A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MIDDLESEX TERRIER

DOUGLAS MOSS AND IAN MURRAY

The London Borough of Haringey preserves in its Bruce Castle Museum a large collection of documents relating to the past history of Tottenham. One of the most interesting of these forms the subject of this essay; its full title is *Terrarium de Omnibus Terris Separatim vel Coniuntim Incentibus in Omnibus Campis Totius Parochie de Tottenham Factum Anno Rr. Henrici Sexti Post Conquestum Anglie Tricesimo Quarto.*[1]

I

Since the recent changes in local government boundaries Tottenham forms part of the London Borough of Haringey. Tottenham is situated in the northern part of the Greater London area, astride the A10, the Roman Ermine Street, and stretches from Highgate and Muswell Hills on the west down to the River Lea on the east. The Lea forms the boundary with Essex; beyond is the borough of Walthamstow. Medieval Tottenham also included modern Wood Green, covering a total area of 4642 acres. Originally it had been forest; in 1459 a large wooded area still remained in the north-west quarter (the present-day Wood Green). The soil is basically London clay to the west of the A10, apart from an area of Taplow gravel round Bruce Castle. On the east side of the highway brick earth predominates until the alluvial soil of the Lea Valley is reached.

Until 1254 the township had long been a possession of the Scottish crown. In that year there was no direct succession and the manor was divided into three parts, owned respectively by Robert de Brus, John de Balliol and Henry de Hastings, Earl of Pembroke. The Balliol manor, in 1295, and the Brus manor, in 1306, were forfeited to the English crown in consequence of the rebellion of their lords. By mid-fourteenth century the Balliol manor was in the possession of the Daubeney family, the Brus manor was in the hands of the Fawkoners. In the course of years several sub-manors appeared, chief of which were Mocking and Twyford. Between 1427 and 1449, the year of his death, all were re-united in the hands of John Gedeney, a London alderman and member of the Drapers Company. Subsequent to Gedeney's decease his widow, Joan, became "the Lady" of the combined manors, and she it was who, in 1459, instigated the preparation of the document which is now to be discussed.

II

Before proceeding, it is necessary to state that the terrier has considerable imperfections. After about a quarter of the work had been completed omission of details became fairly frequent; failure to state the manor or the field to which a parcel of land belonged or, more annoying, the area of the parcel. The omission of areas is particularly frustrating as it occurs most frequently when referring to land belonging to the demesne and the large ecclesiastical landholders. It must be borne in mind, in consequence, that all the calculations which follow can only be approximate.

Tottenham demesne was a large one, in 1254 containing 527 acres of arable land. The inventory of manorial property compiled by Gedeney in 5 Henry VI,[2] before leasing the demesne, mentioned 452 acres of "lord's land and pasture" but this did not include the Mocking demesne, not yet in Gedeney's hands. The enumerated demesne parcels in the

terrier, 45 in number, total only 207¾ acres, but no area is stated for 24 of the parcels, this doubtless accounting for the difference. The whole area was, in the main, consolidated, concentrated in the centre of the western half of the manor (adjoining areas H and Q on the map), with sizeable portions in areas A (Twyford's demesne) and V (Mocking demesne). The H. Q and V sectors included the fertile land and meadow on the banks of the little river Moselle, which followed a circuitous path through the township till it reached the Lea. There were a very few scattered demesne parcels intermingled with the land of the tenants.

There is nothing in the terrier to indicate whether the demesne was leased or in the Lady's hands. Court rolls and bailiff's accounts show that in the previous century much of it had been leased in small parcels to diverse tenants. This seems to have continued till Gedeney's arrival, when, from 1429, farming of the demesne by, at first, one individual and later, by three or four, became the practice.

Turning to the tenants, it is seen that there were 120, holding their land in 693 parcels. (Tottenham's population remained remarkably constant; in the 1390s their number was almost exactly the same.) These 693 parcels were made up as follows:

TABLE 1

"Land" (presumably arable)	2080⅞ acres
Grove and wood	208¼ acres
Meadow	62¾ acres
Pasture	5 acres
Marsh	16½ acres
Total	2373⅜ acres

Of this, 1215 acres were customary, 1021½ acres customary arable. The figure is slightly smaller than the villein arable in the previous century, but the omissions in the terrier could account for this, and also for the gap between all the recorded acreages and the overall area of Tottenham and Wood Green.

Thirty-six occupiers held free land only, 30 had both free and customary holdings, the remainder solely occupied customary land. Seventeen, of whom 12 were free, were cottagers; 52, 25 of them free, possessed less than five acres. At the other extreme were six tenants with very considerable holdings.

TABLE 2

Prioress of Clerkenwell (free)	260 acres
Dean and Chapter of St. Pauls (free)	220 acres
John Drayton (customary)	181¾ acres
Also 4 acres of free land	
John Pye (customary)	86½ acres
Also 9½ acres of free land	
Robert Stubbe (customary)	79¼ acres
Also 2 acres of free land	
John Fowler (customary)	61½ acres

In actual fact, the inequality of distribution must have been greater, as in many of the holdings of St. Pauls, the Charterhouse and the Prior of Holy Trinity, London, no area was stated.

Two of the four large customary tenants were in fact freemen. John Drayton, who had been clerk to Gedeney's predecessor, John Walden, was cited in many court rolls earlier in the century, acquiring numerous villein holdings and frequently being excused payment of all or part of the entry fine: "*finis nullus quia serviens domini et pardonatur per dominum*". And

Robert Stubbe appears in the close rolls for 1452 witnessing a land transfer. All labour services had been commuted since the 1420s and had always been light. In such circumstances frequent purchase of customary land by freemen was to be expected.

If it were possible it would be interesting to compare the distribution of holdings as revealed by the terrier with that obtaining in the previous century. This cannot be done adequately; prior to 1429 no record exists showing how much of the land was classified as free. One basis for comparison does exist. A Pembroke manor rental, dated 1368, survives,[3] giving details of the customary holdings in that year. In Table 3 the spread of occupation in this rental is compared with that of the 75 tenants who, in 1459, mainly held customary land.

TABLE 3

Size of holding	1368		1459	
	Tenants	*Area*	*Tenants*	*Area*
Under 5 acres	19(48%)	37 acres(8%)	27(36%)	41½ acres(4%)
5 – 15 acres	12(30%)	110¼ acres(25%)	25(33⅓%)	190 acres(18%)
15 – 30 acres	3(7½%)	69½ acres(17%)	13(17%)	235 acres(23%)
Over 30 acres	6(15%)	216¾ acres(50%)	10(14%)	555 acres(55%)
	40	433½ acres	75	1021½ acres

In 1368 the most considerable villein was Thomas Harding with, in Pembroke, 54¾ acres.

So far as this limited comparison provides us with evidence it demonstrates that polarisation appears to have increased: the same upward trend in ownership was present in Tottenham which Prof. M. M. Postan believes tooks place in the country as a whole during the century after the Black Death. There were fewer very small tenants, more in the middle range of 15 to 30 acres and a few peasants had amassed considerable holdings. If the comparison is made between the percentages of land owned by the respective groups the movement revealed is even more striking.

III

The nature of the field system in Tottenham has so far eluded those historians who have given it consideration. The township was part of the east Middlesex region, described by H. L. Gray as possessing a "hybrid system difficult to follow in its origins. . . . Scarcely any part of England is so dependent upon conjecture for the writing of its early field history".[4] Fourteenth-century court rolls referred to over 50 fields in Tottenham, fields specifically so named and ignoring those numerous crofts and pytels which are also mentioned. The terrier enumerates 217 named parcels, of which 82 are termed fields. A local historian, C. H. Rock, doubted whether, in the light of facts such as these, common field cultivation ever existed in the vill.[5] The very large number of fields would at first glance seem to support this speculation were it not for the fact that we now know that holdings divided into strips were distributed through most of these fields.

Obviously, no simple three-field system of the midland type existed here. The explanation of the field system which is to be suggested depends on a comparison of the terrier with a field map prepared in 1619 at the time of the Earl of Dorset's survey of the parish.[6]

In 1619 Tottenham was almost completely enclosed. The map shows a large number of small fields, some by their shape betraying their origin in strip cultivation. About half of the fields bear names. Joan Gedeney's terrier is divided by gaps into 24 sections, each one containing a number of fields, crofts and pitels. In a reasonable proportion of instances the names of these fields and crofts correspond to names on the Dorset map, sufficiently so to identify,

in most cases, the areas which each terrier section occupied. It was apparent that the 1459 surveyors proceeded systematically from south to north, first on the west side of the highway, then on its east side. On examination of the map it became clear that most of the terrier's 24 divisions correspond to an area on the map clearly separated from its neighbours, either by the Moselle, or by the several intersecting lanes ramifying through the manor. The exceptions are areas J, L, M, N and O; here insufficient details are present to be precise as to the exact boundaries, though it seems certain all were in North Tottenham and west of the high road.

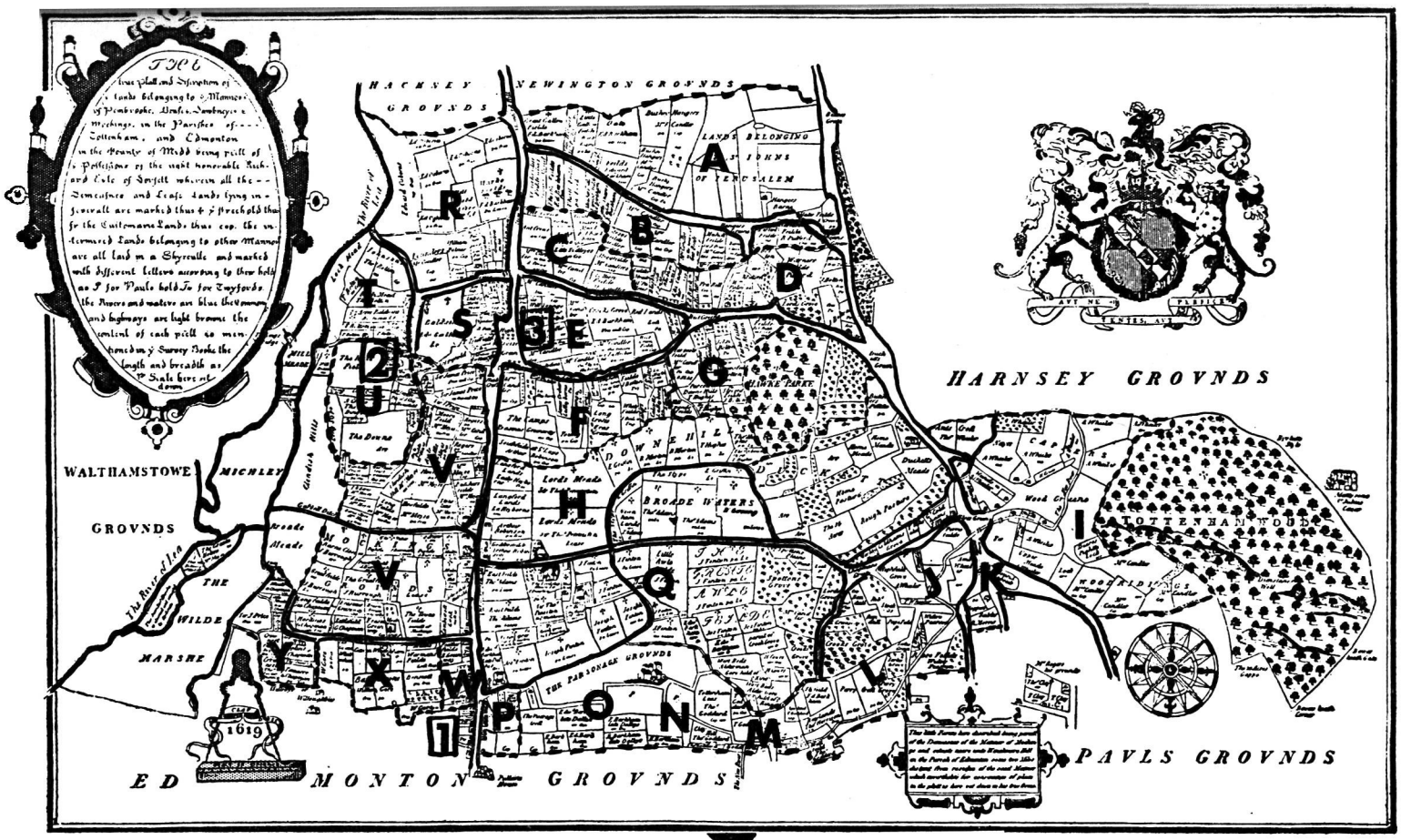
The congruity would appear too close to be fortuitous. Therefore it is tentatively suggested that the lanes in the Dorset map already existed in 1459 and the 24 divisions of the terrier correspond to 24 fields bounded by these lanes or the Moselle, and hereinafter to be referred to as sectors. This will distinguish them from the many other fields whose names appear. The other fields, separate parts of the 24 sections, now rather resemble the furlongs of the midland region. In support of this theory it must be pointed out that the first section of the terrier, a complex containing six fields, bears the name "Hanger" in the margin, applying to the whole. If this theory is correct there appears a field system typical of the lower Thames basin as H. L. Gray described it. On the accompanying map this field system, if such it is, is made clear, each sector being given a letter corresponding to its place in the terrier. The areas of the 24 sectors, so far as it is possible to calculate them, are set out below:

TABLE 4

Sector	*Area in acres*	*Sector*	*Area in acres*
A	321½ plus	N	136¼ plus
B	106¾	O	50½ plus
C	83½	P	21
D	92½ plus	Q	91 plus (ten demesne fields with no area given)
E	43 plus		
F	108½	R	135⅝ plus
G	61½	S	41½
H	107½ plus (five demesne fields with no area stated)	T	64⅞
		U	80 plus
I	291 plus	V	144½ plus (eight demesne fields with no area stated)
J	92¼ plus		
K	18	W	11½
L	67½	X	78¾ plus
M	67⅝ plus	Y	36½ plus

IV

An attempt will now be made to solve another hitherto unexplained problem: how the division of the manor into three parts, made in the year 1254, was effected. Mr. F. L. Fenton considered this in his introduction to Volume 2 of the Tottenham Manorial Rolls.[7] He examined the possibility of division into three homogeneous blocks, only to reject this explanation. Then he explored the likelihood of partition by dividing the tenants into three groups, but finally felt the available evidence insufficient to justify any definite conclusion.



N

= field boundaries
= major roads marking field boundaries
= streams and rivers
1 = main village site
2 = Hale settlement
3 = High Cross settlement

The map shows the suggested fifteenth-century Tottenham fields superimposed on the 1619 Dorset Survey map. This 1619 map is distorted; Sector E, in particular, appears to be much larger than it really was, and all the Section east of the High Road is in reality narrower than shown

As sub-division of manors is often found, and has often presented difficulties, throwing light on the matter by describing what appears to have happened in Tottenham should be of some value. Fortunately, in the vast majority of instances, each parcel of land mentioned in the terrier was ascribed to one or other of the manors which had been created in 1254, Fawkoner, Daubeney and Pembroke, or to one of the sub-manors which had appeared subsequently. The situation revealed is by no means a straightforward one. It can best be explained by first setting out all the 24 sectors showing the relationship between the various manors in each. Mocking and Twyford, being sub-manors of Fawkoner's, are allotted to Fawkoner; minor sub-manors, of negligible area, are ignored. So, also, are demesne and monastic lands, as generally there is no indication as to which manor these belonged.

TABLE 5

Sector	*Fawkoner*	*Daubeney*	*Pembroke*	*Sector*	*Fawkoner*	*Daubeney*	*Pembroke*
A	Approx. 100%			M	37%	23%	30%
B	20%	80%		N			100%
C	22%	66%	12%	O			100%
D		approx. 100%		P			100%
E	58%	21%	21%	Q	Mainly	demesne or	monastic
F	75%		25%	R	ap	prox. 100%	
G	34%		66%	S	30%	70%	
H	nearly all	demesne		T	50%	36%	14%
I		40%	60%	U	58%	19%	23%
J	25%		75%	V	34%		66%
K		Very small		W		Village site	
L	mainly su	b manor		X	30%	20%	50%
				Y		44%	56%

The total areas of the principal manors, so far as these were written down, were: Pembroke $549\frac{1}{4}$ acres, Daubeney $513\frac{1}{4}$ acres, Fawkoner, Mockings and Twyford combined 624 acres.

Disregarding sectors H, K, L and W, of the remaining 20 one manor predominated in seven and occupied two thirds or more in a further five. On examination a pattern emerges. Apart from Fawkoner predominating in Hanger (A), Daubeney lands are largest in the south, Fawkoner in the centre, and Pembroke comes to the fore as one proceeds north. The picture is obviously not clear cut, yet a division by areas would appear to have been an important factor in the making of the necessary decisions in 1254. But sectors T, U and X,

the more fertile land near the Lea, were more equally divided; so, too, for reasons not clear, were sectors E and M. It seems that division by area was the guiding principle, to be departed from where the more fertile parts of the township lay. This would, after all, be an eminently sensible procedure.

V

How far had enclosure progressed in mid-fifteenth-century Tottenham? There are no references in the terrier to enclosed land, or to closes, but many parcels of land were large, occasionally containing 20 acres or more. There are references in the court rolls to the purchase of adjacent strips so as to create a larger block of land; this process of consolidation would in time produce such large parcels. Many parcels are called crofts, which may imply they were cultivated in severalty, as an independent unit of cultivation. Small parcels predominated completely in seven sectors only, namely: D, E, N, O, S, T and V. It is reasonable to suggest that in the remainder enclosure was under way.

The holdings of individual tenants were not distributed throughout all the fields, as they would have been in regions where two, three or four field systems prevailed. Most seem to have had their land in a particular part of the fields. St. Paul's lands were mainly in sectors I, J and N; John Pye had his in M, N and P; Robert Stubbe in B, C and V; John Fowler in A, B and C; John Newman senior in Q, V and W; the Edrich family in J and M; John Lukyn in T and V; Robert Hale in A, B, S, T and V. These are typical examples. The question at once arises: how did common agriculture operate without even distribution of land? An hypothesis will be put forward which attempts to answer the question.

It would be valuable if records existed showing how the fields were sown, but no information appears to have survived. In the year 5 Henry VI John Gedeney, having purchased the three main manors, decided to lease the demesne, in its entirety, to one William Drake: these facts probably explain why in that year an inventory of the contents of the lord's grange was made.[8] This document is the sole provider of any detailed knowledge of late medieval cropping in the locality. The barn contained 84 quarters of corn (presumably wheat), 20 quarters of maslin and "offcorn", 67 quarters 2 bushels of oats, 4 bushels of beans and 3 of peas. Wheat was the autumn-sown crop, oats the spring-sown. There was no mention of barley, in spite of the large number of ale houses.

It has already been made clear that there could not have been a "typical" three-field system in this locality. Nevertheless it would seem obvious that, under medieval conditions, in the absence of clover and root crops, some kind of communally managed rotation, including a fallow course at some stage, must have been inevitable. The Pembroke rental of 1368 refers to a fallow course on the demesne. Several court rolls speak of crofts which were common every third year; possibly implying fields cultivated by a single occupier but which nevertheless had to comply with the general rotation when the fallow course was necessary.

Bearing in mind all the foregoing facts an examination of Dr. David Roden's work on late medieval agriculture in the Chilterns[9] may provide a clue to the methods used in Tottenham. The Chiltern townships also formed part of the lower Thames basin. They each comprised a large number of separate common fields, ten, 20, even sometimes as many as 30. In those townships, too, the holdings of individual tenants in the common arable were confined to one section of the total area. Dr. Roden found evidence showing how the fields were sown, proving that in the later Middle Ages extremely complex systems had developed. Several different rotations existed side by side, each individual field providing a unit of cultivation, as did the furlongs in the Midlands. Complicated permutations of the rotations,

varying over the years, ensured that no peasant, however localised his holding, would have all his land fallow in any one year. And all this activity had to be co-ordinated so that there was uniformity in the throwing open of the fields to pasture.

In Tottenham there are no cropping records to be examined. Yet a similar field system, we believe, is found there to those obtaining in the Chilterns; a similar confining of the land of peasants to a particular section of the fields. If it is accepted that a rotation, including a fallow course, was inevitable in normal medieval arable cultivation, then one cannot avoid the hypothesis that several different rotations existed simultaneously in different parts of the fields of Tottenham. The presence of the various fields and crofts within what we have called sectors would provide flexibility; it would be possible to have a complete rotation within one sector, if necessary. Dr. Roden has said of the Chiltern townships: "the large number of relatively small fields in many townships apparently provided the flexibility that could only be obtained in the great common fields of the Midlands and elsewhere by basing rotation on the furlong".[10] The many sub-divisions of the Tottenham fields would assist in obtaining the required flexibility.

In the absence of cropping records these observations must remain purely speculative. It might be objected that the complicated collective operation would have been too much for medieval peasants. Yet it would be unwise to assume that because they were illiterate these peasants were necessarily unintelligent. It has been pointed out that uninstructed reeves could achieve elaborate calculations with the aid of memory, tallies and notched sticks. Prof. M. Postan believes that local organisation of peasants for control of common agriculture, and other purposes, frequently existed, even if it left little or no impression on the records.[11]

In Tottenham, a township for two centuries divided in the elaborate way that has been described, and furthermore, with many tenants occupying land in more than one manor, some such extra manorial body would appear to have been necessary. No individual lord could have singly regulated his share of the fields. So the villagers would not have been lacking in experience and doubtless could have achieved the skill required to manage a system as sophisticated as that obtaining in the Chilterns

It is necessary to say that, as always, there are no records of such a peasant society. There are no laws of autumn, even. The most to be found are a few references in court rolls to negotiations between lords and the whole body of their peasants and vague hints of some concerted action prior to the 1381 revolt.[12] These, too, only imply joint action by peasants on one manor.

There we would let the matter rest. But is it too adventurous to carry speculation further? If two such widely separated localities as Tottenham, in eastern Middlesex, and the Chiltern Hills, did have similar elaborate agricultural systems could this, perhaps, solve the difficulties H. L. Gray encountered when investigating the irregular field system of the lower Thames basin? Before such a question can be answered much more research on townships throughout the region will have to be undertaken. Yet we feel that here may lie the solution to the problem.

VI

Examining the terrier tells us much about the fifteenth-century township. The bulk of the villagers' cottages are seen to have been concentrated in sectors O, V and W, apparently in the same position as that occupied by the main village in the Dorset map. There, too, were the village's ale houses, six of them, bearing the names Tabard, Crown, George, Bell, Ramme

and Swan. A secondary assemblage of cottages and messuages was located near the High Cross, in sectors E, F and S, and in V, near the Hale; again, there were similar groups in 1619. Out of a total of 124 cottages,[13] messuages and tenements mentioned 34 were scattered, spread over the whole area

As for those who lived in these dwellings, a very noticeable change revealed is the disappearance of most of the families whose names constantly recur throughout the series of court rolls covering the years 1318 to 1413. Over this period certain names continually appear. Of them, Attegor, Baker, Denys, Deyere, Drake, Ede, Egepole, Fourner, Fynch, Godhewe, Harding, Hawte, Horspole, Mersshe, Mayhew, Page, Pappe, atte Stone, and Webbe have in 1459 all vanished; the Abrahams were represented by a single tenant with a toft and four acres; the Bussh family by a solitary cottager. There were a few exceptions. Hales, Malgers, Hoods and Brocks remained and, notably, the six members of the Edrich family had risen in the world, occupying some 156 acres in the northern part of the fields.

What had happened? Records show that in the time of Henry IV 24 acres belonging to the Mersshe family, 21 acres of Mayhew land and much besides had passed to John Drayton. John and William Drayton, Pyc, Stubbe, Newman and Croydon were prominent among the new village names.[14] These had all at some time replaced the older families. All had doubtless made purchases similar to those of John Drayton. London was very close. On the one hand it must have exerted a pull on Middlesex villagers who may have sought their fortune in the metropolis, with or without the lord's permission. On the other hand, as early as the reign of Edward III London citizens were mentioned as buying Tottenham land; very likely some of the newcomers named above were also from the Capital. Whatever the reason, the contrast between the earlier stability and the great changes between 1413 and 1459 is remarkable. It suggests that there had been a great upheaval in the community and it is very likely that this was associated with Gedeney's arrival in the 1420 decade.

To begin with, he had leased the demesne for the first time as a unit, at a rent of 2/– an acre, compared with the 4d an acre charged for demesne which had been previously rented out. Then, in the accounts for 7/8 Henry VI, there appears the first mention of a fulling mill.[15] The manufacture of bricks was first recorded in the account roll of 16/17 Henry VI when 22,000 were sold,[16] a figure to rise later to 50,000 annually. It would appear that by then Tottenham might almost have been called an industrial village. It can well be imagined that such innovation would have a disturbing effect on village life and that the mid-fifteenth-century township was something very different from what it had been in past centuries.

One further matter that the presence of local industry might explain is how the large number of tenants, 52 in all, with less than five acres of land, managed to exist. In addition to possible employment by wealthier tenants there were the opportunities provided by the farmed demesne and by this new industry

VII

At the time of the Dorset survey over half the fields were devoted to pastoral activity. How far was this the position in 1459? Frankly, it is impossible to say. The soil did not provide very good arable. London was near and then, as in later centuries, would have ensured a good market for dairy produce and meat. Yet the 1254 *inquisition post mortem* mentions only 16 acres of pasture, while the terrier lists only five acres. All through land, "terra", is referred to, and in medieval documents one assumes this always means arable land. There

are frequent references in the court rolls to cows and bullocks belonging to the tenants overburdening the common or trespassing on the lord's land. But the numbers mentioned were nearly always small; indeed, rather surprisingly, far more sheep are cited, as one would not think Tottenham soil particularly good for rearing sheep. Yet even small numbers of cows and bullocks would need more than five acres of pasture, even making all allowances for feeding on the stubble. One clue exists in the inventory made by Gedeney in 5 Henry VI. It states that there are "452 acres of lord's land and pasture . . . in the lord's hands by estimation 329 acres of land and pasture for all the lord's cows and horses to be pastured".[18]

Therefore an indefinite proportion of the demesne was pasture at that time. References in the terrier to the demesne land are remarkably uninformative. Typical is "the Lady of Tottenham holds in Longfordland, the same Lady holds in Buryfield". And that is all. It is fair to assume that much of the demesne was pasture; as for the tenants' lands, we just do not know the position. Yet perhaps some of the larger parcels of land found in the fields may have been devoted to animal husbandry.

VIII

The 1459 Tottenham terrier has been examined. The form taken by the tripartite division of the manor in 1254 has been described and an attempt has been made to recreate the medieval field system. A hypothesis has been suggested, no doubt based on insufficient evidence, as to how medieval crop rotations could adjust to a large number of fairly small fields, such as existed here. Something has been said on the changes in the inhabitants of the village community and possible explanations given for this. Finally, a few remarks, admittedly inadequate, have been made on pastoral activities. From a single document more light may thus have been shed on our country's past economic history

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NOTES

1 *Bruce Castle Collection*, M.R. 75.
2 *Bruce Castle Collection*, M.R. 10 mem. 12a.
3 *Bruce Castle Collection*, M.R. 9a.
4 *English Field Systems* (1959), p. 402.
5 *Tottenham Manorial Rolls* (Borough of Tottenham, Libraries and Museum, 1956), I, p. xi.
6 *The Dorset Survey Field Book*. Greater London Record Office (Middlesex Records) Accession 695/9.
7 *Tottenham Maonrial Rolls* (Borough of Tottenham Libraries and Museum, 1961), II, p. iv.
8 *Bruce Castle Collection*, M.R. 10, mem. 12a.
9 David Roden, *Demesne Farming in the Chiltern Hills*. Agricultural History Review 1969, XVII, pp. 10–23.
10 D. Roden; *op. cit.*, p. 22.
11 *Cambridge Economic History of Europe, I: The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages*. Medieval Agrarian Society in its Prime, p. 574.
12 M.R. 10. mem. 29 (negotiation of new rents).
M.R. 21. mem. 11a (local custom as to payment of heriot).
M.R. 21. mem. 18 (tenants' rights over trees on common).
M.R. 10. mem. 56.
13 The possession of 14 of these by John Pye provides evidence of purchase for investment.
14 One unexpected name was William Bouthe, Archbishop of York, with 17 acres of free land in two parcels.
15 M.R. 10. mem. 11.
16 M.R. 10. mem. 3.
17 M.R. 10. mem. 12a.