

## **Gazetteer of Settlement Desertion, Shrinkage, Shift and Survival in Whittlewood**

Key:

SURVIVED = no evidence for contraction

DESERTED = either totally abandoned, or a sizeable settlement now represented by a single farm. Thus Lillingstone Dayrell is deemed deserted, so too Dagnall (Wyke Dyve)

SEVERELY SHRUNKEN = settlement which contracts to less than half of its former area

SHRUNKEN = settlement which contracts but retains over 50% of its former area

SHIFT = a settlement element which can be shown to have moved, thus whose life is continued in a separate location. A different process from Desertion/Shrinkage which leads to the total abandonment of a settlement element.

*Akeley*

SHRUNKEN

The village appears to have been subject to shrinkage during the later middle ages, with the core around the church surviving whilst other outlying areas contracted more severely. Notably, all medieval occupation on the north side of Leckhampstead Road, both east and west of the Chapel Hill junction appears not to have extended beyond 1400 (Jones and Page 2001). On the south side of the road, further contraction has been recently attested by the discovery of structural features and yard surfaces in advance of house building work (Ivens n.d.). In contrast to the northern roadside, however, contraction appears to have been more piecemeal, with certain tofts abandoned and others, for example Manor Farm, surviving into the post-medieval period. Expansion of the arable zone can be shown to have continued beyond 1250, when peripheral land to the north-east of the village was being opened for the first time. The survival of ridge and furrow, notably immediately north of the village points of the abandonment of the open fields well before enclosure in 1794.

The village was granted a 13 per cent reduction in its assessment for taxation in the 1440s, less than for the neighbouring villages of Leckhampstead (20 per cent), Lillingstone Dayrell (21 per cent), and Stowe (15 per cent), though more than for some north Buckinghamshire villages such as Turweston (7 per cent). This evidence of moderate contraction is supported by a series of court rolls dated 1382-1422. The court rolls reveal a number of houses falling into disrepair, for which tenants were fined, sometimes repeatedly. The lord was unable to find tenants for some vacant holdings, although not always for long periods, and was obliged to pardon the entry fine for admission to some tenements, such as the messuage and half-virgate which William Stevens occupied in 1392 because the messuage was ruinous. Nevertheless, this evidence needs to be balanced by the fact that the basic tenorial structure of the manor remained unchanged, with little engrossment, few tofts, and the persistence of the half-virgate holding. Thus, although Akeley undoubtedly experienced settlement shrinkage in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the village remained a viable agricultural community.

Ivens, R.J. n.d. *Archaeological Evaluation of Broadlands, Leckhampstead Road, Akeley, Buckinghamshire*.

Jones, R. & Page, M. 2001 'Medieval Settlements and Landscapes in the Whittlewood Area: Interim Report 2001-2', *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report* **16**, 15-25.

*Boycott (Stowe)*

DESERTED

No archaeological data are available for the site of the hamlet, and thus no clear chronology may be proposed for the desertion of this settlement. The site appears to be occupied by the current farmhouse. Examination of the fieldwalking material from surrounding arable fields reveals continued exploitation of the land through to 1400, but with little evidence for later activity. No late fifteenth-century vessel forms have been found, for example, perhaps pointing to the abandonment of the fields, or perhaps a change of usage around the beginning of the fifteenth century. This may in part reflect the fortunes of the settlement itself.

In the poll tax of 1377, 24 taxpayers were resident in Boycott, perhaps representing about 8 households. In the lay subsidies of 1306-27, 13 taxpayers were recorded, presumably heads of household. The population of Boycott may thus have fallen by about a third after the onset of plague in 1348-9. The settlement does not appear in early sixteenth-century tax records, suggesting that by this stage the hamlet was deserted.

*Chapel Green (Lillingstone Dayrell)*  
DESERTED

In the north-west corner of Lillingstone Dayrell parish lay a chapel dedicated to St Thomas à Becket. There is just the indication on the edge of the estate map of 1611 that a small dispersed settlement had colonized the woodland clearing within which the chapel was set although documents appear to be silent on the matter. One building set a few hundred metres south-east of the chapel is marked as Cannons House in 1611, while a second building is marked immediately to the north-west. If this settlement was prompted by the chapel itself, it is hardly likely to have predated its foundation, the evidence for which may be found in a thirteenth-century donation of land by Robert Dayrell and his son Ralf to Luffield Priory (VCH Bucks, IV, 188). Architectural evidence points to the chapel being rebuilt in the fifteenth century before being converted into two labourers' cottages in the seventeenth century. By the nineteenth century all associated buildings, domestic or otherwise had gone, the chapel/cottages themselves being finally removed during the twentieth century.

*Dadford (Stowe)*  
PATH TO SURVIVAL UNKNOWN

The only evidence for the medieval settlement morphology of Dadford derives from surviving earthwork evidence for at least four crofts behind buildings set on the north side of the small village street running towards Home Farm. Nothing in the architecture of the current buildings implies any antiquity of settlement, and may therefore represent the recolonization of crofts that had formerly been abandoned. It appears highly unlikely that these four properties constitute the full settlement plan. The location of other plots, however, is now lost. There is a strong possibility that a second row of tofts occupied the opposite side of the road: surviving property boundaries mapped in the late nineteenth century show some narrow extended plots, the orientation of which has been retained in modern allotments which now occupy this side of the road. Further conclusive evidence for this arrangement is found on Bridgeman's 1739 plan of Stowe, peripheral to which appears the first map of Dadford. This shows seventeen buildings arranged in thirteen crofts, with a further four unoccupied plots, configured on either side of the village street, and west of a holloway at the east end of the current village. Survival appears good, therefore, although the empty closes may represent piecemeal abandonment.

In 1279 there were 43 tenants in Dadford, all of them smallholders. In 1522 the Muster Survey recorded 24 residents, of whom 14 appeared among the 18 taxpayers contributing in 1524. The number of taxpayers rose to 25 in 1543, while the diocesan population returns of 1563 showed 21 families resident in the village. These figures suggest some recovery of population at Dadford in the sixteenth century, in common with other north Buckinghamshire villages, but in contrast to the decline evident at Stowe. Following the desertion of Boycott and Stowe, and the shrinkage of Lamport, Dadford became the principal focus of settlement in the parish into modern times.

*Dagnall (Wyke Dyve)*  
DESERTED

The site of the hamlet of Dagnall, south-west of the present farmhouse has been partially fieldwalked. The western end which extends into a neighbouring field has been informally investigated with pottery recovered being limited to its northern edge. The presence of large quantities of Potterspury Ware indicate a flourishing community between 1250 and 1400. The entire absence of later medieval fabrics, such as late Medieval Oxidized Wares, Cistercian Wares and Midland Purple Wares, points to a rapid desertion of the site at some time before 1450. This pattern of fabric representation is paralleled from test pit results, revealing a floruit

of activity between 1250 and 1400, little activity here between 1400 and 1700, before an upturn in pottery deposition. Activity between 1470 and 1550 is represented by a single sherd of Cistercian Ware, although this fabric is favourably presented in the field assemblages surrounding the settlement. Taken together, it may be possible to suggest that the majority of the hamlet was deserted, whilst a single farmstead, probably the most significant socially and economically, survived for a few generations longer, from which at least part of the settlement's arable continued to be ploughed.

*Deanshanger (Passenham)*

PATH TO SURVIVAL UNKNOWN

The taxation returns of the early sixteenth century suggest that Deanshanger was at this time larger than Passenham, with 22 and 10 taxpayers respectively in 1525. In the seventeenth century and later, Deanshanger supported a mixed economy based on industry as well as farming, but there is little evidence to show whether such trades developed during the later Middle Ages. No specific evidence of shrinkage survives.

*Elm Green hamlet and moated site (Wyke Hamon)*

DESERTED

Elm Green lies one mile south of Wicken village. Before the union of the two parishes in the late sixteenth century, Elm Green lay in Wyke Hamon. The hamlet appears to have been extensive, dispersed and unplanned. The earliest datable pottery, a single sherd of Oxford Ware (1075+) may indicate a late eleventh century foundation date, but a probable twelfth-century origin is more likely. The settlement appears to have flourished during the later medieval centuries, particularly post-1250, whilst the recovery of significant quantities of fifteenth-century Brill-Boarstall vessel forms and a thin scatter of late medieval oxidized wares and Cistercian Wares indicates survival beyond the crises of the fourteenth century. Desertion, for whatever reasons, was total, the area appearing by 1717 as a series of empty and wooded closes on the Hosier Estate map. Given such a chronology, and the absence of documentary references, it appears unlikely that the moated site, which lies directly south of the main occupation zone outlived the hamlet. It is probable that the Outfields, so named in 1717, which lie south of Elm Green were opened by and farmed from this hamlet. There is nothing from the ploughsoil assemblage to indicate further use of this area as arable land after the abandonment of the hamlet. Indeed ridge and furrow evidence points to its conversion to pasture.

*Furtho*

DESERTED

The location of the deserted site of Furtho is indicated by the survival of the parish church, dedicated to St Bartholemew and a late fifteenth-century circular stone dovecote, both lying close to the current Manor Farm (VCH Northants). Two long rectangular fishponds also survive to the north-west of these two surviving buildings (RCHM(E) *SW Northants*, 120). Little, however, is known of the original morphology of the village since no village earthworks survive. This fact strongly indicates that the village never spread beyond the current extent of the farm and its outbuildings, and thus must have been nucleated in form. Evidence from fieldwalking appears to trace a gradual decline in the importance of the settlement from the fourteenth century. A full range of pottery datable from the thirteenth through to the seventeenth century has been recovered from the field immediately to the south of the village. In addition, metal detecting has produced coinage and other metalwork of medieval and post-medieval date, although little beyond the reign of Elizabeth I which is consistent with the late sixteenth-century enclosure of the parish (Lawrence n.d.).

The manor was assessed with Cosgrove in medieval lay subsidies, but when it made a separate return in 1524, only three taxpayers were recorded. Almost certainly, Furtho was largely deserted by this date, the responsibility for which rested with the lords of the manor, the Furtho family, who began to consolidate their demesne in the fifteenth century. The process was probably completed by Thomas Furtho who stopped up the principal highway through the village in 1571-2.

Lawrence, P. *A summary of the archaeological fieldwork conducted in the parishes of Deanshanger, Furtho & Potterspury by students of Birkbeck College, University of London between 1994-1998.*

RCHM(E) 1982 *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in South-West Northamptonshire* (HMSO).

*Hanger Lodge (Passenham)*  
PATH TO SURVIVAL UNKNOWN

No archaeological or historical data.

*Heybarne (Lillingstone Dayrell)*  
DESERTED

Test pits at Heybarne have produced medieval pottery no earlier than 1250, and this is consistent with the first mention of the site in 1255 (referring to activity five years earlier). The pottery definitively proves that the earthworks, a rectangular ditched enclosure, split into two compartments, one open, the other containing a number of building platforms, and fishpond or water reservoir, are medieval in origin, and should be best interpreted as the seat of Heybarne manor. Originally a carucate of ancient assart held of the lord of Lillingstone Dayrell, the land surrounding Heybarne was ploughed before the Black Death. The decline of the grange can be followed in a series of inquisitions post mortem. In 1369 the manor's low valuation was said to be 'because it lies in the forest of Whittlewood and is destroyed by the king's deer'. In 1391 the land had fallen out of cultivation, while in 1418 Heybarne was no longer described as a manor but a toft and carucate called 'Heybernefeld'. The site was probably deserted by this date. This evidence is consistent with the archaeology, the ceramic finds indicating a terminal date no later than 1400. Arable and wood were recorded in another extent of 1421, but by this time the land was probably reverting to rough pasture. In 1550 a close of pasture called 'Heyburnefelde' was leased to an Abthorpe tanner. Medieval ridge and furrow survives beneath the pasture.

*Lady Nether End (Whittlebury)*  
DESERTED

A row of tofts survives as earthworks at Lady Nether End west of a prominent holloway running north towards Towcester and perhaps in origin the line of the Alcester-Towcester Roman road or a parallel post-Roman realignment of this route. Further building foundations are visible in ploughland to the east. No data are available to elucidate the history of this settlement, its abandonment date, or its relationship with Whittlebury itself. The hamlet never appears to have had its own field system and when abandoned the settlement zone was not taken into the open fields but enclosed by a series of irregular closes.

*Lamport (Stowe)*  
SEVERELY SHRUNKEN

The first map of Lamport village, appearing on Bridgeman's 1739 plan of Stowe, shows thirteen individual buildings in the northern half of the area now surviving as earthworks. They present a rather loose arrangement, and could be described as unplanned. This, however, may be a settlement already deep within a process of contraction, and thus having lost a more regular and planned morphology. The chronology of shrinkage can be discovered for the southern part of the village, where fieldwalking has been possible. Here a relatively early date for contraction is suggested, perhaps not much after 1250 since Potterspury Ware fails to arrive in the expected large quantities to this part of the settlement. This may also be the date when the more regular row of tofts to the east of the main street, surviving as earthworks, were also abandoned, leaving only the northern part of the village to survive beyond the end of the middle ages.

Much of the region in which Lamport lay was experiencing agrarian problems and a decline in grain growing at the time of the inquests of 1341. The parish of Stowe was particularly badly affected, with three carucates lying unploughed, compared with two carucates at Leckhampstead, one at Lillingstone Dayrell, and none at Akeley or Lillingstone Lovell. About 300 acres thus lay uncultivated in Stowe parish, an indication perhaps of falling population and settlement shrinkage before the onset of plague. Lamport comprised two manors in the Middle Ages. One was sold to Oseney Abbey in 1267 by Andrew Moriz, who owed £82 to the Jews, and who was granted board and lodging in the abbey for the rest of his life. Was this a factor in the contraction of the village at an early date? Part of the other manor too had been sold, to Luffield Priory in the 1150s, although it was leased back to its lay lord for an annual rent of 6s. 8d. Significantly perhaps, in terms of possible decline, Richard de Langport sought unsuccessfully to avoid payment of the rent on the very eve of the Black Death in 1348. There were 19 residents at Lamport in 1522, 16 taxpayers in 1524, and 14 families in 1563. Although the settlement survived into the nineteenth century, marked on the first-edition one-inch Ordnance Survey map, the inhabitants would have suffered from the activities of the Temple family in the same way as Stowe in the mid-seventeenth century. Lamport shared its common fields and pasture with the villagers of Stowe and these were enclosed by the Temples.

*Knotwood (Furtho)*  
DESERTED

Four crofts are visible on aerial photographs representing a small hamlet located at the junction of two roads leading from Watling Street towards Furtho. Stone rubble has been found in association with these earthworks since the site has been ploughed, and pottery, mainly dating to the twelfth through to the fourteenth century has been found in quantity (RCHM(E) *SW Northants*, 110; Lawrence n.d.). There is nothing to suggest that this small settlement survived beyond 1400. Metal detecting has produced a number of finds, including a twelfth-century seal matrix (*Matild DeFuro*), silver pennies of Edward I and Edward II, a thirteenth-century bronze strap end and silver ring brooch. Again nothing post-dating 1400.

Lawrence, P. *A summary of the archaeological fieldwork conducted in the parishes of Deanshanger, Furtho & Potterspury by students of Birkbeck College, University of London between 1994-1998.*

RCHM(E) 1982 *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in South-West Northamptonshire* (HMSO).

*Leckhampstead (Barretts End)*  
SEVERELY SHRUNKEN

Barretts End (which may have been part of Little Leckhampstead in the Middle Ages) is the name given to an area of occupation lying both sides of the lane which now runs to Weatherhead Farm. A number of farms and cottages still occupy this run, however, the major part of the earlier settlement has been lost. This manifests itself as an area of earthworks to the south of the lane, and to the north as earthworks visible on aerial photographs, now lost to ploughing, but which has produced concentrations of pottery. Post-1470 activity here is represented by the recovery of only two sherds of Cistercian Ware, in contrast to 319 sherds of earlier medieval pottery. Clearly contraction had begun to take place around 1400, a process which was largely complete by the late fifteenth century.

Little Leckhampstead was held by the Leaume family until the early fifteenth century. Their departure may have been a factor in the retreat of settlement from Barretts End. Thus, in 1492 it was claimed that Richard Empson, who held Little Leckhampstead until 1512, enclosed 20 acres of arable which he converted to pasture. A later holder of the manor, George Tyrell, possessed 7 messuages, 40 acres of arable and 200 acres of meadow and pasture on his death in 1570. The conversion of tillage to pasture may well have hastened the depopulation of Little Leckhampstead in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

*Leckhampstead (Church End)*

## SHRUNKEN

Two areas of late medieval contraction have been identified at Church End through test pitting (this was probably the medieval manor of Great Leckhampstead). First is the apparent loss of an area of occupation at the east end of the hamlet. Here the latest fabrics recovered are Potterspury Wares and Brill/Boarstall Wares, with a hiatus through to modern fabrics. It is unlikely then to have survived beyond 1400. The second area lies immediately north of the church. Here again the majority of the pottery assemblage pre-dates 1400, however, a few sherds of Midland Purple Ware and Rhenish Stoneware perhaps indicate a history of survival through to the late fifteenth century. The mill site, west of Church End also appears to have been abandoned. The impression gained is one of piecemeal contraction extending over a relatively long period.

The village as a whole was granted a 20 per cent reduction in its assessment for taxation in the 1440s. Nevertheless, Leckhampstead remained one of the most populous villages in north Buckinghamshire in the sixteenth century, with 50 taxpayers in 1543. It is possible that some of the enclosure recorded in 1517-18 occurred in Great Leckhampstead, leading to the unemployment of 12 workers.

### *Leckhampstead (Limes End)* DESERTED

Limes End may be associated with the area around Weatherhead Farm (possibly the site of the manor house of Little Leckhampstead). To the south of the present farm there are significant earthworks representing house platforms (confirmed by geophysics). Test pitting produced finds of medieval pottery, all of which date to the period 1100-1400 and not beyond. There is no indication of any afterlife for this settlement. A slightly different picture emerges from an area of occupation to the north-east of the farm. Here, whilst the majority of the medieval pottery again dates to before 1400, a few sherds of later wares point to continuity in reduced size of occupation perhaps as late as 1500. By this stage, however, the settlement had largely collapsed. It is not possible to distinguish Limes End and Barretts End in the historical record, so that the evidence for Little Leckhampstead discussed above may well apply to Limes End as well as or instead of Barretts End.

### *Leckhampstead (Middle End)* SEVERELY SHRUNKEN

Undated earthworks survive on the north side of the road representing former house plots. The recovery of medieval pottery from Valley Farm also points to earlier occupation here. The main focus of settlement, however, was to the south of the road, where quantities of pottery have been recovered through fieldwalking. This reveals that the main period of activity here began around 1100 and continued through to 1400. However, within the assemblage are enough later medieval fabrics, including late medieval oxidized wares, Midland Purple Wares and Cistercian Wares to be confident of some survival of the settlement through to the end of the fifteenth century. Their quantities imply, nevertheless, a certain contraction of the settlement reducing its size from its late medieval apogee. It is not clear to which of the medieval manors of Leckhampstead Middle End should be assigned. It may have formed part of Great Leckhampstead or one of the freeholdings created from it.

### *Lillingstone Dayrell* DESERTED

The first stages of contraction at Lillingstone Dayrell appear to have been rapid and ultimately catastrophic for the survival of the village. The village had experienced considerable growth in the period 1100 to 1400. Thereafter, however, the village rapidly shrank to less than one quarter of its size, back towards its early nucleus, 100m west of the parish church. Five houses remained occupied, to be mapped in 1611, three lying along the track leading to the church, two others fronting the Buckingham-Towcester road. In the western part of the village a further four properties are depicted at this date, suggestive of the fact that this part of the village may have survived better than that around the church. There is an argument to

suggest that the village should be categorized as one which shrank severely rather than was fully deserted, but this would be to underplay the massive scale in the reduction of occupation, to a point when the village failed to function on even the most basic of levels.

The village was granted a 21 per cent reduction in its assessment for taxation in the 1440s. According to the enquiry of 1517-18, Thomas Dayrell engrossed 8 peasant holdings of 20½ acres each in 1491, thereby displacing 40 people from their homes and leading to the abandonment and ruin of 7 messuages and 4 cottages. In total, 164 acres of previously cultivated land were given over to pasture, on which the lord's sheep were set to graze. In the lay subsidy of 1524, after the desertion of the village, just three taxpayers were recorded, the lord Thomas Dayrell and two servants. The chronology of decline at Lillingstone Dayrell is thus relatively clear. There was significant shrinkage in the century following the Black Death, leading to a substantial reduction in taxation in the 1440s. Nevertheless, at least part of the village remained which may have recovered in the sixteenth century but for the intervention of the lord of the manor who displaced the remaining population.

#### *Lillingstone Lovell*

#### SEVERELY SHRUNKEN (EVIDENCE OF SHIFT)

There are large areas of medieval earthworks surviving in Lillingstone Lovell south-east and east of the church. To the south-east, these have been shown to represent a manorial complex, built in a single phase, and not subject to reorganisation. It is likely, therefore, that the site was relatively shortlived, the limited ceramic evidence available placing its use between 1250 and 1400. It is probable that this site was abandoned in favour of another site, either north to the current Manor House location, or south in the vicinity of Lillingstone Hall Farm. The earthwork remains are thus a product of shift rather than desertion. To the east of the church there are a series of house platforms and closes which mark the location of former peasant tofts. Sufficient fifteenth-century pottery has been found in association with these plots to indicate that a number, if not all, survived through to this period. An equally mixed picture emerges from investigation of the area east of the brook, where to the south croft boundaries are clearly visible under pasture. The main focus of activity in this part of the village begins around the middle of the thirteenth century, whilst later medieval activity is not universally found, but is restricted to a number of locations along the length of this row. If some plots remained occupied, others it seems were abandoned around the end of the fourteenth century. Lillingstone Lovell thus experienced piecemeal contraction rather than any dramatic loss of complete areas of the village.

A total of 60 taxpayers contributed to the poll tax of 1377, which perhaps represents about 20 households. This figure seems low when compared with the 40 tenants – presumably heads of households – recorded at Lillingstone Lovell in 1279. The inclusion of wives, children and servants might increase the population to about 120 at this time, double the number of 1377. In addition, 21 taxpayers contributed to the sixteenth of 1316-17 and a similar number paid the twentieth of 1327. Again, these were almost certainly heads of households. However, it has been argued that only about 40 per cent of households contributed to the pre-1334 lay subsidies. There may thus have been a further 30 or more non-tax paying households in Lillingstone Lovell in the early fourteenth century. Using the same formula of three people per household would give a population total of 150-160. The population of the village may have risen slightly, therefore, between 1279 and 1327 and then more than halved between 1348 and 1377 as a result of the outbreak of plague. Nevertheless, the village survived, the number of taxpayers rising from 24 in 1524 to 32 in 1543, but the late medieval population fall seems to have been severe.

#### *Lords Field*

#### PATH TO DESERTION UNKNOWN

The site does not appear on the c. 1608 Whittlewood map (NRO 4210). In 1726, when mapped as part of the Grafton estate, however, a large rectangular building is depicted on the small moated platform. Given the accuracy of the earlier survey, as proven from investigation elsewhere, the likelihood must be that this building was constructed between c. 1608 and 1726, and does not represent a medieval structure.

*Luffield Priory*  
ABANDONED AT DISSOLUTION

*Monksbarn (Whittlebury)*  
DESERTED

The dissolution might be thought to account for the desertion of Luffield Priory's granges, a single example of which, Monksbarn, lies within the study area. The grange has been identified from aerial photographs, documentary research and field survey as a ditched rectangular enclosure and fishpond, previously interpreted as a forest-edge farmstead (RCHM(E) *SW Northants*, 169; Jones 2002). From the mid-fourteenth century, whilst the Priory retained ownership of this grange, it had been let to secular tenants, first to Adam de Cortendale in 1351 and then in 1424 to John St John (Elvey 1958, xviii). It fails to appear, however, on a surviving rental of 1468 and thus may have been disposed of before this date. The absence of further mentions of activity here strongly implies that the site had no secular afterlife. Field names on the c. 1608 map (NRO Map 4210) suggest that the estate was broken up and divided amongst a number of lay owners (*inter alia* Nicolls Wood and Burtons Sarte), although none appear to have maintained the farm (Jones 2003). In all likelihood, Monksbarn had ceased to operate, and the site abandoned, well before the dissolution.

Elvey, G.R. 1958 *Luffield Priory Charters: Part 1*, Northamptonshire Record Society **22**

Jones, R. 2002 'The Luffield Priory Grange at Monksbarn, Whittlebury, Northants', *Northamptonshire Archaeology* **30**, 126-39.

RCHM(E) 1982 *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in South-West Northamptonshire* (HMSO).

*Mount Mill (Wyke Dyve)*  
PATH TO SURVIVAL UNKNOWN

Whether Mount Mill constituted in origin an isolated mill or a small hamlet is unknown. There is the implication from the 1717 Hosier estate map that the settlement did have a single small field, held separately from those of nearby Dagnall or the more remote Wyke Dyve, lying north-east of the current farm. Nothing is known, however, of its later history, or whether the site has been occupied continuously since foundation. The Roman and early medieval site to the north-west cannot have served as the mill.

*Passenham*  
SEVERELY SHRUNKEN (EVIDENCE FOR SHIFT)

The present village lies wholly to the south-west of the village street. To the north-east, however, there are at least seven house platforms preserved under pasture, marking a larger extent of the occupied zone (RCHM(E) *SW Northants*, 100-1). A number of properties are depicted in this general area on the c. 1608 Whittlewood map (NRO Map 4210). No data are available to ascertain the chronology of abandonment. To the east of the village is a rectangular moated site, formerly the manor house, where in excavation the foundations of well-built thirteenth-century stone buildings have been found. It would appear that the manor migrated, first to the south of the church (now the rectory) at some later date, possibly associated with a change in ownership in the sixteenth century. Since no finds post-1400 were noted during these excavations, it may be that the site had been abandoned much earlier. The manor was rebuilt a third time during the seventeenth century, this time west of the church.

Passenham and Deanshanger were together granted a reduction in taxation of about 11 per cent in 1489, a modest fall compared with other villages nearby. With just 10 taxpayers in 1525, however, it would appear that Passenham suffered greater shrinkage than its neighbour during the fifteenth century. But specific evidence of shrinkage does not survive; for



example, no tofts are mentioned in the 1566 field book and the buildings described accord well with the depiction of the village on the c. 1608 map.

RCHM(E) 1982 *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in South-West Northamptonshire* (HMSO).

*Potterspury*  
SURVIVED

There is no archaeological evidence for late medieval contraction. The village and its members (presumably Yardley Gobion) were granted a 13 per cent reduction in taxation in 1489. There were 44 taxpayers in the village in 1525, making Potterspury one of the more populous settlements in the area in the early sixteenth century. No specific evidence of shrinkage survives.

*Puxley (Passenham) and moated site (Potterspury)*  
SEVERLY SHRUNKEN (MOATED DESERTED)

The history of the moated site at Puxley must almost certainly be associated with the keepership of Whittlewood Forest. During the reign of Henry II, this office and a demesne tenement in Puxley were granted to the King's forester Broneman (VCH *Northants*, 220-1). From this moment, the position and the manor of Puxley descended together through several families until in 1417 Sir Thomas Green died holding the two, at which point if not a few years earlier, the office then became attached to Green Norton manor. Like Heybarne, therefore, the abandonment of Puxley may be associated with the running of the estate from a distant centre. Medieval pottery scatters found immediately north-east of the moat suggest that it extended beyond the visible earthworks. The pottery is comprised largely of Potterspury Wares, confirming a late thirteenth and fourteenth century date for the use of the site, with little to suggest further prolonged life (RCHM(E) *SW Northants*, 119).

In the fourteenth century Puxley was a settlement of considerable size. One estate there comprised at least 29 houses, and a charter of 1384 reveals that open-field agriculture was practised. However, in 1500 Sir Thomas Green enclosed 20 acres of arable, to the detriment of 6 tenants. Moreover, in 1501-2, of 15 freeholds purchased by the crown, only 3 included a messuage as well as land, suggesting considerable engrossment. Three taxpayers contributed to the lay subsidies of 1524-5. In 1566 it was recorded that 'there is decayed in Puxley a tenement called Nuttces in the tenure of Nicholas Clerke and also diverse other tenements and cottages there decayed, the names and number whereof are not known', while in the 1720s Bridges described Puxley as 'an hamlet of four mean houses ... formerly a much greater number', which accords well with the view illustrated on the forest map of c. 1608. Puxley thus experienced very severe shrinkage after 1500, a process that may well have begun during the fifteenth century.

RCHM(E) 1982 *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites in South-West Northamptonshire* (HMSO).

VCH *Northants* 5 *Cleley Hundred* (2002, University of London)

*Shrob Lodge (Passenham)*  
PATH TO SURVIVAL UNKNOWN

No archaeological or historical data available.

*Silverstone*  
SHRUNKEN

Test pitting in Silverstone has shown that the state of the village as shown on the c. 1608 Whittlewood map provides an accurate picture of the late medieval village. This map shows that although the main nucleus of the village survived, a number of individual crofts had been abandoned, notably around the square and along the High Street. There is cartographic

evidence to suggest that more complete desertion had taken place along the north side of Murswell Lane. This piecemeal contraction, however, can be demonstrated to have been a long process, beginning in places during the fourteenth century, and continuing right through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Of greatest significance was the abandonment of the royal house and hunting lodge, leaving an area within the core of the village vacant. West End was equally affected by contraction, with the regularity of a double row of tofts in the northern part of the hamlet broken up with the abandonment of individual plots. The southern part of the settlement survived, however, only to be abandoned post-c. 1608. And in Cattle End, contraction again appears to be partial, although the data is far from conclusive.

The court rolls of 1407-49 reveal that some buildings fell into disuse as the survivors of the plague began to accumulate holdings. When John Hempman died in 1423, for example, he held a messuage and a virgate called Hygonnes, a toft and a virgate called Smartes, and a toft and half a virgate called Bondes. The virgate called Smartes was formerly held by John Smart, one of 37 tenants listed in 1403 who owed suit to the manorial court. The list of 1403 was periodically updated, and John Hempman was recorded as John Smart's successor. Thus, it is probable that John Smart's buildings were abandoned and his messuage reduced to a toft during the years 1403-23. The court rolls contain other evidence of buildings falling into decay. In 1444, for example, Richard Andrew paid just 1s. 8d. to acquire a messuage and virgate 'and not more because the messuage is ruinous'. Despite the loss of individual buildings, however, the evidence does not suggest that Silverstone underwent large-scale contraction in the fifteenth century. For instance, the heirs of many tenants seem to have remained in the village to await the inheritance of a holding. About 48 per cent of new tenants recorded in the list of 1403 succeeded their relations, to judge from the evidence of shared surnames. This may well indicate a significant demand for land, an idea supported by the continued occupation of assarts and other smallholdings. In 1416, for example, Nicholas Startup and his son John paid 1s. to the lord to be admitted to two assarts, two crofts and two acres of arable in Silverstone, to hold for their lives, paying 7s. 6d. a year in rent, of which 6d. was an increment.

#### *Stockholt (Akeley)*

##### PATH TO SURVIVAL UNKNOWN

Despite extensive fieldwalking, no concentrations of medieval pottery have been identified which might represent the location of the medieval manor. This strongly implies that the current farm overlies its position. Since unavailable for investigation, whether occupation has been continuous or broken is unknown. The chief historical evidence of decline at Stockholt is the expansion of the park over former arable land in 1412.

#### *Stowe*

##### DESERTED

No archaeological data available. The village was granted a 15 per cent reduction in its assessment for taxation in the 1440s (which also included Lamport). The presence of a vibrant village community is suggested by the building of a church house at Stowe in 1469. Tax records of 1524 reveal that Stowe was one of the largest villages in north Buckinghamshire at this time, with 32 taxpayers. But unlike many of its neighbours, it experienced a decline in the number of taxpayers (to 30) in 1543. In 1563 20 families were recorded. The village may thus have been on the wane in the sixteenth century, but was not finally deserted until depopulated by the Temple family in the mid-seventeenth century.

#### *Wakefield (Potterspury)*

##### DESERTED

The earthwork remains of a small settlement lie close to the western entrance of the Wakefield Lodge Estate. These comprise a series of six platforms with associated and linked linear banks. A second group comprising three platforms and a holloway are separated from the first by a narrow area devoid of earthworks. No dating evidence is available to determine the date of abandonment.

*Wakefield Lodge (Potterspury)*  
PATH TO SURVIVAL UNKNOWN

No archaeological or historical data available.

*Whittlebury*  
SHRUNKEN

Like Silverstone, the mapping of the village in c. 1608 aids our interpretation of the nature and scale of late medieval contraction. This is further helped by the survival of earthworks on the western side of the main village street. These plots had clearly been abandoned before the seventeenth century since they are vacant on the Whittlewood map. The presence of Cistercian Ware in the single test pit dug close to this complex of earthworks might point to a late fifteenth or early sixteenth desertion date. On the east side of the main street, the row of tofts appears to have survived largely intact, although the map does show two vacant plots, perhaps indicative of some piecemeal abandonment. A similarly mixed picture emerges from investigation of a row of buildings which formerly stood fronting onto the path which now leads to the southern porch of the parish church. This row was made up of four individual buildings, two of which appear to have been abandoned by 1400, a third by around 1550, and the fourth surviving to be mapped in c. 1608. Whittlebury, then, was in slow and gradual decline from around 1400, however, the contraction was neither great nor rapid.

A number of tofts existed in Whittlebury according to fifteenth-century court rolls, suggesting some contraction of settlement. Thus, in 1420 Thomas Walsh died holding a toft and two acres. In 1468 five tofts were listed in a rental of Luffield Priory's lands, one of which was stated to be 'formerly a cottage', and William Hall held two tofts beside his messuage. Evidently there had been some consolidation of holdings in the wake of the Black Death.

*Wyke Dyve*  
SHRUNKEN

Wyke Dyve experienced both medieval and post-medieval shrinkage. In the latter period, a whole row of tofts was abandoned post-1717 mapping on the western edge of the village close to the rectory. An earlier period of contraction accounted for the loss of tofts from the north side of Cross Tree Road south of the church. Here long-lived occupation appears to have terminated in the late fifteenth or sixteenth century, although the quantity of pottery suggests that the decline may well have accounted for a number of crofts well before 1450. On the south side of Cross Tree Road towards the eastern part of the village, the picture is less clear, although it seems likely that a number of tofts had been abandoned or were vacant by 1400, a number also appear to have remained in use perhaps continuously to the present day.

It is not possible to distinguish the two parts of the village in the medieval records. Wicken was granted a 26 per cent reduction in its assessment for taxation in 1489, one of the largest in Cleley Hundred. Some enclosure took place at this time. In 1490 Thomas marquess of Dorset converted 30 acres of arable to sheep pasture, displacing four families, and in 1512 John Spencer did likewise with a further 40 acres. Nevertheless, the village remained relatively populous, with 35 taxpayers in 1525.

*Wyke Hamon*  
SHRUNKEN

The principal loss in Wyke Hamon appears to be confined to an area opposite Home Farm, where earthworks locate the position of former tofts, one of which remained in occupation to be mapped in 1717. The archaeological data is not currently available to provide a chronology for desertion.