

The Six New Towns of the Bishops of Winchester, 1200-55

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I

THE six towns whose plantation is studied in this article are Hindon (Wilts.), Newtown in Burghclere (Hants.), Newtown *alias* Francheville (Isle of Wight), New Alresford (Hants.), Downton (Wilts.), and Overton (Hants.). Their location is given in FIGS. 69 and 78, and in Appendix I grid-references are given for these towns and the other properties of the bishop in this area.

Of the six towns, the first three were planted in open country a mile or more from any previous settlement; the sites of the others were each separated from a pre-existing village by a river and were legally and administratively distinct from their old-established rural neighbours. In one case, New Alresford, the planted town has the distinctive prefix to mark its novelty and separation from Old Alresford, just as earlier town-foundations had given rise to a twin nomenclature at Old and New Windsor and Old and New Woodstock. The migration of the bishop and city of Salisbury to a new site by the Avon meadows also resulted in an 'Old' Sarum and a 'New' Salisbury. In the bishop of Winchester's two Newtowns the name also embodied the novelty of the foundations.

The bishops' six urban plantations were part of a continuing English tradition, too long to set out fully here.¹ It is sometimes thought that the plantation of towns in England begins with Edward I and derives from his experiences in Gascony, where he had moved among the many *bastides* founded by the counts of Toulouse and where between 1250 and 1330 the kings of England granted foundation-charters to no fewer than 101 *bastides*.² This same period saw in England and Wales the foundation of at least fourteen new towns as well as the rebuilding of Berwick-on-Tweed (1297) and the re-siting of Winchelsea (1281). This activity by kings, bishops and lay lords in the second half of the thirteenth century may have been stimulated by the success of such earlier plantations as form the subject of this study, but no claim is made for the bishops of Winchester as fathers of English town-planning. The bishops' six new towns were in the same tradition

¹ This is the theme of a book, *The New Towns of the English* which I am preparing. For a sketch see M. W. Beresford and J. K. S. St. Joseph, *Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 197-228, and M. W. Beresford, *History on the Ground* (London, 1957), pp. 125-50.

² *Bastide*, a convenient word for a planted town, derives from *bâtir* to build. The first in Gascony was Puymiról, founded by the count of Toulouse in 1246; the English series begins with Monségur, chartered in 1265. The English kings also renewed or extended the liberties of 17 French foundations on territory which later became English.

as William I's New Windsor and Ludlow, Richard I's Portsmouth and John's Liverpool: the tradition may even go back in the royal line—if the grid-plan of streets is any evidence—to Saxon Oxford, Wallingford and Wareham.

The social and economic forces which encouraged the bishops to augment the towns of southern England were within the same period inducing other territorial landlords to plant such towns as Newton Abbot (c. 1200) and Chipping Sodbury (1227), to say nothing of New Sarum. In the same period New Thame probably arose; in Cornwall semi-rural boroughs like Mitchell; and among the plantations some like Warenmouth, Northumberland (1247) were to have only a short life before their sites faded back into the countryside from which they had been promoted. FIG. 78 shows all the known new towns of the middle ages in central southern England, and it will be seen that the bishops' plantations lay in a countryside where others had seen and seized opportunity.

The unique feature of the bishops of Winchester's foundations, however, is the quality of their documentation. The long series of annual account rolls³ for the Winchester estates has long been well known to historians, who have used them for basic studies of the movement of grain prices, the yields of sown corn, the impact of the Black Death, the progress of commutation and—lately—the levels of mortality. Since all six of the bishops' towns were laid out within rural manors, these annual manorial accounts afford an opportunity—perhaps unique in Europe—of documenting the establishment of a group of new medieval towns.

The bishops' estates lay for the most part within a forty-mile radius of Winchester, the area shown in FIG. 69. Outside this area the only substantial properties were the manor of Witney (Oxon.) and the town and surrounding villages which made up the great manor of Taunton (Somerset). These episcopal estates were mainly valued for their agricultural produce, their rents and their manorial payments. Some, like Highclere, Bishop's Sutton and Bishop's Waltham (Hants.) had a manor house or palace where the bishop could stay on a cross-country journey or come for the pleasures of the chase. The bishop's income at the beginning of the thirteenth century also included some small urban properties in Winchester and Southwark, but only at Taunton does the first surviving account roll (for the year 1208–9) mention a 'borough'. But this borough, which brought the bishop £41 8s. 3d. that year, was far from being a new town: it had belonged to the church since before the conquest and was already substantial when described in Domesday Book.

Between 1200 and 1255 the bishops were able to augment this inheritance of one town and forty-three manors in two different ways. They could promote to borough status an existing settlement which had already shown itself able to develop non-agricultural economic life—the normal route by which medieval English boroughs came into existence: the Northamptonshire town of Higham

³ 'Account roll' is used here in preference to 'pipe roll' which can be confused with the royal Pipe Roll. The bishops' rolls were in class Eccles. Comm. 2 at the Public Record Office; this prefix is omitted from subsequent footnotes where roll number and membrane are given. The roll for 1208–9 was edited by H. Hall, *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester* (London, 1903). In the summer of 1959 these rolls were moved from the P.R.O. to the County Record Office, Winchester. It is to be hoped that this disservice to all except residents in Hampshire will not be exacerbated by re-numbering the rolls and invalidating the references given by scholars during the last fifty years.

Ferrers may stand as a type-site.⁴ On the bishops' estates Farnham (Surrey) and Witney rose this way. The roll of 1208-9 shows the men of Farnham already allowed to pay a lump sum of £7 in lieu of assized rents, fines of land, customary services, heriots, *maritagia*, tolls and market dues. In successive annual accounts

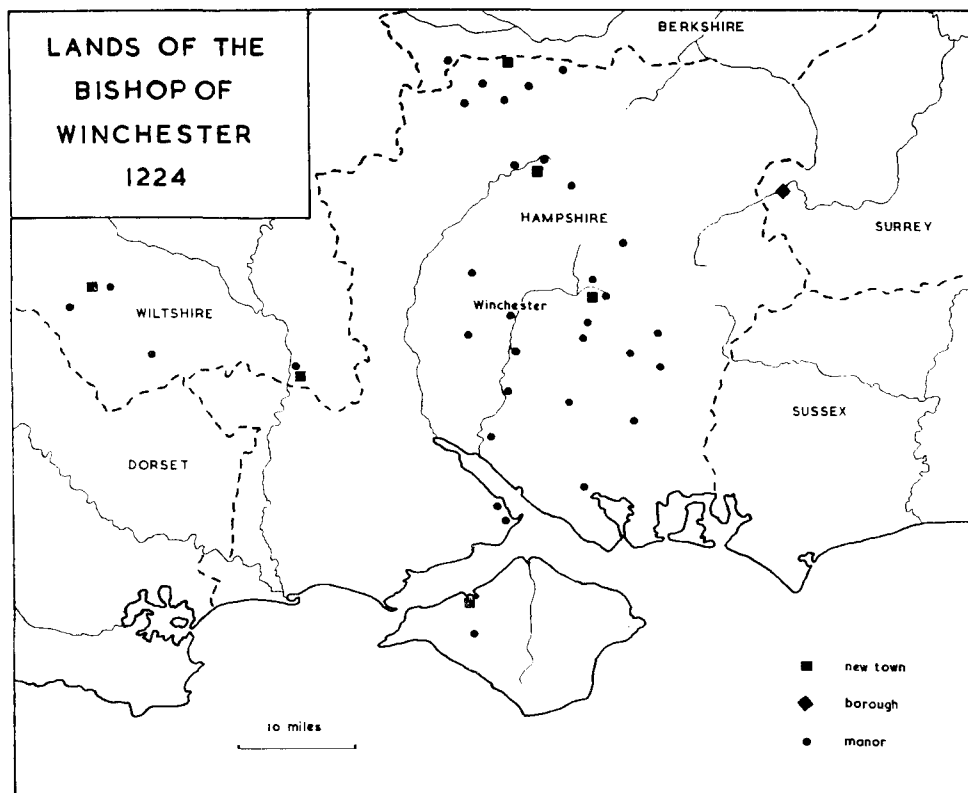


FIG. 69

LANDS OF THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, 1224 (pp. 187 ff.)

The six new towns are indicated by squares, the bishop's borough of Farnham by a diamond; the rural manors are listed with map references in Appendix I, p. 213)

this lump sum increased, but only in 1248 was the town granted a charter by bishop William de Raleigh, giving it the rank of borough and wider privileges.⁵ At Witney *c.* 1208-9 'a borough was formed by amputation of a part of the township of Curbridge'—189 acres cut from 3,265—making burgesses of those who dwelt along the broad green of Witney village.⁶

⁴ Overnight, 91 villeins were enfranchised as the first burgesses. *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, 1 (London, 1903), 372-3.

⁵ E. Robo, *Medieval Farnham* (Farnham, 1935), p. 173.

⁶ A. Ballard in *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, ed. P. Vinogradoff, v (Oxford, 1916), 184. My dating of the borough rests on the entry among the *Purchasia* of 1208-9: 'de Burgo xx s. pro pace habenda' and the expenses that year of three men 'pro libertate novae cartae' (Hall, *op. cit.* in note 3, p. 17); in 1210-11 there was a borough reeve (159270B m.4).

II

In contrast to the promotion of Farnham and Witney are the six manors where the bishops planted new settlements, each a borough from its first day. The first to be considered in detail is *New Alresford*, seven miles ENE. of Winchester near the junction of the rivers Alre and Itchen and less than three miles from the source of the latter. Near the source was the episcopal manor of Bishop's Sutton, acquired in 1136 and soon the site of a palace which was a resting place

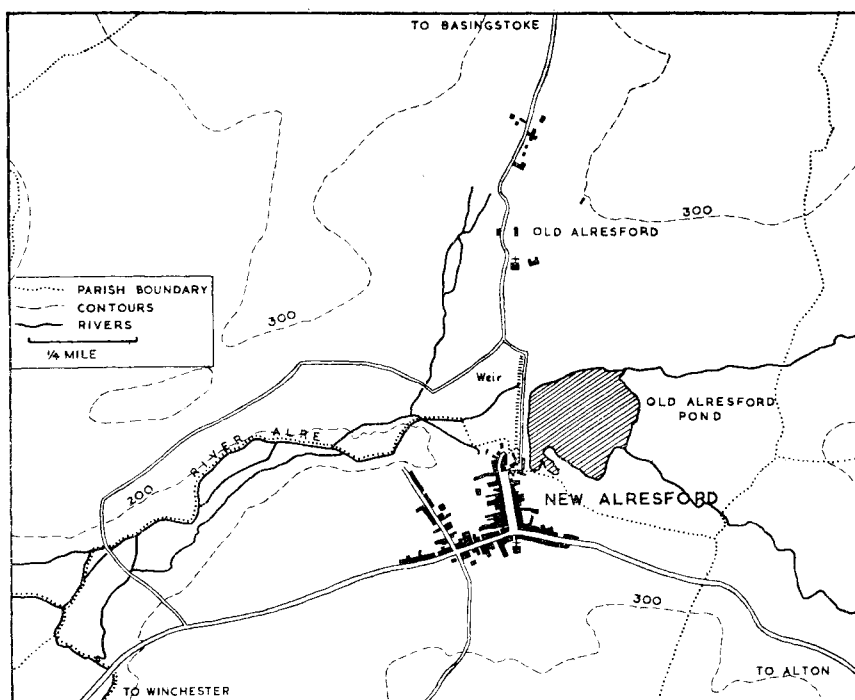


FIG. 70

OLD AND NEW ALRESFORD, HANTS. (pp. 190 ff.)

The new town was planted around a market-place near the head of the canalized river Alre. The Pond supplied water for the canal; across its dam is the road to Old Alresford. The palace of Bishop's Sutton lies 2 miles E., on the Alton road

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on the London road and near the wooded hunting country by Alton. The bishop's presence here, together with his household and visitors, was a natural incentive to bring trade outside the palace gate. King John stayed here, and from the king the village obtained a fair and probably its market charter.⁷ The real beneficiary, however, was not Bishop's Sutton but Alresford two miles farther west. Bishop Godfrey (1189-1204) opened up the higher stretches of the Itchen above Winchester by canalizing the river. To ensure a good head of water he threw a dam across the Itchen valley and created a great reservoir.⁸ This pool, once 200 acres

⁷ *Victoria County History, Hampshire* (London, 1908), III, 41-5 (subsequent references to this *History* are abbreviated to *V.C.H.*).

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 348-54.

in area, still survives as the 30-acre Alresford Pond and across the dam runs the road from New to Old Alresford. This great dam is one of the largest secular earthworks surviving from medieval England (FIG. 70).

In 1200 the bishop obtained a market charter, in 1202 a fair and about the same time the river tolls.⁹ But the markets and fairs of John's charters were neither for Bishop's Sutton nor Old Alresford but for a new town at the southern end of the dam, being a broad open market-place lined with houses and abutting on the Winchester-London road with the new church of St. John the Baptist at its head. Why was a new town engineered? What stood in the way of the promotion of Bishop's Sutton?

The answer seems to lie in the Itchen canal. The making of Alresford pond had prevented boats from reaching Bishop's Sutton, if indeed they ever could, since the river rises only a mile from it. Old Alresford village was more than half a mile from the head of the navigation and not on the main Winchester-London road following the Itchen.

We do not need to guess about the events. The monastic chronicle, naming some notable events of the year 1200, recorded:¹⁰

'Bishop Godfrey of Winchester made a new market place at Alresford and the name of the town he called *Novum Forum*.'

A town had been christened New Market, just as in 1227 a new town in Suffolk was to be christened Newmarket. The bishops' town of Alresford is no longer called New Market, only New Alresford, but the documents from the early years of its life have many references to the place as simply 'Alresford Forum'. (Blandford Forum (Dorset), although not a new town, has the same element in its name.) Indeed, the alternative names rather worried the accountant. In 1210-11 he headed his account 'Forum de Alresford' and accounted for 45 burgage plots paying 2s. a year rent and for four others newly taken up that year. From 477 acres of agricultural land, probably that part of Old Alresford south of the Itchen, nearly £15 in agricultural rents were collected. The reeve deducted the expense to which he had been put in making a new fulling mill, pulling down an old mill and filling in the pond. The rest of the money he sent to Winchester. Later, however, with second thoughts all these entries were crossed out and a small piece of parchment stitched two membranes earlier in the account roll. On it, in small handwriting, the same items and sums appear but the heading was now *De Burgo*.¹¹

The town, we have seen, dated from 1200. The first surviving roll is from 1208-9, when New Alresford brought the bishop £18 7s. 8d. compared with £96 cash income from the rural manor of Old Alresford. But the increment was not as spectacular as might seem, since £14 derived from the agricultural land attached to the new town. In the first decade of its life New Alresford attracted forty people to come and occupy the *placeae*, the building-plots which the bishop was offering to newcomers.

⁹ Tolls: *ibid.*, p. 350; market: P.R.O. C53/2 m. 10; fairs: 159460, 2/2 and *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, III (London, 1908), 349.

¹⁰ *Annales Monastici*, ed. H. R. Luard (London, 1865), II, 252 (Rolls Series).

¹¹ 159270B m. 11 and attachment to m. 9.

There is no evidence that the bishop provided the houses. As in Edward I's Caernarvon and the Gascon bastides this expense fell on the townsmen. At New Alresford the bishop did provide three public buildings besides rebuilding a fulling mill. These, the chronicler states, were a town hall, a town oven and a boulting house—that is, a place for sifting bran from flour. These three communal buildings emphasized the new community's independence both of Old Alresford and of the manorial obligations, which continued to fall on those who lived in the rural manor. The oven, like the mill, was commonly the lord's monopoly, its use a mark of his scignory and the villagers' dependence. The bishop may well have provided the church, for it was on its patronal festival that the fair was held, but the manorial accounts have no mention of it. Architecturally it could well come from the first decade of the thirteenth century.

The town of 'Alresford Forum' had the simplest of plans: it was the market-place, at one end the London road and at the other the bishop's dam. Just below the dam, to the north-west (FIG. 70) is the head of the bishop's canal and alongside it the town mill. The picturesque fulling mill which now straddles the canal must date from after the disuse of the navigation. The older course of the Itchen before the construction of the dam is indicated by the curves in the parish boundary. The straightness of the final length of canal and the straightness of Alresford's main street are an indication of their deliberateness. Contrast the winding local roads, even the Winchester road in the Itchen valley. Winding rural roads and meandering footpaths—like those from Alresford to the bishop's manors of Beauworth and Cheriton—were the product of slow and piecemeal development in the centuries when field was being won from forest. The market place and the rectilinear *placeae* alongside it remain on the modern map as witnesses to a different historical process, that of deliberation, planning and plantation.¹²

The letting of stall-space and permission to build permanent stalls in the broad main street were additional sources of revenue for the bishop. In 1223–4 this income was £3 6s. 8d., the equivalent of the rent from 33 of the town's *placeae*, while the town courts—with their commercial cases, their registration of land transfer and the fines from the petty crime that accompanied commercial assemblies—also brought in the pence and sometimes more than the pence.¹³ In 1264–5 it was £4 9s. 6d., as much as 45 burgage plots would have brought in.¹⁴

In the fourteenth century, Alresford was one of the ten greatest wool-markets in the country, a collecting centre for the downland east and north-east of Winchester. It is known that wool was shipped down the canal to Beaulieu,¹⁵ and the town's importance as a route centre is stressed by the agreement of 1269, wherein the bishops of Oxford and Winchester joined Henry III in constructing a new road eastwards from New Alresford to Alton, crossing the watershed

¹² The burgage plots as distinguishable on the modern map are here 350 ft. long; despite subdivision, it is possible to discern 33 house-and-shop fronts on either side of the *Forum*. At Newtown, I.O.W., plots were 165 ft. long, at Downton the same; at Overton 275 ft. and at Hindon 440 ft. No documentary reference to the size of these *placeae* has been encountered, but those of bastides elsewhere in England and Gascony occasionally occur. Each frontage at Alresford is now about 33 ft. broad.

¹³ 159278 m. 1.

¹⁴ 159295 m. 17d.

¹⁵ Hall, *op. cit.* in note 3, p. xix.

between the Itchen and the Wey valley, the most direct route from Winchester to London.¹⁶

There was one other way in which a bishop, like any other territorial landlord, could gain from the establishment of a new town as an extra marketing centre on their estates. A bishop was both producer and consumer. As a consumer at Bishop's Sutton palace or at Winchester he was keenly interested in provisioning his household and in having plenty of traders with a wide variety of goods offered for sale in competition with each other.¹⁷ As a producer of agricultural goods on his own demesnes he was interested in getting as good a price as possible for whatever surpluses he wanted to send to market. Adjoining New Alresford were four of the bishop's rural manors. The wheat—to take only one crop—sold for cash off Old Alresford manor averaged 30 quarters a year in the first half of the thirteenth century, and, at an average of 4s. a quarter, was worth £6 a year.¹⁸ The more local market-places and the more fairs there were, the more traders queuing up, the better the price that might be expected.

III

The second town to be considered is *Downton* which lies in Wiltshire just over the county boundary and eight miles SSE. of Old Salisbury. It was a large manor and had belonged to the church at Winchester since the third quarter of the seventh century. South of the parish church of the old village (FIG. 71) are the earthworks of the bishops' castle-residence,¹⁹ and near it was the meeting-place of the Saxon hundred-moot, the tradition still preserved in the farm name. It was alongside this sizable community, very much larger than Old Alresford, that the bishop added a new town almost at the same time as the foundation of New Alresford. The town plans are very similar. Each consists of a single, very broad market-place street with one end at a river crossing and the other making a T-junction with the main road. It is this road, now the main road from Salisbury, which forms the foreground of PL. XV, while the trees (top right) mark the earthworks of the castle.

In the first large-scale county map of 1773 this part of Downton was simply called 'Street';²⁰ Stockbridge, another new town of this area (although not the child of a bishop of Winchester) was also often called 'The Street (of King's Somborne)'²¹ as indeed was the midland fair-town of St. Ives. If we look for origins or precedents for this very simple form of town plan we might turn (on the

¹⁶ *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, II (London, 1906), 122-3.

¹⁷ All the bishops' new towns except Overton were near an episcopal residence. In the single year 1208-9 the king stayed with the bishop at three of these palaces.

¹⁸ Figures calculated from N. S. B. Gras, *The Evolution of the English Corn Market* (Cambridge, Mass., 1915), pp. 370-400.

¹⁹ While residing here the bishop granted Newtown's charter of 1255.

²⁰ *Burgus* (as opposed to *forinsecus*) appears in fourteenth-century tax-lists; in 1576, *burgus* (as opposed to *Este Ende and Church Tithing*).

²¹ Stockbridge was probably founded c. 1200: P.R.O. C53/2 m. 21; C132/21/12 m. 11. The town of Blandford Forum was also simply called 'this streete' in a survey of 1591: P.R.O. DL/42/116 f. 49.

Winchester manors) to Fareham²² or Witney, but this is probably too sophisticated. Need we look any further than the end of our noses? That is, to any roadside along which stalls are set up to attract passers-by; or to any village green which commerce turns from green to all the colours of the rainbow when the local people come in to the market stalls and the itinerant traders to the fair booths?

It is as 'the new market of Downton' that the new plantation is first documented. The first surviving account roll, that of 1208-9, is just too late to catch the foundation. 19 *placeae* paid rent *in novum forum* and 11 others were noted as having been let for the first time that year. By 1213-14 there were 72, and in

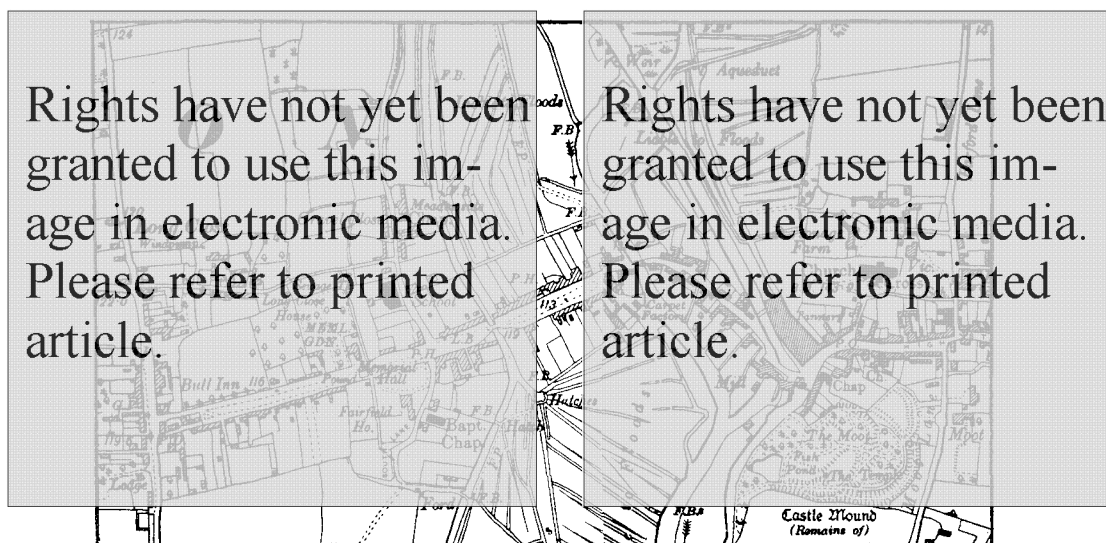


FIG. 71

DOWNTON, WILTS. (pp. 193 ff.)

The new town was planted across the river from the old village where the bishop's castle and the Hundred meeting-place were located ('The Moot'): compare PL. xv. (Sc. 6 in. = 1 mile)

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1215-16 the account roll has the separate heading *Burgus de Downton* for the first time. By 1218-19 there were 89 burgage plots paying rent, two of them occupied by weavers; and a fulling mill paid 40s. rent, as much as 40 burgesses or nearly half the town.²³ The downland sheep, as at New Alresford, were providing occupation in the new town for others than wool-dealers.

Why was it thought fit to tack a borough town on to Old Downton and to set it across the river and away from the castle and village? The shift suggests some fundamental change in route-emphasis from the east bank, where the castle-village lay, to the west bank. It would be interesting to connect it with shifts of route consequent on the migration of Old Salisbury to New Salisbury further upstream,

²² Burgages were being created at Fareham (Hants.) in 1211-2 (159217 m. 4, *Incrementum and Purchasia*).

²³ 1213-14: 159272 m. 7; 1215-16: 159273 m. 4; 1218-19: 159275 m. 7d.

but that hypothesis raises difficult problems of dating, since the foundation of Downton borough is nearly two decades earlier than the final move of the bishop of Salisbury from Old Sarum.

By 1225-6 the rent roll of Downton had risen to £5 18s. 4d., and by 1244-5 the bishop's cash income from Downton rents and its court was £19 6s.²⁴ One aspect of the extra money income which a territorial lord obtained when a new town was planted was the relatively effortless way in which it was earned. This should be borne in mind when comparing the cash yields from the old village and the new town. In 1264-5 the manor of Alresford provided the bishop with £70 and the borough with only £22; the manor of Downton with £110 and the borough with £9. But what a difference in effort, organization and risk! Once the initial land was provided, the borough cost the bishop virtually nothing to maintain. There were no risks of bad harvests to affect his income; no labour problems on the demesne; no marketing problems for the produce of a demesne; simply a collection of rents three or four times a year. To produce the £110 from Downton manor a demesne of 677 sown acres had to be managed; a cattle herd of 101 animals tended; a flock of nearly 1,700 sheep looked after; over 1,300 fleeces shorn and washed. Money had to be spent on property repairs, on buildings, on the village mills, on the bridge. Wages had to be paid and villein labour supervised.²⁵ The attractiveness of a cash income from a new town is not measured only by arithmetic. To use a simile which a bishop would have understood, it came near to being manna from Heaven.

IV

The third Winchester plantation was at *Overton* in north Hampshire, three miles east of Whitchurch. Here the modern topography (FIG. 72) shows the same double settlement as at Alresford and Downton: an old village with its church and across the river a new market town alongside a main road. On the north bank of the river lie St. Mary's church, the rectory, Court House and Court Farm, all that remain of the original village. A plan of the borough in 1615 is among the estate plans of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. On the south bank, across the bridge, lie the town mill and the five streets which form a simple rectilinear grid pattern. The east-west axis is formed by the road from Whitchurch to Basingstoke, but the market-place was in the north-south road from Kingsclere to Winchester. Overton was the first Winchester plantation to approach a grid plan although this alinement of streets was a common feature of the planted towns. New Windsor, Ludlow, Portsmouth and Liverpool—all anterior to Overton—had it, and at the bishop's seat at Bishop's Waltham, Henry de Blois had remodelled the town to form a grid of nine streets which would not be out of place in a Gascon bastide.

The account roll for 1213-14 shows Overton manor bringing in the usual type of rural rent, a *gabulum assisum* of £19 2s. The next year's roll is defective, but

²⁴ 1225-6: 159280 m. 2; 1244-5: 159287 m. 2.

²⁵ 1264-5: 159295 m. 17d.; Downton *manerium*: *ibid.*, mm. 2-3r; *burgus*: m. 3d. The sown area in Downton was 844 if Cowyk Grange is included. Similar areas and stock are found in 1208-9 (Hall, *op. cit.* in note 3, pp. xlii-iii) and in 1274-5 (159302 m. 6d.): see Appendices IV and V, p. 214.

the roll for 1217–18 has an entry for Overton *burgus* in addition to the manor, although the roll is too worn to be legible. In the same year a market charter was granted. The roll for 1218–19 is the first to have a completely legible entry for the new town, and it shows 22 burgages each rented at 2s. a year. Fourteen individuals held these plots, one having three, and five others two each. That year one of the bishop's villeins paid 6s. 8d. to have a plot in the town. Four and a half *placeae*



FIG. 72

OVERTON, HANTS. (pp. 195 ff.)

The principal burgages of the new town were in Winchester Street, a broad market-street. Note remains of old village to N., over the river. (Sc. 6 in. = 1 mile)

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were added in 1219–20 and by 1223–4 there were at least forty occupied,²⁶ and a second market day and fair²⁷ were granted in 1246.

Some aspects of gain accruing to the bishops have been discussed above: one item on the other side of the balance sheet has been omitted until now. The documentary evidence from Overton fortunately enables it to be quantified. A piece of demesne land could not simultaneously grow a crop and a house, and each *burgagium* or *placea* involved some loss of agricultural land from the demesne,

²⁶ 1217–18: 159274 m. 5d.; market, P.R.O. C54/19 m. 5; 1218–19: 159275 m. 3d.; 1219–20: 159276 m. 7; 1223–4: 159278 m. 6.

²⁷ *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, 1, 312.

and hence some loss of produce or rent. At Overton the reeve duly set down the loss in his accounts, for the traditional method of accounting would otherwise have made him liable for the old rents at the full amount. In the late fourteenth century the reeve was still making this formal claim for a *defectus* of 36s. from sixteen pieces of land *tractae in burgo*,²⁸ and the entry can be traced back through the annual accounts. The earliest legible *defectus* is for 1223-4, but part of an entry can be seen on the torn roll for 1217-18.²⁹ In 1213-14 the Downton reeve had claimed 6s. 'in defectu iii terrarum tractarum in novum burgum' and the 1217-18 roll varies this as 'in dominicum de burgo'. By 1264-5 this 6s. is described as arising from 'ii ferlinlond tractae in burgum' but the 'iii terrae' appear in their usual form in the stock inventory of the annual account where under *Instaurum* the reeve claimed a defect of 16 hens which had formerly been part of the rent from 'iii terrae tractae in burgum' and a 'ferlinlond' let to the fuller of Walton, a hamlet on the west bank of the river. In the account for 1376-7 the 6s. is described most fully: 'defectus redditus ii ferlingarum terrae nativae tractae in burgum'.³⁰ Similar entries at Witney in 1220 onwards describe *terra Cotstowe* as *tracta in burgum*, and from 1210-11 onwards (two years after charters from the bishop are mentioned) an additional two hides had been *tractae in dominicum*, and these entries suggest an enlargement of the built-up area of the bishop's borough of Witney at the expense of the surrounding agricultural land.³¹

V

The fourth *novus burgus* was planted on the very edge of Hampshire, separated from Berkshire only by the little river Enborne. Facing the bishop's two manors of Highclere and Burghclere³² was Sandleford priory, named after the ford where the main road from Winchester to Oxford crossed the river. At this crossing, in 1218, the initial 67 building-plots were laid out. The prior of Sandleford prudently took up three of them, and from its situation the town was sometimes called *Nova Villa de Sandelford* and sometimes *Novus Burgus de Clere*. A chapel was built, as at Alresford, for the townspeople and a market charter³³ obtained. The account roll for 1217-18 from the two Clere manors had nothing urban. In the 1218-19 roll there is a bold heading *Novus Burgus* followed by the names of the 52 burgesses who held the 67 *placeae* at a shilling a year. One held five plots, two held three each, seven two each and forty-two people the unitary plot.³⁴

As at Overton, the annual account rolls following the foundation year show

²⁸ 159384 m. 22r.

²⁹ 1217-18: 159274 m. 5d; 1223-4: 159278 m. 6.

³⁰ 1213-14: 159272 m. 7; 1217-18: 159274 m. 1; 1264-5: 159295 m. 2 *defectus redditus* and 3d. *defectus instauri*; 1376-7: 159384 m. 5d.

³¹ 1210-11: 159270B m. 4; 1220-1: 159277 m. 3; see also note 6 *supra*.

³² The 'burgh' element in the name derives not from a borough but from the prehistoric earthwork on Beacon Hill. In the early-thirteenth-century rolls the two Cleres appear as a single manor of Cleres. The bishop's palace was at Highclere: cf. plan in G. J. Copley, *An Archaeology of South-East England* (London 1958), fig. 19. Sandleford priory was founded c. 1200: *V.C.H. Berks.*, I, 362.

³³ P.R.O. C54/19 m. 5.

³⁴ 1218-19: 159275 m. 5d; 1219-20: 159276 m. 6; 1220-1: 159277 m. 1d; 1224-5: 159279; 1225-6: 159280 m. 9d; 1264-5: 159295 m. 7d.

the steady arrival of newcomers to take up vacant plots. In 1219–20 two such paid 9d. for their new plot and the accountant noted that they would pay the full shilling in future years. More appear in the rental for 1220–1 and by 1264–5 over seventy burgage rents were paid. In 1224–5 a ditch 1,650 yards long was dug round the town at the bishop's expense and in 1225–6 the bishop had a house of his own built in the town. An account for plastering Sandleford chapel in 1218–19 suggests that the bishop was responsible for the church, the forerunner of the present parish church, which has no medieval features in it.³⁵

Apart from the documentary evidence, the late arrival of Newtown on the settlement landscape is attested by another feature, its parochial geography. This feature is important, for elsewhere, when documentary evidence is less ample than for the Winchester estates, it can be the principal indication of a late settlement. As a geographical unit, the parish of Newtown has two significant characteristics: the parish is unusually small, and it is surrounded on all three sides by another parish, giving it a 'bitten out' look. The 475 acres of Newtown must once have formed part of Burghclere which surrounds it on the east and south with a tiny detached portion trapped on the west flank of Newtown; on the north is the county boundary. The small parish area and the bitten-out shape can be seen at many other planted medieval towns, for example at New Windsor, Alnmouth, Boroughbridge, Henley in Arden, Hedon and New Malton. In such cases it was usual for the mother parish to cling tenaciously to its rights and either to deny the new town a church or to give it a quite subordinate status.³⁵ Such was the position of the churches in the planted towns like Market Harborough and Kingston upon Hull. When at Stratford on Avon the mayor and corporation make their annual pilgrimage to Shakespeare's tomb in the parish church the long progress is an annual reminder of the double settlement: the village of Old Stratford by the church and the new town of Stratford borough, planted by a bishop of Worcester with a neat rectilinear grid focused on the market-place and bridge—but with no church. At Royston, Herts., until an Act of 1540 the late arrival of the town is marked by the fact that the town lay in no fewer than five parishes and—as the preamble to the Act³⁶ stated—'whereof never a Parisshe churche of them is within twoo myles . . . and somme of them be three myles'.

At Downton and Overton there was no new church: the borough continued to use the village church, although the massive architecture of Downton church suggests that it might have been enlarged when the borough was created. At New Alresford and Newtown, as we have seen, there was a new church but the bitten-out shape of the new parish bears dumb witness to the late arrival.

The exact site of the burgage plots of Newtown can only be conjectured. This is not because the town was an early failure like Skinburness (Cumberland) or Warenmouth (Northumberland). The bishop's income from Newtown continued to rise through the thirteenth century. In 1257–8 it was £6 15s. 9d. and in 1283–4 it was paying a *redditus assisus* of between £7 5s. and £7 8s. a year.³⁷ There

³⁵ New Alresford chapel was dependent until 1850.

³⁶ 32 Henry VIII cap. 34.

³⁷ 1257–8: 159293 m. 24; 1283–4: 159309 m. 9; similar sums a century later (1376–7): 159384 m. 22.

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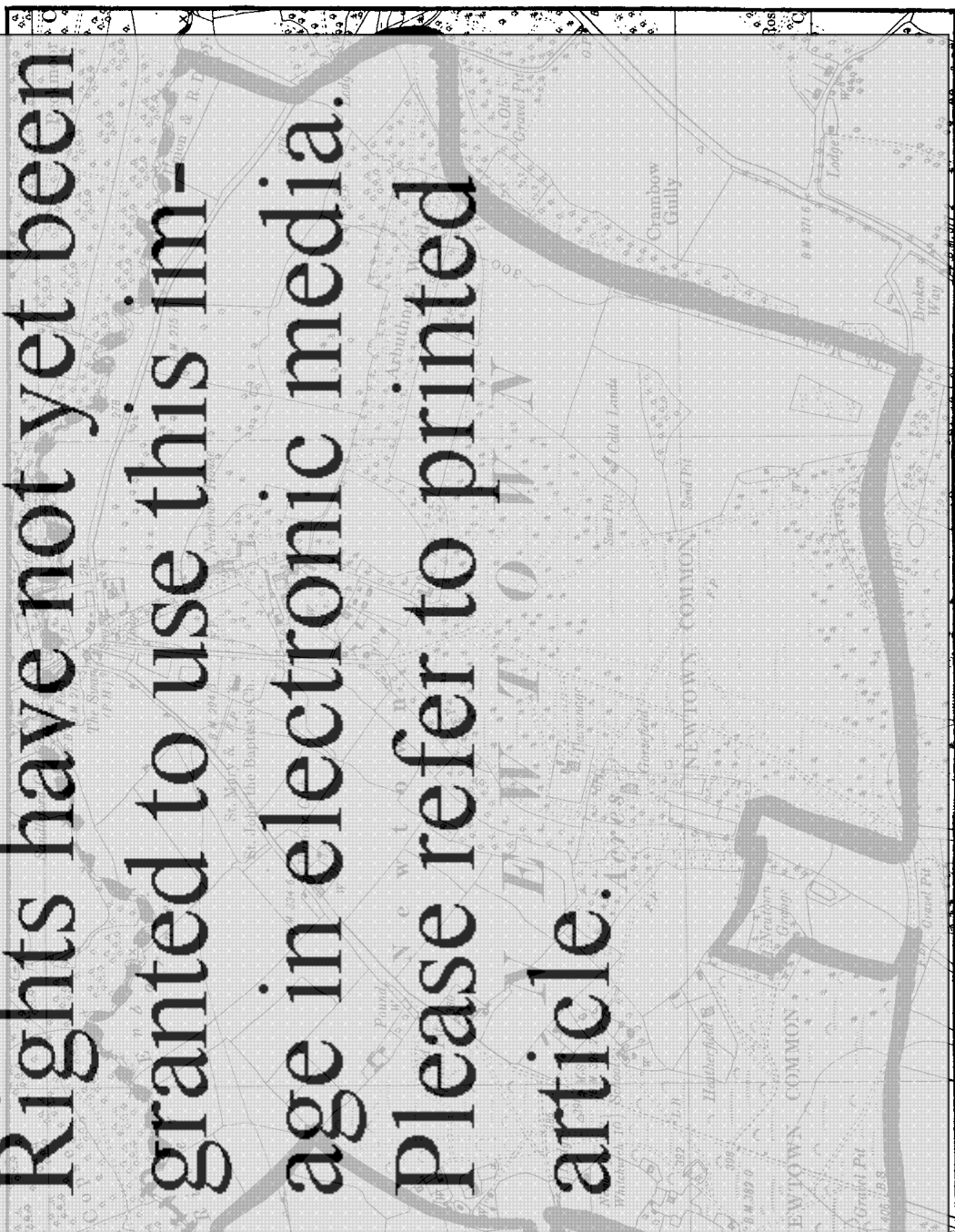


FIG. 73

NEWTOWN IN BURGHCLERE, HANTS. (pp. 197 ff.)

The dotted line is the county boundary; the thick line outlines the small parish of Newtown, cut from Burghclere. The main street of the borough was where the drive from the ford to Newtown House now is. (Sc. 6 in. = 1 mile)

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are no poll-tax returns of 1377-81 extant for Hampshire from which the population after the Black Death could be ascertained, but the rents paid both before and after the plagues were just over eight pounds. In the Hearth Tax of 1674 Newtown had 64 separate houses and 95 hearths,³⁸ but to-day the church stands alone; Newtown House is in its park; by the ford there is an inn and three cottages, and on the southern edge of the park a group of six houses (FIG. 73). There is no sign of a market-place or of a grid of streets. The local tradition is that the main road was diverted from its old course when Newtown House was built, and the old roadway is certainly visible above the post office. No significant earthworks of a burgage character have been observed, and there is obviously a great need for archaeological excavation. As an economic phenomenon the disappearance of a prosperous market town seems unlikely—although there is always Milton Abbas to show that history is stranger than fiction—and it may be conjectured that it was due to the rivalry of Newbury two miles to the north. It will also be noted that the line of turnpike, the modern main road from Whitchurch to Newbury, avoided Burghclere and kept west of both the borough site of Newtown and the church before dropping to the Sandleford bridge. This is the very reverse of the deliberate diversions of medieval roads into such new towns as Boroughbridge and Baldock, and its aloof indifference to Newtown indicates that there was nothing there to interest even a commercial traveller on the turnpike.

VI

Hindon, the fifth of the bishops' plantations, has all the geographical characteristics of the planted town. A few years before the Reform Act the Wiltshire historian Hoare noted three facts about the town,³⁹ although he failed to draw the conclusion from them that the town had been planted: 'Hindon has one long street'; 'the town does not comprehend above 200 acres of land'; 'the town church is still parochially dependent on East Knoyle where most of the people of Hindon are married'.

It was in the fields of East (or Bishop's) Knoyle that Hindon was planted. The name of the town was taken from a hill, *higna dun*, in the eastern part of Knoyle parish.⁴⁰ The road from Salisbury to Wincanton and Taunton passed over this hill, and the bishops' route from Winchester to their Taunton estates may well have lain this way also. Like Newtown in Burghclere, Hindon was planted well away from its mother village, being $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Knoyle.

In the account roll for 1218-19 the entries for Knoyle manor are of the usual rural type. In 1219-20 there is no explicit *burgus* rental, but the reeve of Knoyle claimed a rebate (*defectus*) of 6s. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. for a croft and a virgate and a half 'taken into the borough and the demesne'. The proprietors, it will be noted, were Ada and Roger de Hinedon. In the account for 1220-1 there is the heading *Burgus*

³⁸ P.R.O. E179/176/565 mm. 19-20. Burghclere had 192 hearths. Since this paper was written, a plan of Newtown in 1606, before its depopulation, has been found among the estate plans in Corpus Christi College, Oxford; a copy is now in *B.M.*, Maps 188.e.2.

³⁹ R. C. Hoare, *Modern Wiltshire*, 1 (London, 1822), 181-3.

⁴⁰ *The Place-Names of Wiltshire* (English Place-Name Society, xvi, Cambridge, 1939), p. 191.

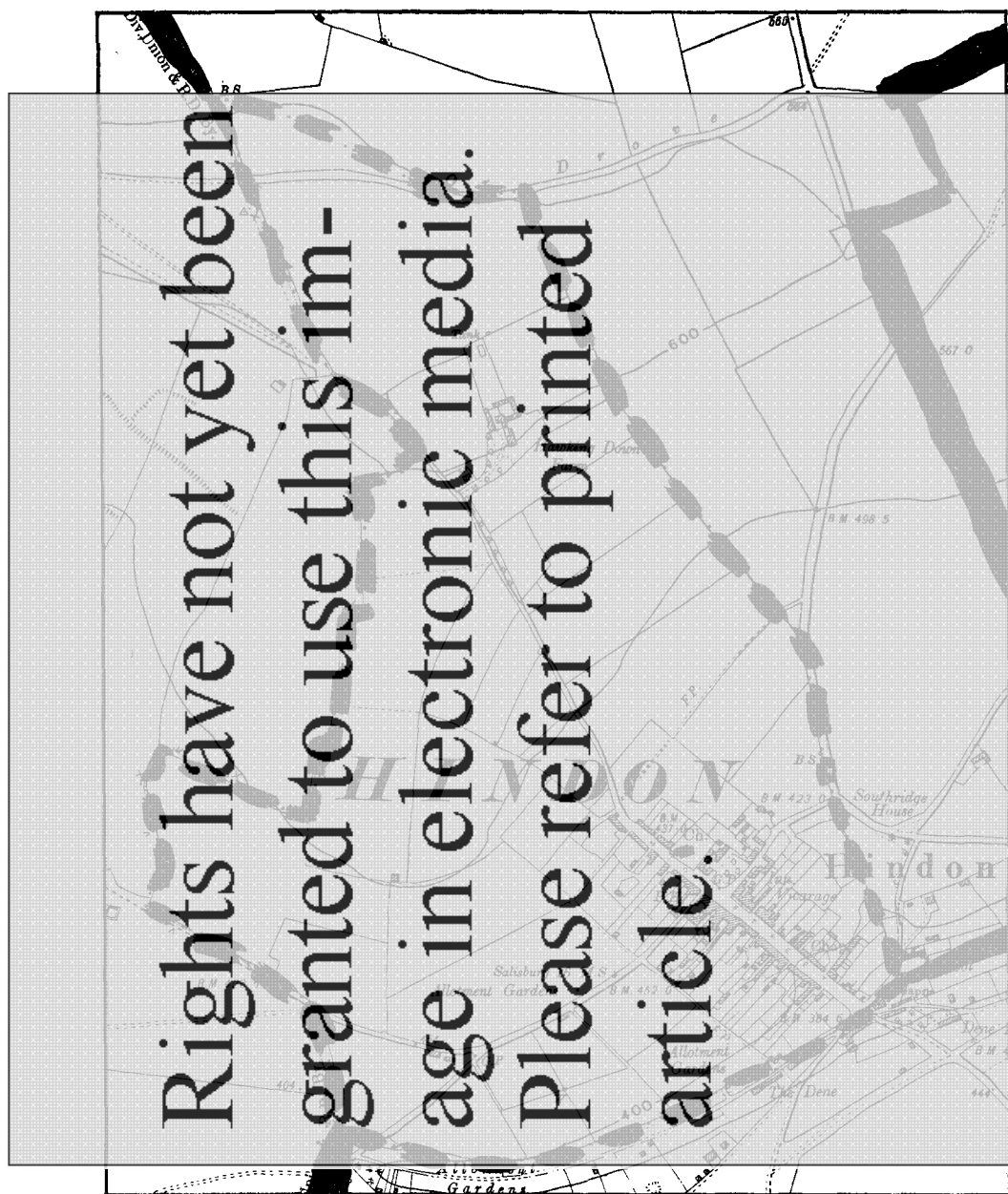


FIG. 74

HINDON, WILTS. (pp. 200 ff.)

The dotted line marks the bounds of the small parish, cut from East Knoyle. The footpath behind the houses on the W. side of High Street marks the ends of the burgage plots. (Sc. 6 in. = 1 mile)

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Hinedon and rents totalling £2 gs. 8d. from it. The borough progressed: in 1224-5 six newcomers were pledged to begin paying the sixpence rents for their plots in the next financial year, the old rents totalling £4 3s.; in 1225-6-7 the total was £4 10s., in 1231-2 £5 16s. 6d. and in 1244-5 £6 4s. 9d.⁴¹ In the middle of the thirteenth century there were just over 150 houses in the town, a few more than at the time of the disfranchisement of the borough in 1832. In the later middle ages the town was moderately prosperous. In 1334 it was assessed at 28s. 9d., not a large sum compared with nearby Wiltshire villages; in 1377 it mustered only 77 poll-tax payers, but from 1378 it elected members to Parliament.⁴²

Hindon, disfranchised and lying off the modern main road, would not immediately strike the visitor as a former borough. It still has its long broad street and the houses which front upon it have the characteristic long narrow burgage plots for their gardens, each ending at a half-abandoned back lane by which the burgesses once obtained access to their fields. The parish comprises 212 acres, about half the size of Newtown in Burghclere, and its bounds clearly indicate that it, too, has been cut out from a larger mother-parish. There is no apparent medieval building in the town; the fine stone houses are very uniform and have the appearance of a squire's rebuilding. Some have entrances for coaches and interior yards reflecting the days when Hoare commented that the main street was lined with numerous public-houses. These have vanished with the franchise.

One dated archaeological feature may one day be explored, for the Hindon accounts include one of the few references to any capital expenditure in a new town by the bishops.⁴³ In 1220-1 the bishop paid for the making of a well 14 fathoms deep (21s.) and for a rope and an iron-bound bucket (1s.). Like Truth it may one day be found at the bottom of the well.

VII

Newtown, Isle of Wight, the last of the Winchester plantations, was founded in 1256. Although shrunk to a town hall and half a dozen houses, it has its grid of streets and burgage plots well fossilized. Once it prospered as a Solent port and indeed so attracted Edward I that he covetously took it from the bishops for himself. The sole Winchester possession in the island was the large manor of Calbourne stretching from the downs northward to the Solent creeks and the marshy and heathy land west of Parkhurst Forest. The bishop had a residence here, built about 1180. This was not in Calbourne village but on the east of the parish at Swainston (441878) and from this house the whole manor was often called not Calbourne but Swainston.⁴⁴ The manor took in about 13 square miles and had been part of the endowment of the church at Winchester since 826.

In the account roll of 1253-4 Swainston appears as a rural manor but in the next year's roll there is a short account for expenses in work at a house 'in the new

⁴¹ 1219-20: 159276 m. 8; 1220-1: 159277 m. 11; 1224-5: 159279 mm. 2 and 2d; 1225-6: 159280 m. 4d; 1231-2: 159282 m. 6d; 1244-5: 159287 m. 20d.

⁴² 1334: P.R.O. E179/196/10; 1377: E179/196/35.

⁴³ 159277 m. 11: 'in quodam puteo facto de xiiij teisis, xxi s; in corda et buketto cum ferro ligato xij d. Summa xxii s.'

⁴⁴ *V.C.H. Hampshire*, v (1912), 265.

borough of Francheville' and in 1256 a charter was issued by Aymer, bishop-elect, to 'the borough of Swainston'. In the account roll for 1256-7 the town's arrival

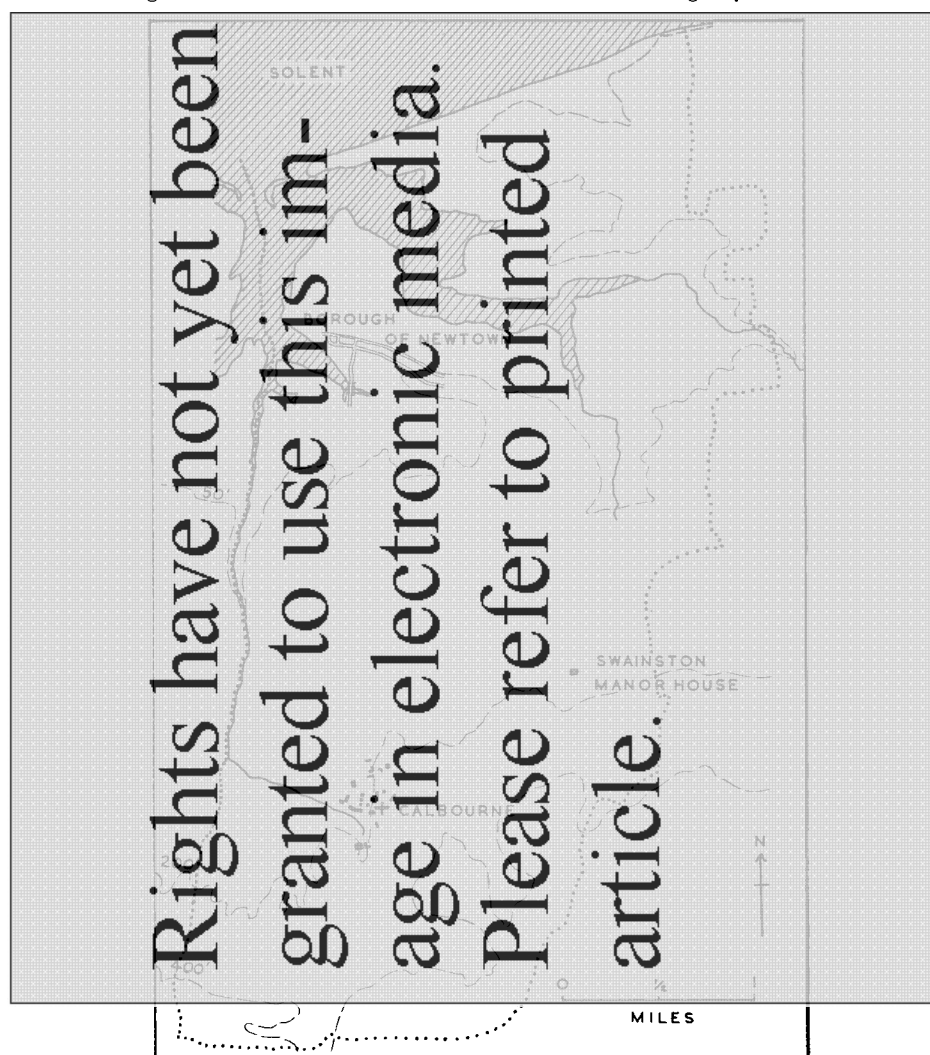


FIG. 75

CALBOURNE PARISH, I.O.W. (pp. 202 ff.)

The borough of Newtown (or Francheville) was planted at the edge of a Solent creek on the NW. tip of the parish. The bishop's manor house was at Swainston, adjoining Parkhurst forest.

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is marked by the bold heading 'Francheville'. The royal confirmations of this charter in 1285 and 1318 make it clear that 'La Neuton', Francheville and Swainston borough were all the same place.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ 1254-5: 159296 m. 5d; 1256-7: 159292 m. 9d; charter, *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, II (London, 1906), 324; P.R.O. E372/147 m. 40.

The reeves' accounts also show the claim for a rebate on the lost agricultural rents from the land on which the burgesses were living. In 1254-5 the reeve was exonerated from 20s. rent 'terrae de Aretleya tractae in burgum'. Two of the three tenants mentioned by name continued to hold their old land with *placeae* adjoining, so that the haven-side town seems to have been planted around them.

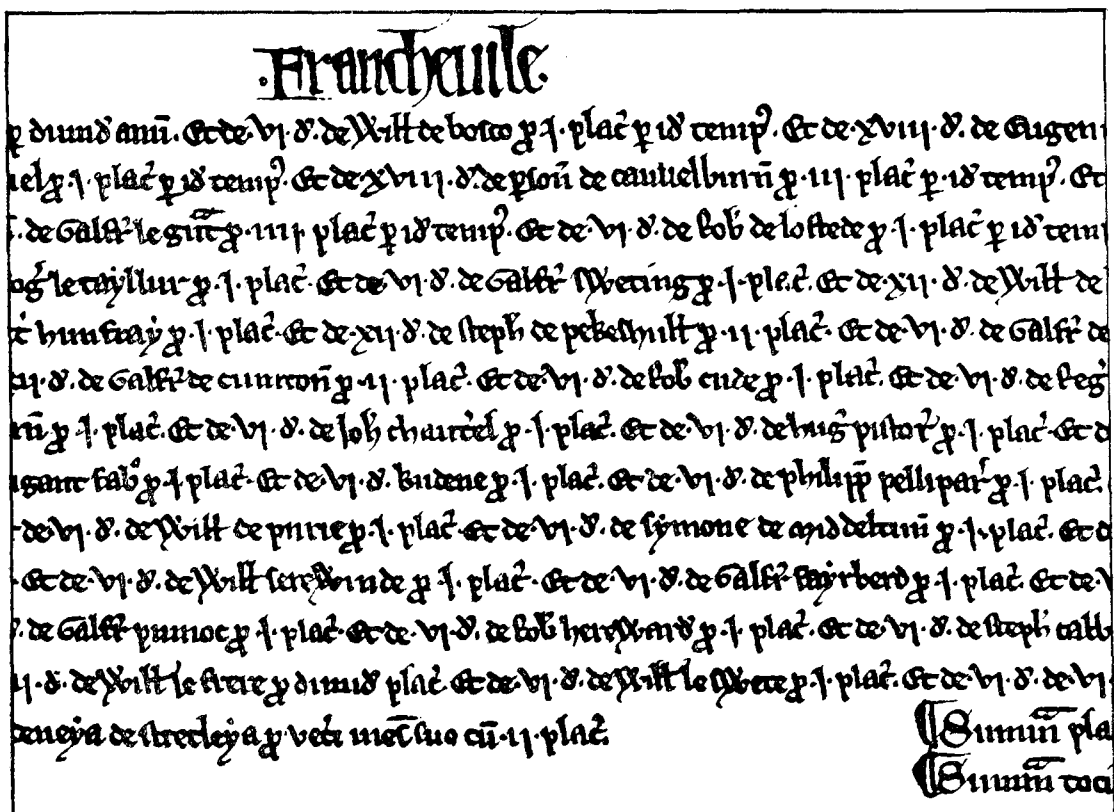


FIG. 76

NEWTOWN *alias* FRANCHEVILLE, I.O.W.

Part of the reeve's account-roll for Michaelmas 1257, with the first half-year's rents for the new burgage plots. Sixpence was paid for a single plot (*placea*), and some burgesses had (cp. ll. 3-4) more than one plot. The first line reads: '... per dimidium annum. Et de vi d. de Willelmo de bosco pro i placea per idem tempus. Et de xviii d. de Eugen(ia de Aretleya pro iii placeis).' The heading is 'Francheville' (*sic*).

Eugenia de Aretley also rented three of the new burgage plots and Richard de Aretley took up another.⁴⁶

The bishop's rent from each of the initial 73 plots was 1s. a year, but the first account was for only 6d., the foundation coming half way through the financial year. The holdings were not equal: one burgess rented five *placeae*, another four, two took three each, six took up a double plot, 45 the standard plot, and two

⁴⁶ 1254-5: 159296 m. 5; 1256-7: 159292 m. 9d.

divided a plot between them. In 1297-8 there were 66 persons occupying 70 burgages.⁴⁷ The account rolls, as long as the bishop still held the town, continued to claim for the rebate of the Aretley lands and the *Instaurum* section for the loss of the 40 eggs which had formerly been part of the rent due from this fraction of the bishop's tenantry in Calbourne.⁴⁷

The decay of Newtown may go back as far as the damage in the French raids of the late fourteenth century,⁴⁸ but a more enduring obstacle to prosperity was the competition of Yarmouth and Southampton as ports, and also the depopulation of the rural hinterland in the island itself as a result of the great conversions from arable to pasture which brought the Isle of Wight the distinction of England's first anti-enclosure Act⁴⁹ in 1488. Despite a fresh charter by Elizabeth I the seventeenth-century town was somnolent. In the Hearth Tax of 1674 only eleven houses were recorded,⁵⁰ and twelve in the manuscript plan of 1768 and the manuscript drawings for the first edition of the O.S. map. The *jeu d'esprit* of the neat little William-and-Mary town hall (now owned by the National Trust) tells us more about the economics of a rotten borough than of the silted haven and grassy wharves at the west end of the shadow grid of streets (PL. XVI; FIG. 77).

In 1284, when bishop Pontiserra was forced to turn all his estates over to Edward I, the town was a much more attractive asset, for even when the bishop paid a fine of £2,000 to receive back his lands, the king clung to Newtown. For ten days in October 1285 Edward stayed in the bishop's manor house at Swainston and, having inspected his new property, issued on the last day of the visit a charter confirming the burgesses in their privileges.⁵¹

Rural Calbourne at this time had 132 tenants, and the extent of 1297-8, with its long list of demesne services, describes a very different world from that of the burgesses.⁵² After reading it, the full significance of the borough name Francheville appears. The new town was the Free Town like the bastide of Villefranche de Queyran which Edward founded in Gascony in 1281. Not for the burgesses the obligation to plough and reap; not for them the obligations of servitude; not for them the cash payments which represented the partial commutation of labour services on the lord's demesne. The greater legal, social and economic freedom of those who took up burgage plots to build upon was the magnet by which populations were recruited. It was an environment which suited and encouraged the bourgeois virtues. It was such an environment that Edward I

⁴⁷ 1297-8: British Museum, Add. Mss. 6166, f.260; in 1303 the burgesses paid a fee farm of £3 10s. in lieu of rent: P.R.O. C145/62/1.

⁴⁸ *Calendar of Inquisitions, Miscellaneous*, iv (London, 1957), 128 and 206.

⁴⁹ M. W. Beresford, *The Lost Villages of England* (London, 1954), pp. 103-4 and 147, citing 4 Henry VII cap. 6 and P.R.O. SP12/7/58-9, a survey of 1559.

⁵⁰ P.R.O. E179/176/565 m. 1; six of these houses were relieved of tax by their poverty. Calbourne had a total of 138 hearths in the non-burghal area.

⁵¹ Charter: see note 45 *supra*. The forced sale is documented in *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, I (1903), 274; *Register of Bishop Pontiserra of Winchester* (Canterbury and York Soc.), I (London, 1915), 282 and II (1924), 411, 421, 423, 434, and 671-5; also in British Museum, Harleian Rolls CC21.

⁵² Two extents survive: that in British Museum, Add. Mss. 6166 f. 233 sqq. is probably of 1297-8; P.R.O. C145/62/1 is from 1303. They differ in detail but agree on 288 acres of cultivated demesne and on 69 or 70 villeins; in addition there were between 17 and 26 cottars. The labour services and their money equivalent are given in considerable detail. There was pasture of 473 acres feeding 106 kine and 600 sheep.

wished to re-create at Berwick-on-Tweed when he summoned his colloquium of town-planners in 1296. They were to lay out a town 'to the greatest profit of Ourselves and of Merchants'.⁵³

It is all the more regrettable that the Winchester documents afford so little information about the recruits who peopled the bishops' six new towns. Here and there the documents mention their occupations: the weavers and fullers, bakers and millers have been noted already. Occasionally one of the bishop's own villeins, like Richard of Waltham, pays to be allowed to dwell in the bishop's borough: but one must suppose from analogous evidence elsewhere that the bishops combined a conservative and a liberal attitude. There was a liberal welcoming hand for those who came from old-established towns with skills already sharpened or in flight from the demesne of other seigneurs.⁵⁴ There was a firm conservative and restraining hand on those from the bishop's own demesnes: with a cash payment 'ut audeat remanere in foro' or 'ne placitent apud manerium'.

This combination of old-fashioned demesne farming and new-fashioned free townsmen may seem a paradox, but it was widely found. It may seem surprising that the redemptive influence of the new towns as a solvent of manorialism lagged so far behind the economic influence of the towns as a stimulus to manorial production. One might have supposed that Downton *manerium* would have been full of the most seditious peasant revolts when the villeins looked over the river to the *novum forum*, or that demesne services here would have been amongst the first to be commuted into cash payments. As Miss Levett showed nearly fifty years ago, this was just not so.

'Know all men'—began the bishop's charter⁵⁵ to Newtown, Isle of Wight —'that we have given to our burgesses of the borough which is called Franchville all the liberties and free customs which our burgesses of Taunton, Witney, Alresford and Farnham have.'

'All men' might indeed have known, and among them the villeins of Calbourne, but for them the boundary between freedom and unfreedom was a matter of birth, favour or money and its expression was the little stream which marked the borough bounds.

It would be interesting to see the plan of 1636 mentioned by A. H. Estcourt⁵⁶

⁵³ F. Palgrave, *Parliamentary Writs*, 1 (London, 1827), 49.

⁵⁴ The Witney charters of 1210-1 were probably for villeins living in the new borough: 159270B m. 11; also in 1210-11 at Downton 'ij s. de Odone . . . ut possit remanere in foro': *ibid.*, m. 2d; at Fareham, 1211-13: 'iiij s. de Ivone pro burgagio habendo': 159271 m. 4, *purchasia*; Downton in the same year, 'de Helya Bel ut audeat remanere in foro': *ibid.*, m. 5; Fareham, 1213-14: 'j s. de Eva filia Gilberti pro burgagio habendo': 159272 m. 3d, *purchasia*; Alresford, 1213-14, 'de xx s. ne placitent apud manerium': 159272 m. 3d; Overton, 1218-19, 'de dimidia marca de Ricardo de Waltham pro fine vilenagii et pro burgagio habendo': 159275 m. 3d; Newtown, 1225-6, 'xij d. pro manumissione': 159280; 1244-5, Overton, permission to dwell in borough: 159280 m. 13d; cp. H. S. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor* (Cambridge, 1937), pp. 298-305.

At Downton in 1376-7 nearly all the corn stacking and carrying and more than half the hoeing, harrowing, manure carting, sheepwashing, sheepshearing, and haymaking were done by direct villein labour; at Burghclere a quarter of the demesne ploughing was similarly uncommuted: A. E. Levett and A. Ballard, *The Black Death* (Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History, v, Oxford, 1916), pp. 72-141.

⁵⁵ Charter: see note 45 *supra*.

⁵⁶ Plan by James Mallett, 1768, reproduced in A. H. Estcourt, 'The Ancient Borough of Newtown,' *Proc. Hants. Field Club*, 11 (1890-3), 89-109; there is a plan of 1793 in P.R.O. MR/489, formerly WO78/1648.

in 1893. Estcourt reproduced another plan of 1768 from which FIG. 77 is redrawn. It shows burgage plots, mostly empty of houses, arrayed along both sides of High Street and on the north side of Gold Street, which was the broader of the two. Broad Street begins at the stone bridge over the creek which carried the road to Calbourne and Swainston and there the town hall stands. The plan indicates the ruins of St. Mary's chapel and twelve buildings which may then have been

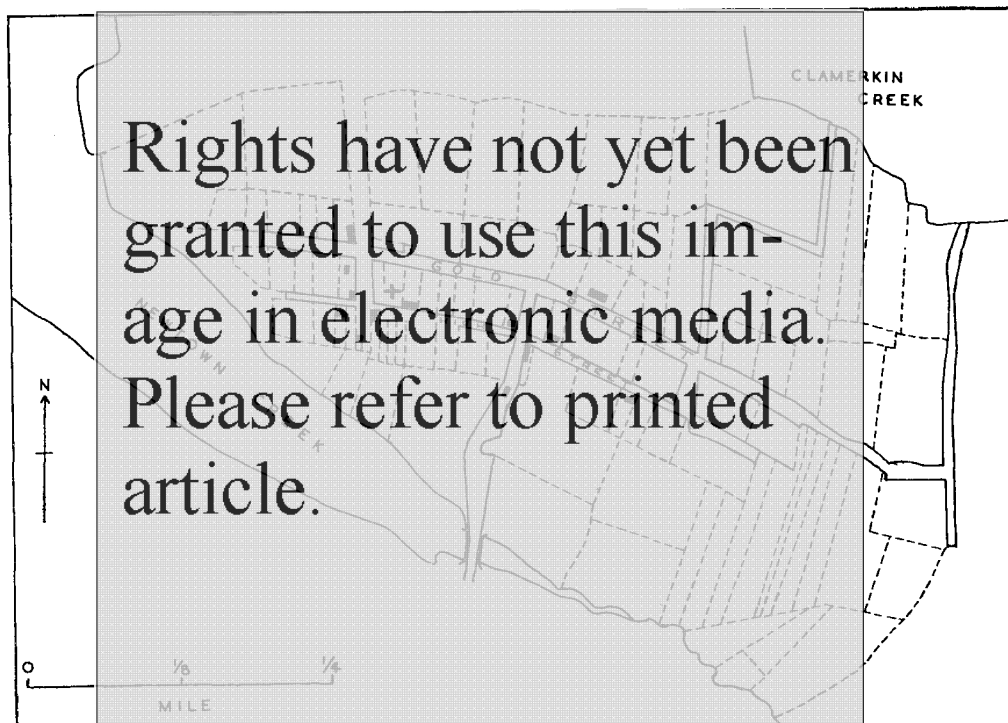


FIG. 77

NEWTOWN, I.O.W.

A plan of 1768, indicating buildings then standing; also the abandoned burgage plots along the streets and some divisions of common fields and marsh. The road over the bridge led to Calbourne. Compare

PL. XVI and FIG. 75

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inhabited. At least 42 vacant plots appear, together with the vestiges of holdings in a common field. To the north of the town was a large marsh with salterns, probably the chief employment of the townspeople of that day outside election times.

The provision of a regular and organized trading venue within the borough of Newtown was made more specific by a second charter, this time from the king himself, securing a weekly Wednesday market and an annual fair at St. Mary Magdalen tide. As Alresford began as 'Alresford Forum', so the economic life of Newtown began with its charter for markets and fairs. The season chosen for the annual fair was that of the patronal festival of the new church of St. Mary, which

the bishop built soon after 1256 as a chapel-of-ease to Calbourne, where he was patron. This church was in ruins by 1663, but was rebuilt in 1836 by the lay patron,⁵⁷ possibly as a gesture of thankoffering for the Corporation's survival in the municipal reforms of 1835.

In 1831 the population was 68 and there were only 39 qualified electors. Three families controlled the votes. In 1835 the *Report on Municipal Corporations* commented:⁵⁸

'The houses are merely cottages, of which there are about 14. The town has at some time been considerable as the names of the streets, the sites of which are still known, show . . . There is not an inhabitant capable of exercising any municipal function; there are probably not sufficient inhabitants of intelligence to form a court-leet jury.'

The device on the thirteenth-century seal of the borough had a ship and a leopard: but Francheville's ship had ceased to sail and the leopard no longer leaped. It was a far cry from the days when the tax collectors of 1334 assessed the manor and town at nearly twice the sum contributed by Newport, the capital of the island.⁵⁹

VIII

The greater liberty of action enjoyed by a burgess compared with a villein finds visual expression in the very different form of the entries on the bishops' account rolls for *manerium* and *burgus*. The *burgus* entry is short, often with no more than half a dozen entries: the rents, the arrears, the tolls from the market and fair and finally the profits of justices, the *perquisita curiae*. On the other hand it was not uncommon in the middle of the thirteenth century for the reeve's account for a single manor to cover from four to six feet of closely written parchment, eighteen inches wide. The manorial reeves of Old Alresford, Downton, Knoyle, Overton, Burghclere and Calbourne had to account for rents collected; for demesne services commuted; for produce gathered; for goods transported to market or taken to the bishops' palaces; the wages and expenses of this production; and the changes in the stock of farm equipment, farm animals and grain. The *purchasia curiae*, later entered as *finis et maritagia*, recorded the many payments which arose from the dependent status of the manorial villeins, ranging from entry fines on the inheritance of land to the fine paid for marriage of a villein woman. The heriots, payable on death, were another expression of the same dependence, as were the *annuales recognitiones*, the payments for permission to remain away from the manor as long as the lord bishop would allow. In the short *burgus* entries four categories reflect the economic fortunes of the venture as the years passed: the *redditus assisus* together with the *incrementa* showed how the burgage plots were being taken up; the market tolls how successful the venture had been in attracting local dealers

⁵⁷ This paragraph is based on *V.C.H. Hants.*, v (1912), 265-8.

⁵⁸ 1831: *id.*, p. 266; 1835: *1st Report on Municipal Corporations* (1835), Appendix II, pp. 791-6. The smaller and less successful bastides, which once had the Parliamentary franchise, lent themselves easily to electoral corruption; among classic rotten boroughs were the bastides of Boroughbridge and Gram-pound.

⁵⁹ P.R.O. E179/173/6 and 23.

and the surrounding countryside; the fair dues how successful in attracting the wider custom necessary to support the annual congregation; the perquisites of the courts perhaps show less connexion with economic activity, for litigious or criminal townspeople do not necessarily vary in number with economic progress, but large increases in the sums under this head are at least an indication that grass is not yet growing in the streets and market-place.

Apart from the account rolls, the other principal evidence for the burgesses' privileges comes from the survival of charters in which the bishops set down in writing the liberties which they wished their new foundations to enjoy. Not all six towns have surviving charters, although copies may be concealed in the unexamined account rolls of the later centuries. That of Newton *alias* Francheville is known from its confirmation by Edward I in 1285. In 1256 bishop de Valence had taken for a yardstick—as the preamble quoted above shows—the privileges already enjoyed by his established boroughs, and it is interesting to see that New Alresford, then less than sixty years old, was one of the four taken as model alongside the oldest of them all, Taunton. The Taunton charter of 1135–9 is formal and curt, so that to elucidate these privileges one must turn to the charter of 1248 where bishop William de Ralegh put down in writing⁶⁰ for the burgesses of Farnham 'all the liberties and free customs hereunder written as they were formerly wont to have'.

What were the privileges which could attract men from other parts of England to come and settle on empty building plots alongside a canal pond and at the edge of a Solent creek? Firstly, the burgesses were to have their own court before their own bailiffs and not to be liable to attend the bishop's court at the village manor house. The court would thus be officered by men elected by the burgesses, understanding commercial practice and sympathetic to the interest of the town. All summonses and distrainments were to be made by these officers and not by the manor's. They were to control the price and standard of bread and beer:

'to take bread at the baker's house and weigh it and test it, and taste beer in the borough . . . and to have the amercements for beer and bread unless the baker be condemned to the pillory or the brewer to the tumbrel, which punishments are reserved to the bishops'.⁶¹

The town was to have a yearly fair 'full and without any diminution'. The burgesses were to have 'all the toll which in any manner can arise within their district', although the accounts of Newtown seem to show the bishop receiving the market and fair tolls. The burgesses of Farnham had contracted to make a single annual payment of £12 (fee farm).⁶² Such a fixed contractual payment in lieu of rents and tolls marks one more stage in the lord's retreat from a direct share of the risks, headaches and profits of decision-making. It put the bishop into the economic role of a pure rent-collector. The risks, like the profits, had passed to the burgesses, for commercial losses, if they came, did not affect the obligation to pay the contractual sum. Although the Farnham charter permits the fee farm, it does not

⁶⁰ E. Robo, *op. cit.* in note 5 *supra*.

⁶¹ *V.C.H. Hants.*, II (1900), 285.

⁶² *Ibid.*

seem from the Francheville or Alresford accounts that the bishop made such an arrangement in all his towns.

IX

The thirteenth-century documentation for the six towns is good and, indeed, superior to that for many old-established towns. Yet it leaves many important questions unanswered. Of municipal records these tiny municipalities have preserved very little. There seem to be none for Hindon and the earliest noted for Downton date from 1660. But of their status as a borough in the later middle ages there can be doubt. Downton was reckoned a borough for taxation purposes eight times between 1296 and 1336; it was summoned to the Parliament of 1275; it was reckoned a borough in the *Nomina Villarum* of 1316; it sent representatives to 22 Parliaments between 1298 and 1377 and to 16 between 1377 and 1449. Hindon was summoned for the first time in 1378 and on eleven further occasions before 1449. At the Reform Act these petty boroughs went the same way as Old Sarum and Francheville.⁶³

The arrival of a borough also augmented the number of communities who were separately represented by their own juries whenever the itinerant judges visited the shire, the countryside at large being represented by a jury for each Hundred. Thus the Assize Roll of 1235 has a separate heading for Alresford Burgus, and it was similarly distinguished at the assizes of 1249 and 1256.⁶⁴ When the records of lay taxation begin to be continuous and full at the end of the thirteenth century the distinct status of the new towns can also be seen in their assessment separately at the high rate of one-tenth of the burgesses' movable property, the unenviable distinction afforded to medieval English boroughs.⁶⁵

The names in these tax lists afford a few suggestions of the origin of those who had peopled a town in the first generation of its life, but the evidence of this kind is scanty, as also is that of the occupational and social structure. Nor do we know anything yet about the unauthorized flight of Winchester villeins to the competing *bastides* of other seigneurs. No account of the bishops' plantations makes sense unless it is set in the context of an economy expanding at a rate fast enough to permit the successful establishment not only of these six towns but of many others—and these in the interstices of a region where there were very many successful and long-established urban communities. It says a great deal both for the expansion of agricultural production and of population that all these towns could be peopled and their populace kept busy; and at the very same time that the old-established towns were also expanding their house- and shop-room. Indeed, the expansion did not stop at the frontiers of England, for the same period saw the colonization of the great empty spaces on the eastern frontier of Europe from the Baltic to the Danube and the multiplication of towns in old-settled parts of Europe like southern Germany and Gascony. In the hinterland of Winchester the

⁶³ M. G. Rathbone, ed., *List of Wilts. Borough Records* (Wilts. Archaeol. and Nat. Hist. Soc., Records Branch, v, Devizes, 1951), pp. vii-xiii and 21-3.

⁶⁴ P.R.O. J1/1/775 m. 9; 776 m. 38; 778 mm. 53 and 64.

⁶⁵ J. F. Willard, *Parliamentary Taxes on Personal Property* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), pp. 9-10.

**MEDIEVAL BOROUGHES
OF CENTRAL
SOUTHERN ENGLAND.**

Counties shown: WILTSHIRE, DORSET, HAMPSHIRE, SURREY, BERKSHIRE.

Legend:
 ■ NEW TOWN.
 □ BOROUGH.

Scale: 10 MILES.

Map details: The map shows the distribution of medieval towns in central southern England. New towns are marked with solid squares and boroughs with open squares. Labeled towns include: H., S., D., B., W., N., C., P., Q., L., Y., NN., NT., PC., PM., CH., A., M., H., G., D., QV., NA., WI., ST., A., L., N.B., and DN. The River Thames is depicted flowing through the region.

FIG. 78

MEDIEVAL BOROUGHES OF CENTRAL SOUTHERN ENGLAND

Key (planted towns in italics): BERKSHIRE: N. Newbury. DORSET: B. Blandford; C. Corfe; N. *Newton in Purbeck*; P. Poole; S. Shaftesbury; W. Wareham. HAMPSHIRE: A. Alton; A. Andover; B. Basingstoke; C. Christchurch; L. *Lyminster*; N.B. *Newtown in Burghclere*; N.A. *New Abresford*; OD. Odiham; OV. *Overton*; P. Petersfield; PC. *Portchester*; PM. *Portsmouth*; S. Southampton; ST. *Stockbridge*; WH. *Whitchurch*; WI. Winchester. ISLE OF WIGHT: NN. *Newtown*; NT. *Newport*; Y. *Yarmouth*. SURREY: F. Farnham; G. Guildford; H. *Haslemere*. SUSSEX: A. *Arundel*; CH. Chichester; M. Midhurst; W. *Wardour in Sidlesham*. WILTSHIRE: D. *Downton*; H. *Hindon*; L. Ludgershall; O.S. Old Sarum; S. *New Salisbury*; W. Wilton.

Corrigendum: Stockbridge, Hants., should have a black square.

also old-established commercial centres at such boroughs as Corfe, Wareham, Blandford, Shaftesbury, Wilton, Ludgershall, Andover, Winchester, Southampton, Christchurch, Chichester, Basingstoke and Guildford. It was among this formidable competitive array that the bishops of Winchester projected their new

⁶⁶ Beresford and St. Joseph, *op. cit.* in note 1, pp. 224-6.

⁶⁷ *Sussex Record Soc.*, XLVI (1942-3), 340 (1262-7).

towns.⁶⁸ There seems to have been room at the top, room at the middle and room at the bottom.⁶⁹

The impact of this urban expansion on the rural hinterland is difficult to measure. How much must one attribute to the arrival of a new local market and how much to the general expansion of population, production and trade in the region? It would also be satisfying to have more information about the engineering of these six projects. Did they spring from a mind like that of bishop Peter des Roches (1204–38), who was born in France, soldiered under Richard I, that royal *bastidor*, fought for the Pope among the towns of Italy, visited Spain and went on crusade,⁷⁰ or from that of some lesser official in the episcopal household? Were the towns imitative of work in other dioceses like Salisbury's Devizes or Chichester's Wardour? Did they copy royal plantations like Liverpool and Portsmouth? Were they the child of desperate finances and a search for cash such as seems to have preoccupied bishop de Valence⁷¹ (1251–60)?

Finally, the cloud of ignorance rests on their physical equipment. The documentary testimony—a market-house, some stalls, an oven, a weir, a canal, a fulling mill, some churches, a boulting house, a well, a fourteen-fathom rope and an iron bucket—is rather meagre for six towns and half a century. Here in the enquiry, History and Archaeology may join hands. The householders of New Alresford, Overton, Downton and Hindon may not take kindly to a threat of invasion by spade and trowel, however great their pride in their old municipal institutions. But History has kindly arranged for the decay of the two Newtowns, of Wardour in Sidlesham and of Newton in Purbeck. All one needs is a project for a radar beacon and an atomic pile—and the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments can begin its emergency dig. In the more realistic meanwhile all disturbances of the soil at the other *bastides* and at the bishop's towns of Witney and Bishop's Waltham would be worth watching closely.

As in all the best intellectual relay races the baton must now be handed on. This particular race is run backwards in time,⁷² and moves towards Saxon Oxford, Wareham and Wallingford, for the prospect if one runs forward is meagre. After the foundation of Bala in 1310 there is only Queenborough in Kent in 1363 to keep us going until Falmouth in 1613. It is a long lap. The silence is eloquent, and what it says or seems to say is this: on the one side of the watershed, which must be placed near 1330, is an environment of economic expansion and on the other a long contraction in which the economy was more than sated with towns.

⁶⁸ Newtown was flanked by the *bastides* of Yarmouth (founded c. 1170) and Newport (1177–84). Across the Solent were New Lymington (c. 1150) and Portsmouth (1194). By 1674, when Newtown had 25 hearths, Newport had 1,049 and Yarmouth 124: P.R.O. E179/176/565 m. 1.

⁶⁹ At the bottom, see the enterprising lord of Cogges (Oxon.) opposite Witney, who cut up his demesne for building-plots in 1212–13: *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*, ed. L. C. Loyd and D. M. Stenton (Oxford, 1950), p. 76, from B.M. Harleian Charters 45/D18; in 1215 the abbot of Eynsham laid out a new borough north of Eynsham village: plan in A. L. Poole, ed., *Medieval England* (Oxford, 1958), 1, 63.

⁷⁰ E. Robo, *op. cit.* in note 5, pp. 70–82.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82–91.

⁷² A. Ballard, *British Borough Charters* (Cambridge, 1913), p. xci: 'from the earliest times we have to account for boroughs which were artificially created and were not village communities which had acquired a burghal status'.

Even in recovery the Tudor and Stuart economies were well enough stocked with towns not to feel the need to found any more within England. Only with the Hanoverian watering-places and factory-towns do we see Englishmen turning again seriously to the business of laying out new towns in this country.

APPENDIX I

LANDS OF THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, 1224

The places are those which head separate accounts in the rolls. In some the manor included adjacent hamlets or villages. The manor of Taunton included 14 villages. Grid references locate those places which lie within the bounds of FIG. 69.

Berkshire: Brightwell, Harwell, Ilsley, Wargrave, West Woodhay 390630.

Buckinghamshire: Ivinghoe, West Wycombe.

Gloucestershire: Moreton.

Hampshire: Ashford 550622, Ashmansworth 415575, Alresford 590337, Beauworth 575260, Bishopstoke 465194, Bitterne 452130, Burghclere 470580, Calbourne 425865, Cheriton 582285, Crawley 425350, Ecchinswell 500600, Fareham 575060, Fawley 458035, Freefolk 490490, Hambledon 646150, Highclere 445588, East Meon 680220, West Meon 640240, Merton 420264, Overton 515500, Ower 472019, Privett 675270, Bishop's Sutton 610330, Twyford 480250, Bishop's Waltham 555175, North Waltham 562462, Wield 630390, Winchester 480292.

Oxfordshire: Adderbury, Witney.

Surrey: Farnham 840470, Southwark.

Somerset: Rimpleton, Taunton.

Wiltshire: Downton 182215, Ebbesborne Wake 992242, Fonthill Bishop 933330, East Knoyle 882307.

The New Towns of Alresford, Downton, Hindon and Overton adjoined the villages of the same name; Newtown in Burghclere was at 478637 and Newtown in Calbourne, I.O.W. at 422908.

APPENDIX II

MEDIEVAL BOROUGHES OF CENTRAL SOUTHERN ENGLAND

These lie within the bounds of FIG. 78. The year given is the earliest reference noted to a borough or burgesses. Domesday boroughs indicated by DB. Planted towns are in italics.

Dorset: Blandford Forum (1307), *Corfe* (by 1288), *Newton* in Purbeck (1286), *Poole* (c. 1248, but probably founded c. 1170), Shaftesbury DB, Wareham DB.

Hampshire: Alton (1295), Andover (1175), Basingstoke (1228), Christchurch DB, Fareham (c. 1211-12), *New Alresford* (1200), *New Lymington* (c. 1150), *Newtown* in Burghclere (1218), *Newtown* in Calbourne, I.O.W. (1255), *Newport*, I.O.W. (1174-84), Odiham (1204-7), *Overton* (1217-18), Petersfield (1183-97), Portchester (?1177), *Portsmouth* (1194), Southampton DB, *Stockbridge* (c. 1200), Whitchurch (?1199), Winchester DB, *Yarmouth*, I.O.W. (c. 1170).

Surrey: Farnham (1248), Guildford DB, *Haslemere* (c. 1221).

Sussex: *Arundel* DB, Chichester DB, Midhurst (1295), *Wardour* in Sidlesham (1262-7).

Wiltshire: *Downton* (c. 1208), *Hindon* (1219-20), Ludgershall (1306), *New Salisbury* (c. 1225), Old Salisbury DB, Wilton DB.

APPENDIX III

PROGRESS OF THE NEW TOWNS

data from 1334 and 1377-9

					Assessed lay wealth in 1334 ⁷³	Taxpayers in poll tax, 1377 ⁷⁴
Old Alresford	..	..	..	..	445s.	no data
<i>New Alresford</i>	..	..	..	..	995s.	
Downton manor	..	..	..	..	700s.	106
<i>Downton Borough</i>	..	..	..	..	1,100s.	214
<i>Overton</i> ⁷⁵	..	..	..	..	1,090s.	no data
Burghclere	..	..	..	..	692s. 6d.	no data
<i>Newtown</i>	..	..	..	..	255s.	no data
East Knoyle	..	..	..	..	1,500s.	146
<i>Hindon</i>	..	..	..	..	287s. 6d.	77
Calbourne	..	..	..	..		22 (1379)
<i>Newtown (Franchiseville)</i>	..	..	..	..		196

APPENDIX IV

PROGRESS OF THE BISHOPS' NEW TOWNS

values in 1264-5, 1274-5 and 1375-6

			net rents £ s. d.	profits of justice £ s. d.	markets, fairs, stalls etc. £ s. d.
ALRESFORD (founded 1200)					
1264-5	..	..	15 12 1	4 9 6	2 0 0
1274-5	..	..	16 11 0	3 7 10	2 14 3
1375-6	..	..	16 12 9	4 12 11	not stated
DOWNTON (founded c. 1208)					
1264-5	..	..	6 1 7	2 7 10	
1274-5	..	..	6 1 11	3 0 0	
1375-6	..	..	6 6 2	4 0 0	
OVERTON (founded 1217-18)					
1264-5	..	..	8 1 11	4 12 2	18 4
1274-5	..	..	8 3 11	1 17 0	19 2
1375-6	..	..	8 4 8½	wanting	wanting
NEWTOWN (founded 1218)					
1264-5	..	..	6 19 9	2 0	
1274-5	..	..	7 2 5	8 0	
1375-6	..	..	7 11 0	7 11	
HINDON (founded 1219-20)					
1264-5	..	..	6 4 1½	2 12 6	5 6
1274-5	..	..	6 4 6½	1 7 6	7 4
1375-6	..	..	6 10 4½	2 5 10	8 0
NEWTOWN, I.O.W. (founded 1256)					
1264-5	..	..	2 2 4	8 0	
1274-5	..	..	2 9 0	7 0	
1375-6	..	..		alienated to king	

⁷³ Overton and the two Newtowns paid tax of 1/15th of their assessed wealth, the other boroughs paid at the higher rate of 1/10th. The manors paid at the 1/15th: Hants. data from P.R.O. E179/173/6 and 23; Wilts. data from E179/196/10.

⁷⁴ Hants. data from E179/173/41; Wilts. data from E179/196/35. There are no surviving data from Hants. in 1377; the 1379 figures are suspect.

⁷⁵ It would seem that by the early fourteenth century there had ceased to be a separate settlement at Overton village near the church.

APPENDIX V

THE RURAL ORIGINS

			Alresford Manor	Downton Manor	Knoyle Manor	Clere Manor	Calbourne Manor	Overton Manor
Sown acreage: ⁷⁶								
1208-9	..	..	565	831	453	869 ⁷⁷	—	496
1264-5	..	..	386	677	387	383	259	344
1274-5	..	..	175	612	199 ⁷⁸	276	322	317
Sheep at Michaelmas:								
1208	..	..	889	1,764	1,048	1,164 ⁷⁷	—	775
1264	..	..	447	1,697	2,059	242	1,052	1,574
1274	..	..	863	1,371	3,128	864	649	2,345
Bishop's net money								
income, to nearest £								
1208-9	..	..	108	140	25	56 ⁷⁷	—	43
1264-5	..	..	69	110	67	60	73	89
1274-5	..	..	112	161	100	96	141	149

The variations from year to year when only single years are examined are not significant: the main interest lies in the level of agricultural production and the contrast with the figures in Appendix IV. See p. 195.

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⁷⁶ An unpublished paper by Mr. J. Titow shows that 'acre' in the Winchester accounts did not always bear an areal connotation; the reduction at Alresford in 1274-5 and at Overton in 1264-5 and 1274-5 may be due to this practice.

⁷⁷ In 1208-9 the two Cleres were undifferentiated; the later figures are for Burghclere only.

⁷⁸ This is a minimal figure, the manuscript being too worn to read all the entries. The Calbourne accounts are missing from the roll of 1208-9.