

## MAP OF ASHBOURNE, DERBYSHIRE.

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THERE ARE PRESERVED in the Public Record Office a number of early large-scale maps that are of considerable importance to the historical geographer. Many were originally drawn to form part of the evidence submitted in disputes over land. For a number of these maps it is possible to trace the associated evidence heard by the court, and these records increase their potential geographical value.

The Ashbourne map (M.P.C.35) appears to have been used in a dispute over enclosure of common pasture, and the hearing took place in 1547 (DL.3/49/C1).

*Construction.*—The map shows a strip of country  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to 3 miles long (from east to west), extending from Ashbourne to the Kniveton Brook. In its length the scale of the map is reasonably consistent. A larger scale was used for the width in order to exaggerate the lane, for the lane was the common in dispute. The width of the lane is given in paces, and the method of survey was probably pacing and field sketching. The sketching was sufficiently accurate to facilitate the identification of fields on the present 6-inch sheets (SK.14 N.E. and SK.24 N.W.) or on the ground. The common arable field can easily be traced since the present field pattern shows strips in the same direction as those indicated on the map.

*The dispute.*—The lane had been common of pasture for the people of Ashbourne. Mathew Knyeton (Knyeton in the written evidence, Kynstone on the map) had enclosed. The hedges (with gates and ladder stiles across the lane) are shown, and the enclosed parts of the lane are distinguished from the farm land on either side by being "nether ryge nor reane". The case was brought by Sir Thomas Cockeyne, Christopher Hurte and William

PLATE XIVa, b.

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Jackson, all of whom held land along the Ashbourne end of the lane. As was then the practice, sworn evidence was collected from a number of local people who had known the lane and local custom over a long period. The majority of these witnesses agreed that the lane was common at its Ashbourne end, but differed about the extent of the area subject to commoning. One witness, John Aley, said that a previous attempt had been made to enclose the lane, but the hedge had been pulled down by the Ashbourne people. Mathew Knyeton had now re-erected the hedge, and drove off any cattle from Ashbourne. In the process the boy who looked after the town herd had been beaten by Knyeton's men and he, the witness, "did meet the boy running and wepying." Christopher Greenwood, the oldest witness, aged 87, claimed to have known the area for sixty years and stated that the common rights only extended as far as the brook. As well as the Kniveton Brook there is a brook marked on the map, rising near "northe" and crossing the lane near to Sir Humphrey Bradburne's house.

Knyeton appears to have been an aggressive landowner for he was later involved in a further dispute over rights of common (D.L.I./23/F4). He was charged by a number of other Ashbourne farmers with not allowing common of grazing across some of his fields, although this right had been enjoyed for years. The grazing was for cows in summer; for sheep, horses and cows in winter. The fields in this later dispute must therefore have been enclosed from pasture and not from arable.

*Points of interest.*

1. The map shows Ashbourne as a small town with a triangular market place. This shape of market was widely used, for it is present at St. Albans, Ashford, Bicester and Market Drayton. The Ashbourne market in 1547 was in process of being built up. The booths in the market place had been replaced with permanent buildings, but there are noticeable differences between this huddle of houses in the centre of the market and the more regularly placed houses on either side of the street. Some trace of this regular pattern of houses still exists

on the west side of the market, with wood-framed buildings projecting back from the street. The site of the first building on the left beyond the church is now occupied by the old grammar school. The school was built in 1586, thus providing additional verification of the early date of the map.

2. The regular layout of the houses and the triangular market suggest a deliberate development. In Domesday, Ashbourne was a waste manor with a recorded population of a priest, two villeins and two bordars. By the reign of Edward I Ashbourne was a town and the town status is confirmed by a reference to sixteen burgages in the possessions of Francis Cockayne (son of Sir Thomas Cocken or Cockayne named on the map) at the time of his death (E/130/749/13). Ashbourne is, therefore, likely to be an example of the large class of small non-walled market towns founded or developed in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. The church provides further evidence: the original foundation was Saxon, but the oldest part of the present church, one of the largest in Derbyshire, dates from the early thirteenth century. The church was re-dedicated in 1241.

3. Such small towns were not, of course, entirely concerned with trade. Farming was still important. The open arable field, Neighmere field, is shown on the map, and the dispute itself shows an active interest in farming. In a previous dispute Jackson and Cockayne had contested the ownership of two swathes of meadow land (D.L.3/22/J2). It would be interesting to know whether the manufacturing towns of the period had a comparable interest in farming.

4. The most intriguing feature of the map is the presence of a large number of small hedged fields and isolated homesteads. The New Hall and the Old Hall are minor "seats" but the other isolated homesteads appear to be cottages or farms. A number of these have disappeared, illustrating once more the many changes in settlement distribution that have taken place in England. Ashbourne rectory was among the possessions of Lincoln Cathedral until 1560 (B.M. ADD MS. 6671), and this accounts for the presence of the Dean of Lincoln's house.

The house is not shown as leased to a tenant, and may therefore have been a country house, occasionally occupied by the Dean. It, too, has vanished.

Many of the small hedged fields are marked "ridge and reane". This term means ridge and furrow. The fields, therefore, were or had been arable. The problem then arises: how had these small fields come into being? The most obvious explanation is "Tudor enclosure". The date of the map is 1547, however, and the memory of Christopher Greenwood would carry us back almost to the beginning of the Tudor period. If these fields had been enclosed from open arable field during the period, it would surely have been mentioned during the hearing of the dispute, as most relevant evidence. If these fields are indeed enclosures from a large open field, they are pre-Tudor. On the other hand, the form of the lane, with widenings into "greens", does not resemble that of an access road across an open field. It appears to be a feature of considerable antiquity, even older than the Neighmere field, for the latter was probably laid out when Ashbourne was developed as a town. The "se" in Segrovefield and the "mere" in Neighmere are both referring to pools, and Ashbourne is a non-habitative place-name, so that the land near Ashbourne is likely to have been neither the first farmed nor the first settled. Enclosure from a large open field is therefore an unlikely origin for these small hedged fields.

A second explanation of this combination of small size with ridge and furrow would be the use of ridge and furrow for drainage purposes. It is difficult to accept this as an explanation since the land is far from flat.

The third explanation is that this is a true example of small fields which had been divided into strips. The difficulty is now partly with nomenclature. The study of the wide range of field patterns associated with communal farming has been rather neglected in this country (apart from the bald distinction between open and enclosed). Consequently, small hedged common fields sound almost a contradiction in terms. Nevertheless the former presence of such fields has been recognized in various parts of England. The field pattern eastward of the Ash-

bourne map is possibly of greater age than the three-field system. Maps of this kind are, therefore, likely to be of great value in considering the application of the extremely interesting German investigations of the development of rural settlement forms and farming systems to this country. Studied together with the wealth of documents normally available and with the ground, they should make possible a major contribution by English geographers to the same theme.