
The Ferrars and the Enclosure of Little Gidding

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Little Gidding, famous for its associations with Nicholas Ferrar and his religious community, is a small hamlet on the western side of Cambridgeshire, formerly Huntingdonshire. Amongst the earliest of early modern enclosures in the former county of Huntingdonshire are the enclosures of the two neighbouring parishes of Little Gidding and Steeple Gidding. The recent acquisition by Cambridgeshire Archives of a map of 1596 and the discovery of a map of 1626 in the possession of the Oxfordshire Archives Service has shed new light on the enclosure of Little Gidding.

Little Gidding, famous for its associations with Nicholas Ferrar and his religious community, is a small hamlet on the western side of Cambridgeshire, formerly Huntingdonshire. It is and always has been a small parish, consisting of 707 acres of land lying east-west from the top of a ridge of clay soils underlain by limestone in the east, to a shallow valley formed by the Alconbury Brook in the west. The hamlet lies on this western slope above the stream (Fig. 1).

Little Gidding does not appear in the Domesday Survey, when it was in all likelihood part of Great Gidding parish. The parish probably represents the manorial estate held in Gidding by William Engaine in 1086. By 1166 this manor was in the hands of William Engaine's grandson Warner who held it as half a knights fee of the king (Page *et al.* 1936).

In 1285, it was stated that Warner Engaine had prior to his death given a Toft and three acres to the Knights Templars, for 12d (Page *et al.* 1936, 53). By this time Little Gidding had a church and was in all likelihood a parish in its own right, for following Warner's death his widow Maud gave the Templars the church of Little Gidding. This church is then recorded in the ecclesiastical taxation assessment of 1291–2 (Taxatio database, www.hrionline.ac.uk, accessed September 2016). The church then dedicated, as now, to St John the Evangelist and in the patronage of the Knights Templar, was valued at £5. 6s. 8d.

The manor of Little Gidding continued to be owned by the Engaine family through to approximately the mid 14th century when it was in the hands of Richard de Eye, who had married the unnamed daughter of a William Engaine. Richard and his wife had died by 1361 when the manor, along with the advowson of

Coppingford, was held by Richard de Eye's daughter Amice who married Adam de Morewyk. Following Adam's death Amice married firstly, Gilbert de Haysand, and after his death, Robert de Stokes. William de Morewyk, son of Adam and Amice, in 1377 sold the reversion of the manor of Little Gidding and half the manor of Copmanford (Coppingford) to Nicholas de Stukeley the elder, at which time Amice was holding the property for the remainder of her life. She continued to hold it in 1399.

Nicholas de Stukeley never occupied the property, dying c. 1370, and it passed to his son John, who with his wife Agnes still held it in 1408. Sometime after 1408 the estate then passed, presumably by sale, to Sir John Knyvet, who in turn sold it to John Gender of London. He presumably then sold it, for in 1428 it was held as quarter of a knights fee, by William Walker.

By 1510 the manor was in the hands of Christopher Drewell, who died in that year, seized of the manor of Little Gidding with tenements in the village, as well as land in Steeple Gidding and the nearby village of Little Stukeley, the latter properties said to be held of Thomas Cheney and the Abbot of Ramsey. By 1596 the estate had been settled on Sir Humphrey Drewell, (Oxfordshire Archives E6/12/13D) who was renting it out for £100 per year. The Drewells were never resident in the manor house and were therefore probably only interested in the income to be derived from the land and properties in the village. It was probably whilst under their ownership that large areas of the parish were enclosed.

In 1596 Sir Humphrey Drewell sold the estate to Sir Gervase Clifton for £5,500. It was arranged that Sir Gervase should retain £1,000 of the purchase price and pay the rent of £100 to Humphrey Drewell senior and his wife (Oxfordshire Archives E6/12/13D/4). Sir Gervase Clifton, in 1612, settled the manor on Esme, Lord Aubigny, upon the latter's marriage with Sir Gervase's daughter Katharine. Apparently, some dispute arose as to the £1,000, for in 1619, after Sir Gervase's death, Esmé, then Earl of March, brought a suit in Chancery against Sir Humphrey, in the course of which Sir Humphrey declared that, although his father and mother were both dead, Sir Gervase had not paid him a penny of the £1,000, but he had, at an

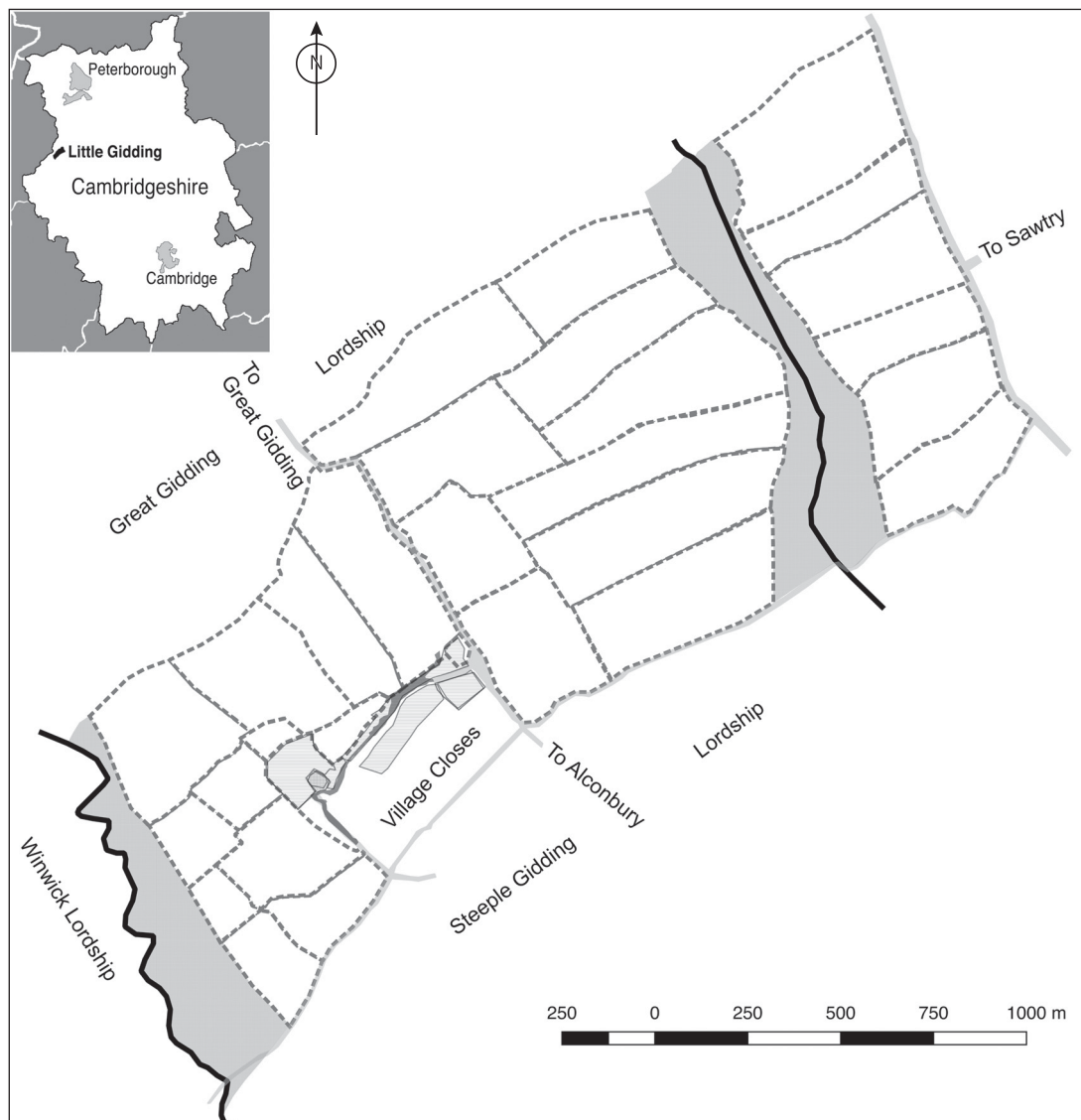


Figure 1. Reconstruction of the medieval furlongs of Little Gidding, based on observable evidence from field walking, aerial photographs and LiDAR.

earlier date, given several obligations in respect of Sir Humphrey's debts, amounting to £200. He said, moreover, that he had been informed of the proposed sale of the manor to Esme, and that Sir Gervase had promised that, on the completion of purchase, he would pay the £1,000 into the hands of a trustee to ensure the payment of the rent of £100; and he said, further, that Esmé had, afterwards, brought a suit against Sir Gervase to discover the encumbrances on the manor.

In 1620, the Earl of March sold the manor to Thomas Sheppard, (Feet of Fines. Hunts, Trin. 18 Jas. I.) who, in 1625, sold it to Nicholas Ferrar and Arthur Woodnoth, (Feet of Fines. Hunts, East. 1 Chas. I.) as trustees for Nicholas's mother, Mary Ferrar. Mrs Mary Ferrar and her son Nicholas took up residence quickly after the purchase and after Mrs Ferrar's death in 1634 her son Nicholas became the owner of the estate as directed

in her will. He continued to reside there, as the guiding spirit of the little band of religious devotees who settled in Little Gidding until his death in 1637, when the estate went to his elder brother John.

The Ferrars

Shortly after the time of his father's death in 1620 Nicholas Ferrar, scholar, courtier and politician, suddenly abandoned all worldly advancement to take up a life of religious retirement and devotion. He had had serious thoughts of going to Virginia as a missionary to the 'infidels' or North American Indians, for the conversion of whom his father had left money. His mother, a woman of great piety, supported his design for a family community, living, "in as strict a way as possible to the gospel of Christ" as good rules could

devise (Hackett 1693, 50). A house at Hertford belonging to Mrs. Ferrar had not sufficient privacy, but another belonging to their relative Thomas Sheppard at Little Gidding seemed to offer the desired advantages and was purchased in 1624. It was a large house, able to accommodate the whole family, which according to Peckard, numbered over 40 persons (Peckard 1790, 173). The house was probably rented out to tenants before the Drewells sold the estate in 1596 to Sir Gervase Clifton of Leighton Bromswold. He either continued to let it out or allowed it to be unoccupied, either way it was in a state of disrepair on the arrival of the Ferrars. At that time there was "nothing left but one extremely large mansion house, going hastily to decay, and a small church within thirty or forty paces of the house, and at that time converted into a barn" (Peckard 1790, 169).

The Ferrars' move to Little Gidding was precipitated by the outbreak of the plague in London. Nicholas got his family away from the city. His brother John went to prepare the house at Little Gidding while he remained to arrange matters in London, after which he joined his brother. We are told that within three days of his arrival at Little Gidding, his mother, aged seventy-three years, rode over from the Collets' house at Bourne, some fifteen miles away, so anxious was she to begin her new life (Peckard 1790, 171). On her arrival at Little Gidding she immediately went to the church where she was "exceedingly grieved to find it filled with hay, and instruments of husbandry" (Peckard 1790 172). She insisted on all the men then working on the house being employed in cleaning it out. She energetically superintended the restoration of both the church and the house, so that the family were able to take up their residence in the early part of the autumn of 1625.

While her sons restored the house Mrs Ferrar was clearly involved in the 'restoration' of the church and some aspects of the estate, and brought it upon herself to restore to the church the glebe which had previously been appropriated by the estate. The 1626 map discussed below shows that she separated a former furlong into two and allocated 28 acres, noting "This allowed for the Parson who comes and builds and lives in Gidding". After Mrs. Ferrar had restored the glebe lands to the church of Little Gidding, the bishop, in honour of the occasion, held a confirmation and preached in the church, the choir of Peterborough Cathedral being brought over to assist in the service.

Enclosure

Enclosure has been a facet of English agriculture from the time that the fields were first laid out by the Anglo-Saxons. The earliest enclosure occurred piecemeal around the towns and villages, forming enclosures into which livestock could be brought and pastured for short periods. As time went on many people kept more animals and needed more enclosed land and illegal enclosure of small areas of arable land and common or waste occurred. Occasionally

we find manorial lords agreeing to enclosure of arable lands, for example, at Burwell, Cambridgeshire, Ramsey Abbey, the manorial lords of the manor allowed the development of houses and closes along a considerable stretch of fen edge land. In most instances only small areas of land were removed from the open field or the waste at any one time.

This however changed in the late 15th and the first half of the 16th century when many land owners recognised the profits that could be had by enclosing and turning land over to animal husbandry, especially sheep rearing for wool production, and enclosed whole parishes, sometimes turning out whole villages, the residents of which, who had previously been fully employed in the village fields, became idle and destitute. Such clearances became an issue of great concern by the late 1400s and laws were introduced to try to stop such enclosure.

From about c. 1600 most enclosure took place in manors where a single owner owned all the land or by agreement between land owners, who often sought legitimacy for their actions through the law, usually through the high court of chancery. Such action, it was hoped, would confirm the new titles to the land and prevent disputes, although occasionally disputes did arise. The use of acts of parliament to bring about enclosure occurred throughout England from the early seventeenth century. The first parliamentary enclosure act was awarded for Radipole, Dorset, in 1604 and the final enclosure act for land at Elmstone Hardwick, Gloucestershire, in 1914.

Across modern day Cambridgeshire there are at least twenty-one parishes where enclosure took place between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries. These early enclosures were achieved by a single owner acquiring all the land, for example, at Wimpole, where the Chicheleys purchased and exchanged land in order to develop their estate, or by agreement between land owners and occupiers, for example, in the parish of Ely Trinity which was largely enclosed with the agreement of two successive Bishops of Ely between 1486 and 1548, and which featured in the inquiry into enclosures of 1548 (Clare College).

For many of these parishes there are few if any records and no early maps to give any detail regarding when they were enclosed. Within the parishes enclosed at an early date, and without a Parliamentary Act to enclose, one-third are within the former county of Huntingdonshire where they make up approximately seven percent of the parishes in that county. Amongst the earliest of these early modern enclosures in the former county of Huntingdonshire are the enclosures of the two neighbouring parishes of Little Gidding and Steeple Gidding, all of which appear to have been enclosed by c. 1650. Both parishes have similar characteristics. Both are small parishes with a single manor holding, they all lie upon the same clay ridge, and they are all heavily depopulated. The reasons for the depopulation are unclear, but probably relate to a combination of circumstances and events, including the effects of disease and the single manorial lordship bringing most of the available land into

the demesne and converting arable land to pasture, the after effect of which would be insufficient rental land to sustain the population, which moved away. In both parishes there is no evidence of the removal of the population either by exchange of land and moving tenants into neighbouring parishes or the forced eviction of the population as seen in some Midland counties. Other nearby parishes such as Coppingford and Barham may have been similarly enclosed by the mid seventeenth century, but in both cases there is no evidence regarding the date of enclosure.

Evidence for a more precise date for when these parishes were enclosed has generally been difficult due to a lack of contemporary documentation. Documentation relating to Coppingford is particularly poor. Steeple Gidding has a detailed map dating from 1648 which shows the whole parish enclosed by that date, with the southern field largely imarked. For Little Gidding the recent acquisition by Cambridgeshire Archives of a map of 1596 and the discovery of a map of 1626 in the possession of the Oxfordshire Archives Service has shed new light on the enclosure of that parish.

To consider the impact of enclosure on the parish it is necessary to consider the medieval fields of the parish. There are no terriers or other early documents which give an indication of the layout of Little Gidding's medieval fields or the names of particular fields and furlongs. However, in many parts of the parish there are the tell-tale ridges of the former furlong boundaries and in areas surrounding the present house known as Ferrar House, (formerly Manor Farm) there is visible evidence of ridge and furrow as well as the remains of the former village. The observation of these remains on the ground by field walking, combined with analysis of aerial photographs from various sources and LiDAR images, supplied by the Environment Agency, has allowed a reconstruction of the layout of the medieval furlongs to be undertaken (Fig. 2).

The site of the village lies on the western slope of a valley, below which is the Alconbury Brook, consid-

erably straightened in the 19th century, which forms the western parish boundary. The north-eastern end of the former village lay against the present road from Hamerton to Great Gidding. At its south-western end lay the manor house and church. The modern road leading down to the present Manor Farm and church is a later road, probably constructed in the 19th century, on a different alignment and to the north of the line of the former Town Street (Fig. 1). The hollow way and the village remains north-east of the present house were surveyed and mapped in 1977 (Brown and Taylor 1977, 88–9).

The original road less straight in its course left the Hamerton to Great Gidding road at the northern end of a moated enclosure (TL048380), which may represent the site of the toft given to the Knights Templars by Warner Engaine, it was the site of the Parsonage House in 1596, and passed down to the church with houses on either side. In 1279 there were 31 persons listed as being tenants of the manor, 24 villeins and 7 cottagers.

Surrounding the village to the north and west was one of its open arable fields, and alongside the Alconbury Brook a long strip of meadow. To the north-east of the Hamerton to Great Gidding Road, which lies on high ground, was the middle of what appears to have been Little Gidding's three fields. Its north-eastern end abutting against a meadow, the meadow known in 1626 as Long Meadow. This meadow lay on both sides of another (unnamed) stream. In the south-western corner of this field up against the parish boundary and close to the Great Gidding to Hamerton Road lay the windmill, still in existence in 1596, this mill gave the field its name, Mill Field.

To the north-east of this second stream lay the third of Little Gidding's former open arable fields, which like Mill Field extended across the width of the parish. At its north-eastern end lay a road known as Angerstone Way or later as Ongerstone Drove, and since the 19th century known as the Bullock Way or Bullock Road, now for most of its length a track way.

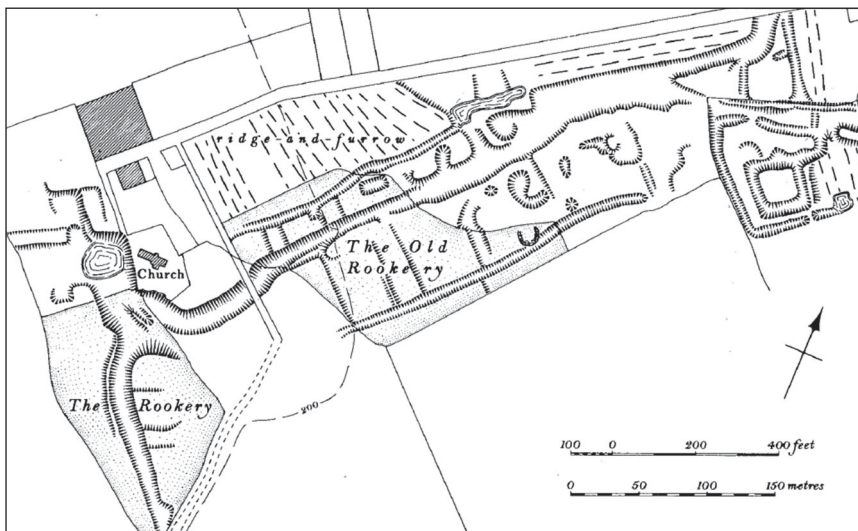


Figure 2. Earthwork Survey.

The Maps

As noted previously two maps of Little Gidding exist, one in the possession of Huntingdon Archives (5806), dating from 1596 (Plate 3) and the other in the possession of Oxfordshire Archives (E6/12/13d/16), dating from 1626 (Plate 4). The former was made for Sir Gervase Clifton on his acquisition of the manor, while the latter was made two years after the acquisition of the manor by Mrs Ferrar. Both will now be described.

Little Gidding 1596 (Fig. 3, Fig. 4, Plate 3)

When in 1596 the estate was acquired by Sir Gervase Clifton it consisted of at least one open and common field, several closes and areas of meadow, the manor house with its appurtenances and gardens, the church and at least two houses, one of which was the Parsonage House and a windmill. Figure 3 provides a reconstruction of the 1596 map, while Table 1 provides a reference to the map, giving the close names and acreages.

The village, by 1596 depopulated and reduced to these two houses, had in 1279 thirty-one tenants, 24 villeins and 7 cottagers, (Records Commission (1812) *Rotuli Hundredorum Temp Henry III and Edward I*. Vol 2, 619) and the site of the village was marked by a series of closes which ran from the former Town Street (not shown on the map) to the parish boundary. The closes and extant earthworks suggest the village had previously consisted of at least 12 houses. The Parsonage House was formerly held by the Knights Templars and subsequently by the Knights Hospitallers prior to their dissolution, presumably on the site of the toft and three acres given by Warner Engaine. The 1596 map shows that the parsonage house stood in a close of 3 acres and 24 perches. Today this site is marked by a moated enclosure, which extends into what was another close in 1596.

The authors of the *Victoria County History*, in 1936, (Page *et al.* 1936 III, 53.) considered the moat, possibly erroneously, to be the site of the Engaines' manor house. The moated area contains within it the remains of ridge and furrow suggesting it was a later moated site created on top of former arable land. The Engainesu manor is probably represented by the manor house situated next to the church, where it was in 1596.

Immediately to the north of the Parsonage House lay another house not sited within any close, but standing alone in the road. To the south of the Parsonage House lay the site of the village, the church and the Manor House. The manor house is shown as a large building facing the church, with two wings projecting out of the back of the building in a northerly direction, and having a slightly raised roof area in the centre of the front, possibly indicating a porch. Immediately in front of the manor house lay a small building with a lantern like projection on its roof, probably the manorial Dovehouse. To the west lay a

long building, probably a barn, of equal length to the manor house's projecting wings, and to the east of the house lay a formal garden with two parterres. South-east of the gardens is shown a close called Conigarth Close, suggesting the site of the manorial rabbit warren. The church, opposite the manor house is shown as having a nave and chancel and a battlemented square western tower with a cross on it.

The former Town Street appears to have gone by 1596, when the main route to the manor house was by a road from Steeple Gidding directly to the yard of the manor house. The site of the former Town Street and the houses north of it was largely taken by a close named Lane Close. The south side of the former Town Street being laid out in 5 regular closes, all named, and two further closes, both irregular in shape against the road from Steeple Gidding. To the west of these lay a further five small closes, three of which lay against the parish boundary, all of which are much more irregular, and the presence of ridge and furrow remains in one suggests that these were never associated with dwellings. To the north and against the parish boundary with Great Gidding lay three large closes, named as "Bells Close", "Parke Close" which lay immediately behind the manor house garden, and "New Close", suggesting it had been created within living memory at the time the map was made.

To the north of the present road passing from Hamerton to Great Gidding lay the one remaining open field, shown as a large block of land, suggesting it remained unclosed, it is described as "Little Geddinge Fielde", and shown to consist of 250 acres and 2 roods. Towards its north-eastern end lay a stream, along either side of which was a meadow, separated into two areas named as the "The Over Meddowe" and "The Nedder Meddowe", and to the north-east of these were three closes which lay against the parish boundary and trackway, known since the late 19th century as "The Bullock Way". The three closes were in 1596 known as "Dixons Close", "The Grove Close" and "The Further Close" (Table 1). The windmill lay up against both the parish boundary with Steeple Gidding and the road from Alconbury to Great Gidding, in the south-east corner of the remaining open field. The 1596 map appears to be incomplete in that the table of reference has a column for tenants which is blank, and it shows only one road, that from the manor house to Steeple Gidding.

It will be noted from Table 1 that the majority of the closes named on the 1596 have personal names, such as Dixons Close and Robinsons Close. The map and the table of reference do not give the names of tenants at the time the map was created, but the presence of so many personal names associated with closes suggests that these were the previous occupiers, or possibly the occupiers in 1596.

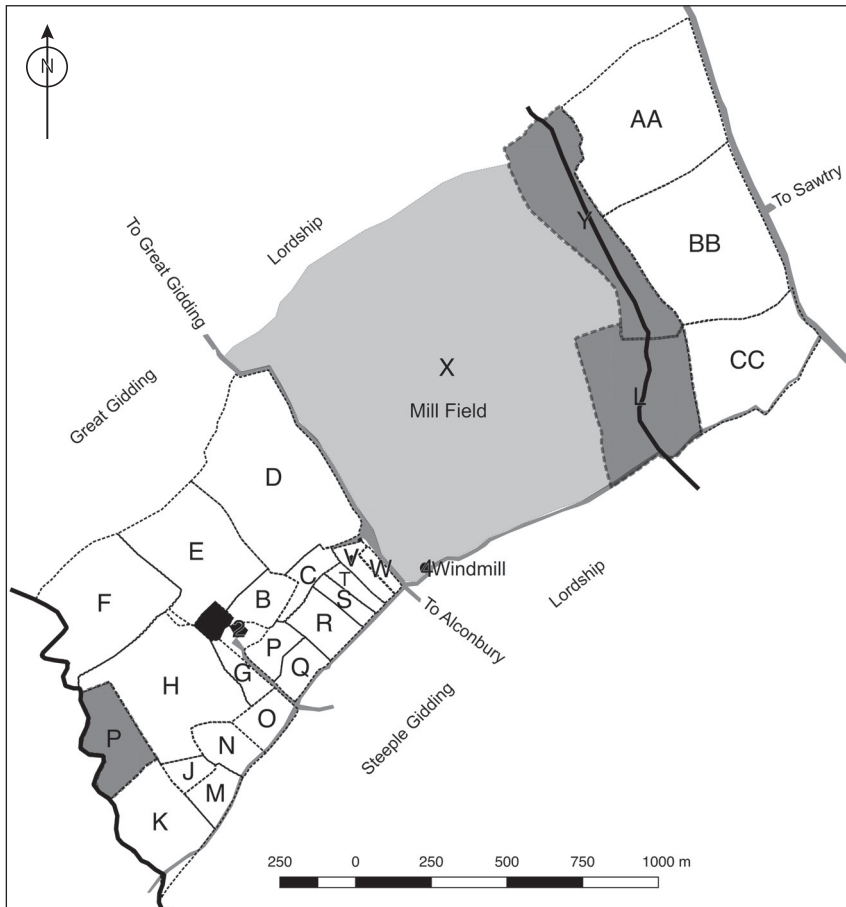


Figure 3. Reconstruction of the 1596 map showing the key features of the fields and partial enclosure. The darker shaded areas are the permanent meadows; the lighter shaded area is the remaining unenclosed field.

Table 1. Closes and acreages of Little Gidding 1596.

ID on Figure 3	Name	A	R	P
A	The Scite of the Manor	2	2	0
B	Conigarth Close	4	3	8
C	Lane Close	4	1	35
D	Newe Close	50	2	18
E	Parke Close	21	2	22
F	Bells Close	16	2	36
G	Bushie Close	3	2	38
H	Bradleys Close	33	2	10
J	Bradleys Meadow	13	2	0
K	Knights Close	11	0	20
L	Bushie Balk	3	3	0
M	Whins Close	3	2	0
N	Johnsons Close	3	2	0
O	William Dixons Close	5	0	0
P	Robinsons Close	3	3	0
Q	Gorhams Close	6	3	0
R	Alcocks Close	7	0	0
S	Berids Close	3	0	0
T	Ful Johns Close	3	0	0
V	The Parsonage House & Close	3	0	24
W	Jacobs Close	2	0	0
X	Little Gidding Field	250	2	0
Y	The Over Meadow	28	3	10
Z	The Nedder Meadow	27	3	18
AA	Dixons Close	16	2	18
BB	The Grove Close	17	2	0
CC	The Further Close	26	1	29



Figure 4. 1596 map. See also Plate 3.

Little Gidding 1626 (Fig. 5, Fig. 6, Plate 4)

The 1626 map cartouche states "The Plott of the Lordshippe of Little Giddinge in the County of Huntingdon belonging to the Worthie Marie Ferrar Widdow". It is more detailed than the 1596 map in that all roads are shown, but it is more crudely drawn and no houses other than the manor house are shown (Oxfordshire Archives E6/12/13d/16), confirming other later sources about Nicholas Ferrar's life which say that Little Gidding was deserted by 1626. The map has no table of reference but it does have comments written all over it, most describing to whom the land was being let.

The notations on the map come from at least three hands. The surveyor or cartographers hand gives neat titles to some of the pre-existing closes, using a typical script of the period with serifs on the capital letters. A second hand has, in darker ink and in an earlier writing style, noted letters upon the new closes, probably with the intent of linking the map to a terrier, although this same hand has also added in the acreages. The third hand, smaller and much more of a scrawl than the others, and in places difficult to decipher, is a set of notes written over most of the map. Primarily, it describes the fields and features in the landscape, and informs the reader who is renting each of the closes not held in demesne. Comments on the landscape include, "This rigg and division run-

ning all a longe the 3 closes", alongside the eastern brook and "The Mill feild thus divided in severall closes".

One comment regards a debt of £80 owed to Mrs. Ferrar by one of her sons, "and if my son fails to pay his mother the 80 pound wch I gave he & Ann then she is to possess them soe longe till my son pay her the year to sum of 80^l & Anne w^{ch} I gave her to be paid out of Gidding ". This is written in the same handwriting as the comments regarding tenants and given the tense, therefore suggests that all of the comments on the map made in this handwriting were made by Mrs. Ferrar herself.

The lines showing the subdivisions of the field and some of the closes suggests that this map was a working copy used at the time of the enclosure of the former mill field, although we are told "Another circumstance that engaged his (Nicholas Ferrar's) attention was, that the parish had for many years been turned into pasture grounds" (Peckard 1790, 183). Table 2 sets out the comments, other than tenancies, noted on the map.

On this map, the acreages of all of the pre-existing closes are rounded to the nearest acre, while the acreages of the former furlongs newly enclosed are given in full as acres, roods and yards. The map is quite fragile and there is some damage along a central fold line and some areas of text on either side of this are illegible. Figure 5 shows a reconstruction of the estate

in 1626 from the 1626 map, Table 3 provides a reference to the map and shows the close names, where known, and the tenants of the Ferrars.

The Windmill let with some land to Oliver Cromwell and Thomas Haselrigge in 1592 by Humphrey Drewell, in existence in 1596, is shown as being still in existence in 1626, but appears to

have gone by 1648, when a house stood upon its site (Cambridgeshire Archives (Huntingdon) Map 120, The Lordship of Steeple Gidding). This mill, unlike the other buildings in Little Gidding, does not feature in the accounts of the life of Nicholas Farrar, and its loss between 1626 and 1648 is another sign of the effect of enclosure and conversion of land to pasture.

Table 2. Comments and notes from the 1626 map.

ID on Figure 3.	Feature	
	Angerstone Waye	From Walmesford to Coppingford. (Walmesford is probably Wansford)
Q		Crose Green
Across Q,R,S	Upper Grounds	Are this left out joynig to Sawtry Field and if my son fails to pay his mother the 80 pound wch I gave he & Anne then she is to possess them soe being till my son pay her the yearly sum of 80li & Anne wch I gave her to be paid out of Gidding by her som [?] of the 63li of the house of London was lett for [?] his joyntur.
Across the top of M,N,O,P	Long Meadow	This rigg and divison run along the 3 closes a bove men'ed doth part there for the meddow brook and reaches from Great Gidding Lordship wch bound in the North ? Of it unto the Southern part of Steeple Gidding Lordship.
E		Divided in to two close both consisting 19ac 1 r
F		Now divided in to two closes contayning 52 acres 3r. 20 pchs. This allotted for the parson when he comes and builds and lives in Gidding. Now lett to Tiplady of Steeple Gidding.
	Track from main road to Close F	This waye [illegible] and leads in to this close
10	Old Park	I found [?] have this close less than 20 acres 23
4	Home Close	This is in our owne occupn

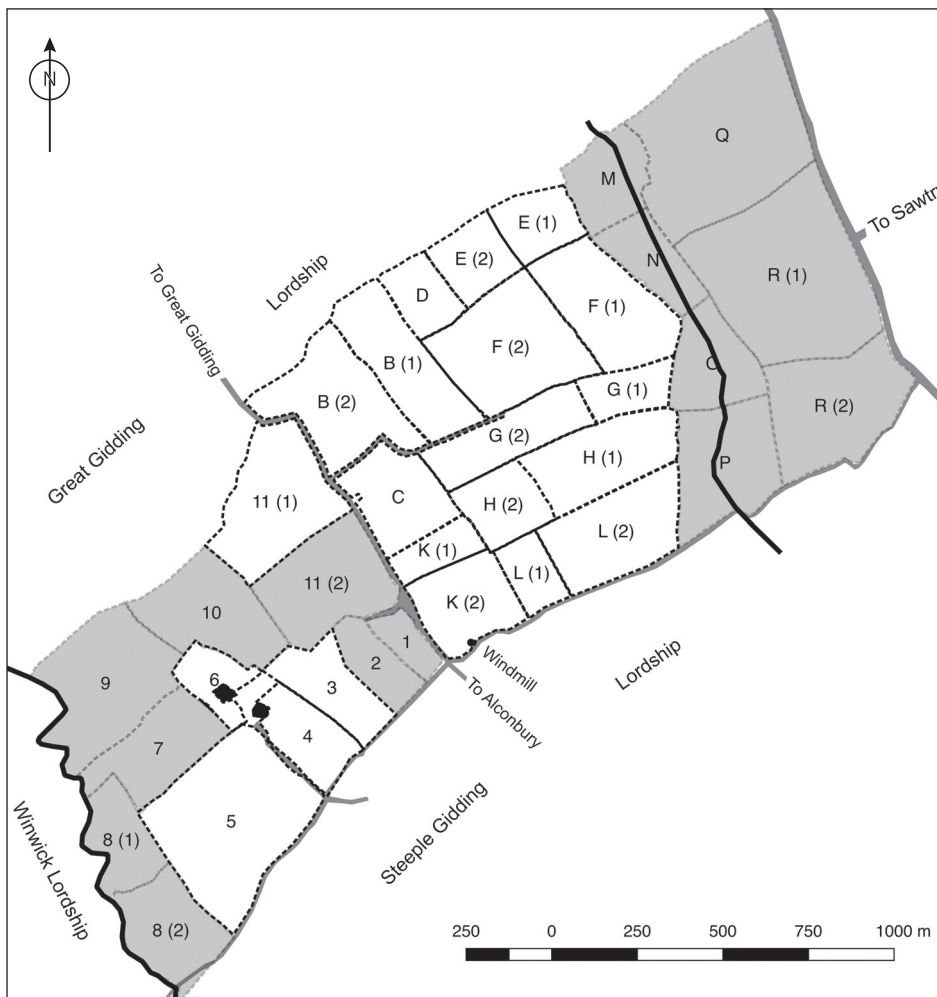
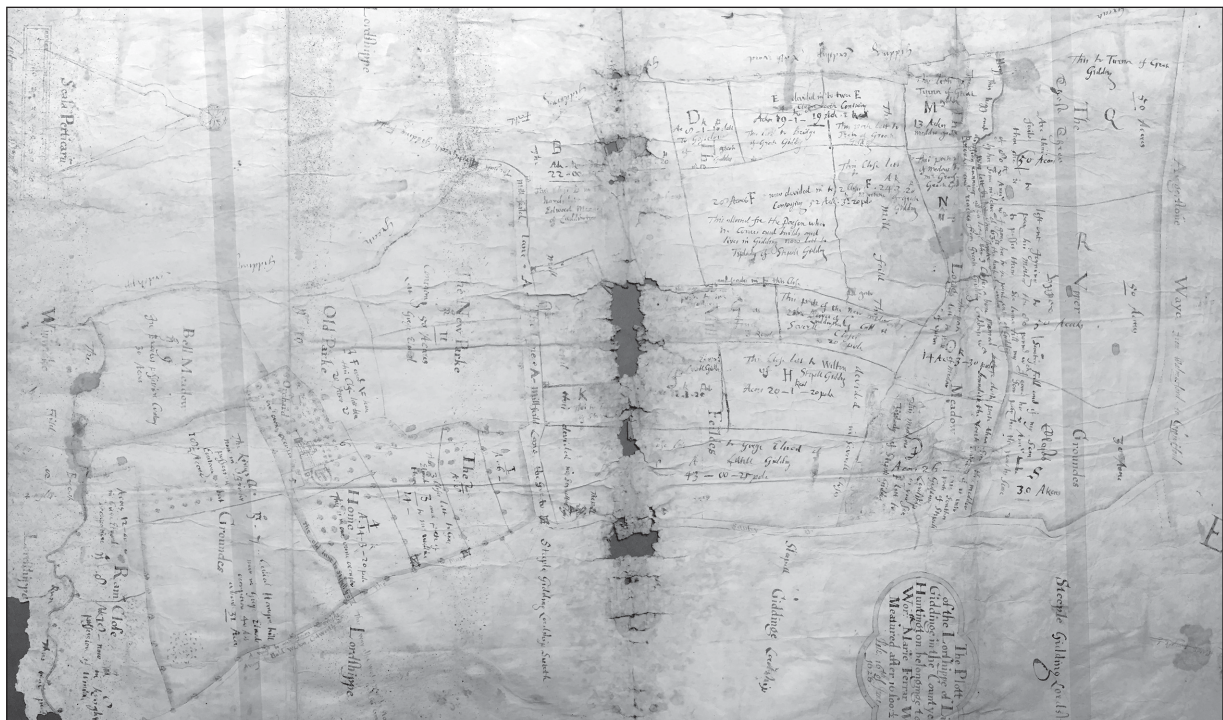


Figure 5.
Reconstruction of the 1626 map showing the enclosure completed. The shaded areas show the closes largely unaffected by the changes made by the Ferrars.

Table 3. Close names and tenants as they appear on the 1626 Map of Little Gidding.

ID on Figure 3	Close Name	Tenant	A	R	P
1		George Elwod of Little Gidding	6	0	0
2			8	0	0
3			14	0	0
4	Home Close	Retained by the Ferrars			
5	Hangar Hill	George Elwod of Little Gidding	32	0	0
6	Orchard	Retained by the Ferrars			
7	Kings Close	George Elwod of Little Gidding	18	0	0
8 (1)	Ram Close		12	0	0
8 (2)		Mr Knight of Winwick	28	0	0
9	Bell Meadow	Mr Brookes	30	0	0
10	Old Parke		20	0	23
11	New Parke	George Elwod of Little Gidding	50	0	0
A	Mill Field Lane				
B (1)		Edward Meer of Luddington	22	0	0
B (2)		Illegible			
C		Illegible			
D		Gostelow of Great Gidding	8	1	10
E (1)		Turna of Great Gidding	19	1	0
E (2)		Bridgs of Great Gidding	19	1	0
F		Tiplady of Steeple Gidding	52	3	20
G (1)		Edward Barnes of Luddington			
G (2)		Illegible			
H		Wilton of Steeple Gidding	20	1	20
J		Illegible	11	1	25
K		Illegible			
L (1)		Illegible			
L (2)		George Elwod of Little Gidding	43	0	25
M	Long Meadow	Turna of Great Gidding	13	0	0
N		Mr Geo[rge?] of Great Gidding	11	0	0
O		Smith of Upton	14	3	30
P		Tiplady of Steeple Gidding	26	0	0
Q	The		50	0	0
R	Upper		50	0	0
S	Closes		30	0	0

*Figure 6. 1626 map. See also Plate 4.*

Conclusion

The north-west of Huntingdonshire like much of north-east Northamptonshire saw much enclosure in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as land owners consolidated their holdings and turned arable land over to pasture for sheep. In most cases this involved the conversion of the demesne. From the inquisition of 1607 it appears that only 7,077 acres in the whole of Huntingdonshire had been enclosed for this purpose (Gay 1903, 581), that is 3.29 percent of the county. In most Huntingdonshire parishes the enclosures that preceded any undertaken by Act of Parliament involved relatively small areas of land. Little Gidding and Steeple Gidding are clearly exceptions to this, being wholly enclosed by 1650.

From these two surviving maps, it would appear that the enclosure of Little Gidding was partially complete by the time the lordship was purchased by Sir Gervase Clifton of Leighton Bromswold in 1596. What took place in the thirty years between 1596 and 1624 is unclear. If Peckard's account of the life of Nicholas Ferrar is correct then the last remaining open field in the parish was turned over to pasture in that period, but may not have been fully enclosed. The 1626 map with its roughly drawn lines and notes, probably written by Mrs Ferrar, clearly shows that the enclosure of the parish was in its final stages. From this map, we can see that Mrs Ferrar had already decided where the church was to have its restored glebe, and what land she was letting out, and to whom, and what was being retained by the family for their own use. That the scheme of enclosure was completed is abundantly clear from the 1880s Ordnance Survey, which shows almost all of the closes created in the former Mill Field still in existence, except that a couple of closes had been sub divided.

Recent observation in the present landscape has shown that some of the field boundaries created by Mrs Ferrar in 1626 in the former Mill Field survive to the present day, whereas most of the subdivisions of the closes to the north and west of the present farm built on the site of the manorial gardens are no longer extant. Similarly, the former closes belonging to what must have been the last of the houses in the village no longer exist. The whole village site, damaged by later quarrying, now lies beneath one large field and under two wooded areas known as the Rookery and Old Rookery (Brown and Taylor 1977, 88–89). The three closes on the north-eastern parish boundary with Sawtry all survive with most of their boundaries shown in 1596 complete.

Unlike the eighteenth or nineteenth century enclosures that occurred in other surrounding parishes such as Great Gidding and Sawtry, the new close boundaries do not appear to have been created at the time of enclosure, but largely appear to have been the result of the enclosure of furlongs, with a small amount of sub-division within, as is confirmed by the maps and the presence of both surviving furlong boundaries and ridge and furrow in the fields of parish. An identical pattern of enclosure has been noted

in the neighbouring parish of Steeple Gidding.

From the first series Ordnance Survey, it is clear that many of the pre-enclosure field roads remained in existence as footpaths and bridleways across the parish. While many of these have since disappeared some still remain, including the road from Little Gidding to Sawtry, named as Sawtry Way in 1629, which remains as a track way. The former road from Steeple Gidding which entered the village near to the manor house survives for part of its length as another track as does the road from Little Gidding to Winwick, which remains as a footpath.

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Plate 3 is reproduced with permission from Cambridgeshire Archives, reference 5806 (author's photo).

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