

The Manor of Farleigh: the evidence for economic changes during the 14th century

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The manorial accounts for Farleigh illustrate the effects of economic change throughout the 14th century. Comparisons with other manors provide evidence for wider regional effects in east Surrey.

Introduction

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The manor of Farleigh is situated in Surrey on the North Downs about 24km to the south of London; an estate map of 1768 shows that it was a relatively small manor, covering 1051 acres. The map also shows that the boundaries of manor and parish coincided at that date – a situation which existed until the later years of the 20th century, when the parish was amalgamated with Chelsham and Warlingham.¹

While there is archaeological evidence² for the occupation of Farleigh during the Roman period, the first documentary reference is found in a 9th century charter when ealdorman Alfred, described as *dux*, granted land in Fearnlega to Eadred in return for payment of 30 measures of corn to the monks of Rochester.³ At the time of the Domesday survey the manor, like many others in Kent and Surrey, was held in overlordship by Richard de Clare and, together with the adjoining manor of Chelsham, it was held by Robert Watvile, who was a major tenant of the Clares.⁴ The Clare overlordship lasted until the death of Gilbert de Clare in 1314, when it passed by marriage to the Despensers who retained it until 1375 when the overlordship lapsed. The Watviles held the lordship of Farleigh until the mid-13th century but, by then, William Watvile had granted his manors of Farleigh and Malden (about 18km to the north-west of Farleigh) to Walter de Merton, chancellor to Henry III.⁵ In 1264, Gilbert de Clare gave formal approval to the transfer, allowing the revenues from the two manors to be used to support a religious establishment in Malden, run by a warden and priests who would manage the manors of Farleigh and Malden and provide money for the education of twenty poor scholars at a university.⁶

It was not until 1274 that this establishment moved to Oxford after Walter de Merton had acquired a building there which was suitable for scholars. He then combined the two elements of teaching and administration in one building and called it Merton College. He also laid down the statutes for governing his foundation. He later acquired other manors, including a third Surrey manor at Leatherhead, called Thorncroft.

Following the instructions laid down in the founder's statutes, the manors held by Merton College were under the direct control of the warden or principal, and he, or some of his officials, were required to visit them at regular intervals. Evidence for the visits is found in the account rolls of the various manors which list the expenses of the warden and his officials. On their visits to Farleigh, they stayed at the manor house there. In compliance with the same statutes, the local official, or *serviens*, rendered his accounts annually to the bursars and fellows of the college. The affairs of the tenants were managed at the court baron where a steward, appointed by the college, presided over the meetings. Evidence from the 13th century rolls shows that at that date the same steward was responsible for all three Surrey manors.⁷ The lordship of the manor has remained unchanged since the 13th century and, in the 1990s, the college is still the largest landholder in Farleigh.

Detailed population numbers for Farleigh were given in 1767 by the Rev Joseph Kilner

who, after serving as bursar at Merton College, retired to Farleigh and became rector there. He described his parish as 'very small and retired', containing about twenty families consisting of 94 individuals.⁸ Kilner's population figure of 94 is corroborated by the census returns of 1801 which recorded 95 inhabitants – a population density which remains the same in the 1990s.⁹

RESOURCES

The account rolls for Farleigh reveal the mixed agricultural basis of the manor in the 14th century, when about 180 acres were used for growing wheat, oats, barley and peas, some of which were sold. Further income was derived from the sale of sheep and wool, pasture and pannage, eggs, fruit, dairy products – especially cheese, and products of the woodland, such as timber, laths and shingles, which were used for building, and firewood and charcoal for fuel. The park was already established by 1278 and was used principally as a source of timber, while the land outside the demesne was held by tenants, some of whom owed customary work on the lord's land.

In the 18th century, Kilner commented that the parish covered about 1000 acres, with about 300 acres being planted with corn and about 400 given over to pasture and hay crops. His figures are supported by the crop returns for 1801 which show that at that date 321 acres were used for the production of wheat, oats, barley, turnips, peas and potatoes, with the remainder being divided between pasture and woodland.¹⁰ The account of Farleigh given in the *Victoria County History* in 1912 suggests that because of its situation on the North Downs, where the chalk is capped with a mixture of brick earth, clay and gravel, the soil is not particularly fertile, with the result that a considerable amount of land was used for woodland.¹¹ From these post-1700 studies, a general picture emerges of a small manor with a low density of population, dependent on a mixed economy of arable, pasture and woodland, continuing the pattern which had been established in the medieval period.

Records

For the manor of Farleigh the earliest surviving records date from 1278 and, for the purpose of this study, the account rolls from 1322 until 1375 have been analysed. There is additional information in the account roll for 1278 which has been published by the Surrey Record Society.¹² I have also used court rolls and rentals for the period 1329-99 which provide information about population numbers in Farleigh for the mid-14th century, before and after the Black Death. The records are kept at Merton College, Oxford.¹³ For comparative material, I have also used the manorial accounts for the Surrey manors of Tillingdown (which is now part of Caterham), Titsey, and Merrow, near Guildford.¹⁴

Manor house, outbuildings and garden (TQ 372602)

The court house, or manor house, was the focal point of the manor. It was a permanent home for the bailiff and various household servants and labourers; it also provided temporary quarters for the officials of Merton College while they were supervising the manor and holding meetings of the manor court at the house. For example, an inventory of the house in 1432 mentioned 'a table with trestles as provision for the warden and a table for the warden's household'.¹⁵

From the accounts we can identify a series of domestic buildings which formed part of the manorial complex. There was a hall and at least two chambers, a kitchen, a bakehouse and brew-house, together with farm buildings, consisting of barns, a sheep-house, a stable and a straw-house.

Repairs to roofs were a frequent and major item of expenditure. We can see that in 1322 money was paid out for work on the roofs of various buildings. These included the kitchen, which was roofed with oak saplings; there was a new roof for a building which had formerly

been a smithy, while the large barn, the hall, the brew-house and bakehouse all had work done on their roofs.

While the account for 1322 shows extensive work being done to the roofs, there are no references to tiles or tilers, which may indicate that the buildings were roofed (*cooperire*) with shingles, or thatched. There was a contrast in 1333, when money was paid for tiling (*tegere*) the barn and the hall. The words *tegere* and *tegulator* (tiler) were also used in 1356 when there were references to tiling the sheep-house, the cattle-shed, barn and stable. In 1358 tilers were again working on the hall and the sheep-house.

Carpentry was a significant item in the maintenance of the house and outbuildings. In 1367 further work was done on the kitchen, when a carpenter was employed to lay foundation beams (*grunsillare*) and a new kitchen wall was built and plastered. The carpenter also fitted upright timbers in the straw-house which adjoined the kitchen. Clearly, the kitchen and straw-house were thatched at this date, since straw was bought for their roofs. In addition, the carpenter installed a gutter to drain the porch of the manor house and built furniture for the interior. He made a table-top and a pair of trestles for the lord's chamber and a cupboard and a board for holding cheese in the kitchen. There is also an indication that stone (probably greensand from the Merstham-Reigate quarries) was used for repairs – a stone-mason (*cimitarius*) was paid to repair 'the corner of the small chamber'.¹⁶

The manor house has continued in use until the 20th century, as a farmhouse, an administrative centre for the manor and as a home for employees. A building account for the early 16th century refers to tiling the hay loft, the stable, the kitchen and the granary, while the carpenter worked on the malt-house, the barn and the barn porch. The building materials at this date consisted of nails, tiles, timber, laths, sand, lime and stone.¹⁷ When Kilner described the manor in 1767, he gave the number of inhabitants as 94, and eighteen of these were living in the manor house.¹⁸

The manor house complex in 1868 is shown in figure 1. The present-day house, known as Farleigh Court, is still moated; the account of 1278 referred to the moat and also mentioned vegetables being planted in the garden. In 1358 a man was hired for three days to make a fence around the garden, and apples and pears featured in the accounts as products of the garden.

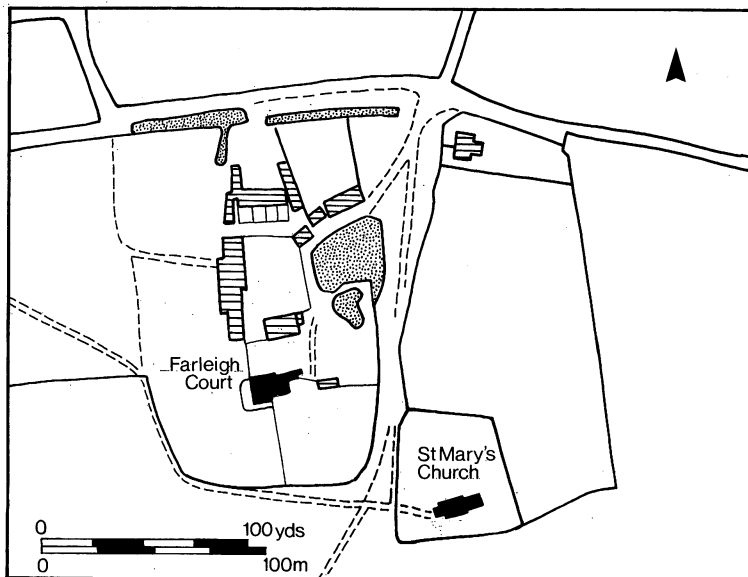


Fig 1 The manor house complex, based on the OS map of 1868. Areas of water are stippled. The moat is still visible on the north and east.

Crops

The crops produced in Farleigh in the 14th century were wheat, barley, oats, sprig, peas, beans and vetch. We can make some assessment of the acreage under plough by looking at the amount of seed allocated for the following year's sowing (table 1).

date	no of acres to be sown	selling price of wheat (pence per bushel)
1278	127 (harvested)	8.5
1322	189	11
1333	228	7
1348	178 (harvested)	11
1351	169	-
1356	115	10
1358	18	10
1367	-	-
1375	150	14

Table 1 Crops

The figures for the acres harvested correspond reasonably closely with the number of acres to be sown; for this reason the number of acres harvested has been included for 1348 since there are no references to sowing. For comparison with the previous century, 127 acres were harvested in 1278. The total figures for 1322 and 1333 do not include the acres for wheat, since there are no references to wheat seed in these years. Analysis of the figures for harvesting and sowing suggest that the number of acres of wheat and oats were roughly the same from 1322 until 1356. We may explain the low figures for seed in 1358 by the decision to lease 112 acres of demesne arable in 1356.¹⁹

A factor in the prices for the years 1348-51 was the intervention of purveyors, as the Crown exercised its right of purveyance – of taking supplies which might later be paid for, 'often at ridiculously low prices'.²⁰ In fact, the prices paid in Farleigh for wheat by the royal purveyors 'for the king's pack-horses' in 1348 were higher than the average price for wheat, since they paid 12d per bushel, compared with 10d or 11d for other sales. The price paid for oats, at 4d a bushel, showed no change from prices in 1322 and 1333. When the queen's purveyors took oats in 1351, they paid at an increased price of 5d a bushel. There was no reference to purveyance after 1351. These prices suggest that the royal purveyors were paying for goods at market prices. However, Farleigh had to bear additional costs, since the manor provided these purveyors and their companions with food and accommodation and fodder for their animals.

There is evidence for bad weather affecting the crops, since the account for 1351 referred to the loss of much of the barley crop, which had been harvested, but left in the fields, and it was badly affected by heavy rain (*per ingentem incrementum aquarum*) in September. There was a shortage of hay in the same year and all the vetch was used to feed the draught animals.

Other crops, such as apples and pears from the garden, brought in small amounts ranging from 1s 0d to 3s 0d a year.

Firewood and timber

While cereal crops featured in the accounts of most years, wood for fuel and timber for building were also consistent products of the manor.

Firewood was categorized as faggots, fardells and talwood, all of which were sold in bundles, often in amounts of 100 bundles at a time (*centena*). As a rough guide to size, a statute of 1552-3 defined the size of a bundle of talwood as being about 1½ yards (1.5m) long

and 18 inches (0.46m) in circumference at the middle.²¹ During the 14th century the average price for 100 bundles in Farleigh ranged from 2s 4d to 3s 6d, with the lowest price of 2s 4d occurring in 1348, when perhaps there was less demand for the products because of the fall in population caused by the Black Death. The highest amount of income was generated in 1322 when faggots were sold at 3s 6d for 100 bundles and an income of £2 10s 0d was recorded. In later years, sales of wood brought in amounts ranging from £1 1s 0d to £1 16s 0d. The accounts mentioned specific areas of woodland which were cropped for firewood, notably the west wood, le Frith (now Frith wood) and the park.

Timber was also cropped in the same woods. Much of the timber was used for building work within the manor. For example, oak saplings were used for the kitchen roof; beams were sawn for the kitchen walls, and thousands of shingles and laths were produced for the manor house complex. Additional products included hurdles for the sheep-fold. In 1333, 96 hurdles were produced and about half of these were sent to Thorncroft. Other hurdles were made for the sheep-fold in Farleigh in 1358 and further products of the woodland included the manufacture of 100 dung baskets in 1356. In addition, the court rolls show that timber was provided by the officials of Merton for tenants to carry out repairs to their property.

Bark was among the by-products of timber and the court roll for 1329 contains an incidental reference to a tannery. It occurred when William le Forester brought a complaint against the reeve, Stephen Bryan. Forester stated that he had made a tannery as ordered, but Bryan had withheld 6d out of his wages because the work was not properly done. An enquiry of 1364 provides further evidence about the use of wood and timber. The enquiry was held 'in the presence of the warden', to examine the activities of John Bele, keeper of the woodland, who was accused of selling timber, bark and loppings, together with shingles and laths, without keeping proper records. The jurors at the enquiry mentioned the sale of almost 400 timber trees and other items of wood and timber. The same enquiry gives some clues about who was buying the products and the distances over which they were being traded. The purchasers included the blacksmith of the adjoining manor of Addington, Otto of Croydon, the bailiff of Morden and the vicar of Chelsham, who was using it for repairs to Chelsham church.²² This evidence suggests that woodland products were being moved within a radius of about 24km from Farleigh.

Animals

date	draught animals	sheep and lambs	fleeces	skins	pigs and piglets
1278	21	-	-	-	-
1322	18	461	457	16	49
1333	17	310	283	15	22
1348	18	-	90	40	19
1351	24	325	480	56	41
1356	11	290	632	86	40
1358	10	204	-	67	7
1367	-	135	107	-	-
1375	8	-	-	-	14

Table 2 Animals

DRAUGHT ANIMALS

Langdon has discussed the terminology used to describe draught animals and has concluded that animals designated as stots (*stotti*) and affers (*affri, aufri, averi*,) were likely to be horses, whereas oxen were specifically noted as *boves*. Certainly the terms stots and affers were used interchangeably in the Farleigh accounts; for example, in 1333 the stock was listed as 17 stots but, in the accounts for fodder and purchase, they were described as 2 cart horses and 15

offers. The draught animals used in Farleigh generally consisted of 2 cart-horses and a varying number of stots or offers. For comparison, there were 3 cart horses and 18 stots in 1278 for two ploughs. Between 1322 and 1348 there were 15 or 16 stots, but in 1351 the number reached 22. However, the accounts for fodder show that this apparent increase in numbers did not represent an expansion of production, since 10 of the animals died of disease between November and March and 4 replacements were brought in by Richard of Peckham, an official of Merton College. The accounts also show that there were problems with fodder that year, since much of the barley crop was affected by bad weather and, from Christmas until 1 May, the fodder was reserved for 2 cart horses and 8 plough horses. In 1356, 11 horses (*equi*) were listed as stock, but the account for fodder described them as 11 offers, which bears out Langdon's view that offers were likely to be horses. In 1358, there were 2 cart horses and 8 offers but, by the 1370s, oxen (*boves*) were being used. In 1375, there were 3 cart horses (but the number then fell to 2 when 1 was stolen) and there were 6 oxen. The change from horses to oxen may have been related to cost reduction, since oxen were cheaper to feed than horses.²³

If we look at items included under the costs of ploughs and wages for ploughmen, we can find further evidence of changes. We can see that in demesne from 1322 until 1351 there were generally 2 ploughs and, since the number of plough animals usually averaged at 16, we have evidence for demesne plough teams of 8 horses. By 1356 there was a change, as the number of plough animals fell to 9, which suggests that there was only one plough team at this date. The account for wages shows the same effect, with just 1 plough-holder and 1 driver, compared with 2 in the previous years. There was a further fall in 1375, when the size of the plough team was reduced to 6 oxen. These changes coincided with the leasing out of areas of the demesne arable to customary tenants, reducing the need for demesne draught animals.

CATTLE

The account for cattle usually listed 1 bull, up to 5 calves and a maximum of 16 cows. In 1333 there were problems arising from disease since, out of a herd of 13 cows, 6 died 'suddenly', all 7 calves died and no more were produced because the cows were barren. In 1351 the cows began to be leased out at the rate of 4s 6d each because there was a shortage of demesne workers to look after them. From 1356 onwards, 10 cows were leased out annually to a dairy farmer at 4s 6d each and this agreement later became a ten-year lease.

Between 1322 and 1367, the products of the dairy appeared regularly on the accounts and brought in between £2 0s 0d and £3 0s 0d a year. In 1322 there was the highest total of 155 cheeses, which is comparable with the figure of 156 in 1278. There were various sizes and qualities of cheese which were sold at prices ranging from 1d to 5d. The largest cheeses were made in summer and were sold for 5d each, whereas the winter, or rowan, cheeses, which were of poorer quality, sold for 1d each. In summer the dairy produced one cheese every day but at other times it produced one cheese in two days. While most of the cheese was sold, 4 medium-sized cheeses were used to feed the harvest workers, 2 smaller ones went to the warden, the vicar received one large cheese and one cheese was allowed to the dairyman. In 1322, the dairy also produced the largest amount of butter. It produced 11 'gallons' (*galena*), of butter in summer; most of this was sold but 2 'gallons' were kept to grease the sheep. After 1322, the butter was generally kept for greasing the sheep and was not sold. The dairy was particularly affected by the shortage of workers caused by the Black Death and, in the period 1348-51, no-one was employed there '*causa ingentis pestis*'.

The accounts include references to expenses incurred by the dairy, such as the purchase of lengths of cloth, churns, rennet, wooden buckets, paddles, earthenware dishes and salt. By 1333, the number of cheeses had fallen to 133 and, in 1348, the accounts show that the dairy was in the process of being leased out. There was no separate account for butter or cheese that year and both items were bought to feed the harvest workers. From 1351 onwards, butter

and cheese were regularly bought in. From 1322 until 1367, the accounts show that milk for the butter and cheese was produced by both cows and sheep.

SHEEP

There was a gradual reduction in the number of sheep and lambs over the period of this study (table 2). The figures suggest that the manor could generally support between 200 and 300 sheep. The high number of 461 in 1332 included 124 sheep and lambs delivered to 'Gamelegeye'. (Gamlingay in Cambridgeshire was a Merton College manor). Disease may have affected the size of the flock from then on. For example, in 1356, oats had to be fed to some of the sheep which were weak from a disease called 'le Pockes'. Apart from the reference to Gamlingay, there is only one other indication of sheep being transferred from Farleigh – in 1367 hurdles were bought to fold the sheep before they were sent to be sold at Kingston market, at a distance of about 20km from Farleigh. By 1375, there was no account for sheep because John atte Welle rendered it separately 'elsewhere' (*alibi*). One shepherd was still employed, but without any extra help. This suggests that most of the sheep were being farmed outside the demesne by the 1370s.

It is difficult to give comparative figures for the number of fleeces produced in the manor, since figures were not given consistently (table 2). Where figures were given, the overall trend shows a reduction from 457 fleeces in 1322 to 107 in 1367. In 1356, the number rose to 632 but on the next account in 1358 all the wool from Farleigh was sold with the wool from Malden and was not recorded separately. In 1367 only 107 fleeces were sold, which included 70 from the previous year.

The sale of skins (table 2) was related to the incidence of disease, since healthy animals were kept for their wool. An outbreak of 'le Pockes' was responsible for the high figure of 86 skins sold in 1356. The figure was so high that it required a special note in the account, stating that it was acknowledged by the steward. The account for 1358 may also show the continuing effects of the disease, since many of the skins were worthless (*debiles valde*), as witnessed by Richard Billingham, the steward. By 1375, both wool and skins were entered on the account of John Bloxham and did not appear on the roll for Farleigh. A few hides of horses and cows were sold each year, again relating to the numbers of animals which had died. Occasionally the leather was dressed and used on the manor to make harnesses and pieces of equipment, which suggests that the tannery was still in operation there.

PIGS

The number of pigs and piglets varied from 49 in 1322 to 7 in 1358 (table 2). The figures show a similar trend to the number of sheep; there was a general reduction, with a large fall in 1333 and an increase in 1351. The availability of woodland probably played a part in the use of pigs, since they could be put to pasture in woodland. However, there were difficulties with feeding them; for example, in 1351, they were fed on chaff, because of a shortage of fodder. Generally, the pigs were fattened up for eating at Farleigh – '*ad lardarium*', while some carcasses were cured and stored as ham or bacon. Like the sheep, they were also affected by disease and, in 1348, 6 died 'suddenly'. By 1375, there were 14 pigs in demesne but tenants were also maintaining their own pigs and they paid for pannage in the park.

POULTRY

A variety of domestic fowl provided income for the manor. These consisted of geese, ducks, chickens and their eggs. The numbers of geese were at their highest level of 29 in 1322 and gradually fell to 6 in 1375. The numbers of ducks and chickens were more variable and ranged from 70 to 106 between 1322 and 1351. At the same time, they produced between 200 and 400 eggs. In 1322, the young fowl suffered from the depredations of foxes and polecats, when 31 were killed in this way. Some chickens and geese were used to feed the workers at

harvest-time, and others were kept to supply the warden's households. Until 1351, the rents of customary tenants included 17-19 chickens but, by 1356, these amounts had been commuted into money and the tenants paid sums of 2s 7d or 2s 9d instead.

Workforce

DEMESNE WORKERS

In 1278 the demesne workforce consisted of 4 ploughmen, a carter, a shepherd, a cowman, a dairyman or woman, a harrower, a haystacker, a cook and a boy to help with the sheep. This gives a total of 12 but some workers, like the haystacker, probably carried out more than one task. Table 3 shows how this figure changed in the 14th century.

date	number of labourers	annual wage of plough-holder	daily wage of roofer
1278	12	3s 3d	-
1322	12	7s 0d	4d
1333	10	7s 0d	3d
1348	9	7s 0d	-
1351	9	10s 0d	3d
1356	5	8s 6d	4d-5d
1358	6	7s 6d	4d
1367	-	-	-
1375	3	6s 7d	-

Table 3 Workforce

Although the number of workers was the same in 1322 as in 1278, the basis of the workforce was different. There was no longer a cook or a stacker, and additional shepherds were employed. This change reflects the larger number of sheep in 1322. There were also 19 women in temporary employment that year to wash and shear the sheep and lambs. After 1322, there was usually one full-time shepherd helped by a boy at the time of lambing. However, by 1375, there was just one shepherd. We can see the same pattern with the other workers; in 1322 there were 2 ploughs in demesne, requiring 4 ploughmen; by 1356, there was 1 plough with 2 ploughmen and, in 1375, this fell to just one full-time ploughman.

CRAFTSMEN

Craftsmen were employed from time to time to carry out building work on the manor house and its associated buildings. The craftsmen most commonly employed were carpenters, which reflects the extensive use of timber in the buildings. Thatchers and tilers were also employed occasionally and there was one reference to a mason working on a corner of the manor house. A blacksmith was employed to work on the ploughs and to shoe the horses and oxen.

CUSTOMARY TENANTS

Customary tenants carried out specific tasks within the manor as a condition of their tenancies. The rental of 1335 details these tasks: 9 tenants were required to help with the ploughing, to work at harvest-time, to collect stubble, to cart dung, to wash and shear sheep, and to weed and harrow. However, the rental of 1335 put a monetary value on these tasks, showing that they might be commuted into money which could be used to hire labourers.

This process was already evident in 1278, when the customary tenants paid 18s 0d instead of helping with the harvest. However, as circumstances changed and the costs of wage labour increased, Merton College might insist on tenants doing the work. The effects of shortages of tenants caused by the Black Death first began to emerge in 1348 when 12 men were hired to mow 'with the customary tenants'. This was followed in 1351 with payments to 40 labourers (*operarii*) for two days' work at harvest-time. Then in 1356, 23 reapers were hired for the same purpose. By 1358, the harvest was gathered by customary tenants, but with the addition of one labourer brought in by the steward.

Wages

The wages of the chief ploughmen, or plough-holders, featured consistently in the records (table 3); changes in their wages were reflected in the wages of other labourers, as differentials were maintained. The plough-holders' annual wage in 1278 was 3s 3d, which shows that it had more than doubled in 44 years between 1278 and 1322, whereas the changes over the next 53 years of these records were on a much smaller scale. This suggests that the Black Death had less effect on wages than the economic problems of the later 13th century and early 14th century. However, these figures clearly show that shortages caused by the Black Death did affect agricultural wages. The highest payment of 10s 0d in 1351 is accompanied by a note on the account roll that an extra payment of 1s 0d was made to 'the master ploughman' (*magister carrucator*). The subsequent fall in wages shows that labour was more generally available by 1356. All the labourers were entitled to receive an allowance of grain, usually defined as 'mixture'. In 1278 the ploughman received an allowance at the rate of one bushel a week; by 1333 this had decreased to less than a bushel a week, but on the remainder of the accounts it reverted to one bushel per week.

There is additional information about the costs of other tasks which followed the same trend as the ploughmen's wages; for example, threshing various types of grain averaged at 2d per quarter, but in 1351, it rose to 4d a quarter for wheat and sprig, with the comment that the manorial labourers helped with the task. The costs of gathering in the harvest similarly rose in 1351. Prior to 1351, the cost of harvesting one acre averaged at 7d but in 1351 it rose to 10d an acre for wheat, vetch and sprig. In addition, the accounts for 1348-58 include the costs of food provided for the harvesters; this consisted of cheese, bread, ale, meat, fish and butter, while the manor provided ham, a goose, cheese and eggs.

The craftsmen's wages were less subject to change and ranged from 3d to 5d per day. The wages for roofers appear on most of the accounts and there appears to be no distinction between the wages of tilers or thatchers (table 3). These wages are similar to those paid at Tillingdown over the same period and are slightly below the average for southern England, given in the Phelps Brown Index.²⁴ When craftsmen were employed in later years, the daily wage-rate was not given.

Taxes and other annual payments

The accounts contain various references to taxes; for example, there was an annual payment of 6d to the sheriff, known as hundred silver. The accounts also included payments of subsidies to the king. In 1322 Merton paid 13s 4d for the manor of Farleigh, which was one tenth of its accountable value. In 1332 the lay subsidy had doubled to £1 6s 8d, while six individual residents of Farleigh paid sums ranging from 8d to 2s 0d.²⁵ However, by 1333, Merton was trying to avoid paying the tax and John Aperdele, a Merton official, was negotiating to prevent the manor being liable to the subsidy. In the same year there was a payment of 2s 5d to parliament. There was a reduction in the subsidy of the tenth in 1348 to 13s 4d and in 1358 there was a reference to the tax of a fifteenth of the accountable value not being paid. After 1358 such payments did not feature on the accounts. Other annual payments consisted of church dues of 2s 1d and the vicar's salary of £1 6s 8d.

Management

The account roll for 1278 reveals a high degree of activity by outside officials in Farleigh. Much of this activity concerned the transfer of the manor from the lordship of William Watvile to Merton College. This changed during the 14th century, when the officials of Merton were chiefly concerned with the general running of the manor. For example, Mr John Reynham received payment for shoes and stockings, while supervising the harvest at Farleigh in 1322. The same account also recorded the expenses of the warden of Merton College and the steward on their visits. In 1358, Mr Richard Billingham, the steward, brought in an extra man to help with the harvest and he organized the joint sale of wool from the manors of Farleigh and Malden. In addition, he testified that the sheepskins were of poor quality that year and so brought in very little income. During the 1350s, Billingham was also exercising supervision at the Merton manor of Cuxham, near Oxford.²⁶ By 1375, when much of the demesne was leased out at Farleigh, Mr John Bloxham took responsibility for the sale of wool and skins and firewood.

Apart from organizing the harvest, the Merton officials were generally concerned with the sale and purchase of goods outside the manor. There is evidence of trade between Farleigh and other Merton manors; most of this occurred within Surrey, with references to Malden and Thorncroft, but there were also links with Elham in Kent and Gamlingay in Cambridgeshire. However, contact was not limited to the Merton manors and goods were bought and sold at the market towns of Croydon and Kingston in Surrey, at Horsham in Sussex, and in London.

The court rolls also reveal a high degree of intervention by Merton officials in the management of tenancies in the years following the Black Death. The effect is most clearly seen in the court rolls in 1352, when the grants of empty tenements to new tenants rose to a peak of eight. They then fell to an average of four per year in 1354-5 and settled down to one or two a year between 1356 and 1381. Comparison between the rentals of 1335 and 1356 shows that the number of tenants almost halved at the time of the Black Death and the total of tenanted dwellings (*messuagia*) fell by a third.²⁷

date	tenants	dwellings
1335	32	21
1356	18	13

The rentals show that three major tenants of the period before the Black Death had died by the early 1350s and their tenements were then divided up between other tenants. One family with the surname Bryan, or Brian, predominated in the records of the 14th century, being mentioned 68 times until the name disappeared after 1410. The account rolls show that various members of the family served as reeves and bailiffs throughout the century. The rentals of 1335 and 1356 reveal the extent to which this family took up holdings that became vacant after the Black Death – in 1335 individuals with the surname Bryan held 21% of the tenements but, by 1356, their holdings had increased to 45%. The officials of Merton were eager to find tenants for empty tenements, and the Bryan family took advantage of the availability of land to increase their holdings.

Another aspect of the property transactions was the granting of leases by Merton. The effect of leasing was to provide a guaranteed annual payment to the landlord while giving the lessee greater control over the property. The records reveal the gradual process which eventually resulted in the leasing of the demesne. The rental of 1335 shows that two tenements were then held on lease but, by 1356, the number had increased to six, with parts of the demesne arable being leased out to various tenants.

Towards the end of the century the number of property transactions fell. The fortunes of the Bryan family also changed, as the earlier impetus towards expansion died down and elderly tenants were left with large holdings they could no longer work. The situation in

Farleigh in the later 14th century suggests that the Merton officials were having to cope with the withdrawal from the expansion of the 1350s and, by the 1380s, they were trying to force tenants to carry out repairs to derelict buildings or put up new ones. As an aid to enforcement, they provided timber, sometimes re-using material from redundant buildings.

Discussion

How typical was the situation in Farleigh? Comparisons between Farleigh and the nearby manors of Tillingdown and Titsey reveal similarities and differences in their economies during the 14th century. They all lie close to one another in east Surrey (fig 2) – none is more than 8km distant from the others. They share the same historical background since all three were held in lordship or overlordship by the Clare family from the time of Domesday. Farleigh was transferred to Merton College in the later years of the 13th century, while Tillingdown and Titsey passed by marriage to the earls of Stafford in the mid-14th century. Tillingdown continued to be managed by Stafford officials during the 14th century, while much of Titsey was held from the Staffords by the family of Uvedale.

The economy of Tillingdown has been discussed in detail in an earlier volume.²⁸ The Tillingdown accounts show a distinct move away from direct farming of the arable as a result

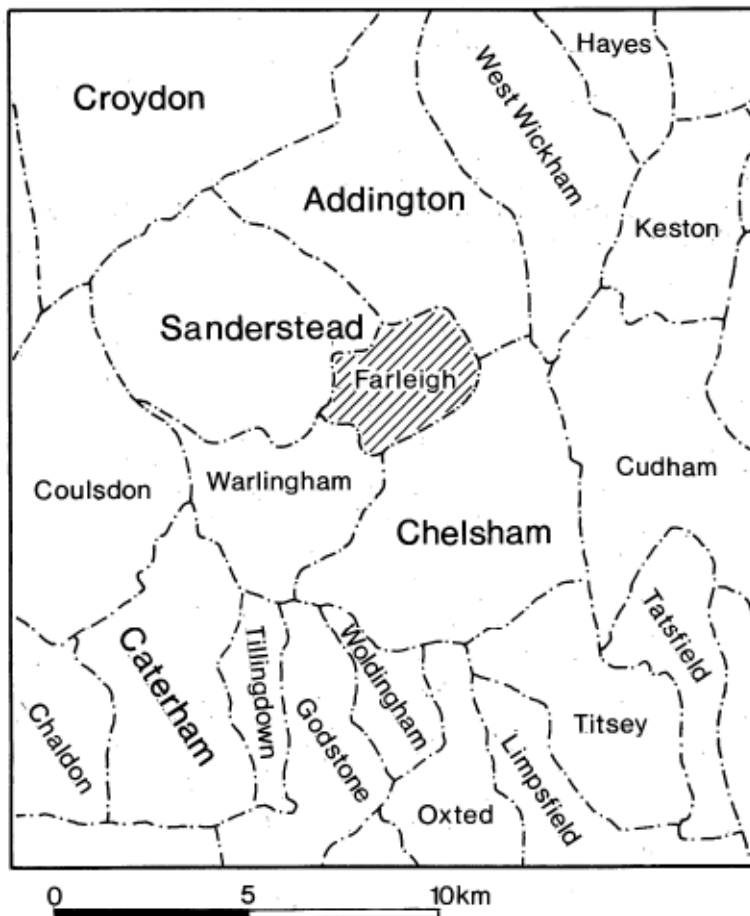


Fig 2 Location map showing Farleigh, Tillingdown and Titsey

of the economic effects of the Black Death. There was considerable experimentation and diversification into other types of products, principally sheep farming, until all the demesne was eventually leased out towards the end of the century.

Only one account roll, dating from 1358, survives for Titsey,²⁹ but it provides a useful comparison with the other manors. The parish of Titsey lies about 5km south-east of Tillingdown; it extends southwards from the North Downs and much of the land lies on the Gault Clay. In 1314, an inquisition on the death of Gilbert de Clare described his holding in Titsey as a chief house, 100 acres of arable, 4.5 acres of meadow, 40 acres of pasture and 20 acres of woodland, while the rest was rented out. This property, like Tillingdown, passed to the Staffords, and was held from them by the Uvedales.³⁰ The account roll of 1358 shows a manor with a large amount of arable, which probably lay on the clay in the southern part of Titsey. There were 56 draught animals; these were mainly oxen, which are more effective than horses on heavy clay. To manage the ploughs, there were ten permanent ploughmen and two extra ones, who were employed occasionally. This suggests that there were five or six ploughs in demesne. The crops were principally wheat and oats, with smaller amounts of winter barley, drage (a mixed cereal crop) peas, beans and vetch. Oats was by far the largest crop and provided fodder for the draught animals. There were 173 head of cattle and a large flock of sheep, reaching a total of 1040. The chalk downland on the northern side of Titsey provides good pasture for sheep. As in Farleigh, the ewes provided milk for the dairy. In all three manors there is evidence for an outbreak of disease among the sheep at about the same time; for example, in Farleigh and Titsey in 1356-8, sheep were dying of the disease called 'le Pockes', while large numbers of sheep died from disease in Tillingdown in 1362. The manor of Titsey supported 169 pigs and piglets, most of which were used to feed the household, while the rest were sold.

Titsey differs from the other manors because it had a large demesne workforce of 18-20 persons, which reflects the amount of land still held in demesne. In 1358, the highest paid demesne workers – the carter, dairy farmer and ploughmen – were receiving 8s 0d a year, which is substantially higher than in Farleigh and Tillingdown at that date.

While a large amount of land was managed directly in Titsey, about eleven tenements, including the mill, were leased out and produced an income of £14 0s 0d a year. The account has no references to customary tenants or customary work, which suggests that the demesne was worked by paid labour and the rest of the manor was leased and rented out. One of the major leaseholders of the Uvedales was the lord of the manor, the earl of Stafford, who held land in Oxted and at Beddlestead, in Chelsham. A rental for Titsey of 1401 shows the same picture, with John Uvedale renting out and leasing large amounts of land.³¹

We can see from the accounts that Titsey had some contacts with outside markets. For example, items that could not be obtained locally were bought in London; these included tar to protect the sheep, and wine, fish and shoes. Cows were also bought at Lewes and other unspecified places. However, there is a clear difference in Titsey in the amount of contact with manors held in the same lordship. While officials of Merton College and the Stafford administration played a significant part in the organization of Farleigh and Tillingdown, there is no similar evidence for Titsey. The Uvedales, who held the manor there, had a series of manors across southern England, but perhaps they lacked a central administrative system to manage their property efficiently.³² In addition, members of the Uvedale family lived at Titsey from time to time and the demesne supplied the immediate needs of the household. The bailiff was a local man, Henry de Stathenden, of Stockenden in the adjoining manor of Oxted. Because Titsey was still run as a demesne estate, with the produce designed for local consumption by a captive market, there was perhaps less of a profit-motive and less incentive to diversify to generate income, as we have seen in other manors. We may also be seeing a more paternalistic approach to the estate and the workers; for example, the wages of demesne workers were relatively high and the account for 1358 included the gifts of a lamb to each of her maids, Elizabeth and Sarra, by the lady of the manor, Margaret Uvedale. Unfortunately, without later records, it is impossible to assess any process of change in Titsey.

In the 1990s it is still largely agricultural and has continued in the ownership of landlords who intermarried with the Uvedales – the families of Gresham and Leveson-Gower.

While these three manors share a common historical background, they show different degrees of development. The chief differences between them seem to result from outside intervention by professional administrators. Although it lies about 36 km distant, the manor of Merrow in west Surrey, near Guildford, provides a further example of the value of professional management – in this case by the Knights Templar. As with Titsey, only one year of the accounts has survived, which gives an inventory of the manor in 1307-8 at the time when the order was being disbanded.³³ The property had a wide range of products which included bacon, fish, pigeons, squirrel skins and honey. In addition to the usual cereal crops, the vineyard and fulling mill provided extra income. The three manors of Farleigh, Tillingdown and Merrow had a common factor of professional management geared to market forces. Manors and estates in Surrey had access to markets in London or in a series of towns across the county. With the use of professional management, the proximity of markets could provide an impetus for change in the economy of the manors, in response to the changing needs of the population.

Conclusion

If we look at 14th century Farleigh against this background, we see a small, well-managed community, with Merton College providing the professional organization to generate income. There was investment in buildings within the manorial complex, both for accommodation and storage of agricultural produce. The officials hired temporary workers at times of shortages so that crops could be harvested and sold at the best prices. The woodland was exploited both for fuel and building materials. The records of the mid-14th century show a high degree of intervention by Merton at a time of crisis when the Black Death was at its worst. But after the Black Death, as wages and prices fluctuated, the economic advantages of direct management faded. Merton began by leasing out parts of the demesne for an assured annual sum and finally leased out the entire demesne. In this situation, as at Tillingdown, the bailiff paid for the lease of the manor and took responsibility for management. This had the effect of reducing the landlord's administrative costs, but it also deprived the local economy of the benefits of wider professional advice.

While Merton continued to invest capital in the manor house and storage buildings, there was no overall policy of investment in the manor and so it remained relatively poor. Despite being about 24km from London, it attracted very little investment by wealthy Londoners and has remained an area of scattered cottages and farms. We see the same effect in Tillingdown and Titsey which have remained primarily agricultural estates, in contrast to many of the surrounding districts like Caterham, Oxted and Warlingham.

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NOTES

- 1 MM: 4901
- 2 Excavated by Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU), June-July 1995
- 3 *VCH Sy*, 3, 281-2
- 4 Morris, *Domesday Surrey*, 19.8
- 5 *VCH Sy*, 3, 282
- 6 Manning & Bray, 3, 3-6
- 7 Briggs 1935, xxvii-xxx. The court baron was a manorial court which dealt with the administration of property. While the court was part of the property of the lord and was a private jurisdiction, it could also be used by tenants to present their own items of business and settle disputes.
- 8 Lambert 1933, 39-41
- 9 *VCH Sy*, 4, 450
- 10 Parton 1976, 121
- 11 *VCH Sy*, 3, 281-2
- 12 Briggs 1935, 6-28
- 13 MM: 4832-62, 4917, 4928-36
- 14 Saaler 1991-2, *passim*; BL: Add Ch 26893; PRO: SC6 1022/3
- 15 MM: 4880
- 16 MM: 4832, 4837, 4848, 8451, 4853-4, 4856
- 17 MM: 4887
- 18 Lambert 1933, 39-40
- 19 Briggs 1935, *passim*. Each account usually covered one year from Michaelmas to Michaelmas. Years have been numbered by the date of the closing Michaelmas of each account.
- 20 Bolton 1980, 181
- 21 *Stat Realm*, 4, 171
- 22 MM: 4917, 4674
- 23 Langdon 1986, 160-1, 293-4
- 24 Phelps Brown & Hopkins 1981, 11; Saaler 1991-2, 36
- 25 SRO: 2575/ Box 3F
- 26 Harvey 1976, 551-2. Mr: this is given in the text as M. for magister (master). The title indicates a man with control or authority. It may also show that the individual mentioned was a graduate, having the title *magister artium* (MA).
- 27 MM: 4895, 4897; Saaler 1994, 280-6
- 28 Saaler 1991-2, *passim*
- 29 BL: Add Ch 26893
- 30 *VCH Sy*, 3, 330
- 31 Leveson-Gower 1865, 137-42
- 32 *ibid*, 78-9
- 33 PRO: SC6 1022/3

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PRO: Public Record Office

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SRO: Surrey Record Office

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