mi/LM/36

Table 6.2 References: Sutton Land Transactions

1. DDM/103/181, 201
- 2.. DDM/103/36
3. DDM/103/6
4. DDM/103/15
5. DDM/103/242
6. DDM/103/153
7. DDM/103/17
8. DDM/103/281, 282
9. DDM/103/159
10. DDM/103/297
11. DDM/103/25
12. DDM/103/29
13. DDM/103/119
14. DDM/103/49
15. DDM/103/136
16. DDM/103/160
17. DDM/103/188
18. DDM/103/8-10
19. DDM/103/127, 181, 184
20. DDM/103/17, 128, 130, 159
21. DDM/103/17
22. DDM/103/49
23. DDM/103/6
24. DDM/103/132
25. DDM/103/104

Table 6.3 References: Edge Land Transactions

1. DDE/13
2. DDE/39
3. DDE/44
4. DDE/9, 41
5. DDE/5
6. DDE/7, 41
7. DDE/13
8. DDE/44
9. DDE/28, Mi/1/29/6
10. DDE/28
11. DDE/28
12. DDE/28
13. DDE/57, 61, 63
14. DDE/57
15. DDE/40
16. DDE/41
17. DDE/40, 41
18. DDE/3
19. DDE/3
20. DDE/67
21. DDE/64

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2. Pendock-Neale, Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 33-4.
3. Cartwright: K.S.S. Train, Twenty Nottinghamshire Families...(1973), 8.
4. Mellish: Me/D/27/18; Knight: SRO/NP/181, (1806 and c.1710).
5. Sir Richard Sutton gave his sons the power 'from time to time to sell or exchange (the estates settled on them) for other manors, lands or property of equal or greater value', 1798 will, DDM/103/20.
6. Knight: to pay an annuity fallen into arrears, SRO/NP/181, (c.1710).
7. Henry Gally Knight: R. Mellors, Men of Nottingham...(1924), 101.
8. Viscount Galway: Ga/65/4/23, 1786 Estate Act.
9. Kearsley: NCRO/DD/WD, 1810, Widmerpool sold, Wysall enclosed.
10. Edge: DDE/57, 61, 63 (1799).
11. Edge: the purchase of Southwell and Upton, DDE/13; Lowdham and Gunthorpe, DDE/7, 9, 41; Strelley and Bilborough, DDE/5, (17thc).
12. Sutton: DDM/103/181 and 184. (c.1791).
13. Clifton: Mi/4/126/4 (1692).
14. Willoughby: Mi/LM/36; Mi/1/10/1; Mi/Da/52 (1721).
15. Tollerton manor purchased by John Neale, Burke's Landed Gentry, II (1969), 33-4, (c.1690).
16. Willoughby: piecemeal consolidation of S. Muskham manor, 1692, Mi/4/126/4 and between 1729-58, Mi/4/139/11-18, charged with raising Dame Elizabeth's jointure in her marriage settlement of 1693, Mi/1/12/2, and still subject to that charge in the Hon. Francis's marriage settlement of 1723, Mi/1/10/1.
17. The Suttons sold their Thornton manor, Lincs. property and consolidated around their core estate at Norwood, Notts. (1792), being land of higher economic value, DDM/103/17, 130, 153.
18. Edge: extended piecemeal acquisition of Bilborough manor, DDE/5, 28, 57.
19. Willoughby: e.g. for a road and wharf, Mi/3/80/1-2 (1783) and (1787) Mi/2/72/61-5; Sutton: (1764), DDM/103/36, (c.1792), DDM/103/132, (1806), DDM/103/25, extension of farming interests.
20. Mi/Da/52 (1726) Indentures of Lease and Release.

21. Appointment of Seignoret fortune inherited by the Suttons, DDM/103/44, 123, 143; the Wright fortune inherited by the Edges, DDE/9.
22. The Duke of Norfolk sold off his Nottinghamshire estates, c.1805-13, to finance purchase of others, SRC/S/423.
23. Mellish, c.1762, Me/76/15/5.
24. The Suttons replaced a number of their Lincolnshire properties with Nottinghamshire land, DDM/103/33, 35; and see Chapter Eight.
25. Sutton (1752), DDM/103/181,201, 160.
26. H.J. Habakkuk, 'The rise and fall of English landed families'... (1979), 199-204.
27. Mi/6/173/221, 222, (1662), Agreement between Sir Francis & Jn.Flamstead.
28. Mi/6/176/164, (1662), further Agreement.
29. Mi/6/176/165, (1662), £1,200 Bond for payment of £600 to Jn. Flamstead for following 1 October; further Bond to pay £1,000 the following 1 May, Mi/6/176/166.
30. (1662), Acquittance: Receipt of £400, Mi/6/176/168; Acquittance: Receipt of £100, Mi/6/176/169.
31. (1666), Covenant: £900 of purchase money for lands bought by Sir Francis Willoughby (deceased) and Francis Willoughby, son, from Hy. Powtrell still owing. Sir Clement Armiger to receive £750 of this sum, and widow Anne Powtrell £150, Mi/6/173/224.
32. DDM/103/179, (1792-7), £6,000 mortgage @ 5% interest on Halloughton manor and Mansion House, Sir Richard Sutton to Miss Mary Pocklington and Jos. Pocklington; and see Table 6.4
33. 1793, the Cossall estate was mortgaged for £4,000 by Robert Willoughby to Ed. Miller Mundy, esq., Mi/2/78/9; c.1792 Mrs. Sherbrooke advanced £1,500 to Sir Richard Sutton, DDM/103/17, to help pay off a mortgage debt.
34. (pre-1805), an account of Sir Richard Sutton's estate not in settlement, DDM/103/62.
35. Estate Acts, such as DDM/103/181, 184 (Sutton); Me/D/38/3, 6 (Clifton).
36. Sutton, DDM/103/181, DDM/103/17, 128, 130, 159, (mortgage encumbrances); Willoughby, property acquired with outstanding mortgages, Mi/4/127/12-17, Mi/1/120/1 & 3, Mi/2/78/9, 15, 16 (1790s).
37. Lease/Release, 1668, DDE/7/16.
38. 1668, various agreements for Lease/Release, Bonds, method of payment, mortgage transference, and Final Concord between Ralph and William Edge and Sir Roger Martin, DDE/5/16-23.
39. J. Locke, Some considerations of the consequences...(1692), in Works, v (1823 edn.), 53.

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42. (1659), Settlement on grand-daughter, Tamworth Horner, DDE/7/6; settlement on two sons, DDE/7/7.
43. (1668), property transfer documents, DDE/7/17-22; DDE/7/54.
44. Fillingham: NCRO/DD/FM.
45. (1676), Lease/Release, DDE/7/45.
46. (1678), Lease/Release, DDE/7/46-48.
47. Chancery Petition (Bill not filed), DDE/7/35.
48. DDE/7/38, £600 mortgage to Arthur Kettleby.
49. DDE/7/35, £1,450 mortgage to Jn. Bright in lieu of Leonard Rearsby's debts.
50. DDE/41/2 Covenant (1672) setting out the terms of Leonard's mortgage agreement.
51. DDE/7/44 (1676), £300 mortgage with Mary Nott.
52. See Strelley Pedigree, p.171.
53. See Chapter Nine.
54. The history of Strelley and Bilborough is drawn from: (1675), Bargain and Sale of Martins Farm, Strelley, DDE/5/100; the legal hearing drawn from 'The state of the case as to the manors of Strelley and Bilborough, 1651-71', DDE/5/69; the Answers of Ralph Edge, Defendant, to the Bill of Complaint of Jn. Thynne, esq. and wife Judith, Complainants, (1679), DDE/5/80.
55. A Brief for the partition of the manors, DDE/5/68.
56. DDE/5/80.
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77. Me/2/104 (Pedigree); 1762 cites the purchase of estates from Sir Robert Clifton, Me/76/15/5, (Estate Act); 2nd Estate Act of 1806 for sale of property, Me/D/27/18; Return of owners of Land, II, 1873.
78. Nottinghamshire Subsidies, 1689; DDM/103/159; DDM/103/281, 282; Return of Owners of Land, II (1873).
79. DDE/13; DDE/7, 9, 41; DDE/5; DDE/39:(17thc purchases); DDE/3, 22: (Sherborne est. inherited); DDE/28 (1780s purchases); Return of Owners of Land, II (1873); and see Chapter Seven.
80. DDM/103/49, 119, 136 (1720s purchases); DDM/103/181, 184; DDM/103/201 (Notts. estates sold); DDM/103/17 (1790s, Lincs. estates sold); DDM/103/104, 297 (1805 sales); and see Chapter Eight.
81. Mi/LM/36; consolidation: Mi/Ac/128, Mi/S/9-12, Mi/1/42/1-10; Return of Owners of Land, II (1873); and see Chapter Nine.
82. The great landowners of Great Britain... (1883).
83. Eyres: Ey/194-237, Title Deeds of Notts., Yorks., and Derbys. land; Bristowes: DD/BB/114/1-7, Pedigree and history; Smiths: K.S.S. Train, Twenty Notts. Families...(1973), 28-9; Holdens: DD/HD/Calendar.
84. See Chapters Eight and Nine.
85. Henry Gally Knight had no children; his estate was sold for c.£70,000. His mother was the daughter of Sir Ralph Knight; she married the Rev. Henry Gally, L. Jacks, The great houses of Nottinghamshire...(1881), 155.

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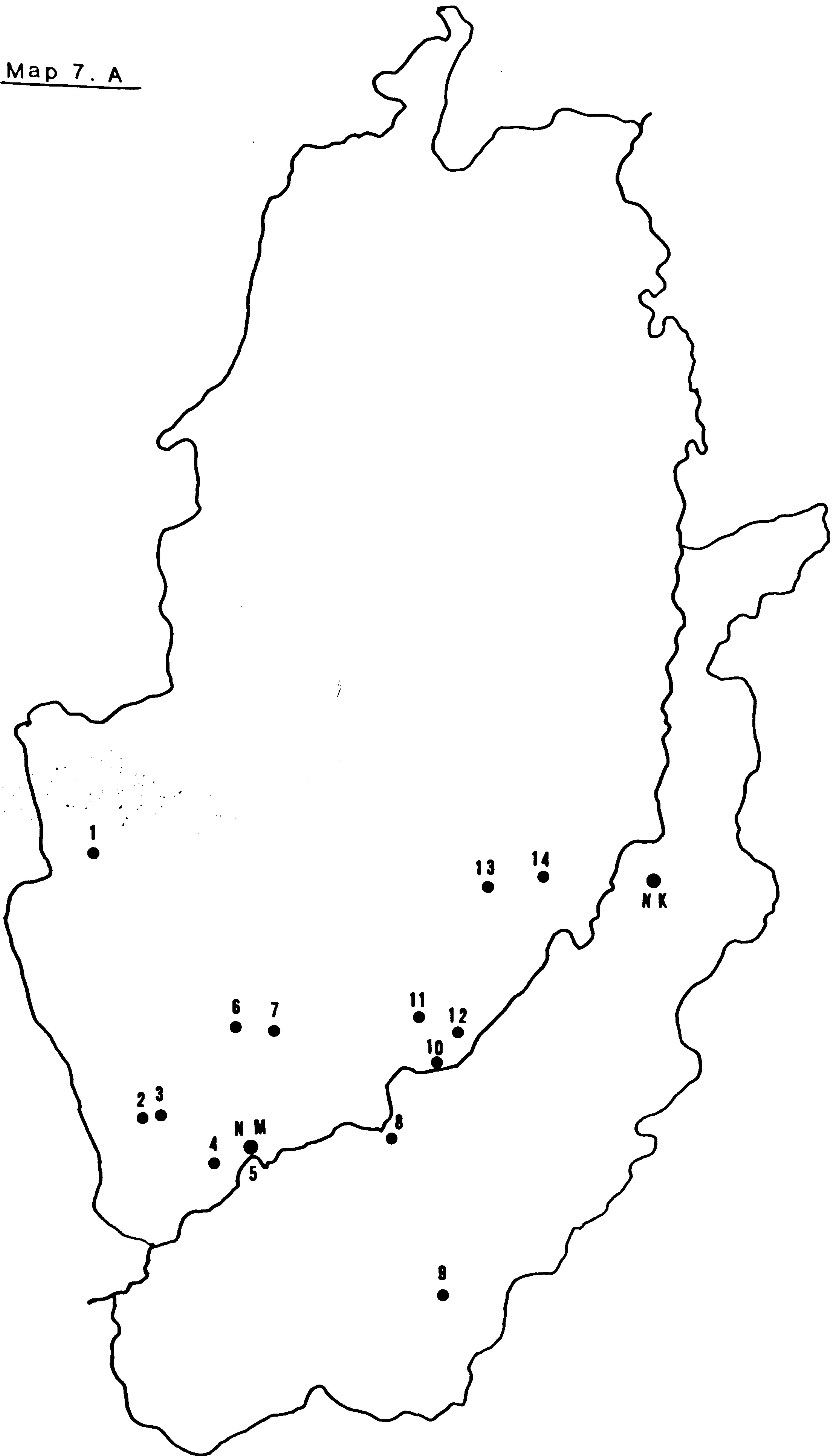
P A R T T H R E E

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P A R T T H R E ECONTRASTS AND CONTINUITY:THREE LANDOWNING FAMILIES

The Edges of Strelley Park were monied newcomers, although they appear to have had minor landowning interests from an early date. The Suttons of Norwood Park were of ancient peerage stock and retained aristocratic attitudes. The Willoughbys of Wollaton Park were a rare combination of entrepreneurs and landowners who were raised to the peerage during the early eighteenth century. How they responded to periods of crisis to maintain continuity is a principal theme of this section. Additionally, the notion that landowners ran their estates as units of economic utility is explored, as good estate management was also fundamental to continuity. Both Mingay and Bonfield have suggested that strict settlement limited economic development; and effective estate management was influenced by the degree of personal interest and expertise, but ultimately depended upon the potential which existed for estate development. How the families met the challenges of financial stringency and economic difficulties will be illustrated through the continuous discourse.

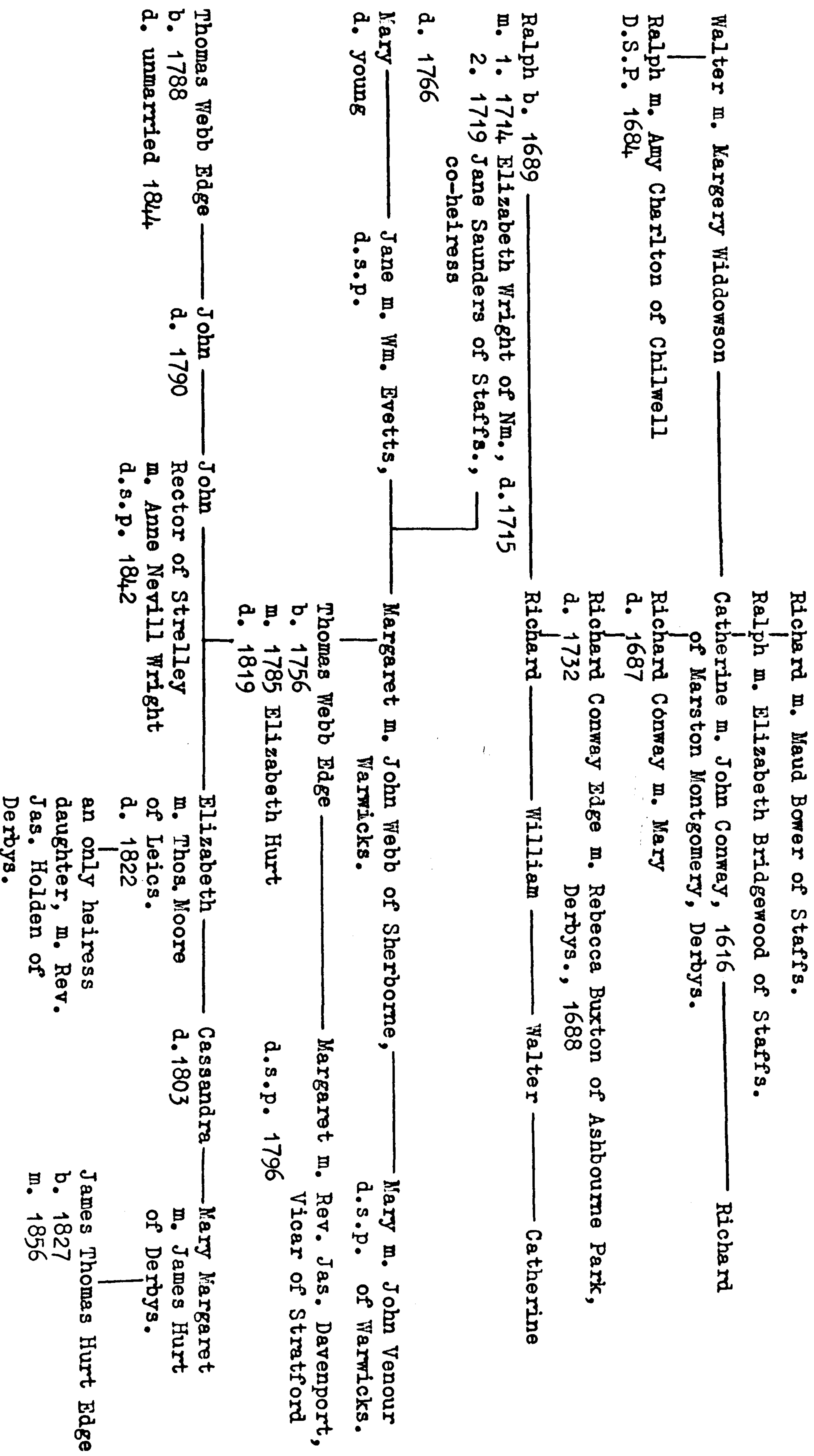
Map 7. A



Edge Landholdings: Nottinghamshire

7.B Key to Map 7.A, Edge landholdings

1. Kirkby
 2. Strelley Park
 3. Bilborough
 4. Lenton
 5. Nottingham
 6. Bestwood Park
 7. Arnold
 8. Radcliff
 9. Kinoulton
 10. Gunthorpe
 11. Lowdham
 12. Caythorpe
 13. Southwell
 14. Upton
-
- NM NOTTINGHAM
- NK NEWARK

Edge Pedigree

Source: Burke's Landed Gentry, III (1972), 280.

CHAPTER SEVENTHE EDGES OF STRELLEY PARK

The Edge family could trace their pedigree back to the fifteenth century, when Richard (Egge), son and heir of Henry, owned c. 45 acres and three messuages at Horton, Staffordshire.¹ Thus they appear to have had a minor association with landholding from an early date. Living in the reign of Elizabeth I was Ralph, second son of Richard who still resided at Horton. Ralph's son Walter became an attorney at law, practising in Nottingham, to be followed in that profession by his son Ralph (1621-84). This Ralph was not only an eminent lawyer, but for 26 years was town clerk of Nottingham, and for 20 years an alderman. Three times he was mayor, and was also a J.P. He established the Edge family as landowners of substance within Nottinghamshire. The full extent of their landholdings prior to the end of the seventeenth century is unknown, but they appear to have been more orientated towards professionalism and civic administration than was usual among the old landed gentry, indicating that they were more likely to be regarded as monied newcomers. Civic responsibility continued to feature among the Edge inheritors: Richard Conway Edge became High Sheriff in 1709. His great-grandson Thomas Webb Edge also became High Sheriff in 1804, and was a J.P.. Thomas's son, also Thomas, was High Sheriff in 1838, a J.P., and a Major in the Nottinghamshire Yeoman Cavalry. His successor, James Thomas Hurt Edge, was High Sheriff in 1870, a lawyer, J.P., and at one time a Captain of the Sherwood Foresters. His son Thomas Lewis Kekewich Edge followed the tradition, becoming High Sheriff, a J.P., and an honorary Major of the Sherwood Foresters.² Thus upward social mobility was maintained by involvement in town and county affairs. With the acquisition of the Strelley estate and its coalmines³ there was a diversification of interests into landowning, estate administration and entrepreneurial development. The family affirmed its social position through intermarriage with other landed families who also had a professional

or entrepreneurial bias: Ralph married Elizabeth Wright of the banking family c. 1715; Margaret married John Webb, High Sheriff of Warwickshire in 1781, whose father had held that position in 1722; John (1790-1842) also married a daughter of the Wright family. Ralph himself, the founder of the Nottinghamshire branch, married Amy Charlton of the Chilwell landowning family who also had coalmining interests in Derbyshire. In the nineteenth century two daughters married into the Holden family, who were descended from Samuel, a third son and a barrister of Aston, Derbyshire. The foundation of family wealth of the Nottinghamshire branch was drawn initially from the legal activities of Walter and Ralph during the seventeenth century, and sustained through agricultural improvements on the acquired estates, and through mineral exploitation, effected by a more direct dependency on estate rentals. It was not until the nineteenth century, following a period of economic difficulties, that a lawyer again featured in the family: James Thomas Hurt Edge, b. 1827.

The Edges appear to fit the traditional view of a rising landed gentry family being established on the profits of a legal business during the seventeenth century when, so the argument runs, opportunities for land purchase were more abundant during the aftermath of the Civil War, and at a time of limited alternative outlets for investment.⁴ Their occupation, representing the interests of landowners, provided them with knowledge of suitable properties coming on to the market. Their professional acumen provided the expertise necessary to manage these estates, and they had a separate income which would initially help to maintain them. Such families (and indeed merchants) were considered to be in a better position to act as improving landlords than were the old established landowners rooted in tradition. But this notion warrants closer scrutiny. The Edges were known to have been at least minor landowners from an early date. Ralph was purchasing smaller properties in Nottinghamshire during the 1650s and

1660s - at Southwell and Upton, Kinoulton, and Radcliffe - before his major acquisitions of Lowdham and Gunthorpe followed by Strelley and Bilborough: but, as has been illustrated in Chapter Six, these estates were as much beset by divided or contested ownership as by the pressure of unsettled debts.⁵ Ralph's acquisitions were effected by deferred payments, indicating a lack of ready capital for initial estate development; and as the following two chapters will illustrate, the running of estates on a sound economic footing was a proclivity not peculiar to only the professional class of landowners. More land was acquired at Southwell and Upton, adjoining the earlier purchase. These properties formed the core estates of inheritance which descended to Richard Conway, who also inherited an estate at Marston Montgomery in Derbyshire from his father. The Sherborne estate in Warwickshire was an additional estate of inheritance, acquired by the marriage of Margaret Edge to John Webb, and descendable with the Edge's core estates. Further purchases were made between 1780 and 1807, enlarging the estates at Sherborne and at Strelley and Bilborough; but there was also some trimming off, with the sale of more important estates, particularly more outlying ones, during the years of economic difficulties early in the nineteenth century. By 1873 James Thomas Edge still owned 2,759 acres of land in Nottinghamshire worth £5,099 a year.⁶ His son was lord of the manors of Strelley, Bilborough, North Muskham and Bathley, and his grand-daughter, Miss E.M. Edge, still resided at Strelley Hall in the 1970s.⁷

Due to certain demographic difficulties, the pattern of inheritance was somewhat chequered. Although Ralph established himself as a landowner, he had no direct heirs, and descent passed to his kinsman Richard Conway, who is thought to have descended from Ralph's aunt, Catherine Edge.⁸ Richard's son, also Ralph, succeeded to both the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire estates,⁹ but produced only four daughters. The third one of whom had married John Webb of Warwickshire; and following her

life interest her son Thomas inherited the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Warwickshire estates.¹⁰ Thomas was succeeded by his son, also Thomas;¹¹ but he died unmarried in 1844 aged 56, when descent was affected by yet more demographic problems. Of Thomas's two younger brothers, one died in infancy and the other, although married, died without issue: of Thomas's three sisters, the eldest married into the Moore family, and her only heiress daughter married into the Holden family; the second sister died in infancy; the third sister married James Hurt of Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Descent passed to their eldest son, James Thomas,¹² who was succeeded by his only son, Thomas Lewis. As descent passed directly or indirectly through the female line on three occasions, name changes were required to retain a separate identity with the Edge estates. Richard Conway, Thomas Webb and James Thomas Hurt all adopted the Edge surname. Richard Conway was a more distant collateral relative; preference had been given in Ralph's will of 1684 to the descendants of his sister Mary, who had married John Jacques. Otherwise descent was retained fairly closely within the family, which contributed to the continuity of estate policies. Significantly, Ralph had decreed that his estates should only descend to whichever male inheritor had already produced a male heir so as to confirm the line of succession. Longevity of inheritors also enabled ideas for estate development and expansion to be carried through. Ralph had owned his smaller estates for 20 to 30 years, and his principal estate for some 10 years at the time of his death in 1684. Richard Conway administered the estates for 48 years; his son Ralph was proprietor for 34 years; his grandson Thomas Webb administered them for 42 years. Thomas Webb junior managed the estates for 25 years until his death in 1844.

Financial Buoyancy

Ralph spent over £8,000 on the acquisition of estates and smaller parcels of land between 1654 and 1682.¹³ His core estate at Strelley and Bilborough extended over 1,000 acres and produced a rental of £406

in 1680.¹⁴ Ralph was acquainted with the profitability and economic potential of the estate during the years when he administered the estate for the legitimate Strelley heirs.¹⁵ Details of rentals and clear coal profits between 1651 and 1667 are set out below.¹⁶ In 1651 there were 5 farms on the Strelley and Bilborough estate, producing rentals of £35, £25, £20, £26, and £12, totalling £118.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rentals</u>	<u>Clear Coal Profits</u>
1652	£ 254	£
1653	224	
1654	210	
1655	313	662
1656	221	1,200
1657	370	1,050
1658	283	1,068
1659	375	1,104
1660	372	1,011
1661	335	797
1662	320	432
1663	335	866
1664	374	780
1665	415	633
1666	292	582
1667	186 ($\frac{1}{2}$ year)	494

Farm rentals fluctuated according to the amount of arrears experienced each year. Coal mine production and profits were affected by the legal battle over contested ownership of the mines. Other estates were purely agriculturally based, particularly Lowdham and Gunthorpe which extended over 577 acres, and Southwell and Upton with its mixture of pasture land, fields and meadows. Diversification of Ralph's economic interests maintained financial buoyancy, supplemented by the income from his legal practice. He made a propitious marriage to Amy Charlton, and did not encumber his estate with lavish settlements. He settled £100 on his successor, Richard Conway's children, and £170 a year in annuities, plus a £100 in bequests.¹⁷ There is some evidence that Ralph endeavoured to reduce his mortgage commitments: in 1674 he repaid a mortgage debt of £530 to the Honourable William Pierrepont which had been charged to the Southwell and Upton estate.¹⁸

Richard Conway (1684-1732) does not appear to have expanded his estates of inheritance with any further purchases, but appears to have

concentrated on consolidating their profitability. Whereas the rental for Lowdham and Gunthorpe estate was in the region of £100 in 1673-4, it had risen to £170 for 1679-80,¹⁹ and had reached £265 in 1700. In 1700 this estate extended over 450 acres, and was valued at £5,280 at 20 years' purchase, with an additional 116 acres of woodland valued at £1,200.²⁰ In 1711 the combined rentals of the Strelley, Bilborough, Lowdham, Gunthorpe, Southwell and Nottingham properties amounted to £603, and had remained fairly static for the previous three or four years, with only a negligible incidence of arrears. By 1721 the combined rentals for estates in Strelley, Bilborough, Lowdham, Gunthorpe, Nottingham, Arnold, Marston Montgomery (Derbyshire) and Longnor (Staffordshire) was recorded at £594; but the value of Strelley Park - which stood at over £100 a year - had not been included in this total, unlike the previous records. Again, arrears appeared to be negligible. In 1731 rentals received for these same estates totalled £648. Again Strelley Park did not feature, and arrears were still insignificant. Out of the estate rentals of £659 in 1708-9 was disbursed £593 in general estate expenses; in 1709-10 £577 was expended on the estates out of the total rental of £696; and out of the rentals totalling £603 in 1710-11 an almost equal amount was disbursed, although additional receipts totalled £115.²¹ This appears to confirm that the daily running of estates tended to absorb the rental income, leaving landowners hard pressed to find the large lump sums required from time to time for capital investment, unless they were buffered by other sources of income. This was a particular problem before the large increases in rentals due to enclosure, farm consolidation, and agricultural improvements, which benefited landowners towards the end of the eighteenth century. Richard did not excessively commit the estates in his strict settlement provisions. His wife Rebecca was to receive £50 a year annuity out of Bilborough and

Gunthorpe as her jointure maintenance, and his five younger children were to receive an equal share of £3,000.²² A term of 500 years was specified to raise these portions, at 5 per cent interest. Richard appears to have been more affected by conditions of financial stringency than his predecessor or his successor.

Richard's son Ralph (1732-1766) appears to have kept the estates intact except for a little trimming off by the sale of the Radcliffe property in 1743.²³ This comprised a half share of the Rectory of Radcliffe and Lamcoate, its appurtenances, Glebe lands, tithes and tenths; and an undivided fourth part of the manor, with free fishing rights in the Trent. At the time of his succession the estates were producing a rental of £648,²⁴ but still carried certain mortgage encumbrances. Ralph married two heiress wives. His first wife, Elizabeth Wright, inherited £3,000 by the will of John Moore²⁵ which, under the terms of Ralph's marriage settlement, was to be used to discharge a mortgage debt on the Edge estates. Total provision for their younger children would have been £4,000, but Elizabeth died without issue.²⁶ Ralph's second marriage was to Jane, prospective co-heiress daughter of William Saunders of Staffordshire; but as she brought no inheritance with her only £2,500 was to be raised in portions for any younger children.²⁷ His final settlement made by will in 1765 indicated that of his three surviving daughters, two had already received portions on the occasion of their marriages in full satisfaction of the terms of his marriage settlement, leaving only his unmarried daughter Jane's portion still to be raised. In addition he bequeathed annuities totalling £1,890 a year.²⁸ During his year as Sheriff on Nottingham in 1760 he had incurred personal expenses of £183 in the purchase of his livery, the opening of court, gratuities, entertainment and the production of legal documents.²⁹ As Richard's expansionist policies will indicate, he appears to have taken more risks and adopted a more enthusiastic economic policy in order to

sustain financial buoyancy.

Thomas succeeded his grandfather at the age of 10, and during his minority the estates were administered by his mother Margaret Edge and his father John Webb, who managed his own estate at Sherborne in Warwickshire. Ultimately this was added to the Edge estates of inheritance. Thomas aggregated around the Sherborne estate with the acquisition of 31 acres of marshland,³⁰ and around Strelley and Bilborough with piecemeal purchases to facilitate complete ownership of the manors.³¹ However, against the background of continuing economic difficulties during the early years of the nineteenth century the more outlying estates were sold off, including Marston Montgomery in Derbyshire,³² St. Nicholas and Ullenhall in Warwickshire,³³ the farms at Kirkby and Lowdham and Gunthorpe in Nottinghamshire,³⁴ together with the smaller properties at Southwell and Upton, Arnold and Lenton.³⁵ These sales enabled mortgage commitments to be paid off, with the residue providing support for Thomas's son until his succession.³⁶ Southwell, Upton, Arnold and Lenton raised £3,058, the various properties valued at between 30 and 53 years' purchase. The St. Nicholas estate was sold for £12,720; Marston Montgomery was valued at £3,454; and the Lowdham and Gunthorpe estate - which had been the Edge's principal agricultural estate - was sold for £21,249. Thomas undertook a policy of steady and regular improvements at Sherborne, which was ultimately let, while he resided at his principal seat at Strelley. The house underwent renovation and rebuilding before being let to Captain Meads. A total of 3,250 new trees were planted on the estate. New farmhouses were built and old buildings repaired.³⁷ In 1779 a farm was let on this estate at £126 a year;³⁸ a small farm was let for £20 a year in 1784;³⁹ and a farm of 192 acres was let in 1785 at £150 a year. Another farm of 48 acres was let at £90 a year;⁴⁰ and an inn keeper rented 50 acres at £88 a year in 1790.⁴¹ In 1808 the Sherborne estate, extending over 684 acres, produced a total rental income of £1,210,⁴² which was an important contribution to the overall annual

income, and warranted the expenditure on the improvements. The Strelley farms produced a rental of £1,021 in 1800⁴⁵ which had reduced to £992 by 1809.⁴⁶ The farms and cottagers together amounted to £1,058 compared with £1,138 in 1805.⁴⁷ The total rental for the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Warwickshire and Staffordshire estates amounted to £3,532 in 1801⁴⁸ reducing to £3,277 in 1805⁴⁹ but rising to £4,009 subsequently.⁵⁰ Out of this income the household accounts for Strelley and Sherborne averaged £100 a year between 1780 and 1806.⁵¹ In addition, educating his three children at school averaged £76 a year between 1787 and 1807.⁵² Property tax on the estates at Strelley, Bilborough, Lowdham, Gunthorpe, Markby, Arnold, Longnor (Staffordshire), and Marston (Derbyshire), plus coal rent in Strelley and Bilborough, amounted to £430 in 1810.⁵³ The property tax on Sherborne was £93 (compared with £77 for Strelley); and window taxes amounted to £171. Thomas's will of 1815 indicated that there were two mortgages of £5,000 and £4,000 on the Nottinghamshire estates due to Mr. Thomas Richards; also £5,000 plus interest due to Mr. Thomas Richards on the Sherborne estate; and £1,500 plus interest due on a mortgage to a relative, Mr. Edge. In addition there was a £5,000 portion to be raised for his daughter Mary Margaret, and the principal and interest due on a Bond to raise trust monies for his sister Margaret Davenport's children.⁵⁴ Shortly afterwards the sale of Lowdham and Gunthorpe estate for £21,000 cleared these debts, except for the £4,000 mortgage which was to remain on the Strelley and Bilborough estates.⁵⁵ In addition, a personal debt of £2,000 was still outstanding, for which a Bond was raised on the Warwickshire estate. Out of the income from the remaining estates, £50 a year was to be raised for Thomas's daughter whilst she remained single (Mary ultimately married James Hurt in 1825), and £600 a year was to be paid in two instalments to his son until his succession, which occurred in 1819.⁵⁶ Thus financial difficulties at a period of continuing economic problems affecting

agriculture forced substantial sales in order to retain a degree of liquidity.

Thomas's son, also Thomas, succeeded to estates much reduced in size and geographical distribution, centering around the two seats at Strelley and Sherborne, but still retaining the estate at Longnor in Staffordshire and the core of the estate at Marston Montgomery in Derbyshire. Thomas was anxious to extend his holdings, a policy he appears to have adopted right through his period of ownership. His agent was engaged in correspondence in 1842, seeking out additional land.⁵⁷ In 1826 Thomas approached the Duke of St. Albans offering to take the prestigious Bestwood Estate on a lease, which the Duke at that time declined, but promised to let him the estate if the farmers became troublesome. By 1830 Thomas had a more active interest in this estate, but it is unclear whether he held a tenuous lease, or was managing it on behalf of the Duke. The Duke advanced £100 towards building a cottage for Thomas's keepers to live in, and agreed that part of a field could be rented for this purpose. He sent his own architect to Bestwood for Thomas to employ, and subsequently requested, 'write me a line to say how the planting is going on at Bestwood, and if you have finished your Lodge, and how my new buildings look'.⁵⁸ However, it does not appear that Thomas made any substantial purchases to extend his estates, for the rentals and accounts only applied to the Strelley, Bilborough, Longnor and Marston estates up to 1840.⁵⁹ (Thomas died in 1844). The 1834 rentals for his Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire estates totalled £5,748, out of which general estate disbursements continued to remain at a high level at £5,236.⁶⁰ By 1840 the annual value of Strelley, extending over 1,000 acres, was assessed at £2,879, including £1,200 from North and Company for colliery and pit rental; and Bilborough was valued at £1,687.⁶¹ As he remained a bachelor, Thomas had no children to be provided for out of the estate, but settled £5,000 on his niece Mary Moore, an heiress in her own right who was passed

over in the line of descent; and £5,000 to his sister, Mary Margaret Hurt whose son James Thomas was to succeed.⁶²

Estate Development

A survey of Strelley manor in 1680 indicates that of its 1,144 total acreage, 68 acres were already enclosed meadow grounds, and 410 enclosed pasture grounds. Strelley Park extended to 533 acres. The three largest farms were 118, 80 and 74 acres in extent, with six smaller farms between 20 and 49 acres, ten smallholdings of 2 to 19 acres, and thirty cottagers.⁶³ A mixed farming policy was in operation, which continued to be the basis of the Edge's farming policy on all their estates. The Lowdham and Gunthorpe estate contained three farms, of 32, 49 and 57 acres, two water corn mills, and two areas of woodland covering 146 acres when it was purchased in 1668.⁶⁴ Land at Southwell and Upton, purchased piecemeal in the 1650s and 1660s, was divided into closes, meadow and pasture.⁶⁵ When purchased in 1660, Kinoulton was an enclosed homestead;⁶⁶ and the purchase of Radcliffe in 1661 covered a fourth part of the manor and a half share of the Rectory, glebe lands and tithes.⁶⁷ These properties formed the nucleus of Ralph's agricultural holdings which were developed and sometimes extended by his successors; and they were the foundation of family income in future generations. The three farms at Lowdham and Gunthorpe were let out on 21 year leases in 1672, each neatly divided into arable, meadow, pasture and enclosed land;⁶⁸ whereas the Southwell farms were let for a variety of terms: 21, 30 and 60 years.⁶⁹ Each of these farms was an admixture of closes and acreages. All these leases denote an adherence to strip farming at this time.

Richard Conway inherited the Marston Montgomery estate from his father, which was added to the Edge landholdings, but this appears to have been only a small property. Its rental produced only £14 at the Michaelmas half year in 1721 compared with £58 for Longnor, £54 for Gunthorpe, £37 for Lowdham, £40 for Bilborough, and £87 for Strelley.⁷⁰

Richard concentrated on developing the Nottinghamshire estates, whose overall profitability increased. In particular the number of farms at Lowdham and Gunthorpe grew from three to eight by c.1700.⁷¹ Seven of them were between 20 and 49 acres, and one over 50 acres; and at Bilborough three small farms were regrouped into two, leaving three larger farms relatively unaffected.⁷² Richard's son, Ralph, continued this development policy. As part owner of Lowdham he agreed to seeking an Act in 1765 for dividing and enclosing the open fields.⁷³ He appears to have been more actively involved in developing his coalmines, than in any radical changes in the farming economy.

Protection of interests forced Thomas to raise objections when the Duke of Portland sought an Act to enclose Kirkby forest land covering 1900 acres. Thomas decreed that the Duke was only entitled to a fourth part of 300 acres, following a tradition of not more than 300 acres in each year being temporarily enclosed into brecks. At that time Kirkby contained about 1700 acres of old enclosure, of which Thomas held 195.⁷⁴ It was a common feature among landowning families to follow local customs and practices in agricultural policies, leading to considerable variety among the various estates of a single proprietor, even within the county of Nottinghamshire. This is particularly indicated in the terms of leases and in tithing rights and dues. In 1779 Thomas granted a 12 year lease on two farms in Kirkby, with strict penalties to be incurred for the sowing of any flax or woad.⁷⁵ In 1791 he granted a lease at will on a 140 acre farm at Strelley, with penalties to be incurred for plowing, burning, or for the sowing of hemp.⁷⁶ At the same time he granted a lease at will on a 17 acre farm at Strelley to a framework knitter, with penalties for plowing, keeping a greyhound, or setting snares.⁷⁷ At Sherborne, where Thomas was joint owner with Elias Webb and to the enclosure of which he agreed in 1799,⁷⁸ leases were short-term. In 1779 a farm was let for six years with £5 penalties (rather than the £10 incurred in Nottinghamshire) for

unlawful tillage of old enclosure or open fields or common;⁷⁹ whereas another farm was let on a yearly tenancy, although the same stringent leasing terms applied to maintain good husbandry.⁸⁰

In 1799 Thomas had over 5 acres of new enclosure in Upton parish valued at 37s.10d. per acre. In Southwell he owned 6 closes; the lowest value was 25s.10d. per acre, but the other closes were considered to be of excellent quality land, worth as much as 60s., 75s., 120s., and 150s. per acre. Land at Upton was reckoned at 47 years' purchase, and in Southwell was 53 years' purchase. The Southwell land extended over 41 acres, comprising a farm of 30 acres, and a smallholding of 9 acres. This land had been held in the family for well over a century. Its original pattern of fields and meadow land in 1654 had been broken up into closes. In Arnold parish Thomas had acquired three closes extending over 15 acres, producing an annual value of £82; and in Lenton he had two closes, one on the Forest, extending to under 5 acres and producing an annual value of £6. In addition he owned three closes of about 3 acres and six tenements in Nottingham. These had an annual value of £66.⁸¹ His piecemeal acquisitions indicate a diversification of economic interests and financial income.

In 1680 Bilborough had contained six farms, none of them large. Three were over 100 acres, one over 50, one over 20 and the other over 10 acres.⁸² As already indicated, the three smallest farms had been reorganised⁸³ into two of between 20 and 49 acres by 1728, which had again been regrouped to form only one farm of 55 acres by 1800. The three larger farms remained, extending over 102 acres, 122 acres, and 139 acres.⁸⁴ The two largest farms also had grazing rights in Strelley, amounting to c.15 acres each.⁸⁵ Strelley and Bilborough manors combined had contained 30 cottagers in 1680. By 1800 there were 27 cottagers in Strelley and 24 in Bilborough, increasing the rental income. Not all of these tenants were employed on the Edge farms or at the coal pits. Some of them were engaged in the framework knitting industry. The

Strelley farms experienced greater reorganisation at this time (see Table 7.1). The smallholdings were being gradually increased in size and reduced in number, and the size of farms gradually expanded. The two largest farms each extended to more than 130 acres. Thomas's Home Farm was the largest at 257 acres, with an additional 121 acres of woods and plantations. The smallest farm covered 24 acres.⁸⁶ Further changes in the Strelley farm structure took place in 1805 and 1809. Taking the farms of 20 acres and over, the nine at Strelley had increased in total to 13 by 1805, but had been reduced to 8 by 1809. By the former date there had been an increase in the number of medium sized farms of between 50 and 99 acres, whereas by 1809 the larger farms had increased in acreage to 136, 173 and 178 acres.⁸⁷ This reorganisation of the farm structure took place against the background of recurring food crises and political unrest.⁸⁸

At Lowdham and Gunthorpe the initial purchase of three farms of c.30 to c.60 acres,⁸⁹ which had expanded to eight farms by c.1700,⁹⁰ contained two farms of c.30 acres in 1809,⁹¹ and three larger farms of between 100 and 150 acres, plus several smallholdings. It had retained one of its two water corn mills, and 600 of the original 146 acres of woodland still remained, which still contained thriving oaks. It was situated in a fertile part of Nottinghamshire, contiguous to the Trent, and contained rich arable, meadow and pasture land. Being situated eight miles east of Nottingham town, the land and farms here were not affected by encroachment through mineral exploitation as were those situated on the coal belt; and were of higher economic value than the moor and forest grazing land situated nearer to Nottingham, which was reflected in its ultimate selling price of £21,249.⁹² This estate was also held within the family for well over 100 years.

In 1808 the Sherborne estate contained two large farms of 278 and 372 acres, a medium sized one of 63 acres, and a small one of 13

acres, plus two smallholdings of 2 to 3 acres each, and 14 acres of plantations. In addition there were 26 cottagers.⁹³ There was also a small estate situated in St. Nicholas parish, in Warwick borough which comprised a farm of 48 acres, an inn, sundry cottages, a wharf with warehouses, and also contained several closes of rich arable, meadow and pasture land. In total the whole extended over more than 66 acres. This was a valuable estate, ranging from around £100 to around £200 per acre. The estate also contained a stone quarry and lime kilns, and the Warwick and Napton canal ran through the property, providing transport and communication access. The beds of stone under the estate were considered to be of superior and durable quality, well suited for building purposes. The proximity of the estate to Leamington Spa, frequented by the nobility and gentry, was regarded as an inducement to the erection of Villas on this land, which was reflected in its ultimate sale price of £12,720.⁹⁴

The exact nature of the Marston Montgomery estate in Derbyshire is unclear (and indeed of the Longnor estate in Staffordshire, which extended over 315 acres,⁹⁵ and which appears to have been an ancient estate of inheritance). Part of the Marston estate was trimmed off, which comprised a farm plus several closes of arable, meadow and pasture land, totalling 60 acres.⁹⁶ A further 55 acres of woodland were retained on the estate,⁹⁷ and either another farm or a Hall house which was tenanted, for this estate continued to feature in the rentals into the 1830s, producing £60 a year.⁹⁸ The sale of the Marston farm raised £3,500.

Recurring economic difficulties together with personal financial problems forced the sales of several of these estates with their potential for further development. In addition 233 of enclosed arable, meadow and pasture land in Kirkby in Ashfield was sold in 1811. This had once been divided into several smallish farms, but was occupied as one in 1811. It was considered to be in a good state of cultivation,

although part of it was situated on the coal field. It was sold in 9 lots, each with a portion of woodland. The timber had been valued at £776.⁹⁹ At this time, after a period of farm reorganisation and capital investment on repairs and new buildings on at least parts of his estates, together with certain new enclosures of Strelley, Bilborough, Lowdham, Gunthorpe, Southwell, Upton and Sherborne,¹⁰⁰ Thomas effected rental increases on all his estates. Many of the improvements invested in occurred before 1800;¹⁰¹ the new rents took effect in 1801. In Lenton, where land was valuable due to its close proximity to Nottingham, the rents were advanced by 7s.6d. from £4.10s.6d. to £4.18s.0d., the price per acre increasing from 50s. to 54s. Arnold rents were advanced by £3.4s.0d. from £8.16s.0d. to £12, the price per acre rising from 15s.4d. to 20s.10d. Kirkby rents were advanced by £40.14s.0.d. from £129.6s.0.d. to £170, with the value per acre rising from 11s.4d. to 14s.11d. Lowdham and Gunthorpe rents were advanced by £127.3s.0.d. from £438 to £565, the price per acre increasing from 19s.3d. to 24s.10d. In Bilborough the rents rose from £264 to £398, advancing by £135, the price per acre increasing from 12s.7d. to 19s.0d. Strelley rents were advanced by £118.4s.0.d from £498.12s.0.d. to £616.16s.0.d, the value per acre rising from 15s.5d. to 19s.2d. Of two properties in Warwickshire, one advanced by £38.7s.0d. from £130.10s.0.d. to £168.17s.0d., the value per acre increasing from 39s.9d. to 51s.6d. The other advanced £290.9s.9d. from £630.18s.9d. to £921.8s.6d. The Staffordshire estate advanced by £120, from £180 to £300, the value per acre increasing from 11s.3d. to 19s.0d.; and the Marston estate advanced by £9, from 31s.0d. to 40s., the value per acre rising from 11s.4d. to 14s.5d. Altogether the rents were advanced by £959.8s.4d. per year, from a total of £2,573.9s.4d. to £3,532.17s.8d.¹⁰² Certain estates saw a further rise in their annual rental. In 1808 at Sherborne the previous total of £921.8s.6d. was increased to £1,210.11s.0d. after

land tax deductions of £49.12s.8d.¹⁰³ The following year the rentals at Lowdham and Gunthorpe rose from £565 to £810.¹⁰⁴ However, these rental increases were inadequate in themselves to meet Thomas's financial commitments, and could not prevent some of the more profitable or more outlying estates from being sold.

Around 1800 Strelley Home Farm extended over 22 closes totalling 262 acres, of which 10 acres were planted with wheat and 18 acres with barley.¹⁰⁵ Livestock purchases between 1795 and 1799 averaged £122 a year.¹⁰⁶ At this time the Strelley and Bilborough farms produced an income of £1,494.¹⁰⁷ Due to the intensive nature of the mixed farming practices labourers' wages were a not inconsiderable charge on the estate. In 1768 this charge was £128.7s.6d., and had only risen to £133.9s.0d. by 1795; but by 1799 these wages totalled £294.16s.1d.¹⁰⁸ As part of his policy of improvement and rationalisation at this difficult period, Thomas decided to consolidate the two livings at Strelley and Bilborough, building a new rectory at Strelley.¹⁰⁹ The improved yearly value of this rectory then stood at £84.7s.0.d. - a net profit.

Thus Thomas's son Thomas inherited estates considerably reduced in size, and with their profitability affected by continuing economic and political uncertainties, and by debts incurred to meet increased capital expenditure. It was left to him to continue a policy of improvements and expansion as circumstances permitted. Thomas's interest in taking out a lease on the Bestwood Park estate, which appears to have been a preferable financial proposition to land purchases at this time, prompted him to have a survey and valuation undertaken in 1825.¹¹⁰ He approached the Duke of St. Albans the following year.¹¹¹ This estate contained thirty farms of varying sizes, which appears to have been a common feature. (The Moore family, a collateral branch of the Edges, purchased an estate in Snareston, Leicestershire containing farms and closes of varying sizes;¹¹² and Thomas's father had

been interested in Nuthall Temple estate when it came on the market in 1817 on which the farms ranged from under 50 to over 200 acres)¹¹³. The estate extended over 3,592 acres and was valued at £4,350 a year. The value of the land ranged from 14s.0d. to £2 an acre. The surveyor's overall opinion was that '£4,000 a year would be about £1.2s.3d. per acre, but the value of the Park, I think, is not more than 20 per cent per acre which, taking the average of the times, would protect a Lease for 21 years, with the Buildings as they are as Tenants would be found responsible to undertake the erecting and supporting of buildings during their respective leases, and should also plant quick on a great part of the waste. But if continued upon their present rents, no permanent improvement can ever be expected; on the contrary, great expenses will annually incur to the Landlord in Buildings and also losses from change of times with the Tenantry'¹¹⁴. Each farm was individually assessed for the state of its farmhouse and buildings and the condition of its husbandry, which could vary considerably, ranging from James Bramley's farm which was 'in the worst state of management in the Park. The whole of this land wants following'; this was a 40 acre farm. Whereas Mr. Lammin's farm of 367 acres was 'for the extent managed, in a superior way to any in the Park. I consider no mode of cultivation can be pursued to promote more advantage to the occupier and Landowner'¹¹⁵. Although many farms were well managed and well cultivated others followed a crude practice of husbandry, and the majority of buildings were in a bad state of repair, considered unlikely to stand a lease. Thus this extensive estate offered quite a challenge which Thomas accepted and applied for the lease of. Again the farming economy was mixed, with arable crops of wheat, turnips and potatoes; and although there was some meadow land, the rough grass and warren was not inconsiderable. This estate was situated in the Forest region, an accessible distance from the core estates at Strelley where Thomas's interests had been circumscribed.

He was assisted on this estate by his younger brother, Reverend John, who was rector of Strelley, and also owned a farm there.¹¹⁶ Further improvements and developments took place here with the continued reorganisation of farms. By 1827 it was clear that tenant landholdings had been formed into tidy accumulations of adjacent plots. In Strelley there were two farms of just under or just over 50 acres, and the four largest were 145, 180, 195 and 209 acres. Bilborough contained four larger farms of 78, 82, 130 and 150 acres,¹¹⁷ indicating a steady and progressive policy over the years to form larger and more economically viable farming units. By 1832 there were only minor changes in the structure of the Strelley and Bilborough farms,¹¹⁸ but by 1840 the six larger farms in Strelley had all increased in size to 48, 98, 103, 135, 220 and 245 acres; and the number of larger farms in Bilborough had increased from four to seven, extending over 45, 52, 80, 90, 130, 147 and 290 acres on the individual holdings.¹¹⁹ Smallholdings remained a feature of the estates, indicating that either further small parcels of land had been aggregated from adjoining parishes such as Cossall and Nuthall, which began to feature in surveys; or that more waste had been reclaimed, or woodland felled and brought into cultivation - which is quite probable as the timber would be required for their coalmining activities. The very small landholders on the Edge estates did not disappear as a result of a progressive policy for economic development, as Table 7.1 indicates; but whereas their holdings were of 1 to 2 acres in 1680, they were of 3 acres and upwards in 1832. In addition to the farms and smallholdings there were still over 400 acres of closes in 1832, most of them situated in Bilborough; but by this date they were collected into fewer hands: only fourteen persons were associated with them. Although a continuous policy of development and expansion may be traced, it did not disregard local practices and customs; and its achievement was not detrimental to the local community. There were certain similarities between the surveys of 1680 and 1840

indicating that the economic structure of the estate remained basically unaltered and that developments had progressed methodically from a fairly sound base as circumstances and opportunities permitted, such that by 1840 the total rental value of the two estates was over £4,500. This figure included the colliery and coalpits, which were valued at £1,200, and whose development was an adjunct to the family's primarily agrarian interests, which produced £3,395 from cattle sales in 1839.¹²⁰

Ralph Edge became acquainted with the coalmining potential at Strelley and Bilborough during the years when he was administering the Balston's interest in the estate. From 1656 to 1660 the clear profits from the coalmines had been over £1,000 a year, but they declined and fluctuated over the next seven years, descending to only £258 during 1667.¹²¹ In 1660, when the profits began to decline, Ralph had a survey made which detailed the charges which would be incurred for sinking a new pit in the Hare Close at Strelley, which is detailed below.

Two or more Dams	£ 30
Two Gynns	150
Wood for Gynns	100
Smith's work and iron	70
Ropes, candles, leasing of wood, cutting and cording	
32 horses, four working six-hour shifts at both Gynns	
The sough 400 yards long	60
Four sough pits	40
The soft coal ginn pit	30
12 yards of headings to the pit	3
The two gynns, wood and making	250
20 yards of heading from the great gynn to the hard coal pit	10
First hard coal pit	40
The great ginn pit mine and cellar	110

The total outlay would be over £900.¹²² In 1671 coal was being mined at Kimberley Green, and Ralph prepared articles of agreement permitting a right of way for eight months through several closes in Strelley Park for the carrying of coals from that pit.¹²³ Four years later Ralph had purchased two parts of the manors of Strelley and Bilborough. In 1684 he undertook an agreement for a second hard coal pit to be sunk in

Strelley Park at a cost of £47. The two teams of four 'butties' would work a double shift (night and day). The mine shaft would be 7 feet long and 6 feet wide, and they would be paid 52s.0d. for each week worked in sinking the pit until the £47 was paid up. If they finished the pit and took up the bottom of the hard coals before the sum was fully satisfied, Ralph would pay the balance owing; and he was to provide all the necessary timber, ropes and tools.¹²⁴ The shallowness of the pits, and the temporary nature of their workings is indicated here. Richard Conway Edge continued to develop the coal mines, using the proceeds from the sale of wood. Around 1700 he had the 600 acres of woodland at Lowdham surveyed and valued, and released 116 acres of wood for sale, worth £1,200.¹²⁵ In 1705 he obtained a grant for the sale of wood from his land in Skythorn, within the Chase of Thorney Wood and Sherwood Forests, and situated in Lowdham.¹²⁶ A further grant was obtained in 1723 for another 17 acres of woodland in Skythorn Coppice to be sold, which cost £400 to be cut down, and over £5 to apply for the grant.¹²⁷ That same year a 21 year lease of the mineral rights in Strelley was granted to John White. White would pay rent for each stack load of hard and soft coals he got.¹²⁸ To facilitate the movement of coal Ralph Edge made an agreement in 1732 that the coalworks tenants could fence out a new road, the coalmasters to make a yearly allowance to the Edge tenants for the land they so used. This was in addition to a common road for tenants which ran from Strelley, through Bilborough field, to Nottingham, and was laid out in the waste at the time of the division of the estate between Ralph Edge and Mr. Thynne.¹²⁹ In 1738 Ralph undertook the unusual step of granting a very long lease of 99 years to Robert and John Fletcher and Francis Barber for the mining of coal in Strelley and Bilborough. A complex system of dues was set out. Yearly rents of the property would be paid, as was the practice, at Michaelmas and Lady Day. For every stack load of coal got, sold or burnt out of the enclosed lands, Ralph was to receive 1s.3d.

For other lands the rate would be 10¹/₄d. per load. Rectory lands were chargeable at the rate of 1s.3d. if enclosed, and 1¹/₂d. if not. Ralph was entitled to 11 loads of coal yearly for his own use, and coal used by the Rector and tenants, or in working the fire engines was exempt from the dues. The lease would become void if the colliery was not worked for two years.¹³⁰ To facilitate the expansion of production a further 17 acres of wood in Skythorn was granted a release for sale.¹³¹ Production and sales of coal continued to increase. From Michaelmas 1736 to Michaelmas 1737 4,950 loads of coal were sold from the Kimberley pits, rising to 5,105 loads the following year.¹³² From October 1744 to August 1745 1,363 loads of hard coal were sold from the pits in Bilborough Field, and 1,755 loads the following year. A new pit was sunk in January 1745.¹³³ From one pit in Bilborough 276 loads were sold in 1761, rising to 981 from November 1763 to May 1764, and reaching 2,297 loads from May to October 1764. In 1766 £110 rent was obtained from the sale of 1,766 loads.¹³⁴ From 1773 to 1819, whilst Thomas was involved in managing the estates, production fluctuated, descending to 1,454 loads producing a rent of £91 in 1816, and rising to 6,510 loads which produced £293 in rent; but most years the rent was in the region of £200.¹³⁵ A survey of the Bilborough coal seam had been carried out in 1770 which anticipated that out of an area of 15,363 yards a total of 3,277 loads could be obtained,¹³⁶ indicating that pits were still very small. This state was influenced by the pattern of landownership. In 1790 Henry Sedley, at neighbouring Nuthall Temple estate, indicated that a small skirt of coal belonging to him joined on to the coal seam on Thomas's estate, and was quite detached from his principal bed of coal. Walker, the coalmaster, had indicated that he could not go quite to the end of Thomas's coal unless he could also have Sedley's to work with it. Sedley suggested that their two agents should settle terms to the mutual advantage of both landowners.¹³⁷ Such negotiations indicated the importance of economic accountability in estate management. A map of the coalfields

prepared by coalmaster John Fletcher indicated the proximity of coal-mines owned by different landed proprietors,¹³⁸ and the problems of accessibility and workability were not always so amicably concluded, as will be illustrated in the next chapter. In 1794 preliminary excavation was undertaken in Old Moore Close prior to the sinking of a pit, which would need to extend 66 yards to reach the soft coal.¹³⁹ In 1799 the timber on the estate at Marston Manor was valued prior to sale. There were 55 acres containing 300 trees valued at £200,¹⁴⁰ the profits of which would assist the new development. By 1807 several piecemeal acquisitions of land had been made which completed sole ownership of Bilborough manor,¹⁴¹ thereby facilitating the expansion of coal production. The 99 year lease granted by Ralph was due to expire in 1837, but coal production ceased about 1811, and under the terms of the original agreement a settlement of accounts was due; but Thomas alleged a breach of the terms and the spirit of the original contract, and the case was taken to arbitration. One dispute arose over 4 cottages which Mr. Barber had built in the woods, and which Thomas wished to be rid of, claiming that the lessees were under no obligation to build cottages for the miners, most of whom lived in adjoining parishes. In addition, several useless pits had been left open a great many years, each of which should have been filled up within 12 months of ceasing work. Other points at issue were that the coalmasters had let the cottages to non-miners after cessation of mining operations; and the original lease had stipulated that 10s.0d. per acre per annum should be paid by the coalmasters for lands used in the mining operations in any of the liberties, which, by 1816 the time of the legal hearing, was considered to be inadequate. Counsel's opinion was sought on whether Barber and Walker had a right to erect the cottages, and a further right to let them out to others after they ceased to be useful to miners; whether the lease could be considered void as the old pits were not filled in; and whether the

tenants were obliged to accept the 10s.0d. rate, or were damages to be estimated according to circumstances? Counsel's opinion was that the original terms of the lease included 'buildings necessary and proper for a working colliery', and therefore Thomas could not dispute them; but the cottages should only have been let to miners. The lease was not affected by the omission to fill up the old pits, but the coalmasters were liable for a breach of covenant. In addition the tenants were bound by the original agreement to take the 10s.0d. per acre for damages sustained. It was estimated that £1,062 was due in compensation for the unexpired period of the lease; and under the terms of the lease, Mr. Walker claimed the new engine machinery valued at £6,500, the old engine valued at £2,000, and all the coal in Strelley valued at £3,000. All the rest of the property belonging to the collieries was to be taken by Thomas at a fair valuation, but in the end he also got the stock of coals at selling price.¹⁴² This costly and protracted arbitration case resulting from a too liberal interpretation of the terms of the leasing agreement by the Fletcher-Barber-Walker partnership soured relationships between them and the Edges. Thereafter they undertook shorter leases with other coalmasters, stipulating quite specific covenants, and reserving the right to refer arbitration to the Queen's Bench, in an attempt to retain stricter (and perhaps wiser) control of their mineral workings in their own hands. They had possibly become too complacent over the operation of this aspect of the economic development of their estates; but it did not deter their policy of expansion: on the contrary, the programme stepped up as mining practices improved and demand increased due to population increase and the opening up of markets. Thomas's successor Thomas had a mineral survey undertaken in 1835 of a coal seam extending over Strelley, Bilborough, Cossall and Nuthall, adjoining Lord Middleton's coal seam under Broxtowe, and extending over 15,332 acres. It was estimated that the seam would be workable for a term of 50 years,

and during the next three years 731,700 tons of hard coal were mined out of 271 acres worth £36,585, and 1,071,900 tons of soft coal were mined out of 397 acres worth £45,655.¹⁴³ In 1838 a 21 year lease was extended to the North-Wakefield partnership at a yearly rental of £1,200, plus three guineas per acre for any land damaged. They were to construct a waggonway from the colliery at Babbington to terminate at or near Cinder Hill, at the Toll Bar on the road from Nottingham to Alfretton; but until the railway was completed a wharf was to be established on Chilwell Dam to carry away the coals for sale. No colliery workings were to take place within 450 yards of Strelley Hall, nor within 126 acres of named closes.¹⁴⁴ In 1840 three other collieries were in production, besides the one at Strelley. Skegby colliery was producing 9,000 tons of coal out of a 2 acre stretch, valued at £100 per acre; Pinxton colliery produced 10,000 tons of coal from 2 acres, valued at £85 per acre; and Sleight's colliery produced 24,000 tons of coal out of $5\frac{1}{2}$ acres, valued at £130 per acre.¹⁴⁵ In 1852 Thomas's successor James was approached by North and Wakefield for a further 21 year lease to be granted to facilitate extraction of soft coal from the Babbington colliery. There were two beds of deep soft and bottom hard coal for which two pit shafts had been sunk in Turkey Field; but in order to obtain a larger supply of the deep soft coal the coalmasters needed to construct a level drift or heading from an existing pit shaft. They were bound by the same strict terms as the previous lease, paying a yearly rent for each acre of coal of not more than £115 and not less than £50.¹⁴⁶ A survey undertaken in 1854 indicated that a considerable slice of the main soft coal would be left unworked at the end of the lease, but the bed of hard deep coal would be worked out. It was therefore suggested that a new colliery should immediately be constructed on the soft bed, the situation - at Dunshill - making both water and land sales possible, owing to its contiguity to the populous manufacturing town of Nottingham, which would also ensure the colliery at all times more

than a proportionate share of the supply of that town and that part of the country with the other collieries then at work. The site of the proposed new colliery would provide a tract of main soft coal and a tract of deep hard coal equal to 323 acres each, plus a quantity of workable though cheaper quality coal which may be found to be marketable, extending altogether over 15,332 acres. It was estimated that the outlay necessary to establish a good and substantial colliery, including the plant and steam engines, railway waggons, wharves, tools and materials necessary to work a good colliery in a proper manner, would be £9,500. If the owner worked the colliery the lowest possible working profit he could expect would be 14 per cent on the capital sunk. The minimum of mine rent would be £750 per year.¹⁴⁷ Following this survey a 21 year lease was granted to Thomas North in 1858 at an annual rent of £1,000 plus £22.10s.0d. per acre of hard coal and £17 per acre of soft coal worked, plus a further yearly sum of £100, plus 3 guineas per acre for any damage caused to land in the construction of a railroad from Babbington to Cinder Hill to Kimberley, which was to be fenced and gated. The usual stringent leasing terms applied. At that time pits were operating at Babbington (in Greasley parish), Kimberley, Cinderhill and Strelley, with old workings remaining at Bilborough. On Lord Middleton's neighbouring estate mines were operating at Cossall, Trowell, Wollaton, Beeston and Lenton,¹⁴⁸ indicating the degree of expansion which had been undertaken from the early workings on the two core estates at Strelley and Wollaton.

Conclusion

Due to failure of male heirs in the direct line of descent, inheritance passed directly or indirectly through the female line on three occasions between 1684 and 1844, necessitating name changes. Only on the first occasion, when Richard Conway succeeded Ralph Edge, was a more distant collateral branch involved. On the other two

occasions the youngest surviving daughter or her eldest son succeeded, ensuring a continuity of aims and attitudes in the structuring of a programme for economic developments, an aspect strengthened by the longevity of inheritors. Rapid expansion of the estates by purchase and inheritance at the end of the seventeenth century was followed by a period of capital investment to exploit the resources of the estates without any apparent increase in their size until the Warwickshire estates were inherited. Then a further period of expansion took place towards the end of the eighteenth century, consolidating around the core estates at Strelley and Bilborough in Nottinghamshire, and around the Sherborne estate in Warwickshire, until financial stringencies affected the family during the early years of the nineteenth century due to a prolonged period of capital investment which was followed by years of low agricultural returns. At this time the supplementary income from coalmining was being affected by substantial demands for capital outlay due to the increasing complexity of mining at ever deeper levels. These difficulties, compounded by mounting personal debts, forced the sale of substantial parts of the estates so as to clear the major burden of debts. This put the remaining estates on a much sounder financial footing which subsequently permitted further investment in farm re-organisation, producing larger and more economically competitive agricultural units; and enabled the family to take advantage of the rapid progress being made in coalmining and compete in the expanding coal markets. The Edge pattern of landholdings illustrates the regular periods of estate expansion and contraction which most landowning families experienced, but with variations in the timing according to individual circumstances and the capacity to withstand periods of crisis. Strict settlement provisions were not a crippling financial burden on the Edge estates: settlements were usually well monitored. Of perhaps greater importance was the degree of personal interest and expertise of each inheritor in the effective management of the estates; and the degree of

risk-taking involved. Large parts of the woodlands on his estates were felled and sold off by Richard Conway to finance mineral exploitation, which might be thought to have reduced the value of the affected estates, particularly Lowdham and Gunthorpe. However this facilitated the engrossing and improvement of farms there to such an extent that this became a valuable estate which was ultimately sold for over £21,000. The extremely long coalmining lease of 99 years extended by Ralph in 1738 was farsighted at a time when mineral extraction industries were still relatively undeveloped; but was somewhat foolhardy in that it made no allowance for change or progress: the same rental and terms for damaged land applied right through this term, proving rather inadequate at the cessation of mining activities. In addition, it engendered a sense of complacency, a distancing from involvement in the extraction process, in Ralph's successor, Thomas, who should have been aware of the infringement of leasing terms by the Fletcher-Barber-Walker enterprise long before the arbitration case forced the issues upon him. However, this lesson in estate management was well learned by his successors, who were much more actively concerned with short-term leases and strict covenants, which enabled the family to continue among the major coalmining competitors. Successive inheritors took a more conservative approach in the gradual engrossing of farms, and the basically mixed farming economy was retained. Improvements took place within and around an existing framework, steadily bringing disparate landholdings into collected units, facilitated by piecemeal enclosures, but still retaining some semblance of the old structure of closes in addition to the farms and smallholdings. As complete ownership of the manors of Strelley and Bilborough was delayed until 1807, which affected the progress of enclosure, the relatively open nature of the townships facilitated an increase in the number and composition of the cottagers, which was a distinct advantage to the overall rental capacity. As they were relative latecomers in establishing themselves among the landowners

of Nottinghamshire, they did not possess the small, 'close' villages frequently associated with the established nobility and squirearchy. Essentially, they owed their continuity to an ability to exploit opportunities - a characteristic still being employed in Thomas's Bestwood Park estate venture - and a capacity to take risks in response to significant challenges; but ultimately it depended upon the desire to explore the potential which existed for estate development.

Table 7.1 Size of Farms or Smallholdings on the Edge's Strelley and Bilborough Estates

	Date	Cottagers	2-4+	5-9+	10-19+	20-49+	50-99+	100-199+	200-500	Over 500
Strelley	1680	30	4	2	4	6	2	1		1 (Park & Farm)
Bilborough	1680				1	1	1	3		
Bilborough	1728					2		3		
Strelley	1800	27	3	3	5	5	1	2		1
Bilborough	1800	24				1		3		
Strelley	1805	21	4	3	5	4	7	2		
Strelley	1809	31	3	3	3	2	3	3		
Strelley	1827	29	4	2	2	3	1	3		1
Bilborough	1827	32	2	2	1	1	2	2		
Strelley	1832	29	2	3	3	3	1	3		1
Bilborough	1832	31	1	2	1	1	1	2		
Strelley	1840	} only larger farms indicated				1	1	2		2
Bilborough	1840					1	3	2		1

Sources: Surveys and valuations, DDE/14/43, 1680; DDE/14/43, 1728; DDE/28/2, 1800; DDE/62/11, 1805; DDE/46/87, 1809; DDE/62/16, 1827; DDE/28/25, 1832; DDE/14/84, 1840.

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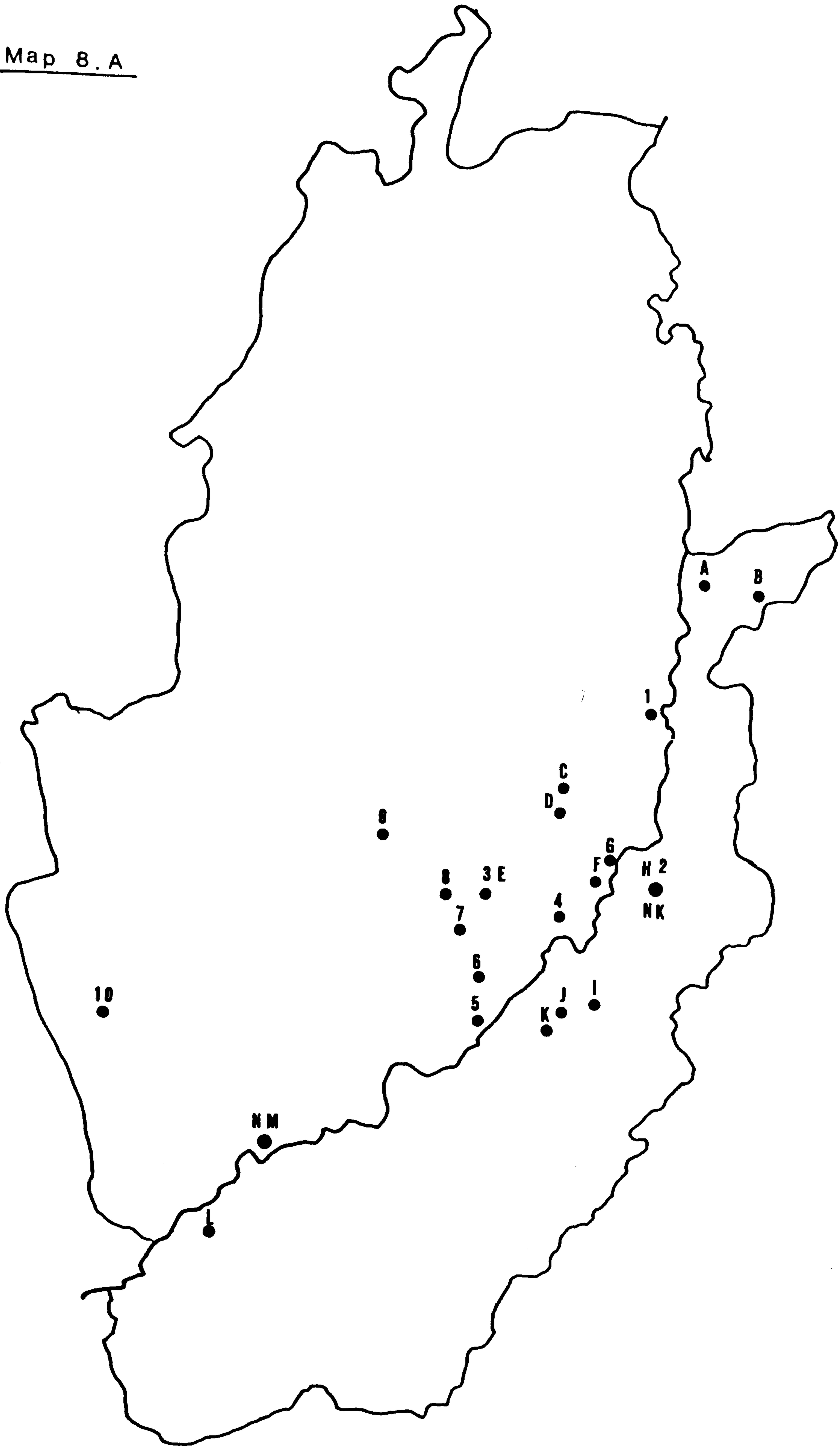
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75. DDE/40/2, 1779, 12 year lease at £5 per acre rent to Sam. Burton, yeoman of Chilwell, on 2 farms in Kirkby.
76. DDE/46/85, 1791, lease at will to Wm. Radford, farmer, of Bilborough.
77. DDE/46/84, 1791, lease at will to Jos. Woodhouse, framework knitter of Strelley, on a 17 acre farm.
78. DDE/22/22, 1799, an Act for the enclosure of the open fields in Sherborne, where Thomas had one undivided moiety.
79. DDE/22/5, 1779, 6 year lease of a farm in Sherborne to Wm. Cattell at £125.17s.6d. a year rent.
80. DDE/22/7, 1784, 1 year lease of a farm in Sherborne to John Hesford at £20 rent.
81. DDE/63/4, 1799, valuation of Southwell, Upton, Arnold and Lenton, prior to sale.
82. DDE/14/43, 1680, surveys of the manors of Strelley and Bilborough.
83. DDE/14/43, 1728, An Act of Bilborow Manor as now divided and let to several tenants.
84. DDE/28/1, 1800, survey of Bilborough.
85. DDE/28/2(a), 1800, survey of Strelley.
86. Ibid.
87. DDE/62/11, 1805, Strelley valuation; DDE/46/87, 1809, Strelley farm rents to commence Lady Day (farm valuations); DDE/28/9(b), 1808, enclosure of Strelley and Bilborough (part).
88. J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, The agricultural revolution...(1966),116.
89. DDE/7/1, 6, 7, 1647, Agreement for tripartite partition of Lowdham and Gunthorpe manors between Wm. Mullins, Dame Elizabeth Rearsby, and Sir Wm. Dalston; subsequent settlement of her portion by Dame Rearsby on her grand-daughter and two sons; DDE/7/8-74, subsequent release of these portions to Ralph Edge and his legal case to determine rights of title.
90. DDE/7/75, c.1700, valuation of Lowdham and Gunthorpe.
91. DDE/41/6, 1809, rental valuation of Lowdham and Gunthorpe estates.
92. DDE/41/8, 1815, auction details of Lowdham and Gunthorpe estates.
93. DDE/67/9, 1808, valuation of Sherborne estate, Warwickshire.
94. DDE/67/11, 1808, auction details of St. Nicholas estate, Warwickshire.
95. DDE/63/5, 1801, old and new rents collected, (giving estate acreages).

96. DDM/64/1, 1811, survey and valuation of Marston Montgomery estate.
97. DDE/61/1, early 1800s, an account of timber on the estate at Marston Manor.
98. DDE/30/16-18, estate rentals, 1833-4.
99. DDE/40/4, 1811, auction sale particulars of a freehold estate at Kirkby in Ashfield.
100. Enclosure pattern: Strelley, part pre-1680, part during 18thC; Bilborough, part pre-1680, part 1728, part 1808; Lowdham, Gunthorpe, Southwell and Upton were all enclosed during the reign of George III, and Sherborne in 1799, See J.D. Chambers, Nottinghamshire in the eighteenth century...(1966), Appendix II.
101. DDE/22/13-25, from 1785 to 1817, building, repairs and improvements undertaken at Sherborne; DDE/30, estate rentals and accounts, 18thC.
102. DDE/63/5, 1801, old and new rents.
103. DDE/67/9, 1808, Sherborne estate rentals.
104. DDE/41/6, 1809, rental valuation of Lowdham and Gunthorpe estates.
105. DDE/28/2(a), 1800, Strelley valuation; DDE/28/2(b) Strelley Field crop details.
106. DDE/1/12, Farm accounts, 1795-99.
107. DDE/28/1, DDE/28/2(a), 1800, Strelley and Bilborough valuations.
108. DDE/1/5, 1768, labourers' wages; DDE/1/12, Farm accounts, 1795-99.
109. DDE/57/6, c.1800, the present clear improved yearly value of Strelley Rectory.
110. DDE/31/3, 1825, survey and valuation of Bestwood Park.
111. DDE/57/7, 1826, correspondence between Thomas Webb Edge and the Duke of St. Albans.
112. DDE/65/2, 1812, auction details of a capital freehold family residence, farms, lands and tenements in Snareston, Leicestershire.
113. DDE/60/1, 1817, auction particulars of a very valuable freehold estate comprising Nuthall Temple, the whole of the village of Nuthall, and 1,200 acres of excellent land in tillage, pasture and meadow.
- 114, 115, as Reference 110.
116. DDE/62/16, 1827 survey of Strelley: Rev. J.W. Edge owned a farm of 195 acres.
117. Ibid.
118. DDE/28/5, 1832, valuation of Strelley and Bilborough.
119. DDE/14/82, 84, valuation of the parishes of Bilborough and Strelley for poor rates, 1840.

120. DDE/46/91, 1839, auction sale of Shorthorn cattle.
121. DDE/5/67m 1651-71, accounts of rents and coal profits of Strelley and Bilborough.
122. DDE/46/67, 1660, a map demonstrating the charges to set on a coal mine in the Hare Close at Strelley.
123. DDE/5/76, 1671, Articles of Agreement for a right of way through Strelley Park for carrying coals from Kimberley Green.
124. DDE/46/80, 1684, Articles of Agreement for a second hard coal pit.
125. DDE/7/75, c.1700, valuation of Lowdham and Gunthorpe woodland.
126. DDE/7/76, 1705, Agreement for the sale of wood from Skythorn.
127. DDE/7/79, 1723, Agreement for the sale of wood from Skythorn.
128. DDE/14/44, 1723, 21 year lease granted to John White, gentleman of Risley, Derbyshire, to the mineral rights under Strelley estate. The rental was unspecified.
129. DDE/46/68, 1732, memo. of an Agreement for the fencing out of a road to carry coals from the farm at Chilwell Dam to the Park gate.
130. DDE/14/45, 1738, 99 year lease to Robert and John Fletcher and Francis Barber, for mining in Strelley and Bilborough.
131. DDE/7/83, 1743, Agreement for the sale of wood from Skythorn.
132. DDE/5/62, 1737-8, coals sold at Kimberley pits.
133. DDE/46/71, 1744-5, coal rents due for Bilborough Field.
134. DDE/46/72, 1761-6, coal rents due for Bilborough.
135. DDE/46/72, DDE/30/6, 1773 to 1816, coal rents for Bilborough and other pits.
136. DDE/28/23, 1770, Bilborough coal work surveyed.
137. DDE/3/17, 14.2.1790, letter from Henry Sedley to Thomas.
138. DDE/42/10, 1739, a plan of several veins of coal within the counties of Derby and Nottingham.
139. DDE/28/24, 1794, mineral surveyor's report on coal boring in Old Moore close.
140. DDE/61/1, 1799, an account of timber, etc. on the estate at Marston Manor.
141. DDE/28/1(b), an account of estates purchased by Thomas Webb Edge at Strelley and Bilborough: 1782, several individual parts of the manors for £1,100; 1785, seven parts in nine, and one moiety of a ninth part of several premises in Bilborough for £2,700; 1788, a share of the advowsons of the manors for £2,000.

142. DDE/14/77, 1816, legal case, Thomas Webb Edge, esquire v. Barber-Walker; DDE/14/46, 1738-1816, Abstract of Title of Barber-Walker to several leasehold messuages, lands and coalmines in Bilborough; DDE/46/73, estimate of what Mr. Walker had offered for the coal mine machinery in 1800.
143. DDE/14/79, 1835, mineral survey, report and valuation of coal mines in Strelley and Bilborough.
144. DDE/14/81, 1838, 21 year lease granted to Thomas North and Thomas Wakefield to mine two veins of coal in Strelley and Cossall.
145. DDE/28/6, 1840, colliery valuations.
146. DDE/14/88, 21 year lease granted to Thomas North and Thomas Wakefield in 1852, to construct a level drift to reach two beds of deep soft coal and the bottom hard coal.
147. DDE/14/79, 1854, report and survey of the hard and soft coal to be got above the deep level.
148. DDE/14/89, 1858, 21 year lease to Thomas North for mining at the new pit.

Map 8.A



Sutton Landholdings: Nottinghamshire

8.B Key to Map 8.A, Sutton landholdings

- SUTTON
1. Carlton
 2. Newark
 3. Southwell (Norwood Park)
 4. Rolleston
 5. Hoveringham
 6. Thurgarton
 7. Halloughton
 8. Halam
 9. Farnsfield
 10. Greasley

- LORD LEXINGTON
(Manners-Sutton)
- A. N. and S. Clifton
 - B. Harby
 - C. Caunton
 - D. Knapthorpe
 - E. Southwell
 - F. Averham
 - G. Kelham
 - H. Newark
 - I. Elston
 - J. Syerston
 - K. Flintham
 - L. Clifton
- NM NOTTINGHAM
- NK NEWARK

Sutton Pedigree

Sir William Sutton, Knight, of Aram (Averham)
 m. Susan, daughter of Thomas Coney, esq., of Bassingthorpe, Lincs.

Robert (1594-1668) ————— Richard ————— Henry ————— Gervas
 re-created Lord Lexington of Aram,
 for devotion to Charles I
 m. Mabel, daughter of
 Henry Faunt, esq.

Robert (1661-1723), 2nd Ld. L.,
 m. Margaret, heiress daughter of
 Sir Giles Hungerford
 Sir Robert, K.B., _____
 (1671-1746)
 m. 1725, Judith,
 Countess of Sutherland
 Richard (1674-1737)
 of Scrofton, Notts.
 m. Catherine de Tolmer

Wm. Geo. ————— Eleanora ————— Bridget
 d.s.p. d.s.p. m. 1717 3rd Duke
 of Rutland
 Robert-John ————— Sir Richard ————— Isabelle
 d.s.p. d.s.p. (1733-1802) d. aged 18
 1772 or. Bt. 1772

From whom the Manners-
 Sutton line descended
 until created Lord
 Manners, 1807
 m. 1. Susan Champion-
 Crespiigny
 Robert-William-John-
 Richard-Ann m. Sir
 Robert
 Gunning, Bt.
 The line continued at
 Scrofton until 1800

John ————— Rev. ————— Robert Nassau ————— Henry ————— Elizabeth Evelyn ————— Anne Georgiana ————— Isabelle Frances
 m. Sophia Richard m. 1812 Mary d. Young m. 1. Rev. Markham, m. Rev. R. Chaplin m. Rev. W. Chaplin
 Chaplain daughter of Dean of York
 d. 1801 John Manners- 2. Jn. Pulteney
 Sutton
 d. 1833

Richard
 b. 1799
 m. 1819 Mary Burton

John — Richard — Francis — Charles — Augustus — Henry — William — Frederick — Plus 4 daughters (3 married landowners)
 (John did not marry, William died in infancy, the other six sons all married)

Sources: The Complete Peerage, III, 382; The Complete Baronetage, V (1909), 162.

CHAPTER EIGHTTHE SUTTONS OF NORWOOD PARK

The Sutton family had a long, distinguished pedigree, and were associated with the title Barons of Lexington.¹ The fourth baron (d.1257) divided his property between his two nephews and heirs, Richard de Marcham and William de Sutton. The title was recreated in the reign of John when a descendant was summoned to Parliament, and was again recreated and conferred on Robert Sutton in 1645, but on the death of his son without heirs once again became extinct. The family merged with the Duke of Rutland's, and the Manners-Sutton name descended through a younger son, resident at Kelham. It was anticipated that a descendant would again have the title conferred upon him, as Charles Manners-Sutton was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1792 until his death in 1805, and his son long held the office of Speaker in the House of Commons; but the title Viscount Canterbury was conferred instead. Robert Sutton (1594-1668) was an ardent Royalist who suffered severe losses through his attachment to Charles I, his estates being sequestered and his house at Averham burnt by rebel troops. In compensation he received the Lexington title (1645). His ancestors had included not only the earlier Barons, but also a Keeper of the Great Seal and a Bishop of Lincoln. His son, the second Lord Lexington (1661-1723) took an active part in State affairs: he was a member of the Privy Council in 1691, and a Diplomat whose correspondence on the wars in Europe was subsequently published (c.1870s), recording his negotiations which are said to have ended the war between Denmark and Luxemburgh. In 1693 he was created Lord of the King's Bedchamber, and from 1694-7 was Envoy-Extraordinary to the Imperial Court at Vienna, (in which office he was succeeded by his cousin Robert). Lord Lexington was sent to negotiate peace with Spain in Madrid, and there lost his only son and heir. It was left to the Baron's cousin Robert

to establish the principal branch of the Sutton family in Nottinghamshire. As well as succeeding Lord Lexington as a Diplomat in Vienna, he was also Envoy to the Ports, and in 1720 became British Minister in Paris. He also represented Nottinghamshire in Parliament, and became Ambassador to Holland and Constantinople. Robert, a Knight, was eventually succeeded by his second son, Richard, who had a long career in politics from 1766 to 1796. He was created Under-Secretary of State, 1766-72, Commissioner of the Privy Seal in 1768, and Lord of the Treasury 1780-2. He was created a Baronet in 1772. Sir Richard's grandson, also Sir Richard (1799-1855), was consulted on matters of political and economic import during the difficult years for the agrarian economy during the 1820s.²

In accordance with his status, although annexed from the Lexington title, Sir Robert married the Dowager Countess of Sunderland in 1725. She was the niece of Baron Ferrand of Beaulieu. Their third son, Richard, married heiress Susanna de Crespigny; then Anne Williams, co-heiress of Peter Seignoret of London and Switzerland, and finally Margaret Porter, a niece of the Sutton of Scrofton branch of the family. Robert Nassau, the third son of Richard and Anne, married Mary-Georgiana of the Manners-Sutton branch of the family. Apart from a political and diplomatic bias to their careers, the Suttons also had an ecclesiastical bent or military inclinations. Several sons (including first-born) either sought a military commission or took holy orders. Daughters tended to marry into other peerage families, or baronets, or other ecclesiastical families of a high standing, such as the Dean of York.

The foundation of family wealth was drawn from inherited estates, diplomatic or political office, and trust funds arising from inherited fortunes acquired through heiress marriages.³ The family's estate interests focused on agriculture: they practised a mixed farming policy.⁴ At Norwood Home Farm they specialised in raising sheep and

beasts, and also at the Brant Broughton farm at their secondary seat.⁵ Here they experimented in breeding for raising fat stock. However, it is possible that some farms specialised in growing crops, as strict corn, grass and summer till rotation was emphasised in covenants.⁶ Although most of the Sutton estates were situated in the east of the county, and across the border in Lincolnshire, they also owned an estate at Greasley on the western coal belt.⁷ Although coal mines were present on this estate, they appear to have been unworked during the early eighteenth century, and the estate was subsequently sold.⁸ A subsidiary source of income came from the sale of timber from the estates,⁹ and a minor source was the sale of garden produce.¹⁰

Sir Robert Sutton (1671-1746) inherited unspecified estates from his father, a third son, who had married a daughter of the Faunt family. He built up the estates by purchasing property out of the profits of his office holding.¹¹ His younger brother Major General Richard Sutton (1674-1737), sometime Governor of Bruges, purchased the Scrofton estate c.1727, which became his family's seat until it was sold in 1800, when West Retford House was purchased.¹² There was a family tradition of younger sons establishing their own seats. The Reverend Richard inherited the Down Hatherley estate in Gloucestershire as a second son.¹³ It had been purchased by a relative in 1704 for £3,490, with an outstanding mortgage of over £500, and was devised to the Suttons by will.¹⁴ Whilst in his possession, the Reverend Richard preferred to lease out this property (a farm of 242 acres in 1805 but extending to 272 acres when sold)¹⁵ and reside at the family's secondary seat at Brant Broughton, around which he purchased numerous small properties. He also owned property in Beckingham, Lincolnshire, and in Bedfordshire.¹⁶ His younger brother Robert Nassau established a branch at Scawby Hall, Lincolnshire.¹⁷

It is possible that the main seat had been at Brant Broughton until the acquisition of Norwood Park. This had originally been one

of four Prelate Parks in the vicinity of Southwell Palace when it had been the residence of Archbishops. Southwell Park was divided in 1795; Hockerwood Park was leased by the Wood family until 1809; Hexgreave Park was divided into two large farms and leased out; and Norwood Park was leased to a number of different occupiers until acquired by John Sutton in 1764.¹⁸ Piecemeal aggregation took place around the Norwood estate, particularly after its purchase and settlement in 1778.¹⁹ The concentration of estates was transferred back into Nottinghamshire after an easterly drift into Lincolnshire, possibly because there had been a lack of suitable properties on the Nottinghamshire land market at an earlier period. Several estates around Norwood were gradually acquired during the 1780s and 1790s,²⁰ when local land market activity was heightened after the lull of the earlier decades of the eighteenth century. Although, as will be illustrated, the estates underwent periods of contraction as well as expansion, the family was still represented by Sir John Sutton at their Southwell base in 1873, when he owned 3,167 acres in Nottinghamshire worth £4,695 a year;²¹ but ten years later the family seat had transferred to Berkshire, and out of a total of 9,340 acres worth £15,500 in Berkshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, only 694 acres were owned in Nottinghamshire worth £1,500.²²

Due to an abundance of males within the family, the Suttons were not affected by any name changes during the extended period under review. There were no collateral inheritances involving nephews or cousins, and no incidence of descent through the female line. Descent passed from father to an eldest or younger son, or to a grandson, but as the inheritors were fairly long lived, there were only four owners and one long minority between c.1720s and 1855. This tended inevitably to produce long periods of stable estate administration. Sir Robert lived to the age of 75; although his eldest surviving son, John, died in his forties, his younger son Sir Richard ran the estates for thirty

years (as John left no issue) until his death aged 69. Sir Richard's eldest son John had died the previous year, leaving an infant son, during whose long minority the estates were administered by Sir Richard's second and third sons. His grandson, also Sir Richard, ran the estates from the time he reached his majority until his death aged 76.

Financial Buoyancy

Sir Robert (1671-1746) over-reached his financial capacity. The nature of his inherited estates in Nottinghamshire is unspecified, but he purchased several estates in Lincolnshire in 1720 which carried an annual rental value of £3,072. These were the Edlington and Thurlby estates.²³ He also held the manors of Brant Broughton, Gowshill, Great Coates and Stirling, and properties in Dale Thornton, Thornton Curtis, Halton, Ulceby, Killingholme, Auber, Bassingham, Skellingthorpe, Thimbleby, Poleham, Bagmoor, Brandon, Hough, Gelston, Great Coates, Millholme, Little Coates, Great Grimsby and elsewhere (unspecified).²⁴ It is possible that some of these properties were inherited, or purchased prior to 1720; but it is known that the purchased estates carried mortgages at the time of acquisition. By 1744 the burden of debts which his estates bore was so excessive, amounting to £66,000, that an Estate Act of Parliament was sought to release his Nottinghamshire estates for sale to reduce the level of commitments.²⁵ These comprised a £20,000 mortgage plus interest on the Nottinghamshire estates, due to Peter Walker, esq; £10,000 plus interest on Great Coates to Sir and Lady Darcy; a second mortgage on Great Coates of £4,000 to Sir John Newton; £2,000 on Brant Broughton at 5 per cent interest to Sir John Newton, and a second mortgage of £2,000 on Brant Broughton to Sarah Ridley, also at 5 per cent interest; and £4,000 on Grosvenor Square House, London. In addition, he had settled an £8,000 portion on his son John, another £8,000 portion on his daughter Isabella, and £6,000 on his youngest son Richard. His wife's jointure was £1,823 a year. An executor of Sir Robert's

estate was Matthew Lamb, a prominent London lawyer. It was not until 1752, some six years after the death of Sir Robert, that some of his financial burdens were relieved. Receipts of rents and arrears, the sale of personal effects, and interest on £5,000 out on loan amounted to £7,494; and the sale of personal effects from the London home raised £3,418. However, payment of wages, bills for services, taxes, and interest paid on bonds and mortgages, and the payment of legacies and surveyor's fees disbursed £7,494. The principal money and interest totalling £5,150, lent out on mortgage to the Earl of Leicester, was received.²⁶ The most significant financial boost was achieved from the agreement Sir Robert and his two eldest sons had made with Matthew Lamb for the latter to purchase Sir Robert's heavily mortgaged Nottinghamshire estates. The whole purchase money totalled £48,000, and discharged the whole debt of £40,000 which had been directed to be paid by the Act of Parliament. The property had carried a yearly rental of £1,805 less £25 fixed charges. It was reckoned to be worth £46,254 at 26 years' purchase, less £2,000 as the numerous buildings were in a very ruinous condition. The woods were valued at £ 3,746. Some of the Nottinghamshire property was retained - the inn and lands at Carlton on Trent, and Tolney Meadow, near Newark. The mortgages discharged were for a total of £17,000 on the Lincolnshire estates, and £23,000 on the Nottinghamshire estates. Legal charges amounted to £148. After the debts and charges had been settled out of the purchase money, there was a residue of £3,579 which was laid out in the purchase of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent Bank Annuities, as under the terms of the Act, until further property could be purchased.²⁷ The portions totalling £22,000 continued as an existing charge on the remaining estates.

Little is known about Sir Robert's eldest son Robert, but it appears that the second son John succeeded his father and inherited the burden of raising portions. Although the extent of the Nottinghamshire property was considerably reduced, the mortgage commitment was likewise.

Out of the surplus money from the sale of the Nottinghamshire estates two farms were purchased at Brant Broughton, where John initially resided. These were bought for £2,360 and £900, and carried yearly rentals of £75 and £36.²⁸ In 1768 he purchased an estate at Pavenham, Bedfordshire, for £4,700;²⁹ but his most prestigious acquisition was Norwood Park, which was initially leased from the Archbishop of York in 1764, and which enabled the family to transfer their seat back into Nottinghamshire, nearer to the Kelham base of the Lexington-Manners-Sutton branch, and more in keeping with their social status.³⁰ He began what became a steady process of piecemeal aggregation of tiny parcels of high value land around the seat.³¹ John appears to have received his own £8,000 portion, but was forced to seek an Estate Act of Parliament in 1771 to raise the £8,000 portion due to his sister, leaving the £6,000 portion due to his younger brother as an existing charge on the estate. Nun's Farm (formerly a nunnery) and lands at Great Grimsby and adjoining parishes of Weelsby, Laceby and Clee were released for sale (all in Lincolnshire).³² During that year the remaining Lincolnshire estates raised £2,141 in rental income.³³ Two years previously John had taken out a £1,200 mortgage with the Honourable Morgan Vane of Blyth, which he subsequently paid off before his death in 1772. The mortgaged properties were 13 messuages in London.³⁴ Thus a period of retrenchment stabilised the family's position.

Leaving no issue, John was succeeded by his younger brother Richard (1733-1802), who had carved out a political career for himself and was created a baronet on retiring from his post as Under-Secretary of State in 1772. He sold off the Pavenham estate in Bedfordshire to enable land in Nottinghamshire to be purchased.³⁵ Then he rationalised the situation regarding Norwood Park. The family seat was leased for £60 a year, but he sought to acquire it permanently. He purchased from Philip, Earl of Chesterfield, an estate at Easthorpe, near Southwell, which was let to several tenants at a yearly rent of £230. This was

contiguous to Norwood. Then by raising an Estate Act of Parliament in 1778 he effected an exchange of property with the Archbishop of York to secure Norwood Park. Norwood was to be diverted out of the hands of the Archbishop and his successors, to be enjoyed for ever by Sir Richard and his heirs against any right of the Archbishop. The Easthorpe estate, extending to approximately 216 acres, was to be vested in the Archbishop in full compensation and exchange, with the right to lease out the Easthorpe property on the same basis as Norwood had been.³⁶ The Pavenham estate had been of similar value and acreage to the Easthorpe estate; it was let at £220 a year clear of all taxes except £20 land tax, and extended over 203 acres. It ranged over two manors and contained a mansion house, let to a tenant, and eight cottages. Its timber was worth £300. After the exchange of the Easthorpe estate, small parcels of land still in hand which had been contiguous to it were sold off;³⁷ and small parcels of land continued to be acquired around Norwood.³⁸ By 1784 Sir Richard had a small fee simple estate in the parishes of Bleazby and Southwell, adjoining other parts of the settled estate, which was let at £372 clear of taxes. He sought an Estate Act of Parliament to substitute this estate for property in Alton, Killingholme, Auber, Skelingthorpe, Brandon and Hough (Lincolnshire) in his settlement. The rental of the latter properties amounted to £355.³⁹ The value of the exchange was to release outlying estates from settlement. Sir Richard continued his policy of selling off outlying estates in Lincolnshire and using the proceeds to purchase estates in Nottinghamshire, consolidating the family's holdings there, and re-establishing their roots which had been ripped up following his father's capacity for over-reaching. In 1791 the Edlington estate in Lincolnshire was sold for £4,200.⁴⁰ By this date Sir Richard was then able to confirm that he had received both the £8,000 and £6,000 portions plus interest and maintenance which had been due to him, declaring that the 1000 year term for raising these

portions was then void. The sale of Thornton College estate around the same time also served this end. The estate covered just over 100 acres and fetched £5,000, although the purchaser had to borrow £4,000 on mortgage at 5 per cent interest.⁴¹ Soon after a farm of 214 acres, with a newly erected farmhouse, was sold for £6,000 at Thornton Curtis which cleared all outstanding charges under the terms of Estate Acts.⁴² He was then free to purchase Halloughton manor and mansion house in Nottinghamshire for £6,500 which carried an annual rental of £707.⁴³ This was financed by the sale of Thurlby estate in Lincolnshire for £5,000.⁴⁴ Perhaps the most prestigious of the Nottinghamshire estates Sir Richard purchased was Thurgarton manor. It extended over 789 acres and drew a yearly rent of £643 clear, except the reserved rent to Trinity College. The estate was purchased from Gilbert Cooper and carried a mortgage of £3,500 at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest to Miss Cooper, with a further £900 mortgage to Henry Walker. Most of the estate was let on 20 year leases, redeemable at the end of 10. Although the estate was being sold for £10,400, Sir Richard undertook to pay £5,400 initially, with the balance of £5,000 at the end of 12 months, plus interest.⁴⁵

Sir Richard's income was initially sustained through his political career, and his fortune was enhanced by two marriages to heiresses which, as indicated previously, reduced the burden on the estate of provision for his children.⁴⁶ A rationalisation process of the family estates enabled the more distant properties in Lincolnshire to be replaced by others more contiguous to the core estate, and of a higher value per acre, with another concentration of property around the secondary seat at Brant Broughton. In 1771, when the estates were concentrated in Lincolnshire, they raised an annual rental of £4,300. Incidental estate disbursements to Lady Day (half year) totalled £720; but the following year disbursements amounted to £2,287, out of the same annual rental. The reduced size of the estates in 1773 produced an

income of £3,057 out of which incidental estate costs of £1,542 were met. Disbursements appear to have remained low at £326 in 1774, £491 in 1775 and £339 in 1776.⁴⁷ By 1787 the combined Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire estates were producing an annual rental income of £6,038. Disbursements remained low at £147 for the half year to Michaelmas, and £437 for the following year; but in 1789 incidental expenses rose to £2,802, including £774 paid out in interest charges, and £660 on new buildings. Expenditure on repairs and new buildings continued to feature over the next few years, initially on the manor house at Brant Broughton: £376 was spent on it in 1791, £260 in 1792, and £488 in 1793. During that year £368 was also spent on other property at Great Coates, Bleasby, Thurlby and Halloughton; and in 1794 over £2,000 was spent on several parts of the settled estates. A minor source of income which would have helped to offset the onset of the building programme was derived from the sale of timber. The amount sold from Norwood plantation, and the woods on Halloughton, Thurlby and Thornton estates amounted to £267 in 1791. In 1794 £400 was borrowed from Mr. Thomas Little towards payment of the new buildings at Brant Broughton.⁴⁸ At the time of his death in 1802 the settled estates of Sir Richard produced an annual rental of £7,400. This was drawn from Halloughton, Hoveringham, Bleasby and Radley in Nottinghamshire, and from Brant Broughton and Great Coates in Lincolnshire.⁴⁹ In addition, he had unsettled property (small parcels of land systematically purchased) near Norwood worth £6,459.⁵⁰ Between 1802-4 £9,393 was received towards his estate, out of which £8,767 was disbursed.⁵¹ A wages bill was settled in 1802 of over £262 to domestic servants, farm labourers, gardener, gamekeeper and steward.⁵² An inventory of the contents of Norwood was valued at £2,900.⁵³ In addition, books were valued at £613⁵⁴ and the wine store at £372.⁵⁵ Fruit and vegetable produce sold from Norwood garden that year (1802) fetched over £8, and sundry produce sold for £110 in 1805.⁵⁶

Sir Richard's eldest son and heir died shortly before his father, in 1801. He resided at Brant Broughton, and a valuation of that property indicated that the contents were worth £2,316. The house contained over 20 rooms, plus a dairy, stables and coach house, a laundry, malt mill, brew house, and stores.⁵⁷ In comparison, Norwood comprised about 30 rooms, and in addition to domestic offices there was a brewhouse, granary, bottle, fowl, bake and slaughter houses, stables and coach houses with saddlery, dog kennels and a cow yard. The valuation of John's personal estate was put at £2,385, which included furniture and plate, his wine cellar, horses and chaise. Money in funds or in the banker's hands only amounted to £146.⁵⁸ His greatest asset was the live and dead stock on his farm, valued at £1058.⁵⁹ John left an infant son, Richard, during whose long minority the estate was administered by John's two younger brothers, the Reverend Richard and Robert Nassau.

It has been claimed that this 'long minority husbanded the family estates, already large, to such an extent that (Sir Richard) was considered one of the most wealthy men in the country'.⁶⁰ Insufficient data exists to check out the extent of the Sutton estates during the early decades of the nineteenth century, but it is known that the Thurgarton estate was disposed of in 1805. It could not be sold without the permission of Trinity College, and had been purchased on a twenty-year lease in 1798 on condition that all the mansion houses and church chancel were kept in repair, and a minister was found for the church. The woods belonged to the College, and the tithe dues were divided between the College and the previous lease holder, John Gilbert Cooper. Sir Richard the grandfather had deliberately left this property out of settlement, with the option that it might be either purchased by his successor, or disposed of. The remainder of the lease was purchased by John Brettle, esq. of Thurgarton for £14,000.⁶¹ Around the core estate at Norwood several parcels of land continued to

be aggregated.⁶² By 1824 the value of land here was £125 per acre.

A calculation of the clear profits of the estates was made from May Day 1801 to May Day 1802. The settled estates in Brant Broughton and Great Coates, Lincolnshire, and in Halloughton, Hoveringham, Bleasby and Radley, in Nottinghamshire, netted £5,994 (£7,400 gross), and the unsettled parcels of land contiguous to Norwood were valued at £6,459.⁶³ The Thurgarton estate rental was £1,106 a year which netted £871 in 1803 and £776 in 1804. Disbursements out of this estate included the salaries of a curate and schoolmaster, Trinity College rent, land tax, the cost of collecting the rent, and the treating of tenants. The Trinity College rent stood at £155 a year, and land tax at £34.⁶⁴ It is possible that the Suttons found this prestigious leasehold property too irksome and costly to administer due to its fixed charges. Rents and profits for the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire estates during 1803-4 amounted to £8,339, and for the year 1804-5 they totalled £8,100.⁶⁵ There was an inherited burden of debt amounting to £110,000 for the raising of portions, which could be met by mortgage or sale of property over a 3,000 year trust period; but which initially was to be raised out of fortunes which were in trust. £30,000 was to be laid out in Government or East India Company Stocks for the benefit of each of Sir Richard senior's three daughters and their offspring; £80,000 was to be laid out in Real Government Securities or Parliamentary Funds for his second and third sons, with the interest on them paid to each son; and on each son's decease to be put in trust for their children, as each son should decree in his will.⁶⁶ Thus the burden of debt was spread over time, and divided between assets; and these two sons had vested interests in the efficient running of these estates during the infant Richard's long minority.⁶⁷ When Richard's own son John reached the age of 21 in 1841 an interim settlement was made granting John the power to raise portions for his own children to the value of £20,000 by sale or exchange of property other than Norwood Park.⁶⁸

Estate Development

It would seem that Sir Robert (1671-1746) turned to estate management and development in the later years of his life, after his successful career as a foreign diplomat and Privy Council to the King had passed its peak of active involvement. Although he held an estate on the Nottinghamshire coalfield at Greasley, indicating diversification of economic interests, his coalmines there were not in active production.⁶⁹ His heavy mortgage encumbrances probably precluded the heavy capital outlay which coal working required, and the estate was sold when retrenchment became inevitable.⁷⁰ With the acquisition of the Lincolnshire properties his holdings became more scattered, and more difficult to administer from a distance. The estates in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire were of varying sizes and values,⁷¹ which may have been the result of a deliberate policy to maintain flexibility of structure; but it may have resulted from a random series of purchases as the opportunities presented. The estates contained farms of varying sizes, including some smallholdings;⁷² but in general they were of a size more conducive to farming on a larger scale than was the case with many of the Edge and Willoughby farms, and may account for their concentration in the east where mixed farming practices were facilitated; this was the foundation of the Sutton's estate income.

After the disposal of the principal estates in Nottinghamshire estate development concentrated on extending the agricultural holdings around the Brant Broughton estate. This estate contained 13 farms, plus the Home Farm which extended over 337 acres;⁷³ and two more were acquired in 1752.⁷⁴ Of the smaller properties, Edlington extended over 300 acres, Gowshill over 550 acres, and Thurlby over 380 acres.⁷⁵ The acquisition of Norwood Park in 1764 provided the opportunity to develop a good Home Farm in addition to that at Broughton, and extended facilities for experiments in fat stock raising. The Broughton estate then became

the preoccupation of sons. Farm leases were usually assigned either for the term of three lives, or for a period of years, which varied from twenty to forty; but occasionally shorter terms were specified. The nature of the transaction determined the term of assignment rather than there being a preference for, or a shift from a particular form.⁷⁶ Although there is little evidence to indicate the force of John's estate policies between 1746 and 1772, they appear to have been directed towards re-establishing a firm and economically viable base in Nottinghamshire and to consolidating the structure of his farms in Lincolnshire. A partial enclosure of Hickham took place in 1771 at a cost of £387, with further enclosure being undertaken there in 1772 at the greater cost of £943. Prior to enclosure the rents had been in the region of £40 a year, with £11 in arrears at Lady Day 1771; following enclosure the rents were raised to around £100 a year. Tithes were a minor though important source of regular income which could help to reduce any outlay, but were offset by land tax. This varied from 5 to 18 per cent of the gross rents of individual estates, but was reasonably high at 17 per cent on Hickham. Nevertheless, as this was considered to be a long-term investment, enclosure of estates continued to be effected, as at Goxhill in 1773 at a cost of £477.⁷⁷

John was succeeded by his brother, Sir Richard, who ran the estates from 1772 until his death in 1802. Sir Richard continued his brother's policy of consolidating and maintaining economic viability. He appears to have had more of his father's drive and energy in expanding the estates, but the enforced period of retrenchment had been borne by John and the estates were inherited on a much more sound footing. Leases were undertaken by yeoman farmers or gentlemen farmers, indicating that tenants of the better sort were preferred. Husbandry covenants undertaken by them were fairly strict, including a penalty of £10 for each acre of meadow or ancient pasture ploughed without permission.

Strict crop rotation was enforced, incorporating summer till, corn, and grass, with the land being broken up into lots. Farms were expected to be tended in a husbandlike manner, for the benefit of the landlord, tenant, and the community at large.⁷⁸ Surveys of farms from the 1770s indicate that farm sizes of 100 to 200 acres prevailed on the Sutton estates, with a few, including the two Home Farms, extending over 200 to 300 or more acres.⁷⁹ Smallholdings were gradually replaced by consolidated farms, particularly at Brant Broughton,⁸⁰ or by the acquisition of property to provide more extensive sheepwalks.⁸¹ The 1771 rentals of Brant Broughton were £748 per half year, with taxes standing at £51;⁸² by 1787 the rentals were slightly reduced to £741 per half year, but taxes had increased to £67. By 1793 the farms alone produced £695 per half year, and the cottages provided a further £766, whilst taxes still stood at £67.⁸³ In 1802 the Broughton rentals produced £2,172, offset by £139 in taxes, £4 payable to the schoolmaster, and an average of £84 a year spent on repairs.⁸⁴ This continued to be the most important estate for development, after Norwood. Investment in a spate of new building and repairs contributed to the enhanced rentals. Similarly, the rentals on the Great Coates estate increased from £762 for the half year in 1771 to £791 in 1793, to £2,431 in 1802. After the enclosure of Goxhill in 1773 the half year's rental rose from £44 to £55 and then to £158 for the half year.⁸⁵ During the short time that the Pavenham estate was owned the annual value raisable per acre ranged from 11s.0d. to 33s.0d. over its 204 acres of meadow, pasture ploughed or fallow land which produced wheat, barley or beans.⁸⁶ The Down Hatherley estate was enclosed c.1796 on which the principal farm extended to 242 acres plus 10 beastgates. As this was an estate of inheritance descendable to a second or younger son, it was let on a renewable yearly tenancy to farmer Jos. Piffe on condition that he maintained and repaired the property, so long as he should farm the premises, using only methods of good husbandry, and when quitting to leave

the same clean and repaired.⁸⁷ Like the Pavenham estate, the mansion house and farm here, extending to over 272 acres, were sold off to permit estate expansion and development to take place closer to the two principal estates.⁸⁸ Following capital investment in the Nottinghamshire property, funded out of sales of landholdings in Lincolnshire, rentals were increased. Comparison is given between the amounts raised at Michaelmas 1793 and Michaelmas 1802. Easthorpe was raised from £90 to £105, Bleasby from £202 to £532, detached farms around Norwood from £72 to £145, Halloughton from £354 to £708, Hoveringham from £315 to £888; and by 1802 detached parcels of land around Norwood raised £227. By 1801-2 investment in repairs and improvements on the Sutton estates was a regular feature, amounting to over £2,000 a year, or about one seventh of the annual rental income.⁸⁹

By 1802 the Suttons had become specialists in sheep raising, but undertook an economically sound policy of mixed farming. The Norwood Home Farm stocked 280 sheep, 33 beasts, and crops extended to 50 acres of hay and corn, 14 acres of wheat, $8\frac{1}{2}$ acres of barley, and 8 of oats, with 7 acres given over to beans, and $6\frac{1}{2}$ to turnips. The Forest farm on this estate extended to 23 acres of barley, 28 of oats, $4\frac{1}{2}$ of rye and 8 of wheat, with 3 acres given over to peas and 29 acres to turnips.⁹⁰ When Thomas Frost took over the farm as the new tenant, the stock was valued at £1,513 for which firm guarantees were required of good husbandry methods and sound management.⁹¹ In the same year (1802) the Home Farm at Brant Broughton, which had been managed by Sir Richard's son John, stocked 134 sheep, including 47 breeding ewes and 59 lambs, and 29 beasts. In addition were pigs and poultry; and arable crops included wheat, barley, oats and turnips. The stock was valued at £1,162.⁹² An indicator of the esteem in which Sir Richard was held is the correspondence he received from John Porter in 1800, which sought Sir Richard's opinions, both as an ex-government minister and as a prominent member of the farming community and specialist breeder,

on the prevailing agricultural difficulties.⁹³ His communication expressed the concern of Lord Liverpool and Lord Carrington over misleading information which had been provided about alleged poor grain harvests from 33 county reports. Porter suggested that the depressed price of grain could not be due to the importation of good quality foreign grain, for this had then been a practice for some years. The previous year had produced a poor harvest, so the indication was that there must have been a stock pile of English wheat, and that less than adequate data was available on the quantity of home-grown wheat, and on its rate of consumption. If his beliefs could be proved - that the country could not grow sufficient wheat for its needs - then the Government could not be blamed, even by the landed interest, for importing to make up the deficit, which he hoped would prevent any further combination in the corn trade. During the previous shortage of 1795 Porter had instigated an enquiry, but farmers had been alarmed by the need to submit returns, and had deliberately made them unintelligible. Porter aimed to instigate another enquiry, via an Act of Parliament, which would avoid farmers' suspicion. He suggested a computation of the number of acres of land in each parish or hamlet on which grain was grown, the acreage of wasteland, and how much of this waste was capable of growing wheat; and sought Sir Richard's advice on this proposal. In addition he expressed the concern of Lord Liverpool and Mr. Pitt that the price of lean stock was disproportionately dear compared with fat stock. It was suggested that the stock of sheep and oxen would be considerably reduced because of the large quantity which had been conveyed to Smithfield market before they had reached three quarters of their maximum weight. This was due partly to the scarcity of fodder the previous year, but also to supplying the Navy during the war years: half fed beef served the same purpose as fat, although a greater number of oxen were required to make up the amount. Porter

had suggested allowing a bounty to encourage the shipment of fish, as increased consumption of this commodity, together with beans, peas, and potatoes, would necessarily reduce meat consumption, and thereby aid the replenishment of sheep and oxen. He also sought Sir Richard's opinion on this point. What is significant here is that what appears to be a national problem of low prices and low stocks does not seem to be reflected in Sir Richard's situation. Against this background he had been investing capital in improving and developing his estates, which then provided a far higher income per acre than at any time previously; but a different situation prevailed some 20 years later, indicating that local responses to national situations were subject to a time delay, albeit on this occasion aggravated by political issues. Sir Richard's emphasis on sheep breeding kept him financially buoyant and fostered his estate expansion and development. Porter also sent him details of an experiment in fat stock breeding by John Bridge of Dorset, extending from 1798 to 1800, indicating average weight increases of six pure- or cross-bred types of sheep.⁹⁴ Relative costs of breeding were set against relative anticipated profits. The experiment disclosed that the value of the animals increased from around £1 to £1.10s.0d. per head to around £4 to £4.10s.0d. About this time the Sutton's sheep were valued at just over £1 per head, and beasts at £8 per head, with wheat valued at about £3.10s.0d. per quarter, barley at just over £2, and oats at just over £1.⁹⁵ Grain prices appear to have been more subject to fluctuations.

During the continuing difficulties affecting agriculture in the early years of the nineteenth century, several tenancy issues were raised, indicating an intensified sensitivity between landlord and tenant at a time when profitability was decreasing. William Pogson left a farm at East Bridgford in 1793, where his stock was valued at £512, to take up the tenancy of a farm at Halloughton.⁹⁶ Sir Richard's grandson, also Sir Richard, held the latter farm under a lease for three

lives. The farm extended over 18 closes.⁹⁷ After Pogson's death his widow succeeded to occupation of the farm and leased another close, but in 1806 went to live elsewhere in the parish. A notice to quit was served upon her, to which her son, the unauthorised tenant, objected. The Court of Chancery directed that an Ejectment Order be brought against him. A precedent existed that a full six months or 182 days should be the term of notice served, but in this case only 180 days were allowed. Counsel's opinion decreed that as Francis Pogson, the son, was the unauthorised tenant in possession, then the farm might be recovered from him; and that as the original notice to quit had been served on widow Mary previous to the commencement of the last half year of her tenancy, though falling short of the requisite 182 days, the notice should stand. The receipt of rent from Francis was not sufficient to constitute him a tenant, as he was acting as his mother's agent.⁹⁸ The arbitration award decreed that the Pogsons should pay Sir Richard £176 in satisfaction of all claims and demands; and that Sir Richard should pay the Pogsons £153 in compensation for quitting the premises, and for hay crops and fixtures belonging to them on the farm; and that the Pogsons should pay the prosecution costs of £12.10s.0d.⁹⁹ Good farm management was at the root of this dispute, as the Suttons usually undertook strict husbandry covenants with tenants of their choice, to which Francis Pogson was not bound. Attitudes towards good farming practice were expressed by the Reverend Richard, co-administrator of the estate, in a letter to his agent over another imminent change in a farm tenancy. He wrote, 'Although I by no means approve of a person who lives out of the parish holding land, yet in consideration of the heavy charges W. Woods had incurred in maintaining his father, paying up his arrears, etc., we are inclined to indulge him by letting him hold on till Lady Day twelvemonths; or perhaps it would be more advisable, if the persons to succeed him are ready to agree to it, to let them pay up the half year becoming due, which may be a better

thing for him and eventually for them, as having only one year's interest in the land he might not use it so well as he should do'.¹⁰⁰

An indication is given here of some of the financial difficulties which affected agriculture at this time (1808). Around this time certain estates had been sold off,¹⁰¹ and it was particularly important to maintain economic viability on the farms on the remaining estates, particularly those of a higher grade around the two core estates.

Financial difficulties and concern over good farm management continued to preoccupy Sir Richard during the 1820s. The agent suggested that the tenant of Culley's Farm should be induced to give it up because of his inability to pay the load of debt on that property, which if it were allowed to continue, would bring the farm to rack and ruin. If the tenant did not consent, the agent, with Sir Richard's backing, would resort to stronger measures.¹⁰² Epworth tenanted a farm of c.200 acres, where the outbuildings were in excellent condition, but the house dangerous to inhabit. A new farmhouse was to be built for £720, with Sir Richard contributing 5 per cent of the expenditure. The house would be almost too good for the size of the farm for any succeeding tenant; but as the tenant had recently married a woman with £7,000 to £8,000, it was not too good a habitation for one of such high respectability, and the house would add much to the appearance of the village, and to the estate generally.¹⁰³

A more important issue was the new tenancy of Norwood Home Farm. The agent explained to prospective tenants, who were thoroughly vetted, that the farm was then (in 1826) in a very excellent state of cultivation, so they must expect to be bound by a written agreement for the best mode of management, which they would be required to adhere to strictly; and Sir Richard would require them to specify a bondsman of sufficient responsibility.¹⁰⁴

Character references were taken up for prospective tenants to confirm their respectability, knowledge of farming, the competency of their purse for the undertaking, and whether the applicant was 'a quiet man

and not likely to be a troublesome neighbour, as the situation of the farm requires me to be particular in the choice of a Tenant of that description'.¹⁰⁵ However, the vetting was not all one-sided: one applicant, Wilson 'the man from the forest', declined taking the farm as the house was hardly sufficient for a respectable farmer to live in; and the agent feared this would be a stumbling block for other applicants.¹⁰⁶ The farm extended over 316 acres and carried a rent of £460 a year.¹⁰⁷ The farm had been built up by piecemeal aggregations of land adjoining Norwood. They were purchased by Sir Richard's uncle from different persons at different times, and some of the later acquisitions had added £60 to the rent,¹⁰⁸ which proved too much for some applicants. Wilson was a tenant on the Saville estate, and despite the condition of the house remained interested in the new tenancy, provided the rent was reduced.¹⁰⁹ Another tenant, Hutchinson, was recommended by Sir R. Heron; but he also requested that the rent be lowered.¹¹⁰ Another impediment to the tenancy was right of access. Sir Richard's stepfather, Mr. Wright, seriously impeded progress by refusing to allow any tenant of the farm the use of the road leading past the stable and dog kennel, through the shrubbery, and into the low fields, which would prove a very serious inconvenience to a tenant, forcing a half-mile detour. It was claimed that Norwood Park was suffering from neglect at that time, with too many people having access and despoiling the grounds. It was suggested that stout locks should be put on all the gates, giving Wright access to only one for his own use.¹¹¹ Sir Richard at this time resided at Lingford Hall: he was still a young man, and relied on his agent. Pressure of circumstances obliged them to tackle the issue of high rentals during the following two years. The agent considered that it would be fair to make some return on the rentals due at Lady Day, but before making such a proposal to Sir Richard had enquired about the situation prevailing on other estates. He had attended the Duke of Newcastle's rent days at Tuxford, and learned

that the Duke had decided to make no return upon that receipt. The Duke's steward advised that as 2 or 3 years of unusually great agricultural prosperity would not have induced his Grace to raise his rents, so one or two years of perhaps unparalleled difficulty would not be considered so ruinous. However, the Duke's tenants were rented higher than Sir Richard's were. The Duke of Devonshire had made no return, and the Duke of Portland did not intend to do so. However, Lord Scarborough had returned 20 per cent to all his tenants; and W. Sherbrooke had made a return to his tenants. If Sir Richard knew the figure, that could be used as a guide to his own rent reductions, which the agent suggested should be 15 per cent to the Halloughton tenants, and 10 per cent to the others. The reason for this being that the Halloughton estate differed widely from the others. The land under plough at Halloughton very far exceeded the proportion of grassland. On the other estates the farms contained very nearly the same proportion of grassland as ploughed land.¹¹² The following year it was disclosed that Sir Richard did not approve of the existing system of making a percentage return to his tenants. He disliked the anomaly between the nominal and the actual rentals, with his tenants paying a larger rent than they could really afford. If the same situation pertained at the next rent day, he would allow no return, but abide by a fresh valuation of his farms.¹¹³ Following a valuation of his Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire estates in 1812 which fixed the rent levels, Sir Richard had made a uniform return of 15 per cent during 1822, 1823 and 1824, and again in 1827. He wanted to replace the deceptive appearance of this system with a revaluation of equitable rents, based not only on the prices of the previous two years, but based on a liberal scale of averages with a careful view of the past, the present and the future.¹¹⁴ As a result of the survey the rentals on his estates were reduced by either 12, 18 or 20 per cent, which was deemed to vindicate the overall reduction by 15 per cent which had operated.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

The Suttons were able to weather a demographic crisis by establishing the descendants of a younger son as the family's principal representatives. A period of over-reaching by Sir Robert during the early part of the eighteenth century in an attempt to consolidate his position was countered by a period of retrenchment, during which the family's Nottinghamshire base was forfeited; but his eldest son John re-established a base at Norwood some twenty years later. In the meantime the focus of the Sutton estates drifted eastwards with dislocated estates being purchased in Lincolnshire where the land market remained more active and was somewhat characterised by transient purchasers due to the nature of local problems.¹¹⁶ Following the period of retrenchment during which the size of the estates was considerably reduced, and with the opening up of the Nottinghamshire land market, Sir Richard was able to continue his brother's policy of consolidation around the core estates; and by pursuing a systematic policy, sold off the outlying or less profitable estates in Lincolnshire and replaced them with economically viable estates situated more conveniently in Nottinghamshire. During the long minority of his grandson, Sir Richard's two younger sons undertook an effective policy of good estate management, concentrating on farm improvements brought about by enclosure, a sustained rebuilding programme, strict adherence to good husbandry covenants, the consolidation of farms, and a firm belief in the economic viability of mixed farming practices. Such capital investments generated substantial rent rises which, together with their expertise in fat stock raising, carried them through the years of agricultural difficulties at the beginning of the nineteenth century, until such time as the young Sir Richard was forced to re-evaluate his estates in response to continuing economic pressures affecting the agricultural

sector. Of paramount importance during these difficult years was the careful selection of tenants whose farming expertise and financial credibility made them sought after by personal recommendation in what appeared to be a highly competitive market for good tenants; but financial stringencies of the period narrowed down the field of selection. Although some further trimming off of estates took place during this period, land around Southwell, particularly on the Norwood and Halloughton estates, had considerably increased in value; and the two principal estates in Lincolnshire, at Brant Broughton and Great Coates, had undergone a steady policy of consolidation and improvement. The farms had been gradually enlarged, and the most appropriate farm policies were applied according to soil types, such that some specialised in arable husbandry, others in fat stock experiments to improve the quality and value of the herds, and others developed an almost equal balance of interests. The family retained a high level of personal interest in the economic foundation and management of their estates, aided by loyal and expert agents, (son followed father to maintain continuity of policies and practices); and only estates of sound economic utility were retained for the exploitation of their potential. If strict settlement limited the path of economic development, it stemmed more from a family's inability to retain all their estates which would have enabled them to follow through a sustained programme of improvements and expansion. Transient ownership inhibited or interrupted the pattern of progress in farm consolidation if capital investment suddenly dried up. The estates most likely to be affected were those which changed hands most often; but perhaps the worst affected of these were the church or college leasehold properties, which were purchased for the duration of a short-term lease by a fairly rapid succession of proprietors who appeared to find the fixed charges and mortgages which they carried

ate too rapidly into profits.¹¹⁷ The nature of these short-term leases and high fixed charges discouraged any heavy or long-term capital investment. However, these issues should not be over-stressed, as good tenants were fairly resilient and self-reliant, and were likely to sustain their own programme of improvements within the terms of their leases, which would be transferred to the new owner. In essence, the Sutton's integrity of purpose sustained them through personal crises and enabled them to respond effectively to financial difficulties, such that they remained a family of considerable strength and repute during the period under review.

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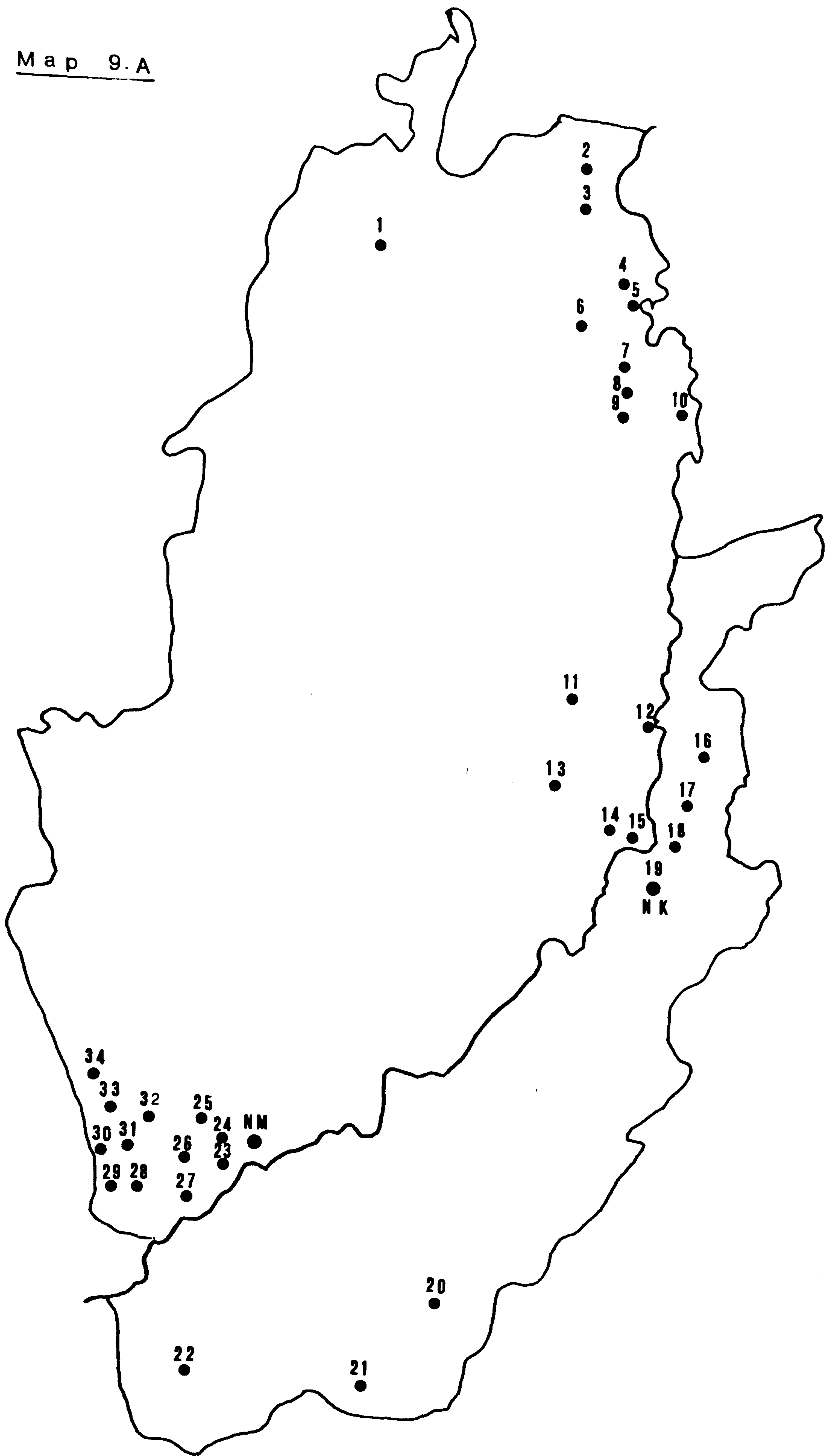
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24. DDM/103/181, 1744, cited in Estate Act.
25. DDM/103/181, 1744, Act of Parliament for vesting the settled estates of Sir Robert Sutton in trustees to be sold for discharging several mortgages and incumbrances.
26. DDM/103/200, 1746-52, account of Matthew Lamb, esq., as executor of Sir Robert.
27. DDM/103/201, 1752, agreement with Mr. Lamb for the purchase of the late Sir Robert Sutton's estates in Nottinghamshire.
28. DDM/103/202, 1752, 2 farms purchased at Brant Broughton.
29. DDM/103/41, survey of Pavenham.
30. DDM/103/37, a Fire Insurance Policy was taken out by John in 1766 insuring the premises for £6,000.
31. DDM/103/36, land purchased in Halam Field, 1764.
32. DDM/103/184, 1771, Estate Act for vesting certain lands, part of the real estate of John Sutton, esq., in trust, to be sold for £8,000, the portion of Isabella Sutton, and for other purposes. DDM/103/185, 1774, out of the proceeds of the sale, a parcel of land contiguous to Norwood was purchased for £900.
33. DDM/103/7, 1771 estate rentals.
34. DDM/103/4, 1769, £1,200 mortgage on 3 messuages in Ironmonger Lane, St. Martin's, 4 messuages in Silver Street and King Street, and 6 messuages in Carnaby Street and Silver Street (St. James).
35. DDM/103/41, 1778, valuation.
36. DDM/103/191, 1778, Estate Act for the exchange of the Mansion House and Park and lands of Sir Richard Sutton (Norwood Park and Hall Meadow) with certain lands in Easthorpe, Notts.
37. DDM/103/8, 9, 10, 1779, several parcels of land in Easthorpe sold off to Mr. Paul Bright, Mr. Jn. Jackson, Mr. Sam. Jackson, and Sam. Wadkin, totalling £248, valued at £20 per acre, or 33 years' purchase.
38. DDM/103/15, 17, 132, 153, c.1792, Norwood acquisitions.
39. DDM/103/193, 195, 199, 1784, Estate Act to substitute property in settlement.
40. DDM/103/127, Release of Edlington property.

41. DDM/103/128, Deed of Conveyance of Thornton College manor, 1792.
42. DDM/103/130, Release of a Farm and lands at Thornton Curtis, 1792.
43. DDM/103/242, Release of Halloughton manor and mansion house, 1792.
44. DDM/103/49, Sale of Thurlby Sheepwalks, 1794, to Jn. Straw; who subsequently resold them, 1804, DDM/103/56.
45. DDM/103/282, Agreement to purchase Thurgarton leasehold estate, 1794; details of purchase money, DDM/103/281; documents relating to the transfer of mortgages, DDM/103/275-297.
46. DDM/103/3, 1765, marriage to heiress Susanna Crespigny; subsequent marriage to heiress Ann Williams and appointment of fortune to children, DDM/103/143, 123, 42, 103, 148-57.
47. DDM/103/7, Rentals of Sir Richard's estates, 1771-6.
48. DDM/103/17, Rentals of Sir Richard's estates, 1787-94.
49. DDM/103/54, settled estates of Sir Richard, deceased.
50. DDM/103/62, estate near Norwood not in settlement.
51. DDM/103/208, Executorship accounts of the late Sir Richard, 1802-4; DDM/103/23, Rent and Account Book of the Sutton family estates in Notts. and Lincs, 1803-5, produced in Chancery.
52. DDM/103/210-213, accounts and memos re. servants' wages.
53. DDM/103/209, Norwood Park inventory.
54. DDM/103/219, inventory of the library at Norwood Park; /220, Valuation.
55. DDM/103/223, 224, valuation of wine at Norwood Park.
56. DDM/103/212, Account of produce sold from the garden at Norwood, July 1802; sundry produce, wine, bacon, pork, etc., 1805, DDM/103/340.
57. DDM/103/205, Valuation of household goods at Brant Broughton, 1802.
58. DDM/103/217, 1802, administration of estate of John Sutton, deceased.
59. DDM/103/204, Valuation of farm stock at Brant Broughton, 1802.
60. The Complete Baronetage, V (1909), 162.
61. DDM/103/297, Assignment of lease for 20 years.
62. DDM/103/25, parcels of land purchased in Southwell and Halam, nr. Norwood, 1806; DDM/103/29, 2 parcels of land purchased contiguous to Norwood, 1824.
63. DDM/103/53, 1802, a calculation of the clear profits.
64. DDM/103/292, Thurgarton rentals, 1803-4.
65. DDM/103/23, Rent and account book, 1802-5.

66. DDM/103/20, Sir Richard's will of 1798.
67. In order to secure their own portions of £40,000 each.
68. DDM/103/24, Abstract of Title, 1803-46, of the property of Sir Richard (1799-1855).
69. DDE/42/10, 1739 map of coalfield, with wrought and unwrought mines.
70. DDM/103/201, 1752, sale agreement with Matthew Lamb.
71. 1724, Brant Broughton, 10 farms, £1,127 rental; Gowshill, Thornton, East Hallaton and Killington, 547 acres, ££359 rental; Auber and Bassingham, 380 acres, £173 rental; Edlington, 48 acres, £103 rental; DDM/103/136; unspecified Notts. estates, let at £1,805, DDM/103/201.
72. Smallholdings of 10 acres or less, farms ranging from 20 to 50 acres, sheepwalks extending to c.300 acres, 1724, DDM/103/136.
73. DDM/103/325, Valuation of Brant Broughton, 1796; DDM/103/136, 1724.
74. DDM/103/160, Conveyance of property at Brant Broughton.
75. DDM/103/119, 136, set out in settlement of 1724.
76. DDM/103/13, 21 years; DDM/103/70, 3 lives; DDM/103/71, 3 lives; DDM/103/145, 20 years; DDM/103/318, 40 years; DDM/103/114, yearly.
77. DDM/103/7, estate rentals, 1771-6.
78. DDM/103/145, 20 year lease between Sir Richard and Geo. Piffe, yeoman; DDM/103/327, mode of occupying and management of Wm. Lilly's farm, 1797.
79. DDM/103/325, 41, 128, 130, Branton, Pavenham, Norwood, Thornton.
80. DDM/103/136, the farms ranged from 17 to 54 acres; DDM/103/325, the farm sizes had increased, ranging from 100 to 300 acres (9 in total), with 7 ranging from c.20 to 80 acres) 1724-1796.
81. DDM/103/136, Gowshill sheepwalks for 700 sheep; DDM/103/17, Thurlby sheepwalk.
82. DDM/103/7, estate rentals, 1771-6.
83. DDM/103/17, estate rentals, 1787-94.
84. DDM/103/53, calculation of the clear profits of the estates.
85. DDM/103/17, 53, estate rentals.
86. DDM/103/41, A particular of Sir Richard's estate at Pavenham, 1778.
87. DDM/103/112, Enclosure Act, 1796; DDM/103/114, tenancy agreement, 1805.
88. DDM/103/117, Release, 1806.
89. DDM/103/7, 17, 53, estate rentals and calculation of clear profits.
90. DDM/103/216, inventory of Norwood Farm stock, 1802.

91. DDM/103/214, 215, 218, 338, tenancy agreement, farm valuation, and accounts, 1802 re. Thos. Frost, new tenant.
92. DDM/103/204, valuation of farm stock at Brant Broughton, 1802.
93. DDM/103/51, correspondence from John Porter to Sir Richard, 1800.
94. DDM/103/52, experimental breeding of fat stock data, 1798-1800.
95. DDM/103/204, 214, farm accounts.
96. DDM/103/243, valuation of Wm. Pogson's farm stock, 1793.
97. DDM/103/245, tithes account for Halloughton, 1799.
98. DDM/103/246, action of ejectment, 1806-8.
99. DDM/103/250, arbitration award, 1808.
100. DDM/103/249, Letter from Rev. Richard Sutton to agent, Geo. Hodgkinson, 26.3.1808.
101. Down Hatherley and Thurgarton estates, 1805, DDM/103/104, 297.
102. DDM/103/29, Letter Book, 1822-29; memo. from Geo. Hodgkinson to Sir Richard, 20.1.1827.
103. DDM/103/29, letter from Geo. Hodgkinson to Sir Richard, 21.1.1826.
104. DDM/103/29, letter dated 5.9.1826.
105. DDM/103/29, character reference taken up for Mr. Saville's tenant, Wilson, of Primrose Hill, 21.8.1826.
106. DDM/103/29, letter of 24.9.1826.
107. DDM/103/29, letter of 5.9.1826.
108. DDM/103/29, letter of 24.9.1826.
109. DDM/103/29, October 1826.
110. DDM/103/29, letter of 18.10.1826.
111. DDM/103/29, October 1826.
112. DDM/103/29, letter from Geo. Hodgkinson to Sir Richard, 29.5.1827.
113. DDM/103/29, letter of 1.1.1828.
114. DDM/103/29, letter of 11.1.1828.
115. DDM/103/29, letter of 19.9.1829.
116. See Chapter Six.
117. Such as Thurgarton estate, available from Trinity College by the purchase of short-term leases, and which the Suttons held from 1798 to 1805; purchased for £10,400, sold for £14,000, DDM/103/281, 282, 292, 297.

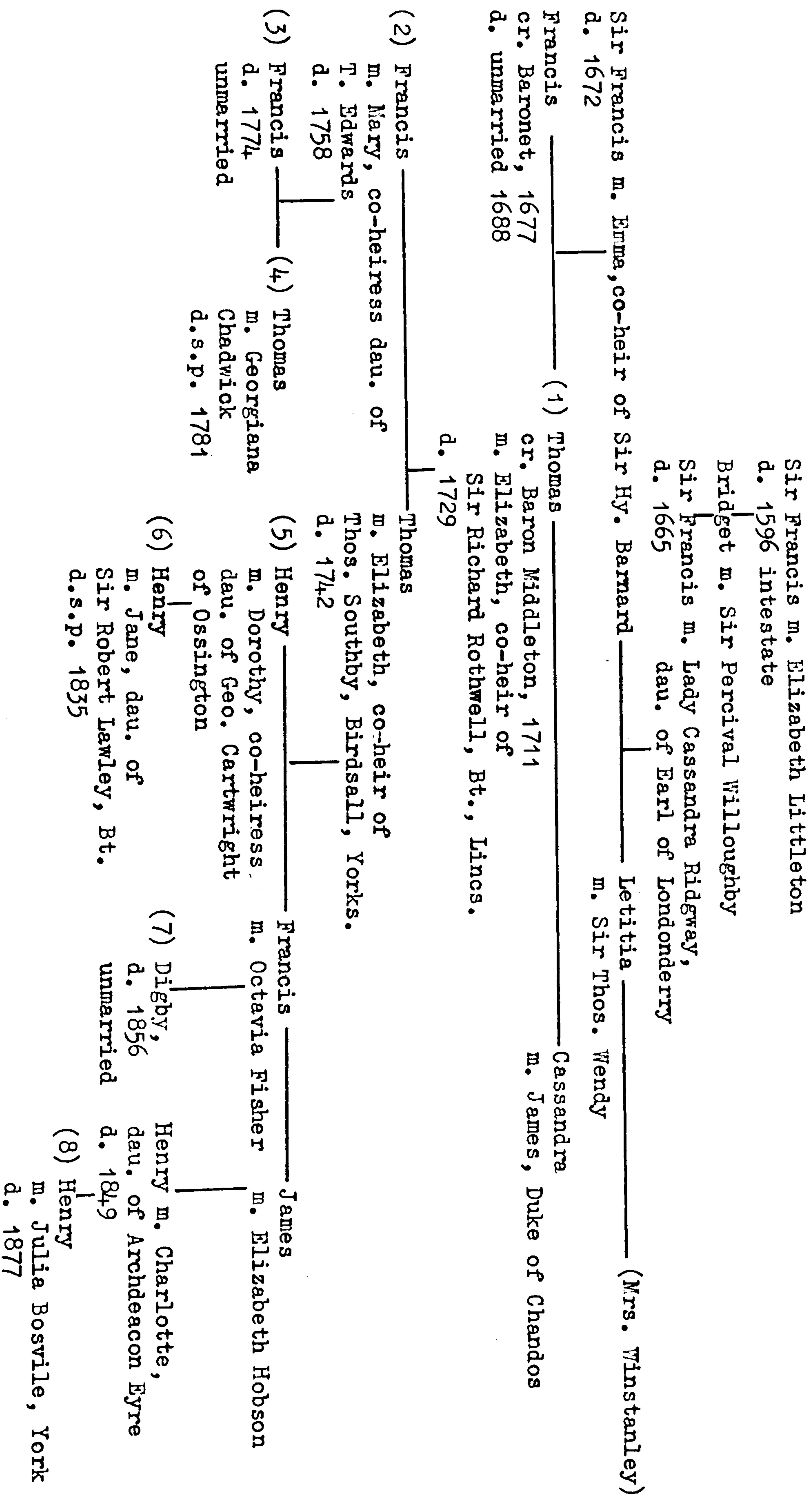
Map 9.A



Willoughby Landholdings : Nottinghamshire

9.B Key to Map 9.A, Willoughby landholdings

1. Scrooby
 2. Misterton
 3. Walkeringham
 4. Saundby
 5. Bole
 6. N. Wheatley
 7. Sturton
 8. N. Leverton
 9. S. Leverton
 10. Coates
 11. Ossington
 12. Carlton
 13. Caunton
 14. Little Carlton
 15. S. Muskham
 16. S. Collingham
 17. Langford
 18. Winthorpe
 19. Newark
 20. Kinoulton
 21. Willoughby
 22. W. Leake
 23. Lenton
 24. Radford
 25. Aspley
 26. Wollaton Park
 27. Beeston
 28. Bramcote
 29. Stapleford
 30. Trowell
 31. Trowell Moor
 32. Bilborough
 33. Cossall
 34. Awsworth
- NM NOTTINGHAM
NK NEWARK

Willoughby Pedigree

Source: The Complete Peerage, III (1932), 697-8.

CHAPTER NINETHE WILLOUGHBYS OF WOLLATON PARK

The Willoughbys (later Lords Middleton) could trace their ancestry back to Ralph Bugge, a wealthy Nottingham wool merchant, who began purchasing land for his sons at Willoughby on the Wolds and at Bingham in the thirteenth century. Descendants took the names of their territorial possessions.¹ During the reign of Edward II a marriage to the heiress daughter of Sir Roger de Morteign brought the manors of Wollaton and Cossall into the family; and a marriage in 1435 between Sir Hugh Willoughby and Margaret, co-heiress daughter of Sir Baldwin Freville, brought the manor of Middleton and other Warwickshire property to them.² Although income was drawn from the Willoughby's agricultural interests, particularly sheep farming, and property rentals and dues, an increasing proportion came from their coalmining activities which centred around Cossall from the thirteenth century and Wollaton by the fifteenth century. By the middle of the sixteenth century coal revenues formed about two-thirds of their income, but these profits were subject to fluctuations. Sir Francis was prompted to build a splendid Hall at Wollaton, closer to the centre of his coalmining activities. The Hall was completed in 1588 and is thought to have been financed largely out of his coalmining profits.³ However, his lavish lifestyle and entrepreneurial activities in ironworks, blastfurnaces, and woad growing incurred great debts at a time when coalpit revenue was declining. Sir Francis died intestate and Chancery decreed that his second wife should receive the properties in Dorset, and Gunthorpe, Lowdham, Caythorpe, Carlton, Nottingham, Radford and Lenton in Nottinghamshire, free of all debts, as her jointure estates. The remaining estates were settled on his son in law, Sir Percival, who was to be responsible for all debts. Sir Percival's own entrepreneurial activities in glassblowing and the continuation of coalmining activities incurred more debts which were only partially offset by the sale of some of the inherited

estates, including the sale of property in Kent inherited from his own family.⁴ The Wollaton pits closed down in 1635 although small scale operations began at Trowell. Part of Wollaton Hall was burnt in 1642, and Sir Percival died the following year. The Hall remained unoccupied and derelict during the Civil War years, with Sir Percival's son Sir Francis, and his grandson Francis, preferring to live at Middleton. Not until the 1680s was the Hall made habitable, with repairs costing £313, to become once again the principal seat.⁵ In 1672 Francis decreed that his executors were to erect a 'very fair monument at Middleton church, in memory of my father, Sir Francis and my mother, Cassandra Willoughby, commending them for...the recovery of the estate that was utterly ruined in the eye of the world'.⁶ This recovery was achieved through a period of retrenchment by father and son. The estates were subsequently expanded, either by gift or by fortuitous marriages. The manors of South Muskham and Carlton were devised by the 1674 will of Sir William of Selston.⁷ The marriage of Sir Thomas (created Lord Middleton in 1711) to Elizabeth Rothwell in 1693 extended the Willoughby property to Stapleton, Carlton le Moorland, Thurganby, Broxby, Rothwell and Binbrooke in Lincolnshire. From the marriage of Francis, the 2nd Lord Middleton, to Mary Edwards the estate at Westerleigh in Gloucestershire was acquired in 1723 or thereabouts;⁸ and her inheritance was used to purchase Saundby estate.⁹ The marriage of Francis's younger brother Thomas to Elizabeth Southby at around the same time eventually brought the Birdsall estate in Yorkshire into the core of descendable property.¹⁰ In addition, successive inheritors were making regular extensions to the estate through purchases. By 1883 the 9th Lord Middleton owned estates in Ross, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire as well as in Nottinghamshire totalling 99,576 acres with an annual gross value of £54,014, of which 15,015 acres were in Nottinghamshire grossing £26,157 a year.¹¹

Sir Francis, who built the Hall, had no son to succeed him. Bridget, the eldest of his six daughters, married Sir Percival Willoughby who, although possessing the same name, came from a different family, the Willoughby d'Eresbys of Lincolnshire. Thereafter a proliferation of males facilitated continuity of the Willoughby line, although collateral branches were brought into the pattern of descent, but without requiring a change of name. The pattern of inheritance was affected by the number of bachelor inheritors, or married inheritors who died without issue. Sir Francis (d. 1672) was succeeded by his son Francis, who died unmarried at the age of 22 in 1688, to be succeeded by his younger brother Thomas who was created the first Baron. Thomas was succeeded by his eldest son Francis who was succeeded as third Baron by his own son Francis: but he died unmarried in 1774 aged 59. He was succeeded by his younger brother Thomas, who died in 1781. He had been married but left no issue. Succession passed to a cousin, Henry, the eldest son of the first Baron's second son Thomas. Henry had two younger brothers, Francis and James, both of whose descendants were brought into the line of descent. Henry's only son Henry succeeded as sixth baron, but he died without issue aged 74, to be succeeded by his bachelor cousin Digby, the son of Francis. He produced an illegitimate daughter, and succession passed to his nephew Henry, the grandson of James. As the males tended to be generally fairly long-lived the lack of sons was compensated for by bringing several inheritors of the same generation into the pattern of succession. However, this produced several short terms of inheritance and affected the continuity of estate policies, particularly when cousins succeeded rather late in life after career interests had been developed elsewhere. Attitudes to circumstances could vary markedly. This factor, coupled with the sheer extent and dispersion of the estates to be administered, resulted in a certain laxity and lack of familiarity with the estates and their

state of development, producing at times a degree of confusion in family affairs.¹² In the late eighteenth century there were three short periods of succession by mature inheritors: Francis died in 1774 aged 59, to be followed by Thomas who died in 1781 aged 53. He was succeeded by his cousin Henry who died in 1800 aged 74, and to whose lot it fell to sort out an inherited muddle. Similarly in the mid-nineteenth century inheritors were long-lived, drawn from collateral branches, but with longer periods of tenure. Henry the 6th Baron, who died in 1835 aged 74, was succeeded by his cousin Digby who had had a long naval career. He died in 1856 aged 86, to be succeeded by his nephew Henry who was 60 when he died in 1877. Younger sons were brought into the direct line of inheritance on two occasions, in 1688 and 1774, one of whom, Thomas, was raised to the peerage. Thereafter daughters were less likely to be included in the settlement pattern. However, collateral inheritances were less responsible for estate disruptions than were the actions of certain individuals.

The family was of sufficient stature as landowners by the sixteenth century for Sir Henry to attend Henry VII and Henry VIII. They had a history of marriage connections with peerage families; and they improved their social status further by extending their estates and by developing their entrepreneurial interests. The family owed its stature to the abilities of its individual members. Sir Francis (d. 1672) was a renowned philosopher in his day. Thomas, the 1st Baron was a Privy Councillor to Queen Anne and a Tory M.P. for Nottinghamshire in five parliaments between 1698 and 1710, and M.P. for Newark 1710-12, and served as High Sheriff in 1695-6. He was also a celebrated ornithologist and a Fellow of the Royal Society. Francis, the 2nd Baron also had a political career, being Tory M.P. for Nottinghamshire from 1713-22 and for Tamworth from 1722-7. Thomas, the 4th Baron's marriage took place at Westminster Abbey. Henry, the 5th Baron was a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Fellow of the Society of Arts.

Digby, the 7th Baron, had a long naval career, from 1782 to 1840. He served as a Lieutenant under Earl Howe in 1794, and retired from service as a Captain. The ninth Baron was an agriculturist and breeder of pedigree stock. The family was characterised by a number of colourful figures, not the least of whom was Sir Francis who built the Hall and directed his particular abilities into diverse but risky entrepreneurial activities. Some of this foolhardy streak, with its predilection for overspending, was to be witnessed again in future generations, bringing periods of crisis in its wake: but ultimately the determination not to lose their position of prestige forced their undoubted talents to be directed more positively into maintaining continuity.

Financial Buoyancy

In the 1660s land was being purchased to expand the two core estates in Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire. In 1662 about 22 oxgangs of land in Trowell were purchased from the Powdrel family for £5,000. Also included were the Shortwood and Frith Closes and all the coal on the estate valued at 12d. per load for the first 1,000 loads. The woodlands alone were valued at £1,700.¹³ In addition a further £900 was expended on the purchase of Trowell land from Anne Powdrel in 1666, to be paid by two instalments of £750 and £150.¹⁴ Further purchases in 1662 were of 26 acres plus a mill and house (location unspecified) for £490, and 392 acres in Caunton for £2,640. A house and crofts at Middleton were purchased for £66. In 1665 Middleton New Park was purchased for £4,000 from Sir John le Hunt, plus £200 to his son. The Park extended over 469 acres, including 70 acres of woodland valued at around £1,000.¹⁵ The purchase of property was usually facilitated by raising bonds or mortgages among family or associates on favourable terms, and by the payment of principal by instalments; or by the proceeds of sales of other parts

of the estates; or by inherited fortunes. At the time of his death in 1672 Sir Francis had left charges of over £12,672 to be raised by his successor, including a £5,000 marriage portion for his daughter Cassandra, two jointures of £600 each for his mother and his wife, £1,000 to his younger son Thomas to help his fortune, £2,000 in the provision of portions for Thomas's younger children, and £2,000 provision for his nieces.¹⁶ Sir Francis died aged 37, leaving three very young children: his eldest son was aged 4, and during his minority the estates were to be administered by trustees, totalling five. Two of these were his brother in law, Sir Thomas Wendy and father in law, Henry Barnard. Sir Thomas Wendy died before probate and Henry Barnard, on behalf of his daughter Emma, widow of Sir Francis, administered the estate and received the rents and profits. Emma subsequently married Sir Josiah Child, who wielded great influence in the East India Company. Her jointure estate of Wollaton was valued at £5,000, with the option to exchange it for the Middleton estate if she chose. In 1682 a Bill of Complaint was registered with the High Chancellor of England on behalf of the children by their father's two sisters, Dame Wendy and Mrs. Winstanley, and their guardian, Adam Ottley. By this time Henry Barnard had died, and the Willoughby family feared that Emma was too influenced by Sir Josiah who did not have so much regard to the children's advantage and improvement of their estate, or the benefit of their father's family as he should. If the children died in their minority, administration of the estate would go to Emma; and with the death of the two family trustees and the concurrence of those surviving, Sir Josiah took over the administration, and took possession of all the deeds relating to the estate. The Bill claimed that an account should be set out of the rents and profits of the estate and be applied to the trust of the will for the payment of debts and legacies, with the surplus laid out to improve the estate for the benefit of the children. At that time the rental of the Nottinghamshire estates

was valued at £2,100 and the Middleton estate at £1,300 a year. Emma had prevailed upon her father, when he was administering the estate, to pay the rents and profits to Sir Josiah to be laid out in East India Stock. A sum of £2,000 had been applied to this means which Sir Josiah claimed had improved to the sum of £20,000, out of which Sir Francis's debts had been settled. The difficult state of trade in 1682 compelled the Willoughbys to consider that the children's trust money was held in a most hazardous manner and should be made more secure by the purchase of lands, with a distinct account kept of what belonged to each child. In particular, Cassandra's portion should not be left to the risk of trade, as she was in danger of losing it altogether. The family feared that if the money was not laid out in the purchase of land before any of them died it would go away from the Willoughby family in the course of administration, 'which is the thinge Sir Josiah Child aimes att' (sic).¹⁷ He was accused of deliberate obstruction in preventing the children and the trustees from knowing the precise state of affairs. The Bill requested that the estate should be managed under the direction of the Court in a manner to improve its performance, and according to the terms of the 1672 will, and that two other trustees should be appointed to effect this end. Subsequently Sir Josiah set out an account of the monies held in trust for the young Sir Francis. At this time Emma was still entitled to the profits of the Wollaton estate and the Warwickshire estate was not specified. Sir Josiah claimed that the rents and profits of the estate in Caunton from 1679 to 1686, valued at £300 a year and totalling £2,250, were being held, plus dividends for stock totalling £6,395, and a further £25,675 was held in trust by the trustees and executors. Sir Josiah also presented an account for looking after the three young children at his home in Wanstead, Essex.¹⁸ Cassandra subsequently suggested that he extracted £60,000 from her brother's estate while he 'acted' as a 'trustee'.¹⁹ Cassandra's £5,000 portion was due on her marriage to James, the Duke

of Chandos. She was also entitled to £1,000 under the will of her brother, Sir Francis, who only enjoyed his estates for a short time after they had been secured back into the Willoughby family. In addition she had lent her younger brother Sir Thomas £2,000. These sums, together with the interest, amounted to £8,400. To secure the repayment of this amount the manor of Saundby was devised to her for a term of 1100 years;²⁰ but in order to meet this obligation Saundby was subsequently sold. Dame Emma was persuaded to relinquish her jointure estate on payment of £5,250. The agreement was initiated in 1700, but was effected by instalments over a long period. By 1723 she had only received £2,000. For the remaining £3,000 Sir Thomas had given her two securities each of £1,000 on his lands in North Wheatley, Hestley, Scrooby, South Leverton, Muston and Hablesthorpe in Nottinghamshire plus a bond for £1,000.²¹ In the meantime, in order to repair the bridges between the two families in conflict, Sir Josiah made Sir Thomas a guardian of his two young sons from his marriage to Emma, 'In consideration of this, Sir Thomas Willoughby will be aiding and assisting to my said two younger sons as I have been to him, his brother and sister'.²² Emma subsequently gave £1,000 out of her personal estate to her grandson Thomas Willoughby. This was to assist him, as a second son, in his marriage.²³

When Sir Thomas succeeded his brother in 1688 he inherited debts totalling £12,515, involving eight different creditors, most of whom lent money on bonds at 5 per cent interest. In addition there were bequests to be met amounting to £1,320 plus a £40 a year annuity for life. At this time the core estate of inheritance included Wollaton, Sutton Passeys, Trowell, Cossall and Caunton in Nottinghamshire; Middleton, Hurley and Kingsbury in Warwickshire; and the Honour of Peverell in Derbyshire. There was no power to revoke Trowell or Cossall, which were essential to coalmining activities, or the family seat at Wollaton Park, but Caunton could, if necessary, be disposed of.²⁴ The combined

estate rentals were over £3,500 a year.²⁵ Sir Thomas extended the estate by purchasing the manor of Kinoulton from Sir Gervas Clifton in 1688 for £25,000;²⁶ and purchased a cottage in South Muskham in 1692;²⁷ and Walkeringham manor from the Earl of Kingston in 1699 for £22,550, with an initial payment of £10,250.²⁸ By 1710 the Warwickshire estate rentals appear to have remained fairly static, but rental arrears were being experienced such that the total income was under £1,000.²⁹ The core estate in Nottinghamshire continued to be the focus of coalmining activities, whilst Sir Thomas pursued a successful political career, resulting in his being raised to the peerage. Thereafter the scale of land purchases increased, partly in accord with their elevated social status, but with many piecemeal transactions to facilitate the expansion of coalmining. The level of debt also increased, reflecting the more lavish lifestyle of a peerage family, and the greatly increased provision for children to sustain their status.

Francis, the 2nd Lord Middleton, married heiress Mary Edwards in 1723 who was entitled to two inheritances of £8,000 and £10,000, but a protracted legal case ensued to exact payment as, unknown to Mary, her father was in great financial difficulties, and ultimately forced to live abroad. According to their marriage settlement the £10,000³⁰ was to be used to buy back into the family the Saundby property, which had previously been disposed of to pay Cassandra's portion. Instead, the estate was purchased by mortgage which was not cleared until 1739,³¹ by which time part payment of Mary's fortune had been received. The matter was settled after the death of her father and the sale of much of his property, after a complex series of settlements and divided inheritances had been worked through.³² By 1748 Saundby was producing a yearly rental income of around £1,000.³³ At this time the Middleton rental was £1,358, but rental arrears were being carried over for several years due to the depressed state of agricultural returns at this

time.³⁴ On the death of her father, Mary succeeded to the Westerleigh estate in Gloucestershire. Other estates and small parcels of land continued to be purchased by Francis. At South Muskham a farm and several closes extended over 136 acres were purchased producing a yearly rental of £190.10s.0d.³⁵ The 'countray hall' and garden in Nottingham, on High Pavement, was purchased, together with stables, the Castle Inn and an adjoining house.³⁶ Several small purchases of land were made at Beeston, comprising 16 acres with a yearly rental of £13, valued at 23 years' purchase or £304.³⁷ Also a farm and land rented for £11 a year;³⁸ and a farm and three houses producing a clear rent of nearly £48, valued at 28 years' purchase or £1,599.³⁹ A house and land in Lenton and Radford, mortgaged for £300, was purchased for £490.⁴⁰ The West Leake estate, extending over 1,316, and producing a yearly rental of £742, was purchased for £15,749. This included 12 farms and 8 houses plus a smith's shop.⁴¹ General estate disbursements at Wollaton averaged £657 a year between 1745 and 1750, ranging from £387 in 1750 and £953 in 1747. The wages bill averaged £188 out of the total yearly disbursements.⁴² To provide an additional but small source of income, the prebend tithes of South Muskham were purchased in 1750 for £1,500.⁴³ To maintain his younger son Thomas, the 2nd Lord Middleton settled the Little (West) Leake estate on him, plus a sum of £30,000.⁴⁴ This was the situation when Francis, the 3rd Lord Middleton succeeded.

Francis continued the family tradition of being involved in politics, and incurred expenses of £365 at Nottingham in 1768, and £409 in 1774.⁴⁵ He remained a bachelor, and not having to make provision for younger sons he did not engage in extensive purchases of estates, but continued to buy in small parcels of land around the Wollaton estate to facilitate coal getting. In 1765 the manor and estate of Broxtowe were acquired, comprising a capital messuage, closes, woods, coalmines, plus lands and tenements in Broxtowe, Bilborough and Basford. The estate was purchased for £6,000 and produced a rental of

£82 a year. The woods alone, containing 4,739 trees, were valued at £1,346.⁴⁶ In 1768 24 acres of Stubbins Wood were acquired for £2,300. This was situated on the coal seam. Messrs. Barber and Fletcher had a lease from Ralph Edge, and one from William Goodday, giving them the right to sink pits in Stubbins Wood in Bilborough parish; but Lord Middleton released them of this right.⁴⁷

On Francis's death in 1774 his younger brother Thomas succeeded to the estates, which included the Honour of Peverell in Derbyshire, and the manors of Wollaton, Sutton Passeys, Cossall, Trowell, South Muskham, Carlton, Saundby and North Wheatley in Nottinghamshire. This included Wollaton Park, 150 messuages, 6 water corn mills, 4,000 acres of land, 2,000 acres of meadow, 4,000 acres of pasture, 200 acres of woodland, 1,000 acres of furze and heath, 5,000 acres of moorland, and 1,000 acres of land under water. In Warwickshire the estate extended over Middleton and Hurley manors, and included Middleton Park, 50 messuages, 2 water corn mills, 2,000 acres of land, 1,000 acres of meadow, 2,000 acres of pasture, 60 acres of woodland, 500 acres of furze and heath, 500 acres of moorland, and 50 acres of land covered with water. In Lincolnshire the estate comprised the manors of Stapleford and Carlton le Moorland, with 25 messuages, 2,500 acres of land, 1,000 acres of meadow, 2,500 acres of pasture, 30 acres of woodland, 500 acres of furze and heath, 500 acres of moorland, and 100 acres of land covered with water.⁴⁸ In addition he had inherited the West Leake estate. During his elder brother's period of inheritance Thomas had resided at Middleton Park, and preferred to continue living there rather than at Wollaton Park. The most far-reaching and controversial contribution which Thomas made was to create another crisis of inheritance due to some personal foible based on folly, ineptness, or over-generosity. From whatever cause, his successor inherited a depleted estate which he had to restore from his own personal fortune. Thomas was considered by his successor to have

made a 'foolish' will.⁴⁹ In the absence of any offspring, he left all his personal property to his wife, which was nearly equal in value to the freehold estate. His cousin Henry who succeeded was so incensed that he wrote an open letter for posterity. 'The error of my Predecessor's will was so near ruining the family, when I succeeded to the Baronacy (sic) - so I will state my past and future conduct so preserving and reinstating the Estate in the Family'. He claimed that on his succession he was in great pecuniary straits owing to the large 'leavings' enjoyed by Georgiana. She inherited money, plate, jewels and furniture in the three houses at Wollaton, Middleton and Piccadilly, plus Middleton as her jointure estate, plus £1,600 a year outpayment from the family estate. She subsequently married E.M. Mundy, esquire of Derbyshire, and stripped Wollaton House of most of its furniture and plate, taking them to Middleton and London. At the time of her remarriage she was worth £250,000, apart from her Town house, jewels and plate. She was considered to have 'plundered' the Willoughbys of a great deal of money, which had been the savings of four predecessors, whereas 'common morality would have returned most part of it to the right line of the family from whence it came'. This accounted for so comparatively little of value being found in the possession of this ancient and wealthy family. A daughter was born from the marriage of Georgiana to Mundy, resulting in the death of Georgiana, but the daughter eventually married the Duke of Newcastle, taking some of the Wollaton gold plate to Clumber. Some of the Middleton crested silver was seen on a visit to the Mundy residence in Derbyshire, and furniture from the Piccadilly house, which had belonged to the Willoughbys, was sold, which was irrevocably gone out of the family. Mundy dispatched much of the Willoughby personal effects to his daughter at Clumber, returning only some of the Willoughby pictures to the family. Georgiana was said to have brought very little if any fortune at her marriage into the family, but in her will, out of

the Willoughby inheritance, she left £17,000 in legacies. Henry's father was Thomas, the younger brother of the 2nd Baron. Thomas had married Elizabeth Southby, by whom he acquired a considerable estate, including a family seat at Birdsall, Yorkshire. Henry had trained in law and became active in Yorkshire county administration at York, being a J.P. and High Sheriff before acquiring Wollaton, which was then, due to its unfurnished state, 'a difficulty better felt than described. No cash was left to me'. He had borrowed £5,000 from Georgiana to buy the personalities of stock required 'to set an established household going to work', and took a whole year to observe how to conduct the affairs which had fallen to his lot.

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Assisted by his wife Dorothy, a co-heiress of the Cartwright family, and cash in rents, they were able to establish a new foundation at Wollaton for the family in future, and had refitted or renewed everything that was neglected. Joseph Woolstenholme, an excellent old collier, had instructed Henry over a period of two years in a proper method of working the coalworks, and by his instruction the Wollaton estate was much improved. By these means Henry was able 'to redeem and recover the import and foundation of my family'.

Henry eventually succeeded to the Birdsall estates of his own family, thereafter providing the Willoughbys with a third family seat. Henry made substantial purchases of land,⁵¹ mainly in parcels, to expand coalmining operations and develop coal wharves as the canal network extended, opening up new markets. He also extended the Gloucestershire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire estates, but trimmed off the more outlying estates in Lincolnshire. Between 1782 and 1800 more than £88,000 was spent on properties around Wollaton. At Westerleigh in Gloucestershire two farms were bought for £1,160, and a farm adjoining the Birdsall estate was purchased for £3,000. At Carlton several closes were added to the estate in Lincolnshire; and a farm was purchased from the Duke of Devonshire near Nottingham for £12,000.⁵²

Thus the agricultural holdings were also being extended. The most significant Nottinghamshire purchases included the acquisition of part of Trowell manor, of which the family were already part-owners. The new acquisition brought them a further 330 acres; about 50 acres still contained coals valued at £20 per acre.⁵³ In addition, the Wollaton estate was substantially enlarged by the purchase of an estate from the Gregory family.⁵⁴ Two important purchases were made in 1793 from a collateral branch of the family, Robert Willoughby of Aspley, Nottinghamshire. The first brought several messuages, farms, and land in Cossall and Trowell to Henry, completing ownership of Trowell manor. This property was encumbered with three mortgages totalling £7,700 plus interest, and was acquired for £21,000.⁵⁵ This was followed by the acquisition of the Aspley estate for £29,000, which was charged with raising a £4,000 portion. This estate comprised a capital messuage plus c.115 acres of land.⁵⁶ The purchase of these properties was facilitated by the sale of others, particularly the outlying Lincolnshire properties, totalling well over £13,325;⁵⁷ or by raising bonds or mortgages, or by payments in instalments.⁵⁸ The 33 acres purchased in Trowell in 1786 for £16,000 was guaranteed by a bond at 4 per cent interest, to be paid by yearly instalments of the principal at the rate of £2,000 until the whole was paid off.⁵⁹ Land purchased in Radford from Joseph Stubbins in 1788 for £4,000 was repaid in yearly instalments of £1,000 plus interest.⁶⁰ The purchase of tithes on property in Caunton, Beesthorpe, Knapthorpe and Dean Hall in 1785 for £3,886 was effected by an initial payment of £886 and a bond to secure the remaining £3,000.⁶¹ Around this time the total annual estate rental income was £11,150, rising to £12,880 in 1790, and to £13,440 in 1795. By 1800 the figure had increased to £17,673.⁶² Henry made very generous provision for his family in keeping with their status, but such provision, together with the very active programme he pursued of estate expansion, incurred heavy debts.

He was probably motivated to over-compensate for the rather destitute circumstances he had inherited. He had been driven to re-establish his family and their estates in accordance with their peerage status. His will of 1793, made seven years before his death, was sufficiently far-sighted as to name the next four probable inheritors. This strict settlement lasted until 1848, when a family settlement was brought about due to the failure of successive inheritors to produce a male heir of the next generation. In effect his youngest brother's grandson inherited. Henry had settled £6,000 a year income on his son Henry until he succeeded to the estates: this charge the estates bore for the next seven years. His wife Dorothy was to receive £4,000 a year plus Middleton Park, except the woodlands, as her dower estate. This she was entitled to from 1800 to her death in 1808. His two daughters, Dorothy and Henrietta were each to receive, should they survive their father, £10,000 in addition to the £10,000 they had each already received as their marriage portions. Any future inheritor had the power to raise portions for his family not exceeding in total £60,000.⁶³

Henry was succeeded by his son Henry as the 6th Lord Middleton, inheriting estimated debts and charges of at least £51,900. Of this sum £20,000 was due to Dorothy and Henrietta and £22,000 in unspecified debts which, from the evidence, must have comprised a fair number of bonds and promisory notes. His assets included canal and turnpike shares to the value of £11,264, his Town house in Portman Square, London, valued at £7,000, and money with the Banker amounting to £6,346; but his personalty was deficient by £25,779. Added to this figure, over £3,000 had been left in annuities. It was decided to charge the unentailed estates in Lincolnshire with £5,600 of this debt, and £22,400 on the strictly entailed estates, according to their individual value. The entailed estates were those situated in Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire, on which the collected rental in 1800 was £15,100. The small Westerleigh estate in Gloucestershire

was also untailed, but due to its smallness (c.75 acres), and the disparity between its rental value of £1,000 and collected rents of only £671, this was not to be charged with any debts.⁶⁴ It was agreed by Deeds of 1803 and 1807 that the two sums of £10,000 due to Dorothy and Henrietta should remain as existing charges on the Willoughby estate.⁶⁵ Between 1800-8 the 6th Baron had repaid over £30,000 of his father's debts,⁶⁶ and continued his father's policy of expanding the estates by a very energetic programme of land purchases. Between 1803 and 1834 his purchases totalled at least £411,840, partly offset by sales amounting to £133,260.⁶⁷ Many were parcels of land or estates to aggregate around the core estate at Wollaton, primarily to facilitate the expansion of coalmining operations, but also to consolidate a powerful base for the diffusion of political influence and social prestige. Parcels of land were purchased in Lenton from 1805, until the purchase of Lenton Firs for £11,000, followed by a large estate in Lenton and Radford for £20,100, then Lenton Priory; and further small parcels of land were purchased at Lenton in between these major purchases.⁶⁸ An estate was purchased at Langford and Winthorpe for £110,000. This was situated near Newark, extending influence into the borough town.⁶⁹ An estate at Settrington in Scotland was purchased for £170,000;⁷⁰ and to extend the power base in Yorkshire an estate was purchased at Wharram le Street for £27,342. Wharram was a leasehold estate, leased for 21 years from the Dean and Chapter of York, renewable every 7 years. The lease was purchased from Major Topham, who had a mortgage outstanding on that property of over £19,000. At that time freehold property was valued at 30 years' purchase, with leasehold land only valued at 21½ years' purchase. This made a difference of £3,000 on the purchase price, and major Topham thought he had been taken advantage of. Lord Middleton paid off £10,000 of the mortgage, and requested a delay of one year for the subsequent payment of

£10,000, 'as some other purchases which I have lately made have called for more than I can conveniently settle in the instant'. This was in 1803. But the request was not granted: £20,000 was required as an initial payment, the balance of £7,000 to be paid six months later. The property, containing three farms, had originally been valued at £34,000 taking into consideration the leases and husbandry covenants which could be considerably improved. Henry's agent considered he had acquired a bargain, making the cheapest purchase in that neighbourhood for some time. The estate covered 1,766⁷¹ acres. Land and houses were also purchased in Kenilworth, to extend the Warwickshire estate.⁷² Taking into account the purchases and sales of property, the total estate rentals rose from £18,260 in 1803 to £23,400 in 1808, and continued to rise from £28,000 in 1820 to £29,000 in 1830 and to £32,000 by 1835.⁷³ A programme of building and estate improvements⁷⁴ enabled rents to rise, contributing to the overall increase. Henry's will of 1834 indicated that he owed £70,000 plus interest on mortgages on the Stapleford and Carlton estates in Lincolnshire and the Langford estate in Nottinghamshire which were chargeable to his estates in Gloucestershire (valued in 1832 at £93,000), and to the Winthorpe estate in Nottinghamshire (valued at £30,000). He left his wife Jane a £6,000 annuity in lieu of her dower and made bequests of £2,000. In addition his wife was due to the fee farm rents totalling £402 a year from property in Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Yorkshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, which he had inherited. He devised Langford manor house to her plus 100 acres of land in part payment of her annuity, and bequeathed her his canal shares. But he also bequeathed to her several debts of £5,000, £10,000 and £10,000 owing from his late father which he had paid off out of his own money. Counsel subsequently directed that she should be released from all claims and demands regarding these debts. In addition, Jane took the petty cash

of over £3,000, and all the plate without Arms, and the horses, carriages, dogs, game and contents of the wine cellar. Cousin Digby who inherited had to pay all the outstanding bills and wages, which it was claimed would all have been paid if the previous Lord had lived another fortnight. In addition he had to pay interest to various people totalling £4,755 and coal rent to the Gregorys of £1,000. He was also liable to pay £25,000 to the Dowager Lady Middleton, the £20,000 portion still owing to the Countess of Scarborough, daughter of the 5th Lord, £5,000 to Miss Emma Willoughby and £3,000 to the Reverend Drake. These debts were paid by Digby out of his private property by 1841.⁷⁵

Estate Development

Due to a number of factors the Willoughbys appear to have been less involved with the actual running of their estates than were the Edges or the Suttons. This was caused by the extent and geographical distribution of the various estates, the tradition of pursuing an active political career which often necessitated residence at the London house, the choice of several family seats which were occupied by the family and not leased out, and the fashion of spending winters in London. In addition, the pattern of inheritance brought younger brothers, cousins and nephews into ownership after perhaps an extensive period spent building up alternative careers, such that there often seemed to be confusion over what they had actually inherited. Court cases helped them to resolve these situations, when accounts and records had to be called for from the stewards and agents operating locally on whom they depended for general day to day operations. The impression is that they were very concerned with the principle of maintaining or improving the status and influence of the family name, brought about by major and strategic land acquisitions, and in general they pursued a continuous policy towards this end. Estates were

purchased with an eye to their development potential for the rental profits they would provide to sustain the lifestyle and prestige of a peerage family. Nevertheless, they did not lose their entrepreneurial instincts, and remained at the forefront of coalmining developments along the Nottinghamshire coalseam, providing the necessary wit and capital to expand local transport facilities, together with the essential competitive spirit, to take advantage of more distant domestic markets. Coalmining extended over their estates at Wollaton, Radcliffe, Asply, Lenton, Beeston, Bramcote, Stapleford, Trowell, Bilborough, Cossall and Awsworth: but activities of coal extraction co-existed here with those of farming, particularly sheep farming. The Westerleigh estate in Gloucestershire, although small, was also valued for its mineral extraction activities. Diversification of economic interests was sustained through the principally agricultural estates in Warwickshire, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, and in eastern regions of Nottinghamshire. As much of the Willoughby's energy was directed towards expanding coalmining developments around their principal seat at Wollaton this facet receives greater prominence: but some indication is given of the nature of their principal agricultural holdings.

Of the more outlying estates, there were some 40 to 50 tenants of farms and smallholdings on the Middleton estate at the turn of the eighteenth century. An additional farm was added to this property in 1793. This estate extended over more than 3,542 acres in 1800, producing a rental of more than £2,500 a year.⁷⁶ The three farms purchased in 1803 at Wharram le Street and Leavening in Yorkshire, which had already been affected by old and new enclosure, were again rearranged to comply with the 6th Lord's desire to improve husbandry covenants. Against the national background of deficiencies in corn harvests, two successive corn crops instead of one were required from part of the great sheep walk. By some alteration to the farm layouts, the tenants agreed to the new owner's request. Several farms were

gradually added to this estate.⁷⁷ The Carlton le Moorland estate in Lincolnshire contained fields, meadows and marshland, comprising a mixture of farm sizes and smallholdings, plus additional closes, belonging to over 40 tenants.⁷⁸ Of the Nottinghamshire estates, the inherited property at South Muskham operated a mixed agricultural policy based on sheep, cattle, dairy farming, and arable crops of wheat, barley, oats, rye and peas. The property had already been subject to enclosure by 1731. A farm of 120 acres and several parcels of land were gradually added to this estate. In 1708 a tenant in arrears of rent totalling £115 sold his entire stock of 71 ewes, 35 hogs, 6 cows, and stacks of rye, hay and peas to Sir Thomas in compensation.⁷⁹ When the West Leake estate was purchased in 1752 it was newly enclosed. It contained 17 farms which, together with the cottagers, produced a net annual rental of £613.15s.0d. It was thought that the rents of the two largest farms would bear raising by £20 and £12.10s.0d. Other advantages pertaining to this estate arose from there being no chief rent to pay, and the land tax was easy rated, whilst the tenants did not have to pay toll to Nottingham nor at the bridge. Capital was invested in buildings and alterations on this estate between 1760 and 1772 totalling £618.⁸⁰ The Langford and Winthorpe estate purchased near Newark extended over 2,785 acres, producing a rental of just under £5,000 in 1845. This estate contained pasture, meadow, arable land, plantations and rough pasture, the value per acre ranging from 1s.6d. to 120s.0d. There were 18 smallholdings, 9 small farms of between 15 and 36 acres, 5 medium farms ranging from 49 to 86 acres, 5 farms with between 151 and 174 acres, the 4 largest possessing between 238 and 326 acres.⁸¹ The principal estate at Wollaton contained 28 smallholdings in 1763, ranging from 1 to 14 acres, and 18 farms. Ten of these ranged from 15 to 50 acres. The two largest were 108 and 163 acres, compared with the 475 acres of the Home Farm. The Park extended over 582 acres. In 1787 Wollaton lordship extended

over 2,281 acres. In 1809, when many landowners had been affected by recurring economic difficulties, a valuation was undertaken of the core estates at Wollaton, Trowell, Cossall, Allsworth, Bilborough, Lenton, Radford, Bramcote, Beeston and Basford, and across the Derbyshire border in Hallam, Ilkeston and Stanton, with a view to implementing improvements for the benefit of the tenants and the landlord. The surveyor suggested that obstructions in the Erewash near the Trowell and Cossall property should be removed and the river widened and deepened where necessary to allow effective drainage of adjoining land which was greatly injured due to flooding. Hollow draining would improve the land on the estates, and to encourage tenants to do it, it was suggested that Lord Middleton should provide them with the necessary drainage tiles at half the usual price; and that before any grassland was ploughed out it should be made a condition that the land was first drained. As the farms were generally too small they should not be let to fresh tenants when they became vacant, but be divided among the smaller farmers, and a suggested plan for rearrangement was drawn up. It was considered that there were many places on these estates suitable for water meadows, which were recommended to be made, thereby producing a great quantity of hay without manure, which would contribute to enriching other parts of the estate. The valuation was made at such rents as the farmers would be able to afford, but it was suggested that parts of the estate nearest to Nottingham might be let off to the best advantage to tradespeople, when one-third more could be obtained in rentals for those parcels. Several cottages and other buildings were due to be taken down as part of general estate improvements. Collectively these estates covered 5,032 acres, of which the two principal ones were Wollaton of over 2,200 acres and Trowell of 1,459 acres. They produced a total rental of £9,305, with the value per acre ranging from 10s.0d. to 60s.0d. The mode of cultivation concentrated on sheep and milk cows, plus arable crops of wheat, barley,

oats, peas, beans and clover. By 1813 the state of management of the Wollaton farms had improved to provide four farms of between 100 and 200 acres, compared with the two of 1763; and the closes were collected into manageable groups. The Home Farm extended round three sides of the Park and plantations. Certain meadow and pasture land in Wollaton had been spoilt by the coalpits, which was improved by fencing and levelling and land husbandry to be brought back into use as cow pasture. Land elsewhere on these estates was damaged through pit sinking, the building of waggonways, or by flooding from the canal, which affected the level of rents or was liable for compensation for damages. The extent of land so affected was an indication of the expansion of coalmining activities.⁸²

During the 1650s mining was taking place in Cossall and Trowell. Between 1650 to 1656 losses were made from the Trowell operations amounting to £1,656. At Cossall the situation fluctuated, producing losses of up to £30 in 1649, 1659 and 1662, but profits of £122 in 1660, and £229 after 1662. A purchase of land in Trowell was made in 1662 for £5,000 to expand operations there, but over £180 was lost in production that year due to the foolish setting of the gin below the old Hollows, which needed draining before any coal could be obtained; and due to the damp which kept them out of the pits almost all that summer; and because of the alleged knavery of the colliers and bailiffs. To offset some of these financial problems 200 acres of timber were sold from Middleton New Park in 1666 for £300, still leaving 90 acres of woodland. New trees were set for £167. Heathland was cleared which, together with an additional close, was sown with rye to increase the yield; and instead of taking 88½ thraves of winter corn for tithes annually, the cost was included in the farm leases. A second parcel of land was purchased in Trowell in 1666.⁸³ Between 1665 and 1668 production at Trowell

fluctuated from 3,316 loads to 1,572 loads, rising slightly to 1,583 then to 1,708 loads. Profits were kept low because the cost of production was high. In 1665 profits were only £176, down to £2 the following year, and up to £171 in 1667; but the actual income for those three years was offset by disbursements amounting to £668 in 1665, £398 in 1666, and £194 the following year.⁸⁴ In 1664 from the Cossall mine 268 loads were sold for £31, but production costs were £21. The following year the mine made a loss of £176, as £740 had been disbursed in obtaining around 3,000 loads of coal.⁸⁵ From July to March, 1672-3, a further loss of £230 was recorded from the pit in Ox close in Cossall. Another coalpit was sunk in the Frith for £490, of which £248 were disbursed in wages.⁸⁶ Profits from wood sales to offset these charges were also relatively low owing to the cost of felling and carting away. Of 272 trees cleared in 1667-8 valued at £121, only £57 profit was made.⁸⁷ After the death of Sir Francis in 1672 mining operations appear to have declined until resumed by the 1st Lord Middleton in Trowell. In 1720 he undertook an agreement with John Hacker to extend the existing sough under Hacker's land, and to have access to that land to sink pits to extract the considerable quantities of coal which were there. It was estimated that there would be 1,050 loads of coal to each acre, for which Hacker would be paid at the rate of 16d. a load for the hard coal and 12d. a load for the soft. When the coal was worked out the land was to be made fit for tilling. This lease was renewed in 1756, under similar terms, with the 2nd Lord Middleton paying £60 per acre for the soft coal raised.⁸⁸ In 1723 Robert Willoughby of a collateral branch, who owned land in Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire and Herefordshire, died leaving two young sons. During their minority (until the age of 24) land the family owned in Cossall, under which there were more than 22 acres of coal delphs, was to be managed by the 1st Baron. The coal was valued at £35 an acre. The payment of the total sum of

£788 was to be paid to the first son who survived to the age of 24. By 1737 £500 in part payment had been received.⁸⁹ In 1793 this estate was purchased from Robert Willoughby of Aspley. After the agreement was undertaken with John Hacker coals were sold from the Trowell Field pit for around £3,000 a year between 1720 and 1727, but with a very variable profit margin. In fact, for the first two years of production there were net losses of £25 and £68, with only a £12 profit margin the following year. This rose to around £300-400 in the next two succeeding years, reaching £1,162 in 1726 and rising to £3,76 the following year, then declining slightly to £1,328 in 1728 and £1,105 the next year.⁹⁰ The second Lord Middleton had to pay 12 of his tenants' monies in 1731 for damaging around 20 acres of land in coal extraction in Trowell Field; and a further 12 acres of land suffered damage, belonging to 4 of Hacker's tenants.⁹¹ A different kind of damage was taking place in the collieries themselves, or at least was alleged, due to the practice of draining pits through soughs. Because of the piecemeal ownership of land, and therefore of the coalseams underneath, there was a tendency for adjoining pits to be drowned when one sough was stopped up to drain a particular pit. John Fletcher and Partners were accused by a Mr. Richardson, a Mr. Lowe and by Lord Middleton of such wilful destruction with the intent of enhancing coal prices and procuring for themselves a monopoly, having rendered the neighbouring pits inoperable. The Willoughby pits at Kimberley and Bilborough were affected, with the stopping up of the Kimberley sough in order to drain and operate Lord Stamford's colliery. The Fletcher partners claimed that they had spent £20,000 in making soughs to drain and work the collieries they leased, in addition to which they had to pay large rents to the landowners under whose land the soughs were cut, and for the mines; and if they were not at liberty to stop up the soughs on their own ground others who had not contributed to any of the expense would reap the benefit by having

their collieries drained at the expense of the Partners, who would then be unable to pay their rents. The Partners brought a counter-claim of monopoly by these landowners. Such was the degree of local competition and of conflicting interests. At that time it was considered that coal was as cheap as it had been for 20 years due to the extent of mining operations, and that the Partnership worked less than one quarter of the mines then operating.⁹² Trowell Field continued to be the centre of the Willoughby mining operations from 1730 until the opening of the Wollaton pit in the 1760s. During the 1730s coal sales remained at around £2,000 to £3,000 a year, with profits averaging around £1,000, but sales and profits began to decline by 1737. Then from 1738 to 1748 sales averaged £762 a year whilst profits only averaged £263 a year.⁹³ In 1758 the value of timber in Ossington woods was estimated at £8,065.⁹⁴ It is unclear how much of this the Willoughbys owned, but the sale of some of this timber would help to offset their coalmining expenses. Although coal profits were variable and small, they constituted a supplementary income. However expenditure remained excessive in comparison due to disbursements for wages, repairs, compensation for damage, sinking pipes, laying butteys, plumbing, soughing, cleaning, stabling, and for the breaking up, washing and carting away of coal.

The third Lord Middleton purchased properties in the 1760s to expand mining operations. The Broxtowe estate extended into Bilborough and Basford: it included coal mines, and woodland valued at £1,346.⁹⁵ He also acquired 22 acres of Stubbins wood situated on the coal seam.⁹⁶ During the 1760s a new pit was sunk at Wollaton. The cost of building it in the Redfield, and of sinking a sough, cost £2,000. By 1768 the mine was in production. Between 1770 and 1777 sales averaged £3,793. Initial operating expenses were high at over £1,000 a year dropping to £350-400 by the later 1770s.⁹⁷ Trowell pits continued a more erratic production record. Between 1758 and 1766 sales produced

an average of £4,111 a year, and profits averaged £2,126 a year.⁹⁸ To facilitate these operations wood was sold in 1776 for £260, in 1778 for £211, and in 1779 for £155. Further incidental sales of wood in 1780 and 1781 raised £15.⁹⁹ Lord Middleton owned about 60 acres in Lenton and Radford, some of which was of old enclosure. With the enclosure of the open fields and commons exchanges of land between the different proprietors took place, and the Baron acquired 25 acres adjoining his lands in Wollaton and extending to the Nottingham to Derby turnpike road. If the land did not extend to the sough which conveyed water from the Wollaton coalworks it was decreed unlawful for anyone to obstruct the water running from such sough; and the Baron and his heirs were granted free liberty of access. The enclosure of his land and the necessary water works incurred expenses of £884.¹⁰⁰

The Wollaton colliery extended to two pits by 1781. At the death of the 4th Baron that year the stock of unsold coal at these pits was valued at £686. In the previous three years coal sales had amounted to £6,131 in 1778, £5,141 in 1779, and £5,597 in 1780; and the profits for those three years were £2,726, £2,004, and £2,224 respectively.¹⁰¹

The evidence seems to suggest that during the period of possession by the 4th Baron the full potential of the estates was not being exploited. He did not reside at the centre of activity at Wollaton. Also, the term of his possession only lasted for 7 years. The 5th Baron pursued a much more dynamic policy of exploitation and expansion, making many land purchases to facilitate this process. Despite taking a much more keen interest in the operation of the mines, they were not run any more profitably. In fact, operating costs increased: whereas they had absorbed about half of the income in the 1770s, they were using up about two-thirds of the sales income in the 1780s. Income from the sale of coal from the Wollaton coalfield rose from £5,368 in 1781 to £6,907 in 1790; but as expenses also rose from £3,179 in 1791 to £4,823 in 1790 profits per year remained around £2,000. The average income from sales

during these years was £6,079, and the average operating expenses were £4,092.¹⁰² In 1793 two more engines began work for drawing coals from the Dobs Knowle pits at Wollaton.¹⁰³ One advantage in cash flow at this time was that coals had begun to be sold in winter, whereas previously activity had been confined to the summer months.¹⁰⁴ At this time a colliery was in operation on the Gloucestershire estate at Coalpitheath where again the profit margin was low in comparison to sales income. From May 1783 to May 1784 coal receipts for this pit totalled £7,909, but profits were only £2,287; and the following year, from May to May operations, receipts totalled £8,490 producing profits of £3,093.¹⁰⁵ The potential for coalmining expansion at Trowell was realised by the purchase of 331 acres of the manor which possessed about 50 acres of unwrought coal, valued at £20 per acre. Although payment of the £16,000 purchase price was made by instalments over a period of years, it was a condition of the transaction that the 5th Baron should immediately have liberty to bore for coals in all or any part of the land. This purchase immediately facilitated enclosure of the manor which contained 584 acres of old enclosure, 680 acres of open fields, 80 acres of woodlands, and 252 acres of common pasture on Trowell Moor. Two rectors owned 30 and 55 acres respectively, but the Act gave the liberty to mine under part of their property, including the churchyard. A public bridle road running across the Moor was to be discontinued.¹⁰⁶ To facilitate mining operations at Cossall the 5th Baron undertook an agreement with Bourne and Potter in 1783. They leased mining rights on the Duke of Rutland's land at Ilkeston, and they agreed to erect a fire engine and sink an engine shaft and bye pit shaft on Ilkeston Common between the Erewash river and canal, and to drive a head from the bye pit shaft under and across the Erewash river and under Cossall Common so that the fire engine could be worked to drain Lord Middleton's coal mines in Cossall, with each of the two parties bearing half of the expenses and owning half of the

shaft and machinery. This agreement would only exist so long as the engine was useful to the Cossall mining operations; thereafter Bourne and Potter would purchase Lord Middleton's share.¹⁰⁷ The same year a new pit was sunk at Cossall.¹⁰⁸ The following year coal sales from that pit produced £1,000 but operating expenses incurred £2,333. The following year a profit of £650 was made on sales worth £2,127. In the next two years sales were around £2,200 with a great reduction in operating costs, so that over £1,900 profit was made each year.¹⁰⁹ In 1793 land in Cossall and Trowell was acquired from the collateral Willoughby branch at Aspley, whose coalmines had been managed by the 2nd Baron. Three years later work began at Robinets colliery in Cossall.¹¹⁰ In 1797 the agreement with Bourne and Potter was discontinued, except that Lord Middleton agreed to leave his 3 pits open to provide air vents to assist with the working of the Ilkeston colliery. During the course of the agreement 69,299 tons of coal were extracted at Cossall, and Lord Middleton's half share of expenses incurred for the working of and repairs to the engine were £1,277.¹¹¹ In 1787 more than 35 acres of land on Bramcote Moor were purchased and subsequently Lord Middleton entered an agreement with a neighbouring landowner, John Sherwin, for the getting of coals on this part of the estate. Sherwin was to permit Lord Middleton to make a waggon rail through his estate from Bramcote Moor to communicate with the rail road below Trowell Moor to convey coals to the Erewash canal; and also for conveying coals which may be got in the parish of Wollaton on the east side of the Moor. Coals under Sherwin's own adjoining estate were also to be mined by the Baron, who would pay Sherwin at the rate of £25 an acre for 22 acres, and £50 an acre for 15 acres, to the sum of £200 a year paid twice yearly, until the whole was paid off; the first payment to be made at Michaelmas 1790.¹¹² A small parcel of land was purchased in Radford in 1788 which contained coal mines, situated between the Wollaton and Aspley property.¹¹³ A

further small parcel of land was purchased at Stanton by Dale situated between the Erewash river and canal.¹¹⁴ The waterways network was substantially improved, and in 1794 the first boatload of coals was taken from Lord Middleton's collieries up the Nottingham canal.¹¹⁵ In 1799 an Act was passed for making and maintaining a navigable canal from the Cromford canal to the Trent river bridge to facilitate access to the coalmines in the parishes of Bilborough, Broxtowe, Nuthall and Basford. The canal, constructed by the Barber-Walker Company, passed through Wollaton and Bilborough Woods. Under the terms of the agreement, if Barber and Walker were ever desirous to sell the navigable cut they could only do so to Lord Middleton.¹¹⁶ As part of the waterways development, wharves were constructed on land acquired at Stanton and Stapleford.¹¹⁷ In the 1790s Lord Middleton owned shares in the Nottingham canal worth £6,000, plus shares worth a total of £11,264 in the Caister and Grantham canals, Trent Navigation, Gainsborough Bridge, and in Grimsby and Mansfield roads.¹¹⁸ Such was the degree of his commitment to mining and transport developments. The 6th Baron also pursued an energetic policy of expanding the coalmining production. He purchased parcels of land or estates which either facilitated the mining process, or provided greater access to, and some control over the road and waterway networks which provided transportation for his coal. The most significant pointer to change was that for the first time one of the mines was leased out to the Barber, Walker Company. They were granted a 21 year lease from 1805 to mine a seam of coal under land in east Cossall. They were to pay £1,700 for the engine which had been working at Robinets colliery, £20 a year for the use of the coal wharf, and £100 per acre per year for hard coals, £40 per acre for soft coals, and a further £40 per acre for making the pits and roads.¹¹⁹ In 1805 there was a conflict over mineral rights on Bramcote Moor, Lord Goring having purchased some property there and claiming that the right to title included mineral rights on the Common; but the Willoughbys proved that

Queen Anne had granted the rights to Sir Thomas in 1704-5 for a number of years, but when he was created Baron in 1711 the mineral grant was greatly extended and gave him all the rights.¹²⁰ Rapid expansion of the estate took place by piecemeal acquisition of Lenton to gain access to Nottingham canal and coal wharves. Some of these parcels of land enabled new bridges to be built across the canal, or new access roads to be made, and new workshops to be built.¹²¹ Three estates were also purchased: Lenton Firs was acquired for £11,000 in 1813; an estate belonging to the Gregory family was purchased for £8,175 in 1818; and Lenton Abbey was acquired for £12,600 in 1830.¹²² To improve other waterway facilities, the 6th Baron contributed £100 to the building of a bridge over the Leen at Radford.¹²³ Further properties had been purchased on the coal seam at Radford: 8 acres were purchased in 1818, and the following year the Gregory's estate was purchased for £11,925. The year after a new pit was sunk on this property near Radford Folly. In addition the Baron leased Gregory's coal in 67 acres of land on the Nottingham to Derby road. This lease was for 35 years at the rate of £200 per acre, with 100 acres to be got or paid for in the first 21 years. By 1835 the coal rent to Gregory stood at £1,000.¹²⁴ In 1823 another agreement had been undertaken to obtain coal under a Mr. Longden's property at Bramcote, at the rate of £110 per acre for hard coals and £45 per acre for soft coals.¹²⁵ Both Lord Middleton and the Earl of Stamford had working mines in Allsworth in 1835. The Earl leased out his coal veins, and it was agreed that the Earl could make a waterway into, through and under the Baron's lands to drain the Earl's mines at the yearly rent of £200, plus £120 an acre for hard coal, and £80 an acre for soft coal.¹²⁶ Whereas most landlords were leasing out their coal veins to coalmasters as a matter of course, and leaving the technicalities of extraction to them, the Willoughbys still retained virtual control of their own at this juncture, even to the extent of leasing adjoining property from other landowners to facilitate

their operations. A complex network of mines and leasing agreements operated owing to the fragmented pattern of landownership which still existed despite the trend towards aggregation around principal holdings.

Conclusion

The periods of crisis which the family faced were brought about by the activities of certain individuals, bringing financial difficulties in their wake: but these challenges to the continuity of the family's status evoked different responses. After the rather cavalier attitude to entrepreneurial enterprise displayed by Sir Francis and Sir Percival during the later sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries, a sober period of retrenchment followed which subsequently enabled the family to build up its resources, and maintain a steady programme of estate development and expansion until the succession of the 4th Baron between 1774 and 1781. The terms of his will appeared to operate against the interests of family posterity by vesting too much power in his wife. On her behalf it may be claimed that she used the Willoughby estates to secure her subsequent position at a time when women's interests were much more vulnerable. Nevertheless the state of crisis she engendered at Wollaton by leaving a depleted estate produced not a period of retrenchment, which had been the solution of forebears to a financial crisis, but a sustained period of long-term risk taking on a grand scale.¹²⁷ However, these were calculated and far-sighted risks, undertaken by both father and son between 1781 and 1835, with an eye to future rather than immediate gains. An energetic policy of estate expansion greatly to increase income was achieved by incurring heavy debts. The status of the family would enable them to procure more credit for these activities than would usually be made available to lesser landowners, the extent of their vastly increasing landholdings being used as security. They were able to carry such a high level of debt as they were regular in the payment of interest on mortgages or bonds,¹²⁸ drawn from their increasing estate rentals and inherited fortunes. Although family provision

substantially increased after they were raised to the peerage, the burden was mitigated by the strict terms of settlements which were set out like an obstacle course of delaying tactics;¹²⁹ and even when such terms had been met and portions became due they could still be held back if the financial situation was compounded by other debts.¹³⁰ Although strict settlement provision must have had some effect on the availability of capital for economic developments, this was less a factor than the degree of personal initiative invested in ^{management} estate. It is questionable whether the Willoughbys would have received greater profits from coalmining if they had leased out the rights: rentals increased significantly on the land used for mines, on the pits themselves, and on the quantities of coal extracted; and mining machinery, once pits ceased operating, could be sold to the coalmasters. Instead, they were committed to heavy outgoings and comparatively low profits; a capital investment which lesser landowners could not have sustained. It was perhaps their tendency to focus on coalmining which at times diverted interests and capital away from agricultural improvements such that the potential of estates was not exploited to the full. Certainly by the early nineteenth century their agricultural holdings were not in such an improving state as one would expect, when neighbouring estates had been following a steady policy of improvements and investments and farm rearrangements, the pace of which escalated at the end of the eighteenth century. It was at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the Willoughbys undertook a more expansive agricultural policy and invested in new buildings and farm consolidation to improve the economic utility of their estates and bring their agricultural holdings and policies more in line with current practices. The smallness of farms was still a significant feature in 1809 running contrary to the engrossing movement promoted by the Board of Agriculture; but in general practice small farms were to remain a feature of agriculture until at least the later

nineteenth century. The concentration on coalmining produced a radiation of activities from Wollaton through Radford, Aspley, Awsworth, Cossall, Bilborough, Trowell, Stapleford and Bramcote, initially contributing to developments of the Erewash waterways system. Subsequently the navigable cut from Lenton to the Trent at Beeston generated a sustained period of land acquisitions in Lenton to take advantage of the trade being brought to Nottingham wharves, and extended the territorial dominance of Lord Middleton. Essentially what characterised the family was the ability of most of its individuals to exploit opportunities for economic developments through a capacity for risk taking on a grand scale which kept them in the forefront of entrepreneurs. They were motivated by pride in the family and the sustaining of status.

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122. Mi/LM/36, 1813, Lenton Firs, 1818, Lenton and Radford estate from the Gregorys, 1830, Lenton Abbey: Lenton Lodge built 1824-5.
123. Mi/LM/36, 1820, £100 donation to building of bridge over Leen at Radford.
124. Mi/LM/36, 1818, purchased at Radford land and coal of Bingham's, 8 acres for £967; 1819, purchased Gregory's estate, 1819, began new engine pit in Gregory's ground near Radford Folly; 1818, Agreement with Gregory for the getting of coal from 67 acres.

125. Mi/LN/36, 1823, Agreement for getting Mr. Longden's coal at Bramcote.
126. Mi/3/81/1, Lease for 21 years for 2 veins of coal at Allsworth: Lord Middleton to the Earl of Stamford.
127. Mi/F/12, post-1800, in the account written by Dorothy, widow of the 5th Lord Middleton, for the edification of her son, the 6th Baron: 'these his speculations, he thought might be of service to his successor, and he flatters himself, that those who understand business, will allow he has not been an unjust Steward': details improvements.
128. Mi/Da/65, 1803, letter of 20 January from the 6th Baron to Hy. Barker, re. mortgage repayments, 'Upon inquiry you will find punctuality my practice'.
129. See Chapter Five.
130. Mi/3/G/3, 1803 and 1807, Agreements to leave £20,000 portions as existing charges on the estates due to the level of debts to be cleared.
131. J.V. Beckett, 'The decline of the small landowners in eighteenth- and nineteenth- century England: some regional considerations', The Agricultural History Review, 30, Part II (1982), 99.

C O N C L U S I O N

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CHAPTER TENC O N C L U S I O N

The Nottinghamshire evidence indicates a continuous process of estate expansion and contraction among the data set families which is difficult to square with the prevailing notions of a drift of property into the hands of the greater magnates. The old established families were consolidating their position from an early date by various means: either by land acquisitions through marriage, inheritance, gift, or purchase, or by exchange of land, usually with an eye for the economic potential of the estates so acquired. Sales were also a regular feature, either to offset debts, or to promote economic utility; and the division of estates through the inheritance pattern was another regulating factor in the overall size and distribution of estates. The Cliftons were a family of note by the thirteenth century, purchasing their Clifton estate c.1279. Their estate was extended by further purchases or fortuitous marriages, but suffered reversals at periods of political upheavals. They were selling property in 1660 and 1688 and again in 1766, but were still a family of note in 1883.¹ The Willoughbys were consolidating their position from the thirteenth century but suffered regular periods of reversals, often self-inflicted, from at least the sixteenth century. One of their greatest periods of estate aggregation was experienced from 1800 to 1835, but the next inheritor, the 7th Baron, divided the estates between his successors, indicating that they had reached the optimum size for economic viability in the hands of one owner. The Eyres were also building up their estates from the thirteenth century by purchase or marriage, forming a family network of territorial holdings across Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, but were diminished through the processes of sales and inheritances to the ranks of the less substantial landowners by 1883.² The Strelley family consolidated their position from the twelfth century, losing

their Nottinghamshire base through inheritance problems during the seventeenth century; but the Strelley-Pegge-Burnell marriage connections saw them established in Derbyshire at the end of the nineteenth century, and possessing a family seat at Hockerton Manor near Southwell in 1969.³ Periods of property aggregations or dispersal were very variable, according to individual family circumstances. Although the situation could be aggravated by prevailing political or economic conditions, different responses were produced among the various families. The greatest periods of estate expansion took place in the Edge family before 1680 and again in the 1780s and 1790s; but both were followed by periods of retrenchment, with an ultimate reduction in the size and distribution of estates. Great expansion had taken place in the Sutton estates before the 1720s, which were subsequently greatly reduced in size, to be followed by a further period of expansion in the 1790s, and more sales at the turn of the nineteenth century. Following a long period of troubles in the Willoughby family and a great reduction in the size of the estates prior to the 1660s, a steady and prolonged period of expansion followed, escalating quite dramatically after 1800, but with a subsequent division of estates through inheritance. The experience of the data set families indicates a continuous process of property redistribution within and between landed families, but not to the exclusion of the smaller owners, nor the monied interest from trade or the professions, who featured in the land market. Fluctuating fortunes within many families caused them to re-establish territorial holdings or social status which had been lost or diminished due to very varied and individual circumstances. Even the magnates were not unaffected, as the 'Dukeries' changed its family composition over time, either through sales to rationalise holdings, or through marriage or inheritance processes. If there was a drift of property into the hands of the wealthiest proprietors it was a continuous process from a very early period, receiving regular checks and balances,

and subject to changes within the composition of families. This did not exclude those from trade or the professions, but was principally comprised of those whose interests were rooted in the land, but possibly drawn from different economic strata. This notion may go some way to support Cooper's contention that there were long-term changes in which some small homogeneous group was replaced as owners of the major part of the land by some other group with different social or economic characteristics.⁴ The continuous process of checks and balances experienced in landholding makes it difficult to determine any overall rate of increase in estate aggregation. Despite periods of heightened activity at the end of the seventeenth century, and again at the end of the eighteenth century, and on occasions during the nineteenth century, the overall rate of increase was probably rather small, and more in keeping with the 5 per cent rate determined by Thompson.⁵

It has been illustrated that the factors contributing to estate aggregation or dispersal were varied, and ultimately depended upon the ability of the individual to meet challenges and crises. It has been suggested that the demographic evidence might be looked at in a new light, as continuity of families and their estates was maintained through the extended family, bringing younger sons and daughters, or their offspring, into the line of descent, as well as more distant collateral branches. Sons in law might also feature. There was a tradition of younger sons marrying the daughters of other landed families, thereby keeping up the strength and numbers of the landed classes. Where there was a disinclination of some families to see their estates absorbed into another family by the marriage or inheritance processes, a change of name could be brought about under the terms of a strict settlement; or it would be stipulated that a wife's portion or inheritance should be used for her children's future provision. The flexibility of settlements enabled them to respond to altered demographic or financial circumstances, such that if they were well monitored they

were more likely to succeed in their aim of estate preservation; but even the best laid plans could go awry. The mortgaging device was not nearly so strong a financial buffer as has been suggested in the literature but enticed families to over-extend their financial capacities. This was brought about by prevailing attitudes to investment which considered mortgages to be a long-term form of security, when in reality they were much more vulnerable. They were likely to be called in if the lender suddenly became faced with heavy financial commitments; or by the trustees on his decease to rationalise his estate. A major problem during the extended period under review was lack of access to large capital sums, except by loans. Even landowners in debt would still have money out at interest. They appear to have operated on a reciprocal loan basis, helping each other out with lump sums as the occasions arose. This was most likely to centre around land purchases, family provision under the terms of strict settlements, or capital investment in estate development; but could also be due to general overspending or profligacy. Members of the extended family would be drawn upon as lenders or guarantors. It has also been demonstrated that strict settlement provision need not become an intolerable burden of debt unless the level of provision was grossly over-generous or ill-conceived in terms of projected estate income. Individuals met the challenges of recurring financial strain either in a conservative way by undertaking a period of retrenchment, or through a more dramatic approach, taking great risks for potential long-term benefits. Some adopted a more cavalier attitude, intensifying the nature of their crises; others pooled their resources through intermarriage to strengthen their position. As many families were able to accommodate the demographic factor through the extended family, maintaining financial buoyancy was the ultimate factor essential to continuity. Landed proprietors have been described as agents of institutional changes, providing the necessary capital for improvements and

developments in agriculture and mineral exploitation, in transport facilities and overseas trade; they were less usually involved as entrepreneurs.⁶ However, it has been indicated that their economic role was underestimated, for the Nottinghamshire evidence suggests that they took a major part in directing the movements of change. The Edges set high standards in their husbandry and mineral covenants, but changes were not brought about to the detriment of the local community. The Suttons were actively involved in agriculture, particularly in stock breeding experiments, and kept their estates at the forefront of improvements. The Willoughbys continued to display their entrepreneurial instincts in the exploitation of the Nottinghamshire coalfield, and in the opening up of trade and communication networks through their involvement with turnpike road and canal trusts. In essence, landowners were motivated to preserve continuity of status which was bound up in no small degree with maintaining economic credibility.

Several major contributions in recent years have affected the focus and direction of the landownership debate, stressing the need for more interregional comparisons to be made; indeed, regional variations are at the heart of the different interpretations being presented of changes within the structure of landholding since c.1660.⁷ The initial spate of research which Habakkuk's line of argument engendered seriously undermined his stance to such an extent that Holderness indicated a new hypothesis might be required to form the basis of detailed comparative research in the future. This is an important concept, as his own study was narrowly based on the Lincolnshire land market;⁸ and Roebuck's Yorkshire-based study concentrated on selected family histories.⁹ Other studies have concentrated on a short time span to isolate the nature of the drift of property into fewer, or at least different, hands. As so many aspects of the debate are now being reappraised a more cogent model would enable future

comparative regional studies to be more fruitful. One major area of debate centres around the workings of strict settlement, which is still imprecisely understood. Bonfield's interpretation of this legal device has formed the basis of other research, but has come under attack from English and Saville;¹⁰ and the Nottinghamshire data tends to support their contention that the significance of wills has been overlooked in assessing the impact of settlements both on the landownership pattern and on the economy. Clay's earlier work appeared to have a better grasp of the ramifications of settlements, but he has subsequently become more influenced by Bonfield.¹¹ The whole settlement process is bound up with demographic factors, and the prevailing view, based on the research of Hollingsworth, Wrigley, and Jenkins,¹² is of a demographic crisis affecting the landed interest and their pattern of landholdings between 1650 and 1740. However, this Nottinghamshire study has presented an alternative interpretation, suggesting that families maintained continuity of lineage and of their estates by deployment of the extended family; and that the role of younger sons and daughters was fundamental to this process, and was a seriously neglected factor of landownership. A better understanding of the settlement processes depends upon a reappraisal of the demographic argument, which it is suggested has been too literally interpreted. The line of argument has been further complicated by sociological interpretations of the role of strict settlement which are causing this aspect of the debate to move off at a tangent. Stone was prompted to portray the changes within the family structure as facilities for entailing estates changed, and developed a theory of the affective family which has been criticised by Eileen Spring who has placed this within the context of Habakkuk's and Bonfield's theories.¹³ Stone's latest contribution perpetuates certain misconceptions about the strict settlement device and demographic factors as he sees them impinging on the nature and scale of land

market activity and the social composition of landowners in Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire and Northumberland.¹⁴ But it is important not to lose sight of the economic and political factors which influenced landowners and the condition of the local land market, as the effects of these crises produced different local responses, and are an important source of interregional comparison, particularly of the social composition of the landed interest and any determination of a 'drift' in the pattern of landholdings. Indeed, the usual approach to landownership studies is through an understanding of the financial and economic activities of the local families. To avoid the recurring problem of fragmentation to which the landownership debate has been subjected, this study has aimed at a more holistic approach, using a wide range of documentary evidence covering an extended period. This was in keeping with the studies of landowners presented by Mingay and Thompson,¹⁵ which did not lose sight of the economic and political aspects whilst at the same time presenting a social documentation. It is suggested that this holistic approach, incorporating the aspects of the debate which are still in contention, and which have been subjected to reappraisal in this study, might form the basis of a new hypothesis for future comparative research within the regions; particularly as fundamental economic theories have tended to become rather overshadowed by more sophisticated sociological interpretations. Ultimately, although some of the Nottinghamshire evidence runs contrary to the principal lines of argument established in certain other regional studies, and because the county did not suffer from the effects of geographical remoteness, it is suggested that the Nottinghamshire pattern of landownership was not unique.

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