

THE TURNOVER OF TENANTS ON THE ASHBURNHAM ESTATE, 1830-1850

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A problem facing the Earl of Ashburnham in the mid-nineteenth century was the relatively rapid rate of turnover by his tenant farmers on his High Wealden estate in Sussex. An examination is made of a number of interlinked general factors such as the relatively poor physical environment, low farming standards, and conditions of tenure, all of which effectively hindered the stability of tenants. The quality of management varied greatly between farms and the importance of obtaining an experienced tenant with capital was crucial, since his improvements could then be furthered by his successors to produce a cumulative beneficial effect.

In 1830 the estate income of the Ashburnham family came from the four areas of Wales, Suffolk, Bedfordshire and Sussex. Of these, Sussex was by far the most important, contributing as much as the other three together. The Sussex estate was large—nearly 6,000 acres of upland farmland with about 1,500 acres of marshland grazing—and was worth over £5,000 per annum in rents alone. Located in the south-east High Weald, the upland had varied resources, with pasture, meadow and arable land closely linked with plentiful supplies of underwood and construction timber, together with supplies of limestone from a small inlier of Purbeck beds. Southwards were rich expanses of Pevensey marshes, an important adjunct to the larger upland farms (Fig. 1). The estate was also well endowed in human resources; in fact the underemployment of agricultural labour in the district was a causal factor in the 'Swing' riots in the Battle area in November 1830. Emigration from the Bexhill district was a feature of this period and over one hundred persons had left Mountfield parish, for example, for America by 1851.

Bertram, the fourth Earl Ashburnham, appears to have been a relatively unremarkable landowner at this time. His predecessor was given much credit by the Rev. Arthur Young for his skilful ploughing, while Bertram appears to have been interested in the possibilities of adopting Scottish poultry in Sussex¹. The large amount of correspondence between Bertram and his stewards testified to his interest in the estate; and he was directly involved in the choice of tenants, particularly when political or social issues were involved. Rural unrest continued in east Sussex throughout the 1830's, and the Earl was often reluctant to admit farmers to a tenancy who had sons who could work and thereby deprive local labourers of employment. Thus, Lord Ashburnham did not welcome William Sinden's application for Ellis's farm in Penhurst in 1838. Lord Ashburnham's approval was hesitant since he had heard that Sinden had two sons of working age, and their arrival from Salehurst to the very small parish of Penhurst (total population in 1841, 103) could have been disruptive. His steward, James Bellingham, accepted Sinden on the strength of a very good character². Sinden, then aged 53, was to stay for some time at Ellis's and by 1851 was employing himself, his wife, his son, aged 31, and daughter, aged 17, together with three labourers, on the fifty acres of farmland. His sister, a nurse, would also have been a welcome addition to the local community³. Sinden had earlier farmed a smaller holding,

¹ Reverend Arthur Young, *General view of the agriculture of the county of Sussex* (1813), 66-7; and *East Sussex Record Office* (hereafter E.S.R.O.), *Ashburnham Mss.* 1300.

² *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss.* 1300.

³ *E.S.R.O. XA9/7.*

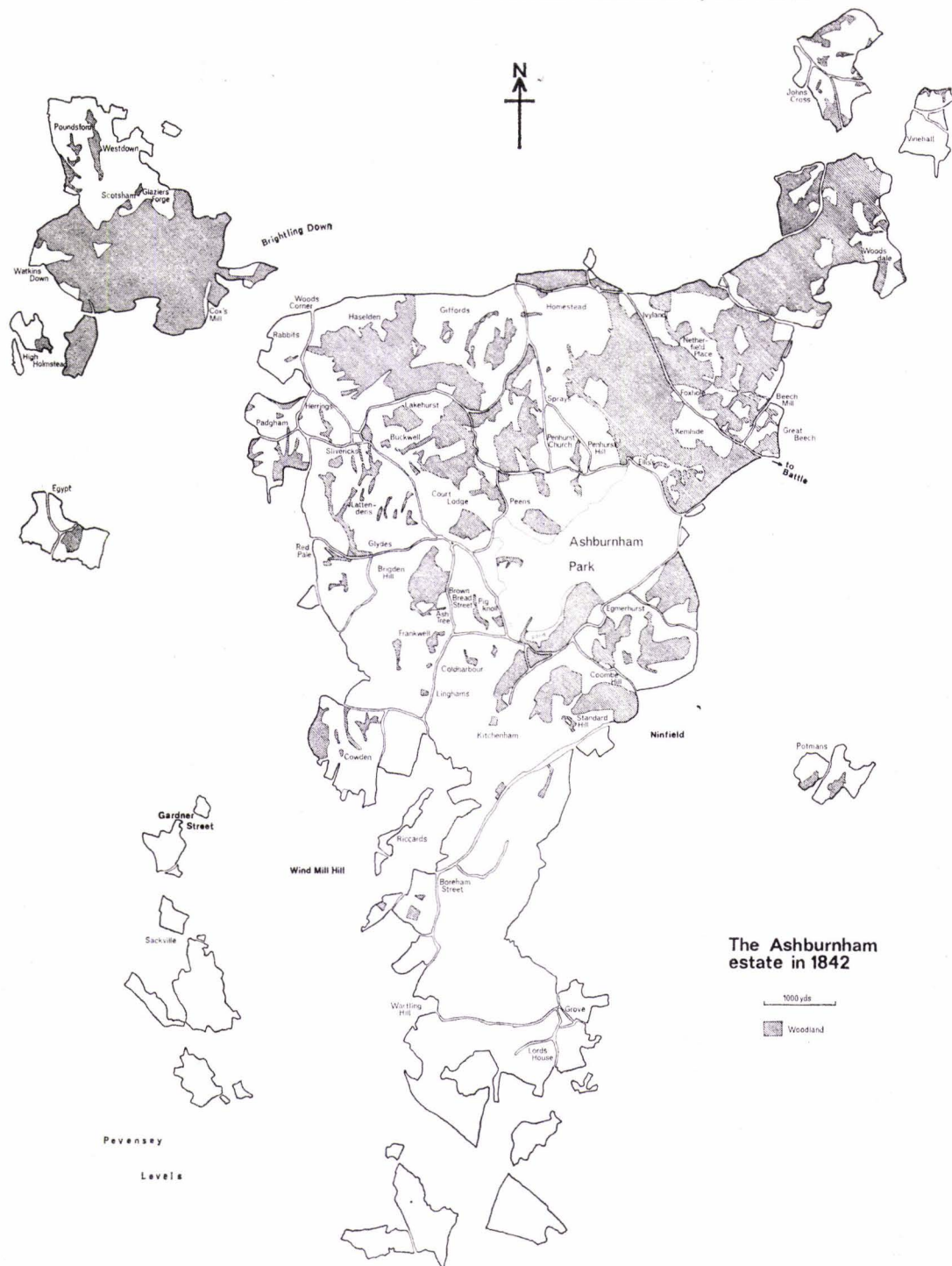


FIG. 1. The Ashburnham estate: main constituent farms in 1842 (Source: *Ashburnham Mss.* 4472).

Little Sprays, in Dallington, so fears of his impact on the local economy were probably more imagined than real. Possibly there was some doubt about Sinden's political leanings. The Earl's steward questioned closely all the tenants in these matters before being accepted on to farms on the estate, and one of the Earl's letters to his steward concerns the political leanings of William Jenner, applying for Great Beech farm in 1837. Jenner, although only 22 at this time, was admitted to the farm, partly because he offered more than the rent demanded, and partly because his father, Thomas Jenner, had been farming at Boreham Street farm since 1832. Young Jenner was anxious to farm near his father and was conscious of the advantage of farming at Great Beech, just outside the town of Battle, and thus near a plentiful supply of manure¹.

The Earl's interest in the choice of tenants was well merited, for one of the greatest estate problems was the relatively large turnover of farmers. Taking the High Weald as a whole—that area of higher land stretching between Horsham in the west and Hastings and Tenterden in the east, and to the north of Uckfield and south of Tunbridge Wells—there were two areas with higher than average rates of turnover of tenants in the mid-nineteenth century. To the west, estate land was being sold for railway development after 1840, while the new town of Haywards Heath displaced some farmers and encouraged others to sell to property developers. The second area was the Ashburnham district itself—the poor upland of the Forest Ridges, stretching between Burwash and Hastings. Taking the number of persons classified as 'farmers' or 'graziers' in the census enumeration schedules for 1841 as a starting point, these persons are traceable in subsequent census schedules to give a record of the turnover of farmers. For the High Weald the average percentage of the farmers in 1841 remaining by 1861 was 14.6%, but in the Worth area it was only 8.4%, and in Burwash 10%, Hastings 12.5%, and in Battle 13.3% (see footnote 1).

The changes in each farm can be seen from the Appendix, constructed from a variety of source materials relating to the area—the Ashburnham Mss; Tithe apportionments; electoral registers; land tax returns; and the census enumerators' schedules for 1841 and 1851. Combining these sources has proved rewarding and provides the basis for far more information as to social and economic conditions on the estate than can be analysed here.

The Appendix Table consists of the main farms of the estate. Most of the smaller holdings are omitted but 62 properties are considered, ranging from the 700 acres of Boreham Street at Wartling to the 9½ acres of Pettits at Ashburnham. Tenants are recorded by their dates of occupation, and the number of tenants at each farm is noted. This table prompts at least two questions to be dealt with here; (a) the relatively high rate of tenant turnover on the estate and (b) the variation in turnover between one farm and another on the same estate.

General factors underlying tenancy changes

1. *The environment*

The Ashburnham estate upland is located along the southern slopes of the Forest Ridge—a chain of higher land reaching to over 500ft. around Cross-In-Hand and in a wishbone-shaped formation between Burwash Down, Heathfield and Punnetts Town. The altitude is somewhat lower than in the central part of the High Weald around Ashdown Forest, but the area is highly dissected by the headwaters of the Cuckmere, and there are many ghylls drained by small streams.

¹ *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1301.*

With less than 30% of the surface classifiable as flat (see footnote 2), the highly dissected topography is largely responsible for a very localised occurrence of soil series. Alternating sands and clays, much faulted and folded, have resulted in an extremely varied distribution of pervious and impervious strata. The Ashdown Sands of the Forest Ridge, the Tunbridge Wells Sands and Wadhurst Clay and the small inliers of Purbeck Limestone all give rise to a patchwork of soils varying field by field from heavy clay to light sand. Thus the Rev. Arthur Young in 1793 wrote of the turnips-barley-clover-wheat rotations on the lighter soils of Ashburnham, and Horsfield also noted in 1835 the sandy summits of the Ashburnham hills, but sands in the north of the estate gave way in the south to more intractable mixtures of Wadhurst Clay and Tunbridge Wells Sand, and eventually to alluvium in Wartling, Hooe and Herstmonceux¹. The parish of Warbleton is an example of this soil variation. According to Horsfield, there was poor black sand on Warbleton Down; loam in the south and southwest, clay in the east and southeast; and a gravel-loam mixture in the centre of the parish².

Although the dissected topography intensified weather hazards, the main economic impact was through the soil. About 60% of the soils were defectively drained, due to the fine grain and high compaction of the sands. These were commonly as defectively drained as the clays, since the drainage of the latter was aided by the presence of small cracks. Puddling or poaching of the surface by livestock also aggravated the problem, and compacted eroded material was washed downslope to cover springs and render the slopes as badly drained as the flatter land.

Chemical analysis of the soils show the lack of lime, phosphate and potash, of which the first has long been appreciated to be the main need. The Ashburnham estate had its own supply of lime from the Purbeck beds, and the land at Glaziers Forge had for long supplied much of the estate. The Earl, "the greatest lime burner in the kingdom", exploited this resource such that by 1794 he was supplying a sixteen mile radius, and competing with rival Hastings concerns using imported materials³. Other methods of soil improvement included denshiring, marling (which continued into the 1820s despite Topley's belief to the contrary), and the use of village waste, salt, and Betersden *Paludina*. But by the 1840s many were turning to the use of guano and the 'artificial', the former being supplied from Lewes and Hastings to Court Lodge farm by 1843, and to Penhurst Church farm by 1849 (together with London rags, Eastbourne lime and Hastings salt). With the use of rape cake for cattle feed, the enriched rotted dung of stall-fed bullocks became a valued source of potash, formerly supplied by basic slag, and particularly important on the Wadhurst Clays. Phosphates were supplied in the form of crushed or powdered bone from the beginning of the nineteenth century, with Ore becoming a distributing centre for the region by mid-century.

Much soil improvement had to await more effective methods of drainage. Earlier techniques combined surface ridge and furrow with turf drains and hollow drains lined with stones, blackthorn twigs, or chalk. By the 1830s tile drainage was being encouraged at Ashburnham by the offer to tenants of cheap tiles but although, for example, Penhurst Church farm was drained in this manner between 1827 and 1836, progress was slow. A draining plough was used from the late 1820s in the Kentish Weald, but generally springs were inaccurately located, drainage

¹ Reverend Arthur Young, *op. cit.* (1793 edition), 27; and T. W. Horsfield, *History of Sussex*, I (1835), 556.

² Horsfield, *op. cit.* (I), 570.

³ Reverend Arthur Young, *A tour through Sussex*, 1793, *Annals of Agriculture*, 22 (1794), 273; Arthur Young, *A tour in Sussex*, *Annals of Agriculture*, 11 (1789), 759; *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1835-44*.

costs were too high, and mole-ploughing rarely successful on the finer soils of the area. The fine sand grains tended to silt up the tiles rapidly, and much of the area had to wait for pipe drainage after the 1840s¹.

With abundant steep slopes and impeded drainage, much of the character and attraction of the district resulted from what Horsfield described as "its declivities . . . adorned with sylvan riches"². But tenants adopted less prosaic terminology than immigrant gentry since woods and shaws were a continual source of annoyance—impeding evaporation, harbouring vermin, and reducing sunlight and cultivable area. Shaws occupied about 1/8th of the arable land. The field sizes were very small, many being effectively fossilized medieval assarts; the average field size at Dallington in the 1840s being only 3.2 acres, that at Ashburnham 5.7 acres³. In addition 'lost fallows' resulted from the large headlands needed to turn the ox-teams, and the resulting small fields were uneconomic for arable cultivation, carting manure, draining, and small field gates. Nevertheless, shaws contained underwood and game, and were correspondingly highly valued by the Earl. By 1850 some hedges had been removed, but low wheat prices at £2 per quarter rendered the initial outlay uneconomic on soils producing but three of four quarters per acre. Moreover, many tenants feared rent and tithe increases following the conversion of tithe-free woodland to farmland, and consequently the overall effect was to stultify progress and hinder innovation.

Thus the Ashburnham tenants were faced with small, hilly fields, circumscribed by shaws, and containing variable soils, many very poorly drained. The area was also poorly served by roads, since these tended to follow the hill tops in an east-west direction, by-passing many of the valley-side or valley-bottom farms. In part the rents reflect this poor environment for farming. Ashburnham rents were stable at about 8s. per acre between 1815 and 1835, compared with the average High Wealden rent of 15s. per acre in 1815. By 1842 rents had risen generally, but that at Penhurst, for example, was only 11s. 3d.; at Ashburnham 17s. 9d.; at Dallington 17s. 2d.—compared with the High Wealden average of 21s. By 1860 there was virtually no change since the main touchstone of increased land values, the railway, came no nearer than the stations at Battle, Hailsham, Bexhill and Westham in the 1850s⁴.

2. *The standard of farming*

From a reconstruction of farming at Ashburnham or other districts in the Weald using contemporary sources, a picture emerges of low farming ability, and scant chance of improvement. Leonce de Lavergne in 1855 compared the Weald with one of France's second-rate provinces, seeing it as "In nothing . . . beyond the average, whether in picturesque beauty or in agricultural richness", and with farmers: "men without capital, and as ignorant as they are poor". Caird had also previously written of the small farms; ill-drained and half-cultivated, inadequately stocked, and with too much woodland; and of the tenants—unskilful, and unheeding of innovation.⁵

¹ B. M. Short, *Agriculture in the High Weald of Kent and Sussex 1850-1953*. (A case study in the application of multivariate techniques in the field of historical geography), *Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London* (1973), 91-97.

² Horsfield, *op. cit.* (1), 436.

³ *E.S.R.O. TD/E68 and TD/E146*.

⁴ *Br. Parliamentary Pap.* xix (1818); xxxii (1844); xxxix (1859-60); and *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1173*.

⁵ L. de Lavergne, *The rural economy of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1855), 203; J. Caird, *English agriculture in 1850-51* (1852), 126-7.

Few farmers would have actively sought out the Ashburnham district for settlement, for the area was relatively unattractive compared with the Petworth, South Downs, Sussex coastal plain, or East and Mid-Kent districts. Of 65 farmers traceable in the 1851 census enumerators' schedules who had farmed during the period 1830-50 on the estate, 19 were farming in their parishes of birth; 14 in a parish abutting on that of their birth; 9 in the next-but-one parish away; 16 from other parts of East Sussex; and only seven from outside the county of whom three were from the Kentish Weald. It could be argued therefore, that only four of the tenants (6%) were strangers to the area, while forty-two (65%) came from within a six mile radius of their farms.

Such minimal movement goes far towards explaining the slow diffusion of innovations into and throughout the area. Sources of contact were virtually limited to markets and fairs, such as the Whit Monday fair at Battle, or those at Westham, Boreham Street and Robertsbridge during September. Some may have visited the Lewes sheep and wool fairs, but would rarely have travelled further afield. It was the landowners who attended the meetings of agricultural societies, rather than the smock frocked farmers. But such spatial restriction, it should be remembered, was combined with a tendency to move between farms in the same district with some freedom. Some actually returned as tenants to a previously held farm, as did James Overy at Netherfield Place who held the farm in 1840 and again in 1845-46.

Over much of the High Weald agricultural conservatism stemmed partly from the age and knowledge of the farmers, and assuming that the best farmers gravitated to the best soils, one might expect an area of rather older, less informed, operators in the High Weald. Unimproved techniques were inherited, together with the fear that improvement would incur higher rents, and what Siday Hawes referred to in 1858 as 'force of habit' appears dominant¹. Overall, the High Weald in 1861 had about 20% of its farmers aged 65 years or over—a fact conforming with known nineteenth century migration differentials, and to some extent with the modern age structure of the area. However, on the Ashburnham estate, details of 50 tenants farming in 1850 have been collected, and these reveal an average age of only 48. This is consistent with the high turnover, but there is an interesting distribution about the mean. Twenty-four of the tenants were under 45 years of age, while eighteen were over 55 years old, leaving only eight in the age range 45-54. With the exception of Humphrey Carpenter (54) at Lower Standard Hill, none of the large properties were being farmed by tenants in the latter age group, and there is a gap in early middle age where one would typically expect a forceful combination of experience and vigour.

The relationship between age and farm size is summarized in Table I. It should be noted that some farmers, like the brothers John and Samuel Blackman, farmed more than their Ashburnham land. The 1851 census records them farming in all 1,000 acres. Noel Bourner was more typical. Born in Battle in 1823, into a large and relatively prosperous local family, he was aged 27 by 1850, with a wife and three small children, working Scotsham farm with the help of his father-in-law and two labourers. At the other extreme was Thomas Burgess, aged 83, from Rabbits Farm, Dallington—a holding of just 36 acres run with the help of one labourer, and two granddaughters aged 22 and 15, and a 10-year-old grandson².

¹ S. Hawes, Notes on the Wealden clay of Sussex and on its cultivation, *J.R.Agric. Soc. England*, 19 (1858), 188.

² *E.S.R.O. XA9/21 and XA9/10*.

TABLE 1. Ashburnham tenants' ages, farms, and family composition

Age range	number in range	average farm size (acres)	average number of family working on farm (including wife, excluding farmer)	average number of dependents (non-working)
25-29	5	99.17	1.00	3.20
30-34	6	145.33	0.67	2.30
35-39	6	230.00	1.20	1.80
40-44	7	107.00	1.86	3.59
45-49	4	98.17	2.20	1.60
50-54	4	198.50	4.00	0.75
55-59	7	216.85	3.14	0.28
60-64	4	137.50	3.50	1.25
65-69	3	40.75	1.67	1.00
70-74	2	137.50	1.50	0.00
75-79	1	23.00	1.00	0.00
80-84	1	36.00	2.00	1.00

Source: Census numerators' schedules, 1851, and E.S.R.O., Ashburnham Mss., 1173.

The lacuna in the 45-54 year age group becomes more striking when family composition is considered. Most sons stayed on the farm, often becoming the tenant eventually, and the number of workers in the family was a strong determinant of the acreage a tenant could tackle. For young tenants the workforce was often no more than the married couple themselves (the Blackman brothers, as bachelors, were very atypical), but the number of dependent children was high. Treyton Christmas (41) who farmed Great Beech in 1850 with his wife had eight children under fifteen years of age.¹ However, the number of dependents decreased in the 45-49 year age group, and there was a corresponding increase in the number of family workers—adult children, wives, and even grandchildren in the typical extended families of the period. Tenants of early middle age had more workers than dependents, and this highlights further their inability to command larger farms. At Ashburnham it seems that most tenants were either young farmers at the foot of the 'farming ladder' eager to progress to larger and better farms, or too old and conservative to farm successfully in the accepted style of the period.

3. Tenurial conditions

About 75% of the High Wealden farmers in the mid-nineteenth century were tenants, and a majority of these held their land by annual agreement rather than by lease. The Rev. Arthur Young, in his 1793 tour through Sussex, noted that leases were not normally granted in the Battle area, and in 1828 Kennedy and Grainger stated that:-

¹ E.S.R.O. XA9/7

“ Agriculture in this county has long been considered to be in a very backward state with regard to improvement, and until the practice of tenancy is entirely altered, no change, in this respect, for the better can be expected.”¹

In Sussex, tenants took possession of their farms at Michaelmas, and although their position was precarious since changes in ownership could result in notices to quit, or rent increases, such risks were offset in the opinion of many small farmers by the freedom to leave any holding after one year. Many took advantage of this and estates were constantly in need of tenants. This could create artificially low rents, particularly in depressed periods, to keep the farms occupied and to encourage some degree of permanence.

Many of the annual agreements were verbal, and we are therefore uncertain as to their precise nature. Often they were contingent on necessary repairs and if the landlord was slow in taking action, the tenant suffered from poor equipment and uncertainty over the future. At Lower Standard Hill in 1850 Humphrey Carpenter was charged for work undertaken by Lord Ashburnham on his behalf.² Maintenance was the tenant's duty and he was normally supplied with materials from within a radius of between five and twelve miles, and occasionally allowed the use of a wagon for the carriage of timber and other materials.

With yearly tenure dominant some system of compensation for improvements was necessary. In Lincolnshire, compensation for purchased crushed bones by tenants in the eighteenth century took the form of tenant-right³, and a similar system developed also in the Weald. On quitting at Michaelmas, valuers were appointed by both landlord and tenant, with a neutral third in case of dispute. On the Ashburnham estate a fairly strict procedure took into account “ seasons ” (preparation undertaken for cropping or fallowing); manures and “ half manures ” (the value being halved after the taking of one crop, although dung, marl and mould fell to zero, and guano to one-third value). “ Young seeds ” were paid for according to age, and unused straw was also valued; as were hop poles, plants, materials and labour, underwood, hay at feeding price, and house repairs. Sales of hay and straw off the farm were normally prohibited, with penalties of up to £10 at Netherfield Place in 1849. Many tenants were uncertain as to compensation allowed for draining, because of help received from the landlord, but most were allowed a four-year valuation on wooden drains and ten years on tiles. On some estates the tiles were supplied free, being manufactured in the estate yards by “ Hatcher's Benenden tile machine ” or some local variant. Often the charge could be recovered if the tiles were not laid within six months or otherwise not to the landlord's satisfaction. At Ashburnham tiles were supplied cheaply, and occasionally a charge of 5% per annum on costs was levied, a practice common over much of England.

The actual process of change from one tenant to the next was complicated by the rights of the incomer to sow seeds among his predecessor's spring corn, and to direct preparations for a wheat season. He in turn was obliged to thresh the remaining corn, inbarn the hay, and market the produce, taking the straw and haulm as payment. Storage was shared with the outgoing tenant and considerable confusion arose, with deductions for dilapidation being bitterly contested.

The consequence of this “ custom of the country ” (not legally recognised until the 1883 Agricultural Holdings Act), was that Sussex had the heaviest ingoing valuations in England, saddling the tenant with a heavy debt, since few could afford to pay the valuation outright. The

¹ Reverend Arthur Young, *op. cit.* (1794), 258; and Kennedy and Grainger's *Customs of countries* (1828) (quoted in *The Farmers' Magazine*, 7 (1837), 35).

² *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss.* 2236.

³ J. Thirsk, *English peasant farming: the agrarian history of Lincolnshire from Tudor to recent times* (1957), 264-7; and D. Grigg, *The agricultural revolution in South Lincolnshire* (1966), 49, 148.

sum of £2 per acre, and more for a hop farm, limited the number of prospective applicants, although payment by instalment was usual. A note from Thomas Jenner to steward William Morrison¹ ran:-

Sir,

I hereby tender for Pagham (*sic*) farm at 10/- per acre provided I can have about 15 or 20 acres of marshland at the usual rent, and to allow the amount of valuation to remain on interest till paid off

I am sir very respectfully,
Your obedt. servant,
Thomas W. Jenner
Frant, 10 Nov., 1837.

Tenurial custom then, helps to explain the limited immigration of farmers to the estate. Once established however, farmers could "trade in" a valuation, hoping to profit by the change; and a cumulative degenerative process set in, whereby farmers aimed at profits through moving, as much as by building up a farm. The problem that could arise is illustrated by Penhurst Church farm in 1837. Tilden Smith, a banker and landowner in his own right, and the most prosperous of the Ashburnham tenants, quit Penhurst Church farm in that year, having affected considerable improvements, particularly in draining. His arrangement with Lord Ashburnham was that he could buy the tiles at half price, or claim on quitting; and he took the latter course thereby pushing up the ingoing valuation to £500. The farm was duly let in August 1837 to John Newington, who had occupied Bines farm, Burwash since 1822. Agriculture was then severely depressed but Newington had, it seems, done well in farming and in planting up hops. But he suffered badly from the valuation for Bines farm, and problems over compensation for labour, for seed wheat and tares. In consequence he was forced to sell most of his stock to meet the ingoing valuation at Penhurst Church. With a family of nine children, four of them very young, Newington had tried to take on too large a farm, and the agreement languished. To their credit, the correspondence between Morrison and Lord Ashburnham on the subject is more concerned with the welfare of Newington than with the tenancy of Penhurst Church. Eventually Newington found a 30 acre farm in Heathfield, probably with the help of Morrison².

James Caird was a vigorous opponent of such tenant-right:-

"In the wealds of Surrey and Sussex, where the custom is most stringent, we found the state of agriculture extremely backward, the produce much below the average of England, the tenants deeply embarrassed (*sic*), and the landlords receiving their low rents irregularly; in fact, no man connected with the land thriving, except the appraisers, who were in constant requisition to settle the disputed claims of outgoing and entering tenants. We found both farmers and landlords complaining that the system led to much fraud and chicanery, and that an entering tenant was compelled by it to pay as much for bad as for good farming³."

There may have been some parts of the Weald where the tenant-right system was put to better effect. The evidence of Benjamin Hatch to the Select Committee on Agricultural Customs emphasised the security of capital in making improvements, and of the area around Tenterden it was said that:-

¹ Short, *op. cit.*, 114-8; and *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1301*.

² *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1301*.

³ Caird, *op. cit.*, 506.

“ In consequence of that custom . . . from being one of the worst farmed districts anywhere I know, it is now getting to be one of the best; and I attribute it to this, that other people do not enjoy the same benefits that the men who are making the improvements do”¹.

Hatch was a land valuer and general agent as well as a farmer, but there were many others in the land-connected professions who saw many deficiencies in the Wealden tenurial system. By 1830 it was felt more generally that there should be more restrictions on the tenants' farming practice, and that these should be rigidly enforced. A survey of the Ashburnham estate was made by Edward Driver in 1830, whose general criticism was that there had been no mode of cropping, draining or restrictions on breaking up pastures entered into with tenants². Such general lack of guidance was often disastrous when combined with the very heavy entry sums necessary, which deprived tenants of working capital. Often he was “ obliged to do so as he can, not as he wishes ”, but much depended on his first year. If crops failed, or there was a glut, then financial embarrassment was acute. To compound the problem many relied overmuch on hops—a notoriously unreliable crop—but one which often received disproportionate attention, to the relative neglect of the rest of the farm.

There were therefore three factors combining to effect a degree of transience on the Ashburnham estate. The physical environment was poor, being particularly marginal for wheat, on which too many farmers were dependent at this time. The standard of farming was generally low, and many of the farms were tenanted by younger, less equipped men, or by farmers of an older generation, perhaps still mindful of the beneficent times during the Napoleonic wars, when corn brought profits even on Wealden soils. In addition, most were yearly tenants, part of a system allowing rapid turnover of farmers, aiming to profit through moving encouraged by the complicated tenant-right valuation. Naturally it would be wrong to suppose that all tenants and environments were of an equal quality; and so the ensuing section is devoted to a review of the inter-farm variation on the estate.

Tenancy change at the inter-farm level

Within the Ashburnham farming community the distribution of expertise was far from even. However, it is now difficult to disentangle accurately the abilities as perceived by contemporaries from the problems being faced on individual farms. Driver attributed the generally low returns to a number of factors: laziness, bad systems of cropping, too great an emphasis on hops, lack of capital, high poor rates, and a combination of bad seasons and low prices, the former sparking off sheep rot (foot rot).

Certain holdings were particularly mentioned by Driver in his 1830 survey, as being poorly farmed. Brown Bread Street, tenanted by Charles Stollery, for example, was “ very badly farmed and (is) wet, foul and neglected in all respects ”. Pigknoll was likewise “ wet, foul and neglected and not at all well farmed ”. Driver's finest invective was reserved for Sarah Bartlett's Swan Inn and land at Woods Corner—“ in a most shameful foul and neglected state, and not half cultivated, and the public house is equally badly managed ”. Similar comments were passed on Great Beech, Johns Cross, Potmans, and Sprays farms.

¹ Evidence of Benjamin Hatch to the Select Committee on Agricultural Customs, *Br. Parliamentary Pap.*, vii (1847-8), 219.

² *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1173.*

On the other hand some farms were singled out by Driver as being well managed. Of larger farms were Vinehall, Poundsford, Woodsdale and Netherfield Place; of smaller, Ash Tree, Beech Mill and Foxhole, both of which latter holdings could have managed more land¹. Poundsford and Vinehall were both tenanted by members of the Simes family and remained in the same family's hands throughout the period. Although Edward Simes' arrears of rent in 1837 were complained of and he was suspected of taking lime *gratis* rather than at the normal (reduced) rate², it would appear that the family had built up a tradition of good farming in the Whatlington area. Both Woodsdale and Netherfield Place were in 1830 tenanted by Tilden Smith, the ablest, wealthiest and widest known of the Ashburnham tenants, who held a succession of Ashburnham properties throughout the 1830s. Owning a great deal of land himself to the north east of Ashburnham, some of the tenancies were held with Tilden Smith Sr., until the latter's death in 1834. As a hop grower of many years experience, he was called upon to give evidence to the Select Committee on Hop Duties in 1857, a year in which he was adjudged bankrupt. He was also an enthusiast for the Sussex breed of cattle, taking over the famous herd from Samuel Selmes for use at Knelle farm, Beckley, until his death in 1880, when the herd was dispersed. By 1850 he was farming about 1,200 acres, although this did not include any Ashburnham property, and employing over forty labourers³. Another able farming family, though perhaps on a smaller scale than Smith, was that of the Bourners. By 1850 Peter Bourner (57) was tenant at Brigden Hill and Red Pale, having sold the latter to Lord Ashburnham in 1843; Charles Bourner (43) was at Penhurst Hill; and young Noel Bourner at Scotsham. When Ellis's farm became vacant in 1838, Peter Bourner was offered the tenancy, and only when he declined, was Sinden accepted as tenant.

Where the Simes, Smiths and Bourners farmed there was relative permanency; the farms were well managed, and by about 1840 there was little poor land. Table 2 indicates those farms that did contain poorer fields, and is derived from undated remarks pertaining to farms in an 1835 survey of the estate. Brown Bread Street and Johns Cross still contained a high proportion of 'poor' fields (fields variously described as poor, mossy, foul, rough pasture etc.), but the surprisingly large proportion of the bigger farms which was also less productive should be noted.

Much of Lower Standard Hill is stiff Wadhurst clay, and although Elizabeth Goldsmith was in arrears with her half-yearly rent of £135 by 1842, at least she had the financial resources to stay on the farm. She had also managed to turf-drain (rather old-fashioned by 1840) some of the arable, pasture and hop fields. Much of Wartling Hill farm is on the Pevensy Levels, and much of the grassland at this time was rush-infested. Pencil jottings regarding poor fields may have coincided with Philadelphia Hicks' takeover of the tenancy, since by 1842 the farm was in good shape, and the rent increased by £20 per annum. Driver had recommended that another 20-25 acres be broken up for arable here, since 69% of its area was grassland; or that grassland be dispersed among farms in need of more, such as Homestead farm, with only 27% of its area⁴ pasture. At Homestead farm there were fewer poor fields by about 1840, compared with 1830 when it was very poor and wet, with some fields "very foul", and there was a succession of tenants, with the farm in hand between 1831 and 1833 and partly farmed with Rose Fuller from 1834-40⁴.

¹ *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1173.*

² *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1300.*

³ E. Walford Lloyd, *Sussex Cattle* (1944), 24; and *E.S.R.O. XA9/6.*

⁴ *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1173, 1202, 1993.*

Some farms certainly offered precious little return on invested capital. In the north of the estate steep slopes, poor soils, small fields and remoteness combined in a formidable alliance. The small, somewhat detached farm of Watkins Down had as many as nine tenants during the period. Nearly 32 of the 82 acres were merely 'down'; there was a small hop garden; two or three acres of furze, and the rest was arable—39 acres divided into twelve fields. At over 500ft. on the edge of Heathfield Down, and with land sloping north into the Dudwell valley, it was an inauspicious setting, and only William Hobden, from 1832 to 1837, managed to stay longer than three years. This was an extreme example, but there were other, larger farms, where there was patently an inability to cope with the problems. As well as Homestead farm quoted above, Egmerhurst farm (194 acres) had six tenancies; Netherfield Place (182 acres) had seven, six of them after Tilden Smith left in 1840. Similarly, after Smith quit Woodsdale in 1840 there were four further tenancies, which highlights the difficulty of farming with insufficient capital to match the size of the farm and its problems. There was, in fact, a slight tendency for the number of tenancies to increase with the size of the farm (see footnote 3) and thereby with the total rent to be paid, although not with rent per acre which fell as farm size increased and buildings accounted for less of the total area. William Hobden paid only 4/2d. per acre for Watkins Down farm, but the normal rent at that time for smaller farms was nearer 15s., whereas that for the 269 acres of Vinehall was 9/6d. per acre.

Rent was a sensitive indicator of demand for individual farms. Watkins Down was a difficult farm, but its neighbours on the Dudwell slopes also paid low rents—Poundsford at 8/4d. and Westdown at 8/10d. Some of the other outlying farms similarly were lowrented—Potmans at 8/2d. and Woodsdale at 8/7d. Although distance from Ashburnham Place may have exerted some influence, it was far more likely to have been a response to soils. Gardners Street (19/8d.) and Lords House and Grove farms (£1-1-2d.) were equally distant, but on kinder soils¹. Economic fluctuations, the seasons, and land use decisions also played their parts. If the hop crop prospered rents were forthcoming; but if not, as in 1844, rents fell heavily in arrears. Frederick Ellman, the third of the agents at this period, thought the rent arrears of £700 in 1845 very good, considering the hop blight of the preceding year. In 1846, for example, they amounted to over £1,200. During the depression of the 1820s many rents had been cut, but by the 1840s, probably at the suggestion of Driver, many were increasing. At Grove and Lords House they rose from £245 in 1841 to £295 per annum in 1842; and at Wartling Hill from £400 in 1841 to £420 in 1842. Between 1844 and 1845 some farms could bear rent increases and still attract tenants, as at Egypt farm (£95 to £100) and Herrings farm (£70 to £80); although others were dropped to encourage letting, as at Netherfield Place (£182 to £180) and Padgham (£133 to £126)².

On some farms there were definite signs of what Farncombe in 1850 called the "unincumbered capitalist" at work³. The removal of hedgerows was mentioned at Great Beech farm to form a larger six acre field. At Netherfield Place two fields were merged to form a fifteen acre enclosure; while on lighter soils at Brigden Hill two of the arable fields were 'adapted' for working with two-horse ploughs. At Buckwell farm by 1845 steam threshing was normally used on wheat, beans, peas and oats, while tile drainage gathered momentum. But even at Penhurst Hill farm c. 1840 fields needed draining; 'mine pit' holes at Homestead farm needed filling, and an eight acre field at Brigden Hill was "very badly cultivated"⁴.

¹ *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1202.*

² *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1173 and 1202.*

³ J. Farncombe, On the farming of Sussex, *J.R. Agric. Soc. England*, 11 (1850), 84.

⁴ *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1993.*

TABLE 2. Farms with poor fields c.1840

Farm	Number of 'poor' fields noted	Acreage of 'poor' land	Total acreage	Percentage 'poor' land
Beech Mill	2	10-1-6	44-1-16	23.2
Boreham Street	14	78-0-24	657-1-34	11.9
Brigden Hill	3	24-1-2	221-1-22	11.0
Brown Bread Street	2	7-3-30	38-2-37	20.5
Buckwell	6	35-0-13	195-1-14	18.0
Cinder Hill	4	32-1-30	92-1-15	35.1
Cowden	2	11-3-14	271-3-35	4.4
Giffords	8	56-1-33	171-0-23	33.0
Grove	1	8-0-11	163-2-10	4.9
High Holmstead	1	4-1-12	48-1-27	9.2
Homestead	2	6-1-35	219-1-12	3.0
Johns Cross	3	22-0-36	111-3-14	19.9
Lakehurst	2	4-1-25	26-3-17	16.4
Lemons	1	6-2-13	49-1-4	13.4
Linghams	3	37-0-39	250-3-8	14.8
Lower Standard Hill	7	85-2-25	364-1-19	23.5
Mills	2	19-3-15	93-0-13	21.3
Netherfield Place	1	7-3-24	182-1-8	4.3
Peens	1	1-2-8	117-2-26	1.3
Penhurst Hill	4	26-3-18	130-0-31	20.6
Pigknoll	1	3-2-37	41-3-33	8.9
Poundsford	4	16-3-39	186-0-35	9.1
Scotsham and Glaziers Forge	1	6-0-13	108-0-16	5.6
Slivericks	1	6-0-32	82-0-8	7.6
Vinehall	1	13-3-14	268-3-33	5.2
Wartling Hill	8	62-3-2	308-1-33	20.4
Woodsdale	2	17-1-30	314-0-20	5.6

Source: E.S.R.O., Ashburnham Mss. 1993

In narrowing down the scale of enquiry to the inter-farm level, generalisations become more difficult, and less useful. However, the importance of obtaining an experienced, well equipped tenant is seen to be paramount. If his improvements were lasting, then, as at Penhurst Hill, subsequent tenants might remain and build up the farm. But much depended on the subsequent tenants, for not all were like Charles Bourner coming in to Penhurst Hill in 1837, and a farm could often suffer a series of short tenancies, with tenants taking full advantage of the annual agreement to quit before losing everything. The interrelationship between the physical environment, farming skill and the tenorial system is thus again revealed. All three affected the land use, which in turn affected profits and thereby length of stay, and thus the state of the holding for the incomer. The cumulative effect of the quality of tenant farming was the strongest differentiating force at the inter-farm level.

Concluding remarks

In 1751 Dr. Burton, emerging from "*A traveller's reveries or journey through Surrey and Sussex*" wrote of the "Sussex native":—"... and surely we cannot wonder if the rust, contracted in this muddy soil, should clog the energy of the mind itself". However by 1850 Farncombe was able to distinguish the newer 'improver' from the old type of farmer. The older type might cling to his three-course rotation with naked fallow, his 'keep-sheep' system, and the raising of working cattle. But newer ideas were slowly permeating the Weald, bringing a more intensive system of rotation with more emphasis on clover and seeds; draining; the use of artificial manures; more roots (when soils permitted) and green crops; better livestock management; improved mechanisation; all stimulated by increased markets at the "watering places" by 1850¹.

The signs of change have been noted at Ashburnham, as both cause and effect of tenant turnover. How far did the changes emanate from Ashburnham Place? The fourth earl was clearly interested in agriculture although slightly out of touch; in 1845 he was trying to stave off the threatened potato famine by persuading his labourers to grow rice and eat oatmeal cakes. He was not unpopular; there were not the demonstrations against him in 1830 that there were against Lord Gage at Hellingly or Lord Sheffield at Sheffield Park². Nor was he unheeding of advice, and after 1830 there is a significant tightening of the tenancy agreement clauses. When Sinden came to Ellis's in 1838 there was a clause to the effect that he was:-

"not to sow two successive crops of white strawed grain without a clear preceding fallow well and properly manured and cleaned—or with some intervening green crop (Lord Ashburnham himself stipulated beans) ploughed in according to the usual custom of good husbandry"...

This clause was to remain standard in all agreements beyond 1850, since Driver had commented harshly on the growing of two white straw crops in succession as "bad anywhere, but ruinous on these poor soils". By 1849 James Cane's agreement for Netherfield Place also contained penalties of £20 per acre for conversion of grass to tillage; £10 per acre for meadowland mowed without adequate prior manuring; £10 per load for straw, fodder, manure etc. carried off the farm; as well as a prohibition on the growing of more than twelve acres of hops³. The impact on tenant turnover is not easy to assess. During the 1840s there was a smaller turnover than in the 1830s, except during the free trade panic of the period 1844-46, when many farmers sold off stock too freely. Whether this slightly greater stability is due to the firmer guidance from Ashburnham Place or is traceable to other factors has not been pursued.

By 1850 agricultural change was in the air, although the most dramatic of the nineteenth century changes, the rise of Wealden dairying and poultry farming, were still to come. Times were soon to become more prosperous, as grassland was extended to maximise the environmental potential of the district during the period of "high pressure cultivation"⁴. But in the twenty years before 1850 the Ashburnham tenants had to endure uncertain prices, and uncertain yields; labour unrest, and insecurity of tenure. Many failed to survive.

¹ *BM. Addit. Mss. 11, 571*; and Farncombe, *op. cit.*, 87.

² *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1418*; and E. J. Hobsbawm and George Rude, *Captain Swing* (1969), 314, 322.

³ *E.S.R.O. Ashburnham Mss. 1173, 2229*.

⁴ Report from the Select Committee on Hop Duties (*Br. Parliamentary Pap.*, xiv (1857), 70).

APPENDIX

Farms and Tenants on the Ashburnham estate 1830-1850

<i>Farm</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Size (acres)</i>	<i>Tenants</i>	<i>Number of Tenants 1830-1850</i>
Ash Tree	Ashburnham	16-2-31	Hen. Richardson 1830-1850	1
Averys	Ashburnham	17-1-39	Jesse Smith 1830-32; Thos. Talbot 1832-41; Geo. Isted 1841-50	3
Beech mill	Battle	45-2-38	Jn. Shaw 1830 to 1850	1
Boreham St.	Wartling	700-0-38	Jn. & Francis Scrase 1830-32; Thos. Jenner 1832-42 Robt. Pursglove 1842-50	3
Brigden Hill	Ashburnham	221-1-6	Ed. Cooke 1830-35; Peter Bourner 1835-50	2
Brown Bread Street	Ashburnham	38-2-37	Chas. Stollery 1830-48; Anne Stollery 1848-50	2
Buckwell	Dallington & Ashburnham	195-0-28	Is. Veness 1830-36; Jos. Veness 1836-39; Jos. Veness & pt. in hand 1839-45; Jos. Bishop, Zach. Elliott, Reverend Munn 1845-50	4
Cinder Hill	Ashburnham & Dallington	87-0-24	Is. Veness 1830-36; Jos. Veness 1836-45 (Wm. Noakes pt. tenant 1840); Wm. Noakes 1845-50	3
Coldharbour	Brightling	25-0-34	Wm. Crouch 1830 to 1850	1
Comb Hill	Ninfield & Ashburnham	83-2-20	Wm. Lemmon 1830-39; Chas. Collins 1839-50	2
Court Lodge	Ashburnham & Penhurst	214-0-2	Ben. Hilder 1830-32; Jn. Veness & Sawyer 1832-5; Jn. Veness 1835-45; Robt. Partridge 1845-50	4
Cowden	Wartling	272-1-5	Nich. & David Oxley 1830-34; Eliz. Oxley 1834-44; Othniel Oxley 1844-50	3
Cox's Mill	Burwash & Dallington	30-2-18	Rich. Saunders 1830-39; Wm. Brett 1839-42; Wm. Clarke & Alb. Geering 1842-50	3
Egmerhurst	Ashburnham & Catsfield	193-3-17	In hand, 1830-31; Hen. Smith 1831-32; Tilden Smith & Son 1832-33; Hen. Smith & Wm. Pennington 1833-34; Til. Smith & Hen. Smith 1834-5; In hand 1835-50	6
Egypt (Batsford)	Warbleton & Dallington	112-1-23	Jn. Pattenden 1830-45; Levi Lade 1845-50	2
Ellis's (Little Beech)	Penhurst	49-2-14	Til. Smith 1830-38; Wm. Sinden 1838-50	2
Foxhole	Battle	36-2-6	Jn. Carter 1830-47 Sam. Hobden 1847-50	2
Gardners St. (Buckle)	Herstmonceux	52-3-35	Ed. Vine up to 1830; Widow Vine 1830-33; Jas. Everest 1833-46; Mary Everest 1846-50	4

<i>Farm</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Tenants</i>	<i>Number of Tenants 1830-1850</i>
Giffords	Brightling & Dallington	171-1-3	Thos. Marchant 1830 to 1850	1
Glaziers Forge	Burwash & Brightling	14-0-2	Jn. Westover 1830-33; Wm. Dawes 1833-50	2
Glydes	Ashburnham	46-1-25	Geo. Isted 1836 to 1850	1
Great Beech	Battle	180-1-11	Thos. Hunt 1830-37; Wm. Jenner 1837-40; Treyton Christmas 1840-50	3
Grove	Hooe	163-2-10	Ben. Blackman 1830-39; Jn. & Sam. Blackman 1839-50	2
Haselden	Dallington & Brightling	220-1-39	Jn. Veness 1830-39; Simmons 1839-42; Jn. Smith 1842-50; In Hand 1850	4
Herrings	Dallington & Ashburnham	132-0-14	Sam. Taylor 1830-44; In hand 1844-45; Jn. Catt 1845-50	3
High Holmstead	Warbleton	48-1-27	Thos. Dann 1830-49; Stephen Pilbeam 1849-50	2
Homestead	Brightling, Battle & Dallington	219-1-17	Jn. Martin 1830-31; In hand 1831-33; Stevens 1833-34; In hand & Rose Fuller 1834-40; Wm. Dawber 1840-43; Thos. Easton 1843-50	6
Ivylands	Battle	51-0-19	Thos. Veness 1830-45; Jas. Ellis 1845-49; Jas. Honeysett 1849-50	3
Johns Cross	Mountfield	97-3-35	Rachel Simes 1830-32; Wm. Dawes 1832-33; Geo. Dawes 1833-43; Isaac Mannington 1843-50	4
Kitchenham	Ashburnham & Ninfield	331-0-36	Wm. Dray 1830-31; Hen. Smith 1831-40; Robt. Kenward 1840-41; Robt. Kenward & Geo. Jenner 1841-50	4
Lakehurst	Dallington	25-3-37	Sam. Elliott 1830-46; Zach. Elliott 1846-50	2
Lattendens	Ashburnham & Dallington	38-3-37	Thos. Noakes 1830-36; Jn. Veness 1836-38; Jos. Golden & Ed. Noakes 1838-47; Jn. Hook 1847-48; Robt. Partridge 1848-50 (Hen. Ticehurst part tenant 1849)	5
Lemons	Wartling	39-0-34	Jn. Pattenden 1830-46; Luke Lade 1846-48; Levi Lade 1848-50	3
Linghams	Ashburnham	261-0-37	Wm. Pennington 1830-37; Thos. Wickham 1837-44; Chas. Jenner 1844-50	3
Little Ponds	Ashburnham	52-0-18	Thos. Noakes 1830-38; Thos. Cook 1838-46; Jesse Oliver 1846-50	3
Lords House	Hooe	67-2-8	Ben. Blackman 1830-39; Jen. & Sam. Blackman 1839-50	2
Lower Standard Hill	Ninfield & Ashburnham	364-1-19	Francis Tapsell 1830-31; Eliz. Goldsmith 1831-50; Humph. Carpenter 1850	3

<i>Farm</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Tenants</i>	<i>Number of Tenants 1830-1850</i>
Mills Netherfield Place	Wartling Battle	99-2-11 182-1-18	Stephen Pettit 1832-50 Til. Smith & Son 1830-40; Jas. Overy 1840; Wm. Dawber 1840-44; In hand 1844-45; Jas. Overy 1845-46; In hand 1846-49; Jas. Cane 1849-50	1 7
Padgham	Warbleton & Dallington	202-0-0	Jesse Smith 1837-45 (Part in hand 1838); Jn. Bishop 1845-49; In hand 1849-50	3
Peens Penhurst Church	Penhurst Penhurst	117-3-6 224-0-5	Jos. Sinden 1830 to 1850 Til. Smith 1830-37; Jas. Weston 1837-43; Wm. Neve 1843-49; Ed. Carter 1849-50	1 4
Penhurst Hill	Penhurst	130-1-22	Til. Smith 1830-37; Chas. Bourner 1837-50	2
Pettits	Ashburnham	9-2-16	Robt. Pettit 1830-39; Jn. Creasy 1839-50	2
Pigknoll	Ashburnham	42-0-24	Mary Isted 1830-35; Jn. Isted 1835-50	2
Potmans	Catsfield & Ninfield	109-2-31	Ann Adams 1830-41; Geo. Sargent 1841-50	2
Poundsford	Burwash	175-1-32	Thos. & Ed. Simes 1830; In hand 1830-32; Ed. Simes 1832-50	3
Rabbits Redlands	Warbleton Ashburnham	35-2-8 63-0-0	Thos. Burgess 1830-1850 Jas. Noakes 1838-45; Jesse Oliver 1845-50	1 2
Red Pale	Dallington, Ashburn- ham & Warbleton	115-1-34	Peter Bourner 1842-50	1
Riccards	Wartling	37-1-22	Wm. Holland 1830-32; Jas. Bellingham 1832-34; Jn. Collins 1834-50	3
Sackville (Old House)	Herstmonceux	194-3-15	Robt. Pursglove 1830-46; Jas. Morris 1846-49; Ed. Watson 1849-50	3
Scotsham	Burwash & Brightling	90-1-39	Jn. Westover 1830-31; Jn. Westover & Widow Clerk 1831-32; Widow Clerk & Wm. Dawes 1832-47; Wm. Dawes 1847-50; Noel Bourner 1850	5
Slivericks	Dallington	81-3-13	Is. Veness 1830-36; Jn. Veness 1836-40; Ed. Noakes & Is. Golden 1840-41; Wm. Noakes 1841-50	4
Sprays	Penhurst	288-2-37	Robt. Hembury 1830-31; Stephen Barrow 1831-35; Wm. Mitchell 1835-39; G. Lovell & Son 1839-41; G. Lovell Jnr. 1841-50	5
Vinehall	Mountfield, Whatling- ton & Salehurst	286-1-30	Jn. Simes 1830-46; Chas Simes 1846-50	2

<i>Farm</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Tenants</i>	<i>Number of Tenants 1830-1850</i>
Wartling Hill (Court Lodge)	Wartling	308-3-10	Jn. & Francis Scrase 1830-32; Rich. Hicks 1832-38; Philadelphia Hicks 1838-50	3
Watkins Down	Heathfield, Warbleton & Burwash	47-2-32	Thos. Store 1830-31; Robt. Mitchell 1831-32; Wm. Hobden 1832-37; Jesse Mitten 1837-40; Wm. Webb 1840-42; Rich. Kealy 1842-43; Geo. Collins 1843-45; Nat. Piper 1845-48; Jas. Butcher 1848-50	9
Westdown	Burwash	169-2-29	Widow Hicks 1830-31; In hand 1831-33; Thos. Marchant 1833-44; Ed. Lansdell 1844-50	4
Williams Land	Wartling	34-2-17	Jn. Scrase 1830-32; Geo. Bray 1832-45; Robt. Pursglove 1845-50	3
Woods (Hoods) Corner	Dallington	44-0-33	Sarah Bartlett 1830-35; Wm. Bartlett 1835-47; Stephen Baker 1847-50	3
Woodsdale	Battle & Mountfield	261-2-32	Til. Smith 1830-40; Jas. Overy & Chas. Jenner 1840-43; Is. Mannington & Wm. Dawber 1843-46; Is. Mannington & Jas. Overy 1846-48; Is. Mannington 1848-50	5

Note 1. All measurements are in acres, roods and perches.

2. All changes in tenancy were at Michaelmas, except in the case of James Overy at Netherfield Place in 1840, who entered in May.

Source: Various (see text).

NOTES

- 1 The somewhat vague term 'area' is used deliberately to refer to a group of parishes, since there is a scale factor to be considered here. Many of the parishes in the Forest Ridge section of the High Weald are much smaller than those, for example around the Ashdown Forest, and the effect of one farmer leaving would therefore be exaggerated in percentage terms. To counter this one can use aggregated groups of parishes to give units of approximately the same size, thereby ruling out scale distortion. For details of the groupings used see B. M. Short, *Agriculture in the High Weald of Kent and Sussex 1850 to 1953* (A case study in the application of multivariate techniques in the field of historical geography), *University of London unpublished Ph.D. thesis*, 1973, 30-35.
- 2 Definitions of 'flat land' vary, but that adopted here is an average slope of 2° 50' for each 1 km. grid square on the 1: 63360 Ordnance Survey maps. For further details see Short, *op. cit.*, 61; and A. A. Miller, *Skin of the Earth* (1965), 46-9.
- 3 Statistically this was not a significant relationship, since a product-moment correlation coefficient of only +0.24 existed between the sizes of 59 farms and the number of tenancies from 1830 to 1850. The average size of farm was 137 acres, and the average number of tenancies was 3.