

Fardish in the Counties of Bedford and Northampton or in one of them

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Archaeological and historical surveys of Bedfordshire are being conducted at several levels. Members of the County Conservation Department are making rapid parish surveys to collect information for immediate planning needs, and at the same time encouraging in-depth field-by-field surveys.¹ We present here a case study of the detailed parish survey of Fardish.

The need for such surveys is self-evident where there is a threat by housing development or mineral extraction. A recent finding at Wollaston, Northants., adjacent to Fardish, has shown that modern agricultural threats to the landscape are also serious. Here some fields were revisited after a fifteen year interval when it was found that the linear earthworks of the medieval fields were badly eroded, some having disappeared. No doubt there has been corresponding damage to the occupation levels of ploughed-over ancient sites.

The in-depth parish surveys operate at three levels. Firstly a careful examination of ploughed fields is made for ancient occupation remains which are often marked by stones scattered from ploughed buildings, or darker areas accompanied by sherds of pottery. Bronze Age burial mounds often reveal themselves as raised mounds of pink soil or circles of dark grass or as crop marks. Secondly, the medieval ridge and furrow is plotted on an Ordnance Survey six-inches-to-the-mile scale maps, the strips being marked schematically (but with the correct orientation) and the furlong boundaries marked accurately. The third type of survey is made by recording shrunken village earthworks and the surviving ridge and furrow enveloping modern villages. These are plotted on the 1:2500 scale. All these surveys are supplemented by the use of aerial photographs, care being taken not to confuse marks left by modern agriculture with ancient features.

The results of the first class of survey over several parishes in northwest Bedfordshire have been given previously,² and also the medieval field systems of Milton Ernest.³ Detailed parish surveys are available for the Northamptonshire

parishes of Little Houghton,⁴ Paulerspury⁵ and Wootton.⁶ Plans of open fields, with brief notes, have been published for Bozeat,⁷ Grendon,⁸ Hartwell,⁹ Maidwell,¹⁰ Newton-in-the-Willows,¹¹ Strixton¹² and Wollaston,¹² all of which are in the same county. Village earthwork surveys have been given for Newton Bromswold,¹³ Strixton¹⁴ and part of Raunds.¹⁵

We shall now discuss the results for Fardish, excepting for the earthwork survey. General survey techniques have been discussed elsewhere.¹²

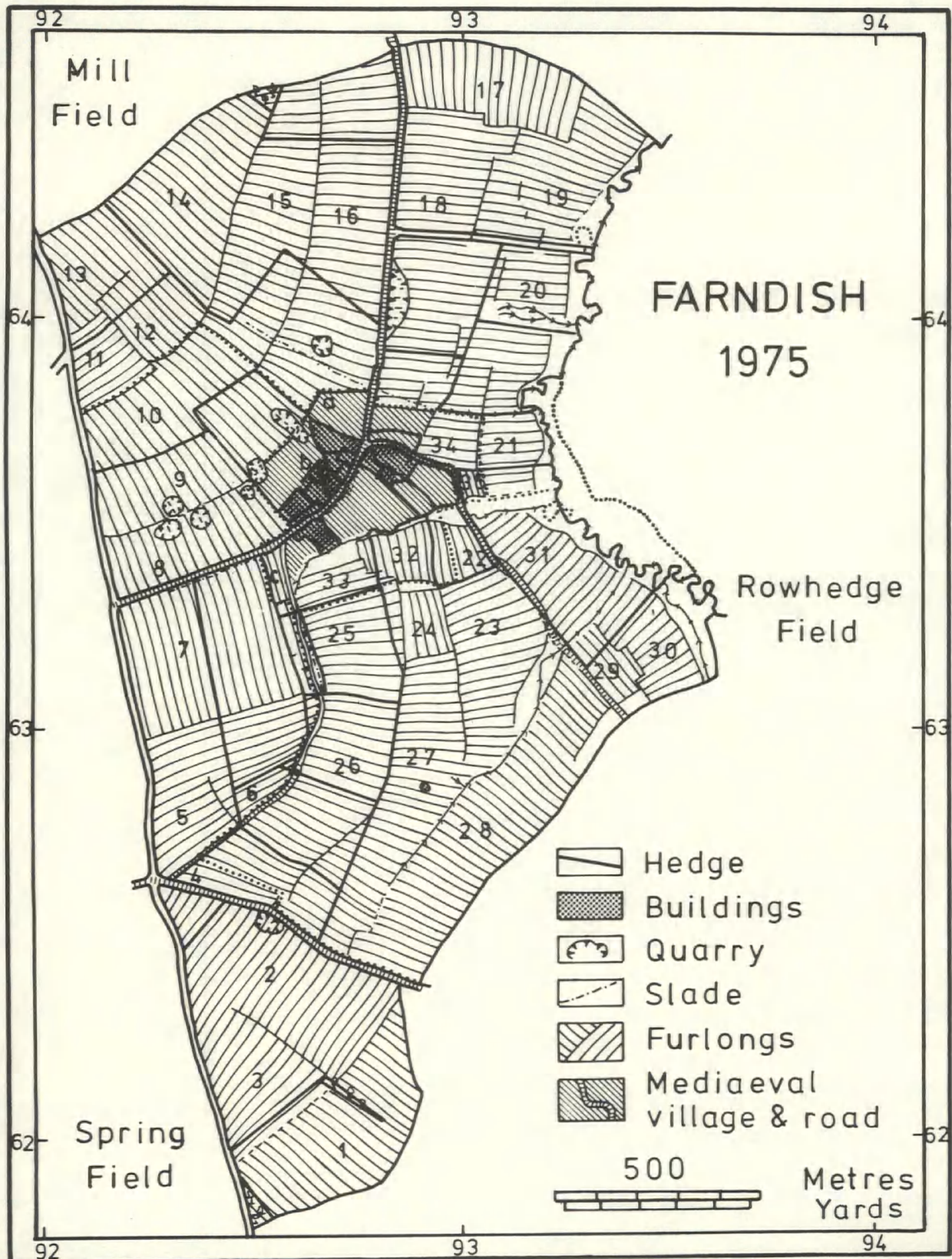
The village is sited on a bed of great oolite limestone adjacent to a stream (the *Fullwell*) which runs into the Podington brook. The higher ground is covered by glacial deposits, which consist of heavy clay, north and south of the village, but are quite gravelly and sandy along the west boundary. Unnamed water courses run by the side of the Wollaston Road and below the Hinwick boundary. North of the village runs the *Calverstade*, being a small valley.

The only pre-Saxon occupation site so far identified is a possible Romano-British villa (F1, SP 934632) which yielded a scatter of building stone, roofing tile and sherds when first ploughed in 1967.

In about 1828 a Saxon inhumation with grave goods of a brooch and beads were discovered "in a bank which here forms part of the county boundary".¹⁶ This latter remark is ambiguous since it is not clear whether the county boundary in 1905 or 1828 is meant, and these are quite different. We believe that the site is at the west end of the Wollaston Road, for reasons discussed below; here there is a bank, mostly caused by medieval ploughing, and partly perhaps by the Roman road, which forms the western manorial and parish boundary. It is not possible to identify this burial with an early settlement at Fardish. Details of the Saxon burial goods are given in Appendix 2.

The main features illustrated on the plan, figure 1, are the medieval fields. A brief explanation of the terminology is given for clarity.

The unit of cultivation was called a *land*, which was a narrow strip of average area one-



third of an acre, and average dimensions 200 yards by 8 yards. Soil was ploughed towards the centre of the strip more often than to the outside, so forming the characteristic ridge and furrow. On figure 1 the number of lands shown in each furlong should be multiplied by four to give the approximate real number (the small scale does not allow each land to be represented individually).

A group of lands parallel to one another was called a *furlong*, each of which had a name. Boundaries of furlongs are still visible, even in ploughed fields, as linear earthworks of soil piled up by ancient ploughs.

A group of furlongs was called a *field*; each parish was divided into two or, most commonly, three fields which included all the land except the flooding meadows and the village.

Figure 1 shows the open field system of Farn-dish as it was at about the end of the thirteenth century. Various historians¹⁷ have demonstrated that *circa* 1300 A.D. saw the end of the great post-Norman economic and agricultural expansion which in most of Midland England had used up all marginal land and it seems likely that the open-field system reached its maximum extent at this time.

Farn-dish is a classic case illustrating the difference between village ploughland area, and the diffuse political area of the manor. The ploughland is, and always has been, the neatly defined area coterminous with the ecclesiastical parish. In contrast at the Domesday Survey (1086) the land was divided amongst three estates, one of which was considered to be in Northamptonshire.

Taking the ploughland area first. The appealing simplicity was noted by Emerson in 1937, using the Inclosure information, Farn-dish is

'the simplest type of single manor parish small in area and population, and regular in shape. The village and home closes being in the centre surrounded by three fields of about equal area. There were no other closes whatever.'¹⁸

The parish boundaries form smooth lines except for the eastern one which is a meandering brook. The western boundary is formed by the long line of a Roman road to Irchester, and those north and south are smooth watershed curves being quite uninfluenced by the furlong patterns. This

is consistent with the boundaries being defined before the ploughlands of Farn-dish or any of the adjacent villages actually reached them, at Farn-dish demonstrated by the furlongs to the north west. Here Upper Furlong and Spich Hocks Furlong (figure 1, 13) finish off in awkward triangular lands (called *gores*). Clearly the boundary was in existence before them so forming a constraint. Had Farn-dish been cut out of a 'primaeval' larger parish there would have been right-angled bends in the boundary as it made its way between existing ploughlands, as can be seen between Wollaston and Strixton¹² or Great and Little Houghton, Northamptonshire.⁴

The manor and county boundaries, in contrast, have been in chaos until resolved by the Victorians in 1884,¹⁹ who could not tolerate the offence to beaurocracy of a parish lying in two counties. As previously mentioned one of the Domesday estates was in Northamptonshire, this was probably that with property and tofts northwest of the village street. As, however, with open field agriculture the lands belonging to each toft are completely intermixed, the counties became confused throughout the parish strip by strip, and this accounts for Bridges' note of *circa* 1720,

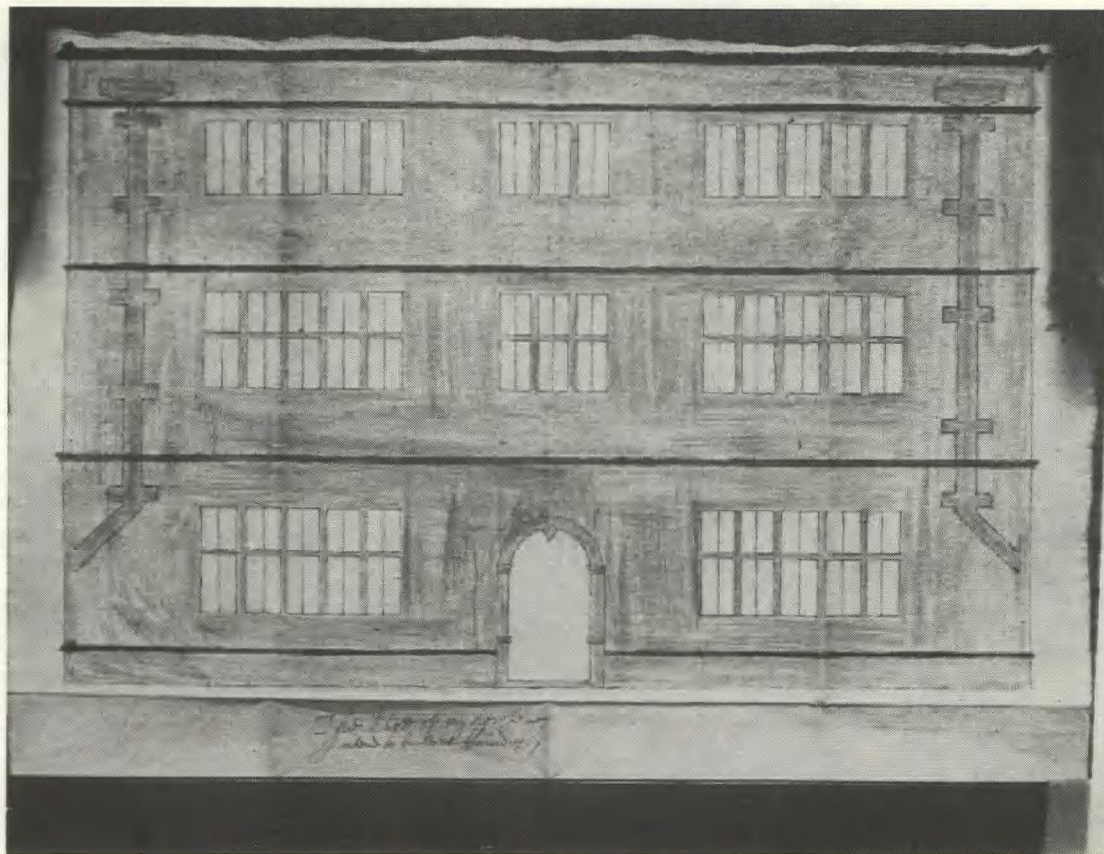
'As to its civil and ecclesiastical government it is subject to the jurisdiction of Bedfordshire, but charged to the land-tax with Irchester . . . The lands in the open field, several closes and houses, are so intermixed with those of Bedfordshire, that in crossing any one furlong you traverse the counties various times'.²⁰

At the time of the Inclosure in 1800 the properties north of the village street are stated to be in Northamptonshire. It is from this document that the cautious legal statement which we have used for our title is taken.²¹

The dual county problems came to a head in 1637 when an enterprising Bedfordshire tax-collector insisted that the villagers living on the Northamptonshire side of the street should pay him, so they ended by paying twice. A letter of complaint was promptly sent to the Sheriff, Henry Chester at Amptill.

'I am requested by Robert Mase and John Pack and the others inhabitant of Northamptonshire to inform you of an abuse afforded to them upon the last years taxation for shipp money by means of Robert Worley a man . . . that loveth to be over busy . . . Parte of Farn-dish is Northamptonshire and the greater parte Bedfordshire. Those of Northamptonshire are

Fig 1 (opposite) Farn-dish furlong plan, 1975.



Pl 1 Plan and elevation of new building by Samuel Collins at the manor house, Farndish, c. 1653.

wholy under the constabulary of Irchester and have no relation in any thing to the constables of Farndish and doe pay with Irchester . . . all taxes . . . Robert Worley causeth these men to be taxed with Farndish returneth their names to Mr Geery (and) . . . escaped for 4 shillings. Afterwards this town being assessed with Northamptonshire contributed 6 shillings . . . and so payed double'.²²

The Inclosure commissioners rationalised the county boundary in an artificial way which cut across several furlongs. Most of the northern third of the parish was in Northamptonshire, and also a detached close set out on the east side of furlong 7. Perhaps the village street was the boundary of some Saxon estate before Farndish was settled, and was still half remembered at Domesday thus becoming crystallized in the political landscape.

The village plan is quite simple, lying either side a principal street which branches into two at

each end. The sunken village lane to the east originally continued to Podington. There was a road, the *Woodway*, leaving to the south west crossing Wollaston Parish to Strixton and Harrold. Within the village the roads are sunken because of erosion occuring before they were properly surfaced. The furlong pattern is set out in a basically rectangular form from the settlement and the four roads, becoming distorted by water courses and valleys (slades) to the east.

No detailed medieval documents survive. The Domesday estates descended as a principal manor and a minor property not of full manorial status.²³ The chief manor seems to have had the usual features of a rabbit warren (figure 1, (a), coney geares), dovecote (figure 1, (b), dovecote yard) and mill.

The pound (figure 1, (c)) was at the west end of the village in front of the manor house. A windmill site has not been identified, nor do there appear to be any obvious fishponds.



Pl 2 Modern photograph of the manor house, Farndish.

In common with most villages there has been late- and post-medieval shrinkage, leaving good earthworks east and south of the settlement. At the northwest the earthworks are ploughed over exposing building stone and sherds of twelfth to fourteenth century date. The reduction of population freed land from the open fields so allowing an envelope of 'home closes' to be formed encompassing the earthworks and some of the former ploughlands. This is likely to have occurred during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was certainly complete by the seventeenth century when many of the closes mentioned in deeds are known by the names later recorded in the Inclosure papers.

Along with the increased area of inclosures there was an increased amount of grass in the open fields. Many strips were left as permanent grass leys, and are referred to in terriers. These grass lands seem to be in furlongs at the edge of the parish. Insufficient ridge and furrow survives to see if any headlands were double, indicating that they too were left as permanent grass, but the name *horse hadens furlong* suggests that there was extra grass formed in this manner. (see under)

The manor was purchased by Samuel Collins of Irchester for £1,000 in 1653.²⁴ He rebuilt the house soon after and his plan and elevation for the new building survives²⁵ (pl 1). It is recognisably

similar to the existing Manor Farm (pl 2). The estate was split between Collins' two daughters, one of whom, Margaret, married Thomas Maydwell of Holcot, Northamptonshire in 1680.²⁶ The Maydwell family, as distant landlords, were only interested in exacting as much money from the estate as possible and frequently vied with other members of the family, e.g. in 1715.²⁷ In 1719 Thomas Alderman applied in Chancery against Thomas Maydwell because he had bought some property in Farndish.

'half a messuage close and severall parcells of arrable land and ley ground lyeing dispersed in the open fields . . . 54 acres and common. Thomas Maydwell has the other half . . . (the) great part of which . . . lye so dispersed and intermixed with other lands of Thomas Maydwell . . . that they are not nor can be easily known or distinguished from (them) . . . Thomas Maydwell for five years past received more than his share of rents . . . taking advantage of the orators ignorance in ye exact Buttals and boundaries.'²⁸

The court found for Thomas Alderman and two separate terriers were drawn up when both halves of the property were sold together in 1720.²⁹ In the early nineteenth century the estate was mortgaged and eventually sold.³⁰ These disputes, no doubt tedious to Farndish people at the time, are useful because they caused terriers

and maps to be made which now help in the identification of the fields.

The name Farndish is derived from *fearn edisc*, which means 'enclosed pasture, overgrown with fern or bracken'.³¹ A complete list of furlong names is given in Appendix 1. Although no early forms are available most of the 1607 names are intelligible. There was then, as usual, a three field system.

Henwycke moore, is Hinwick meer or boundary. *Stanbush* means stone bush, and the form *Pubbly wound*, crooked pebble, perhaps referring to the stones and the twisted shape of the lands. *Hubbons ditch* is also a Wollaston name and occurs in the form *Huboldesdyche* (1372) and *Huboldisdyche* (1430);³² the first element is the Old English personal name Hubald. The Farndish 1708 terrier gives the additional information that it butts into *Streetway*, which is a common name for a Roman Road. It seems that the old road was still visibly ditched in early medieval times. *Fidlers grave*, also occurring at Wollaston in 1591,³³ takes its name from a site on the parish boundary. It is very probable the Saxon burial place discovered in 1828, if so we have a case of an event surviving as a place name for about 1200 years.

Fauldewes means ewe fold. *Spich hockes* occurs at Wollaston in 1430 as *Spytchehokes*.³⁴ Ordinarily this would mean bacon hooks and refer to unusually twisty lands. Twisted strips are often noticed in furlong names, thus *Trendeland* (wheel-land) at Hinwick in 1765,³⁵ *Wheelback* and *Tenter* at Higham Ferrers (1576)³⁶ and *Twinywayes* at Strixton (1583).³⁷ There is some doubt in this case because with the two Wollaston furlongs there are three adjacent furlongs bearing the same name; it would be unusual to find so many twisted lands together on gentle terrain with no awkward boundary constraints. It is just possible that instead the name means *spaeche okes* that is, speech oaks, and is an early site of the Higham Ferrers Hundred Court meeting place.

This might be the reason that part of Farndish remained in Northamptonshire. The site is on high ground, typical of a meeting place. *Langlande* also refers to the physical aspect of a furlong, in this case the extreme length of the lands (420 yards compared with the norm of about 200). *Moore*s in Mill Field probably means marsh rather than meer; the area is very marshy caused by numerous springs running out of the base of the limestone. *Old Yards* furlong lies below some shrunken village earthworks. Yard is often used to name a manor house site (e.g. at Bozeat and

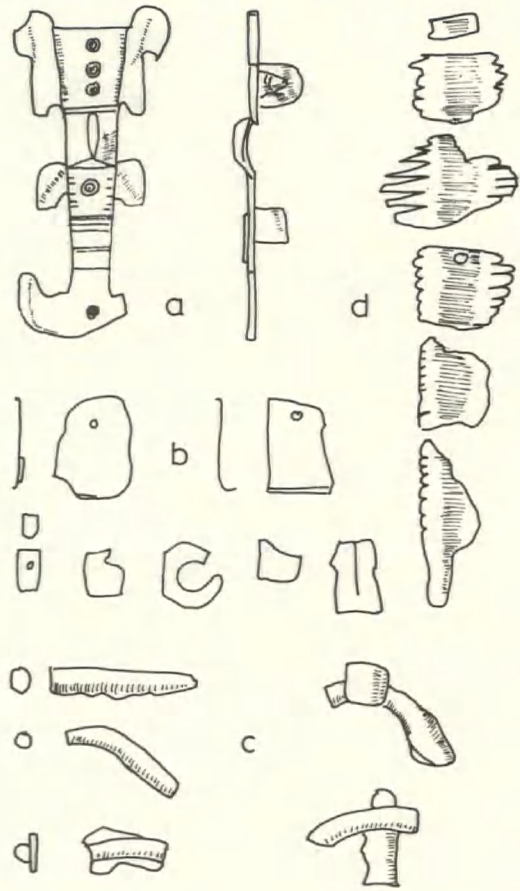


Fig 2 The objects from the Saxon burial at Farndish. (scale $2\frac{1}{2}$).

Wollaston, *Bury yard* and *Hall yard* respectively) and the earthworks may be near one of the Domesday properties.

Fullwell is foul or muddy spring, being the slade below the village. *Hallway* is the Wollaston to Hinwick road and refers to Hinwick Hall. *Rowhedg* may mean rough hedge or, if it should really be *wro*, then corner hedge, and referring to the angle at its north end. *Horshadens*, horse heads is probably the ends or heads of the strips later set down to grass where horses were staked out to graze in the summer.

Although these name forms are rather a late set to work on there seems to be a remarkable absence of any Scandinavian influence in them, except perhaps for *wro* (Old Norse *vra*), which in the surviving form of row is uncertain.

Farndish was included by a Parliamentary Act

of 1800.²¹ The usual straight-hedged fields were set out, and infilled to a certain extent with some curved ones following the open field contours. Limestone quarries were allocated by the Commissioners on furlongs 9 and 18 and gravel on furlong 2. There had been quarries at the first site, *Mayds pit*, at least by 1607.³⁸

The Inclosures rapidly introduced the new agricultural techniques so that by 1838 there were 430 acres of arable (i.e. destroyed ridge and furrow) out of the total area of fields of about 660 acres.³⁹ In 1905 177 acres were described as permanent pasture.¹⁶ The total of ridge and furrow and village earthworks was 113 acres in 1966, now reduced to 51 acres. Ridge and furrow survives in parts of furlongs 18, 20, 32, and 33.

The population has remained small and agricultural, being an estimated 30 at the Hearth Tax of 1671, 68 in 1801 and 72 in 1881.⁴⁰

An interesting practise for hiring labourers is deplored in a sermon of 1858 by G.J. Chester, the Rector. Apparently workmen hired themselves out at 'Statute Fairs' which 'became a time of fiery temptation and fearful peril to the young. The public houses are all filled, those of the worst name having dancing-rooms open, and by the time that night set in drunkenness and grosser crimes are the invariable order of the season'.⁴¹

In furlong 27 there is a crater which was made by a United States Air Force B17F bomber crashing fully laden soon after take-off in 1944.

It is hoped that this account will prove of some use to those undertaking parish studies. It can be seen that it is still possible to map pre-inclosure landscapes, and identify the open fields using the combined evidence of terriers and surviving field names.

APPENDIX 1

FARNDISH FIELD NAMES

The principal sources are the glebe terriers of 1607³⁸ and 1708,⁴² and a conveyance terrier of 1720.²⁹

Number on
Figure 1

Name in 1607

Orientation

West Field or Spring Field 1-10.

1	Henwycke Moore furlong	NS
2	Long John furlong	EW
3	Stanbush leys (Pubbly wounds 1720)	EW
4	(Short furlong above galls 1720)	EW
5	Hubbons dich.	EW
6	(Short furlong shooting to Woodway 1708)	

7	Eldarn (Elder furlong 1708)	NS
8	Fidlars grave (Nether furlong 1708)	NS
9	Mydle furlong	NS
10	Upper furlong	NS

Windmill Field 11-21

11	Fauldewes (Faldows 1708)	EW
12	Blacksandes	NS
13	Spich Hotkes	NS
14	Langlande	NS
15	Mydle furlong	NS & EW
16	Furlong above Irchester Way	EW
17	(Below Irchester way on Meer 1720)	NS
18	Furlong below Irchester way	EW
19	(abutting moores)	EW
20	Short furlong butting into Mores	EW
21	Old Yards furlong	EW

Rowheg Field 22-31

22	Fullwell	NS
23	Beanland	EW
24	Oatecraft	NS
25	Woodway furlong	EW
26	(?Galls furlong)	EW
27	Hallway	EW
28	Rowhedg furlong	EW
29	(? Ditto)	EW
30	Horshadens	NS
31	Brooke furlong	EW

Ancient Inclosure 32-35

32	Grass croft
33-35	

The *Calverslade* running EW, north of the village means calf valley.

APPENDIX 2

THE SAXON BURIAL

By David H. Kennett

The Saxon finds from Farndish have been noted as having been found "in a bank which here forms the county boundary" in the year 1828, or thereabouts. These finds are now in the British Museum, London, but are without accession number.

- a: Small-long brooch, bronze with square head-plate panelled with horns on upper corners; decorated with three circles on the panel with nicks along the edges, with a short bow and down-facing lappets either side of a panel decorated with a circle. The broken notched crescentic foot has a central circllet. Length extant 65mm.
- b: A collection of bronze fragments, including two plates each with a rivet hole and one binding pieces. These are of uncertain interpretation.
- c: Series of five iron fragments, some curved, others straight, probably from two or more iron penannular brooches.

d: fragments from a bone comb; length of longest fragment 32mm.

The associated group is unusual for north Bedfordshire and adjacent areas of Northamptonshire, although iron penannular brooches are known at Holdenby.⁴³ The small-long brooch is of a type found in Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk. Associated examples are few. Two graves at Holywell Row provide some pointers. With a notched crescentic foot, the pair from grave 37⁴⁴ were associated with a large example of a cruciform brooch of Aberg's group IV, with flat excrescences on the knobs, which had been broken and mended in antiquity. The type is known also with a triangular foot; that in Holywell Row grave 79 was buried new in a grave with four other brooches, all of which show considerable wear.⁴⁵ Lethbridge placed both graves late in the sixth century. For all examples of the developed form of the horned small-long brooch this seems not improbable and this is probably the general chronological position of the Farndish grave.⁴⁶

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C.B.A., Council for British Archaeology.
N.C.R.O., Northampton County Record Office.

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