

THE FURLONG-NAMES OF CHICHELEY

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*Professor A. C. Chibnall's ancestral village of Sherington has been doubly fortunate: first in the quantity and quality of its archives, and then in the insight of its historian, whose work has illuminated its agrarian history,¹ and as a by-product has facilitated a case-study of the longevity of its field-names.² In a sequel, *Beyond Sherington*,³ Dr. Chibnall applied the same approach mutatis mutandis to a group of neighbouring parishes in north-east Buckinghamshire, and particularly to Chicheley, where the Chibnalls held a reputed manor in the sixteenth century.⁴*

The settlement histories of Sherington and Chicheley have been very different. Sherington is a loosely nucleated village which probably retained its identity as an estate throughout the Dark Ages, however precariously; its lord's demesne was consolidated, probably soon after the Norman Conquest, instead of being dispersed in the open fields. But the whole district was not settled village-wise; in particular, Chicheley comprises an oddly-shaped area, where scattered farmsteads may have had no consciousness of common identity until the ninth or early tenth century. Until then, there was no central government of England which could maintain a comprehensive and regular scheme under which burdens of taxation and national defence were imposed on fiscal and administrative units of convenient size, either existing or newly defined.

Sherington had a classical midland two-field system with two common fields and two fields in the lord's ring-fenced demesne. Each field was fallowed every second year until the early sixteenth century, when all the furlongs (topographical units of cultivation) were reallocated into three larger fields, with fallowing every third year to prevent or at least delay exhaustion of the soil. In Chicheley this move towards high farming had clearly taken place much earlier, when pressure of population and shortage of pasture led to a recasting of haphazard local arrangements into an allocation of fur-

longs, not into compact fields but into three permanent groups, with a regular three-course rotation. For such a grouping of non-contiguous furlongs the name 'field' was hardly appropriate. Professor Ekwall found that in Sussex a sector of arable land sown in regular succession was called a *leyn* or *layne*, and Dr. Chibnall had noted one reference to Mill Field in Sherington as *Mulleleyn*, but this dialectal element is otherwise unrecorded in Buckinghamshire, where the usual term was 'field' where the constituent furlongs were contiguous, 'field season' where they were not.

The open fields of Chicheley were professionally surveyed in September 1557 for Mr Anthony Cave, a merchant of the staple at Calais, member of parliament for Liverpool in the previous reign and lord of the principal manor,⁵ to which he had added the former monastic lands in 1545 and the Chibnall (formerly Reynes) manor in 1547. He died in 1558, the year of the loss of Calais, and on the death of his widow in 1577, after two remarriages, Chicheley was inherited by his grandson Anthony Chester, then aged eleven, in whose family the estate has remained.⁶ The 1557 survey,⁷ giving the names of furlongs and meadows then in use, was closely studied and annotated by Professor Chibnall, and is the basis of the invaluable Map 5 in his *Beyond Sherington*, which has made the present study possible. This survey is supplemented by a terrier of

1526,⁸ occasioned by the suppression of Tickford Priory in 1524,⁹ with papal approval, to provide part of the endowment of Cardinal Wolsey's new foundation, now Christ Church, Oxford. This terrier supplies the names of greens, closes, highways and streams, but not of arable land previously held from the priory in the open common fields.

For Sherington, Dr Chibnall had been able to construct a field map for c.1300 which is almost complete, and can be closely compared with corresponding maps for c.1580 and 1950.¹⁰ For Chicheley, a complete medieval map has not yet been found practicable, though numerous furlongs are named in the archives of the Maunsell family, settled at Chicheley before 1135. Between 1153 and 1166, with the consent of their lord Gervase Paynel, they had given a large part of their fee to 'the monks of Newport' (i.e. Tickford, a Benedictine priory founded by Gervase's grandfather Fulk Paynel) to be held in frankalmoign. What survived of Ralph Maunsell's knight's fee was dispersed in the parish, and between c.1240 and c.1370 his descendants acquired strips in the common fields as opportunity offered and means permitted. Eighty-eight of their deeds from this period have survived.

In 1287 William Maunsell was obliged to sell his manorial rights in order to keep his mansion, later Balney Farm. Henceforward the Maunsells, despite their knightly ancestry, were modestly described as yeomen or even husbandmen until the sixteenth century, when Richard and his son John, both attorneys practising in the Middle Temple, restored the family fortune; but their success came too late for them to compete with (Sir) Anthony Chester,¹² who already held a thousand acres in Chicheley and bought their land in 1607–10. Their legal practice soon passed into other hands, and their medieval muniments, though not lost, gathered dust until early in the twentieth century, when they were bought by Mr. H. R. Moulton. He offered the collection to the heir of the Maunsells at Thorpe Malsor, Northants, who could claim eight centuries of direct male descent, but who nevertheless replied that even if he could afford it, which he could not, he would prefer to spend the money on buying a horse.¹³ Dr. Chibnall was therefore able to acquire those deeds in 1945, and found that they supplied earlier forms or alternative names for most of the larger and some of the smaller furlongs included in

the Cave survey. It is thus possible to construct a list for the early fourteenth century which is more or less complete for those furlongs any part of which was owned by the Maunsells. Most of the transactions recorded relate to a single acre, half-acre, rood or selion (strip, ridge or land) but this is enough. Names in this list which do not occur in the Tudor record can safely be assumed to have fallen out of use.

Of the 65 furlongs in which the Maunsells held land, 50 had names, in use around 1330, which were recorded in 1557. The survival rate of 77 per cent implies a rate of loss of nearly 1.2 per cent per decade, corresponding to a half-life of just over 600 years. This is in good agreement with the results for the South and West common fields of Sherington, where 75 per cent of the furlong names known to have been current around 1300 were still in use c. 1580, giving a half-life of 670 years.¹⁴

Table 1 below classifies the furlong names in Chicheley according to the number of selions in the furlong recorded in 1557, and whether the occurrence of the name (or description equivalent to a name) in the Maunsell deeds allows an inference that it was in use c.1330. Names which occur in those deeds but not later cannot be located on the map with certainty or placed in their correct field seasons. One furlong (Lowis lees) named in 1557 is omitted, as no particulars are given in the schedule.

All identifications made by Dr Chibnall have been accepted except that Middle Hay cannot be the same as Middel furlong, in view of their different abutments. In particular, continuity is claimed in a few cases where the generic element has changed; thus, ad Hocstub (c.1240) was Hogspill by 1557, *stubb* 'stump' having been replaced by *pil* 'stake'. Similarly, le Akerger became Acrehed; *gāra* 'gore' seems to have been displaced by *hēafod* 'headland'. Part of this furlong had been assigned to a different field season, and the name was there entered as Acred; the two sections were demarcated by Skawsley Bush. The parts of this divided furlong have been counted as two.

Thus, the chance of a Tudor name occurring in the Maunsell deeds is dependent on the number of selions in the furlong. When that number exceeds 40, the odds are in favour of finding it there, while

TABLE I.
Furlong names in Chicheley, 1557

No. of selions	Under 20	20-39	40-59	60 or more	Total
<i>Hay Field Season</i>					
Early form on record	3	8	7	3	21
No early form	6	11	8	-	25
Total	9	19	15	3	46
<i>Barlong Field Season</i>					
Early form on record	1	2	4	6	13
No early form	9	7	2	1	19
Total	10	9	6	7	32
<i>Brook Field Season</i>					
Early form on record	3	2	3	8	16
No early form	2	2	3	4	11
Total	5	4	6	12	27
<i>All field seasons</i>					
Early form on record	7	12	14	17	50
No early form	17	20	13	5	55
Total	24	32	27	22	105

of the large furlongs with 60 or more selions three-fourths can be shown to have had effectively the same name in the early fourteenth century as in the mid-sixteenth. No doubt the Maunsell collection is slanted towards the larger furlongs in which the family is more likely to have made acquisitions by purchasing odd parcels of land as occasion served. Sometimes, as with "the vicar's Balscroft" an opportunity would not arise. One can only assess the survival rate for the names of those furlongs in which the Maunsells held land, on the assumption that the furlong-names in their deeds are more or less exhaustive for their medieval estate.

The evidence from Chicheley is consistent with the Sherington estimate of the slow rate of change in the common fields, and supports the further

hypothesis that the survival rate of furlong names was associated with the size of the furlong, because the larger furlongs were more often mentioned and thus had more stable designations. Those little furlongs (under 20 selions) for which early names persisted nearly all adjoined a highway or a windmill; these would be more often noticed and mentioned than similar small furlongs in locations where fewer people would pass, and their names would thus be maintained in common usage.

The extreme case is that of deserted villages. It has been shown that in Hasley, where the village was depopulated and the land subsequently emparked and then disparked, there was an almost complete loss of medieval and then of post-medieval field-names; even the name of the township

was eventually forgotten locally, surviving only as a book-name used by its corporate landlord.¹⁵

In Sherington it was possible to establish beyond reasonable doubt that names in the common fields had much greater likelihood of survival than those of fields in the consolidated demesne, so long as that distinction lasted, though not afterwards.¹⁶ In Chicheley tenurial complexity was immemorial and was reflected in the field system. The Hay field season comprised a group of furlongs extending from the river-meadows along the Monchelade lane in the south-west of the parish, together with the Balney furlongs in the centre and a detached group in the north-east. The Barlong field season was mainly in the south of the parish, but also included two groups of furlongs towards the north. The Brook field season was mostly near the village centre (where names were more likely to survive, *ceteris paribus*) but also extended into the north-west, where the various Stocking furlongs look like post-Conquest assarts from the ancient oak woods, of which the Aggrove (*āc*, 'oak') was a remnant; another detached group in the far east has been interpreted as a late addition to the parish made at the instance of the prior of Tickford.¹⁷

Field seasons of this type, corresponding to Sussex *laynes*, were more flexible than compact open fields, and seem to be associated with dispersed settlement in 'endships' or hamlets. In any case a three-course arrangement could hardly be primitive; outside Kent,¹⁸ there appears to be no evidence for it earlier than the eleventh-century *Rectitudines*.¹⁹ Possibly the earliest three-field rotation involved one crop and two fallows, the very reverse of high farming. Joan Thirsk²⁰ has argued that in the midlands the three-field system emerged between 1100 and 1250 from a preceding stage when furlongs were not yet arranged into orderly groups on a parish basis, and H. S. A. Fox²¹ has pointed out that a transition from irregular arrangements to three-course field systems was proceeding in the honour of Denbigh as late as 1334: in two of the four demesnes, conversion was complete, and another 'non partitur in ceteris seisonas, tamen potest bene tripartiri'. This was at a single lord's initiative, but once a vill like Chicheley had the effective communal organisation required to meet its wider obligations (and until that stage it was hardly an entity at all) the adoption of a systematic

three-course rotation of crops, with minimum change in existing practice, would follow naturally when (but only when) the pressure of population on resources demanded it. In contrast, in a village which was an organised community from the first, a simple and compact two-field system with communal rights and obligations is quite likely to go back to the ninth or even the eighth century,²² and once a two-course system was established there would be considerable resistance to its conversion to a three-course rotation.

An important though untypical experience is that of Newton Blossomville,²³ which had been harried in or before 1065 and was still derelict in 1086, apart from two bordars (smallholders) with no plough-team, so that they would have had to hire oxen for ploughing, probably in return for their meadow. The vill, held by Roger of Olney in 1086, was taken over by Gilbert de Blosseville and was refounded and renamed by him or by William de Blosseville about 1100. It had only two field seasons, but with some 'every year's land', until its open fields were enclosed in 1811.

Table 2 shows the area of each field season in Chicheley in 1526 and 1557, the numbers of furlongs and of selions in 1557, their average areas and the numbers of selions per furlong.

For each field season, the distribution of the average size of selion within the furlong is bimodal: there is some tendency to cluster round two standard values, approximately a third of an acre and a quarter of an acre (one rood). In the Cave schedule the areas of furlongs are stated to the nearest rood, except for two which are given in terms of thirds; in *Beyond Sherington* all these are rounded to the nearest acre.²⁴ The acre was notionally a day's work; more than a free man would impose on himself, but perhaps not more than he would expect from bondsmen. One recalls Ælfric's ploughman,²⁵ who had each day to till a full acre or more, and complained, "Yes, it is hard work, because I am not free."

Of course the 'lands' (selions), though of standard width, had to conform as regards length to the varying topography of the furlong, but it is suggested that some of the original assarters may have thought in terms of three selions to the acre and

TABLE 2:
Numbers and areas of furlongs and selions in Chicheley

Field Season	Area (acres)		Number (1557)			Average area (acres)		Modal area* of selions	
	in 1526	in 1557	Furlongs	Selions	Selions per furlong	per furlong	per selion		
Hay	532	525.8	46	1674	36.4	11.43	.314	.26,	.36
Barlong	411	393.4	32	1254	39.2	12.29	.314	.24,	.33
Brook	405	403.0	27	1538	57.0	14.93	.262	.25,	.32
TOTAL	1348	1322.2	105	4466	42.5	12.59	.296	.24,	.33

* Most frequently occurring values

others in terms of four. Maitland found that "a fairly common usage made four selions in each acre."²⁶ Here, it seems hardly accidental that two large 'Stocking' furlongs in the north-west corner of the parish, interpreted as twelfth-century assarts, had 60 and 63 selions for their 15 and 15¾ acres respectively, averaging exactly one rood. For the Brook field season, which includes these, this is the more prominent mode; this sector had larger furlongs and smaller selions than the others, and the average size of its selions is depressed by some short ones in the part of *Cuculmeshoh* (Cooksoe) which Tickford priory is thought to have claimed for the parish, creating a kink in its boundary.²⁷ For two furlongs in this season, there is probably a scribal error; to exclude these would reduce the average from 0.262 to 0.254 acres per selion, exceeding one rood (0.25 acres) by no more than one square pole, rod, perch or lug.

EARLY SETTLEMENT CENTRES IN CHICHELEY

Descriptive place-names often persist long after the features they once described have ceased to exist. When considered in relation to topography and soils, the minor place-names of Chicheley can throw considerable light on its early history. Dr. Chibnall concluded that for this area of scattered development proceeding piecemeal, the oldest Anglo-Saxon settlement was to be found near the very short frontage to the Great Ouse, and that its name (perhaps antedating that of Chicheley itself) may have been *Brocheleshei*,²⁸ evidenced by Gervase Paynel's benefaction to Tickford Priory in 1175, with elements *brōc*, *lās* and (*ge*) *hæg*, corrupted by folk-etymology to Brockholes (were

there badger-setts there?). The first and last elements seem to have survived in the Brook furlong in the Hay field season. The existence of this "enclosed meadow by the brook" does not necessarily imply a settlement close by, but no sooner had *Beyond Sherington* been published than Michael Farley²⁹ found a habitation site, on the natural shelf east of the Great Ouse and north of the Chicheley (or Tickford) Brook, during a rescue dig under difficult conditions on the line of the Newport Pagnell by-pass. The material survived only because it was protected in a ditch. The excavation yielded 69 hand-made shelly-fabric sherds of Middle Saxon date, similar in form and size to group 3 from Maxey, some 40 miles to the north-east. The pierced-lug vessels seem to be precursors of Maxey type 2b. It would however appear that swallow-nest/bar-lug vessels are so rare that it is not yet possible to establish their chronological sequence; but the most likely date for the settlement is late in the seventh century, and nothing appreciably later than the eighth century was found. This settlement may not have had more than one or two households, but a seventh-century household would have comprised more than the nuclear family of its head; it could well have included other kinsfolk, and any opportunity to secure a few slaves would have been taken.

Certainly Brockholes was highly self-sufficient. Slag indicates a smithing hearth, and the small finds included knife blades, an iron bar tapering at both ends closely similar to one at Maxey, fragments of a lava quern and a broken and burnt spindle whorl. The animal bones imply that sheep were kept mainly for their wool. The charcoal was from birch trees and from particularly slow-grown oaks.

In the settlement period, moving house was neither lengthy nor costly, and the *Brocheleshei* site was short-lived, but it lasted long enough to affect the layout of the Hay field season. Three furlongs with significant names meet here: Tickford Ashe (Asthulle in Brocholes c.1240), Byddell Hooke (*hōc*, land in river-bend) and Goslund – the bones found included geese as well as fowl. A late eighth-century date for the relocation of these dwellings elsewhere (a “Middle Saxon shuffle”) is fairly close to the probable origin of strip cultivation locally, but leaves time for a period when the site was not cultivable.

What was to become the village centre of Chicheley, ‘Cicca’s clearing’, is on a sheltered and attractive site, probably chosen because of its un-failing supply of pure water from the Frewell spring, discussed below. There were, however, other habitations along the Newport-Bedford road, which must surely have existed as a track. A group of furlongs called Balney recalls **Ballan-hæg*, ‘Balla’s enclosure’ where Balla represents some name with first element Bald. The same minor place-name occurs at Hanslope; in both cases the site appears to preclude *ēg* as the second element. Such repetition occurs elsewhere; the field names of Ashley Green in Great Chesham include Pednor and Winchmore Hill, both replicated as hamlet names a few miles away.³⁰ Dunstall or Tunstall furlong, adjoining Balney, probably took its name from Balla’s *tūn*; this would have been near his *hæg* ‘close’, which nevertheless became common arable except for one acre of meadow, Balney mede (1311).

To the west of the village centre, Catisweke furlong (Cadeworth c.1140) appears to have the personal name Cata or Cada as first element; for the second, *wīc* in the sense ‘dairy farm’ replaced *word* ‘enclosure’. Just across the road was Bursted furlong (“called a close”) obliterating any remains of the *burh*, which could well have been Cada’s. Close by were a few cottages (now demolished) latterly called Little End, but recorded as Welche croft end in 1557; “Welsh crofts” could have been those of Britons associated with Cada, whose name appears to be Celtic, and who seems to have had a wood or scrubland, Cadfryth, in Newton Blossomville, which became common arable. Peaceful relations between Britons and Mercians in

the seventh-century settlement period, though uneven, are well evidenced.³¹ Names such as Tunstall and Bursted must have been given after the *tūn* or *burh* was demolished but while its site (*stall*, *stede*) was remembered and often mentioned.

During the tenth century, kings and ealdormen demanded that Buckingham should be fortified and defended, bridges constructed and maintained and the Danes confronted. This necessitated the delimitation of Chicheley as a 10-hide unit and so established its identity. A changing economy, and perhaps insecurity and lack of capital, may already have led to arrangements for co-aration being made locally and informally, but there is no evidence for a mill before the coming of windmills, or for a parish church before the early twelfth century, when the minster of St. Firmin at Crawley fell into decay.^{31a} However, once the vill was defined and named, even if organised existence was imposed upon it from above, common institutions and a common sentiment would follow. Change may have been accelerated by the disaster in 1010, when the whole area beyond Sherington, including Chicheley, was on or very near the route of the Danish army, some three months after the battle of Ringmere in Norfolk on 5th May.³² The Chronicle³³ is most emphatic:

And syððon wendon eft suðweard into Temese, and ridon þa gehorsedan menn on gean þa scipo, and syððon hrædllice wendon westweard on Oxanford scire, and þanon to Bucingham scire,³⁴ and swa andlang Usan, oð hi comon to Bedanforda and swa forð oð Temesanford, and á bærndon swa hi geferdon

(And afterwards they (the Danish host under Thorkell the Tall) turned back southwards into (the) Thames (valley), and the mounted men rode towards the ships (being refitted in Kent), and quickly afterwards they turned westwards into Oxfordshire,³⁵ and thence into Buckinghamshire, and so along (the) Ouse till they came to Bedford and so on as far as Tempsford, and always they burnt as they went).

If the Danes moved south of the Great Ouse, the dispersed farmsteads around Chicheley are not likely to have been spared by those who had already gone even into the wild fens to slay and burn; they

took delight in destroying things which were not even in their way. This seems an appropriate context for greater concentration of settlement in the area; it has been suggested³⁶ that Viking harrying in 917 had this effect between Bernwood and Aylesbury.

Nevertheless what was to be the parish of Chicheley remained polyfocal, and three proto-manors retained their identity before and after the Norman Conquest.³⁷ On the day when King Edward was alive and dead, three hides were held by Baldwin, who retained them as under-tenant of William son of Ansculf, lord of Newport. Three hides were held by Edestan, who lost them to Andrew, a retainer and under-tenant of William. Three hides and three virgates (one virgate short of the four hides needed to make up ten) were held by nine thegns (not named) who had power to sell their respective holdings without leave of their lords. It is suggested that frequently it was such groupings which had initiated strip-cultivation; that when they took in new land from woodland or waste they allotted it in strips, acre-meal, and when the need became apparent they or their successors agreed on a regular crop rotation. Even if they started as family groups, newcomers might be admitted if they could contribute to the plough-teams. Probably, as at Lavendon,³⁸ they agreed that one of them should represent the group in the eyes of the Crown and that geld should be collected at his hall. "Kings dealt more naturally with men than with folk-moots".³⁹ But after the Conquest they were all succeeded by or subjected to Payn, another retainer of William, who also gave him an adjoining half-virgate in Hardmead. The half-virgate (15 fiscal acres) still lacking was perhaps the odd half-virgate annexed before 1086 to the single hide which was to become Newton Blossomville. The overlordship of all these holdings in Chicheley descended thereafter with the barony of Newport Pagnell. Dr Chibnall has fully elucidated the descent of the Chicheley manors, all of which eventually came into the hands of the Chester family, so that what had been an 'open' village community became a very 'close' one in the seventeenth century. Pevsner⁴⁰ said "There is no village to speak of, just the church close to the hall, a small group of houses on the main road, a few outlying farms". But much the same could be said of other North Bucks parishes. The population of Chicheley, 189 in 1801,

271 at its maximum in 1851 and 208 in 1901 was fairly characteristic of the district.

Although Chicheley adjoins the shrunken Hardmead and the depopulated townships of Ekeney and Petsoe, which may exemplify the rule 'last in, first out', it enjoyed until the Dissolution a degree of social and economic stability favouring the survival of minor place-names, which can provide evidence of earlier phases of local history of which no other record remains. The holdings of the nine thegns are quite likely to have been small dairy farms, so that the element *wīc* should be significant. In addition to Catesweke, replacing Cadeworth, relevant names include Syswic (from a personal name with Sige-), Sybwic (pers. n. Sibba) and Snelleswik. Other early farms may be recalled by Skawsley (Danish pers. n. Skalli?), Cooksoe from Cuculmeshoh (Cwichelm's hoo)⁴¹ and perhaps Armenhale, a corner (*healh*) for the use of the poor (*earm* 'wretched') or associated with Earm(a). The dispersion of these suggests that farmers preferred to live apart until economic pressure or external hazards drove some of them closer together, leaving their names behind.

A relatively high proportion of furlong-names have the element *land*, usually descriptive of the varying character of the soil, especially in a square mile or so in the south of the parish. Such names include Clotty land (*clot(t)* with adjectival suffix), Mawny lond (*malm* 'sandy soil'), Redd londe, Blakelond ('blackland' may be heath or scrub), Whytland (*hwīt* perhaps in the sense 'dry, open') and Waterland, translated *ad aquosam (terram, understood)*. With these may be associated Clay Hill, the Sandes, and probably Sendedge, which gives good sense, though the form *sende* for earlier **sænde* is not otherwise on record in Bucks.

CLOSES

In addition to its common fields, Chicheley had some 40 closes by 1526, totalling 295 acres, including 126 acres in the lord's demesne, of which 100 acres constituted Bury Field, the 'great pasture between Thickthorne and Hardmead', enlarged to 120 acres by 1646. Chantry land, on map 5 but omitted from the accompanying schedule, was the endowment of the Wake chantry at Blisworth, Northants. The next largest close was Tymkyns, 15

acres. Of the smaller closes, with 2 to 6 acres, 21 had names like Tymkyns, a personal name in the genitive; of these Sybwic is ancient, but the rest took their names from landholders in the fourteenth century or later, mostly from surnames, though Phips, Hannes and Edes, which are adjacent, look like pet forms of Philip, Henry and Edith. Bownes is probably from Bohun,⁴² Tills from the Tyle family, here in 1316, while Hyxtre is probably 'Hick's tree', but others were recent or strictly contemporary; in 9 cases, the name in 1526 is that of the owner or tenant at the time. Such names were obviously mutable, and were not always distinctive; Glovers close, with William Glover as owner or tenant, occurs three times, and he also gave his name to a grove and to a hedge on the Sherington boundary. For closes with personal names, the term 'close' is standard, except for Horton's toft and croft, owned by Richard Horton, and Perkyns pightle, tenanted by John Perkyns.

Two closes recalled former manor-houses: Moted Close (or Bawerck's Close) in a neighbourhood called 'le buriende', the site of William Paynel's house in the twelfth century, and 'John the manor' adjoining Thickthorne manor place.

The name Longcroft was shared by three closes, of 3, 7 and 14 acres, which were not adjacent; the name is recorded from 1312, and in 1332 what became Webbs Close was 'another Longcroft'. The name is natural enough for the enclosure of a few neighbouring selions, which many farmers desired and some achieved by purchase or exchange. "Names are given to places in order that they may be distinguished from neighbouring places", but evidently here only immediate neighbours were concerned. There was a Shortcroft of 3 acres on the Ekeney boundary, with an alternative name, Little Harecroft, found in 1415, when Harecroft itself had only 2 acres, though 13 adjoining selions were conveyed with it, presumably with a view to their enclosure; a century later it had 5 acres, and was accordingly Great Harecroft. The first element may be *hār* in the sense 'boundary' rather than *hara* 'hare'.

LANES AND WOODS

In 1526 there were 17 roads or lanes in Chicheley, 11 of which were named in the terrier,

though oddly not the major highways; one more name, Mawn Portwaye, is implied by a furlong-name. Of the named highways, Lacbridge lane, the road from Tickford End to Sherington, has the old element *lacu* 'small stream, tributary'. Dr Chibnall suggested that Slies lane, from the Maunsell house (Balney Farm) to Petsoe and Emberton, took its name from **slēa* 'grassy slope'; this element is evidenced in Norwegian, but should give *Slee (or Slay?); John Sley occurs here in the late thirteenth century. Monchlade ('nuns' path') from Little End to Lacbridge lane, was later Blackbird lane, and was otherwise called the Portway or Ridgeway (rygweye de Schyryngton, 1421); it was used when the road from Sherington to Newport was flooded, until it was closed by a private Act of 1753 to prevent avoidance of tolls. Snorend lane from Church End to the Maunsell mansion (**snār*, Norwegian *snaar* 'brushwood') was later 'the lane leading to Bedlam.' Upend lane to Thornhill manor farm does not adjoin Upend furlong, but together with Upend brook these names suggest a lost hamlet of Upend adjoining Thickthorne wood, which by 1526 was the only wood of any size (43 acres) remaining in the parish; the others were 'groves' (*grāf*, small (managed?) wood) of two or three acres, mostly named for an owner (Spencers, Reynes, Glover's, probably Slies) or from a farm-house which was itself so named (Snellswic grove; toft called Snelswyk, 1425).

FREWELL

Four furlongs were named from springs or wells: Badgers Well, Fimblewell, Salt welle (later Salt Hill) and especially Freyewell furlong abutting Frewell in 1316. In view of the later forms Frithwell and Friswell, Freyewell is probably a mistranscription of Frepewell, parallel to Fritwell in Oxfordshire, which is Frithewelle c.1316, Frethewelle c.1380, Frightwell 1580, for the first element of which Alexander⁴⁴ had proposed *freht* 'augury, divination'. Subsequently Gelling,⁴⁵ Smith,⁴⁶ Ekwall⁴⁷ and Mills⁴⁸ all suggested 'wishing well' as the likely sense, but Dr Carole Hough⁴⁹ has recently pointed out that this is somewhat anachronistic. A **frehtwella* should rather be used to ascertain the future so as to take action accordingly, especially as regards one's enemies. Further, Tolkien⁵⁰ had to remind his translators that in place-names 'well' is 'spring, source' rather than a deep water-pit.

Dr Hough has recalled that while Fritwell remained unique as a place-name, a sense unsupported by external evidence had to be treated with caution, but that though two occurrences might be a coincidence, three or more begin to be a significant corpus, implying that the recurring compound was an appellative, not an *ad hoc* formation. In 1963 Fretwell Close and Fraight Lane were recorded in the West Riding,⁵¹ in 1980 a field-name Frightwell was found at Chetton in Shropshire,⁵² and in 1994 another, Frethewell, came to light at Morton, Notts.⁵³ It is submitted that Frewell is a further example of the same formation. Ekwall considered that the forms hardly supported the alternative **friðen* 'fenced in' from *frið* 'refuge, protection'.

Cnut's second code⁵⁴ prohibited the worship of springs (*þæt man weorþige . . . wæterwyllas*) or encompassing death by sacrifice or divination (*mordweorc gefremme . . . oððon an blote oððon fyrte*). These were equally forms of the *hæðenscipe* which persisted in the Danelaw, though attempts were made to Christianise sacred springs, as well as holy stones or trees. The later part of the so-called Law of the Northumbrian Priests (c.1020 – 23)⁵⁵ which is in fact addressed to landholders rather than priests, also associates heathen sacrifice (*blot*) with divination (*firht*) and goes on to prohibit the making of a sanctuary round a stone, tree or spring 'or any such nonsense' (*swilces ænigge fleard*, probably 'deception, fraud' rather than merely 'folly'); the fine (*lahslit*) went half to Christ, half to the lord of the estate (*landrica*). Shortly before his death in 1725 the current *landrica*, Sir John Chester, without any such superstitious intention, honoured the spring with a curious tower, which in due course became an ivy-covered ruin. The never-failing waters which he harnessed to supply his newly-built Chicheley Hall still flow into his pond or 'canal'. A century earlier the furlong to which the spring had given its name had become part of Frewell Close, effectively Anthony Cave's private park.

FIMBLEWELL

The names Fimblewell lane and Fymble well furlong imply the existence of a spring near the site of Thickthorne manor-house, in the lost hamlet of Upend. Dr. Chibnall suggested 'a well protected by hurdles?' but it is not clear what place-name element he had in mind. 'Fimble' is evidenced from

1484 for the male plant of hemp, *Cannabis sativa*, but here the name may be older and more ominous. The Old Norse *fimbul* has senses 'mysterious' and 'powerful'. Fimbulthul 'mysterious mumblor' is one of the streams in the underworld (Niflheim, source of cold) flowing from the spring called Hvergelmir, where Weird shapes the lives of men and Hel provides miserable board and lodging for those who die ingloriously; her dish is Hunger and her knife Famine. Further, the *fimbul*-winter (three winters together, with no summer between) is to follow years of fratricidal strife until the world is ruined, and to be the final sign of Ragnarok.⁵⁶

Fimblewell may have served the same purpose for Thickthorne as Frewell did for the principal manor of Chicheley, and both may have had heathen associations until the eleventh century, perhaps darker for Fimblewell than for Frewell; then, as Eilif Gudrunarson wrote (c.1000), Christ claimed heathen lands and set up his throne at Weird's well.

It is just possible that the name may originally have been Romano-British; *fimbol* lenited from *fyn-pol* 'boundary pool', is evidenced in Cornish⁵⁷,

QUENE LAY DEAD

Quene lay dead, abbreviated to (the) Queen furlong, was of only 4½ acres with 15 selions; however, the next furlong southwards, of 10 acres with 28 selions, was named, or rather described, as 'the Furlong buttyng up to Quene laye deade'. Dead mead and Dead mead lees were separated from these by Crosse furlong, up the lane; this was 'super le Cross' in 1329. All these names with the element 'dead' are evidenced in 1557, but not in the Maunsell archive.

Professor's Chibnall's original suggestion was that the queen was Eleanor, wife of Edward the First, who died on 25 November 1290, and that her cortege may have come by this route on its way from Stony Stratford to Woburn on 11 December, to avoid having to cross the Ousel at Fenny Stratford. Further, Monchelade lane, named from the nuns of Newport, may have been esteemed as a pilgrims' way to Walsingham. This would be a notable instance of the tenacity of tradition, but Professor Ekwall felt obliged to advance a more

homely explanation: that 'quene' could be *cwene* 'woman' rather than *cwēn* 'queen'. He could have cited a still homelier parallel, *Thertheoxlaydede* in Northall.⁵⁸ Dr Chibnall conceded the point in *Sherington* p.7, but one concurs with some reluctance, especially if 'quean' was already becoming pejorative. The halt could have been a short one, yet sufficient to warrant commemoration by a memorial cross, not one of the official Eleanor Crosses, but erected locally, with a deliberate renaming of the adjoining furlongs, in honour of a lady greatly beloved.

NUMBERING OF SELIONS

Selions were not named, but they could be numbered. The Bucks Record Office has no glebe terrier for Chicheley, but the 1640 terrier for Newport Pagnell⁵⁹ shows that the vicar of Newport had two half-acres lying together in Chicheley in the Nether Way furlong "being the Eleaventh and Twelveth ridges from lake bridge lane" and two roods lying together in the same furlong "beinge the fiveteenth and sixteenth ridges from the said Lake bridge lane". Thus ridges in the same furlong could be either roods or half-acres. The adjoining lands in Nether Way had been acquired by Anthony Chester before 1601.

CONCLUSION

After a century of controversy on the origin of the manor, most medievalists would now agree that some English manors were successors of Romano-British estates taken over, together with their bondsmen and *coloni*, by Saxon invaders. Other

manors originated in tracts of land, often nameless, where households of free settlers cultivated their own holdings, mostly with their own labour, or cooperated with a small group of neighbours in named hamlets in order to assail the wildwood and waste. Both categories could give rise, the first perhaps more readily than the second, to the compact village community with large common fields and with settlement clustered round the parish church and the manor house. Yet left to themselves both British natives and English newcomers would have preferred not to live close together, or under the rule of a lord, but rather with each household providing for its own needs, governing itself, at peace with its neighbours but uniting with them only to meet a common threat. We are dealing with a gradual process, the emergence or imposition of feudalism, extending from the early seventh century to the late eleventh, and bringing much evil but more good; the specialisation which restored commerce, scholarship and the arts, which made possible the cathedral and the university as well as the castle and the great house. In most parishes there are no written sources earlier than the Conqueror's great survey of 1086, and it might be thought that there the historian seeking to go back beyond Domesday Book must depend on the archaeologists who are contributing so much to our knowledge of field systems and village structure. But it is submitted that the myriads of minor place names, especially significant names of furlongs in the open fields, constitute a major resource, hitherto too little used. It has been shown that under favourable conditions such names have been remarkably stable. This is another reason why frustrated students of settlement history can feel hopeful.

APPENDIX

FURLONG-NAMES AND OTHER MINOR NAMES IN CHICHELEY

The reference numbers on the map in Fig. 1 and the appended lists are those in Map 5 in *Beyond Sherington*, pp. 180-1, a reconstructed plan for the mid-Tudor period, based on the survey of the manor of Chicheley made for Anthony Cave in 1557, supplemented for closes, highways and streams by the 1526 terrier made on the dissolution of Tickford Priory.

Reference numbers 1-16 (including 9A) relate to roads and lanes; their names, where known, are shown on the map as far as possible. Nos. 17-22 are rivers and brooks, all but one of which had names, which are also shown. Nos. 23-48, 52, 56-60 and 62-68 refer to closes, listed below; Nos. 40 and 61 were not allocated, and 50, 51 and 53-55 relate to closes in the former township of Ekeney.

These can be identified with Nos. 192, 191, 193, 197 and 198 in Table 22 for that vill (*Beyond Sherington*, p.224); the names are the same except that Ekeney, No. 51 in the Chicheley schedule, is Forest Leys in Ekeney. These five closes outside the medieval parish boundary are not shown on the map and have not been brought into the reckoning, as they were not absorbed by the manor of Chicheley until after Ekeney was completely depopulated (c. 1485?). There had been at least seven households in Ekeney, with a tiny church of their own, the free chapel of St. Martin; the living, with an annual value of half a mark in 1250, was united about 1409 with the free chapel of Petsoe, which itself was derelict when the last presentation was made in 1560, the cottagers from both vills having moved to Petsoe End, which is actually in Emberton parish. Ekeney cum Petsoe, reduced to one farm, survived as the civil parish of Petsoe Manor, held since 1519 by Lincoln College, Oxford.

No. 52, Wake's fee or Teggs Ground, appears to be a duplicate of No. 78, Chantry land, a name which must have arisen after 1515, when Roger Wake's trustees established a chantry at Blisworth, primarily to support a free grammar school, with the priest as master. On this account the Chantry Commissioners allowed the school to survive despite the suppression of chantries in 1549; it did not recover the land, but the Crown replaced the endowment.

The parcels numbered 69–75 are woods; 76, 77, 79 and 79A are greens, and 80–84 houses; these are named in Fig. 1 as far as possible. The numbers 85–89 were not allocated. Cottages were not named.

Nos. 90–196 refer to furlongs or common meadows; most of these are numbered in Fig. 1 and all are listed below, under field seasons, which are shown in Fig. 2 as in the 1557 survey.

Closes, 1526

<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>
23	Crips	41, 42	Longcroft
24, 24A	Lord's demesne	43	Little Harecroft (or Shortcroft)
25	Horton's toft and croft	44	Snorend
26	Pollards	45	(Great) Harecroft
27	Thistleborow	46	Collyer's
28	Sybwic	47	Godreds
29, 30	Glovers	48	Upend
31	Bownes	52	Wake's fee <i>alias</i> Teggsground
32	Glovers	56	Bury Field (demesne)
33	Tymkyns	57	Shytyerd (does not adjoin Shytyerd furlong, No. 160)
34	Moted Close (or Bawerck's Close)	58	Longcroft (does not adjoin Nos. 41,42)
35	Estend (or Spartul Croft)	59	Buttevants
36	Phipps	60	Turners
37	Hannes	62	Perkyns pightle
38	Edes	63	Hardmead closes (4)
39	Reynes	64	Creke's
40	Horrells		

Closes, 1526 (cont.)

<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>
65	Tills
66	Webbs ('another Longcroft')
67	John the manor
68	Hyxtre
78	Chantry land (see No. 52)

Furlongs and Meadows

(F stands for *furlong* (Latin *cultura* or *quarentina*))

<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Name, c. 1330</i>	<i>Name in 1557</i>
<i>(i) In the Hay Field Season</i>		
90	—	Lake Bridge F
91	—	Byddell Hooke F
92	Asthulle in Brocholes	Tyckford Ashe F
93	ad hocstub	Hogspill F leys (93A: Hogspill pece)
94	—	Whytlond F (94A: Whytlond pece)
95	super le Brokes	The Brouk F
96	—	Middle Hay F
97	super Clotilond	Clotyland F beginnige at the mere between Chicheley and Sherington feilds
98	—	Owe lond buttyng into Rynforow
99	Goslond (le longe goseland)	Goslond F
100	Portwey	Portwaye F
101	le Akerger	Acrehed F from Skawsley
102	(Above the hafftheye, 1421)	Overhey F
103	—	Rynfurowe F
104	—	Badgers Well F
105	—	Overskawsley F
106	—	Nether Skawsley F

<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Name, c. 1330</i>	<i>Name in 1557</i>
<i>(i) In the Hay Field Season</i>		
107	—	Redd lond F
108	—	Densons pece F lying in Sherington field
109	Malmilond	Mawny lond F
110	—	F buttyng up to Quene laye deade
111	—	The F at Wellche crofte end
112	Cadeworth	Catisweke
113	—	Pollards Pece F
114	—	Dead Meede lecs
115	—	Dead Meade F
116	—	Bursted F called a Close
117	ad pedem de Monchelade	Monchelade-foote F
118	super Monchelade	Munchelade-hill F
119	super le Cross	Crosse F
120	—	Quene lay dead F
121	—	Agaynst the Hill F
122	apud le Mule	Myll F
123	Bovewude	Wode F
124	—	Pollard pece F shutinge up to Pollard Close
125	Long Balney	Long Balney F
126	Balney	Balney F lyinge by Bownis Balk
127	—	F called Next Culverpytt
128	Balnymede	Short Balney F, Balney mead
129	—	F called in Balney
129A	—	Swaithes grass (meadow)
130	Armen(c)hale	Armenhole F
131	apud le Dene	Dean F
132	—	Dean F next oxe balk
133	Lockescroft	F at Loeke Style
134	Cuculmes ho	Cookes F (Cooksoe)

Furlongs and Meadows (cont.)

Ref. No. Name, c. 1330

Name in 1557

Ref. No. Name, c. 1330

Name in 1557

(i) In the Hay Field Season (cont.)

135	—	Fymblewell
136	—	Haymead (meadow)
136A	—	Eyemead (meadow)

(ii) In the Barlong Field Season

137	le broc, ate ston	Brouke F from Stone hook to pissinge Bushe
138	—	F beyond pyssinge Bushe next the Brouke Field
139	ad aquosam	Water lond F
140	—	more of Water lond F
141	—	Waterlond F begynnyng from Mares pott
142	Middel Blakelond	Myddy! Blacklond F
143	—	Lees buttyng on mawn porttwaye
144	le Akerger	Acred F buttyng upon Skawseley Busshe
145	—	Sendedge
146	Netherblakelond	Nether Blacke Lond F
147	super le Lange forlong	Above Lang F bygynnyng at the Brouke
148	—	The goores above lange F
149	(implied by No. 147)	(In) Longe F
150	—	Welche croftis endes in Barlonge feild from the Hay Feild
151	Litelebrokhuil	Lyttle Brouke Hill F buttyng on Griffyns wylowes
152	—	Old Goores F
153	—	Margarets Lees
154	—	The F betwyxt the Lyttle Brooke and the

(ii) In the Barlong Field Season (cont.)

155	—	pynfold Mares Pott F
156	Berefurlong	Barlonge Bushe F
157	Salt(e)welle	Saulte Hill F
158	—	Crabcrofte F
159	(Ekeney)	Eckney F
160	(?) Berteyerd	Shytyerd F begynnyng at 6 buttes hedge
161	Hympey croft, le Ympey	Impie F
162	—	Goose crofte F
163	—	Staple F
164	—	Wysemede F
165	le Long Crofte	Shawes lane ende Buttyng upon a close of the lord called longcroft
166	—	Ban F lyyng alongst by longcroft
167	—	John's land (lees)
168	—	Bowde F

(iii) In the Brouke Field Season

169	—	Lewis lees
170	super le Madelond	Maydlond F begynnyng at Claye pyttes
171	(viam molendum)	Myll Hill F
172	le Perie	The pery under Glovers hedge, with grass called shrobs
173	—	Wodwole F
174	—	Calver Crofte F
175	—	The vicar's Balscroft
176	—	Syswyck F
177	Pauelinscrofte	Pawlyns F
178	le Cleyhuil	Clay huil F

<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Name, c. 1330</i>	<i>Name in 1557</i>	<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Name, c. 1330</i>	<i>Name in 1557</i>
<i>(iii) In the Brouke Field Season (cont.)</i>			<i>(iii) In the Brouke Field Season (cont.)</i>		
179	—	Snowerende F otherwyse called over hyll F or templemanes	188	super le Sond	F called the Sandes
180	Freyewell F abutting Frewell	F buttyng upon Friswell (Frithwell, 1517)	189	desuper Tonstale	Dunstall F begynninge at the Swathes
181	le buriende	Buryende crosse F	190	ad Linch	The Lynche F buttyng on Hatche Grene
182	—	Myll hill F	191	super le Hach in Valle	Snayle hill F to hache bridge
183	—	Crawley Crofte F	192	super Langelond	Longe lond F
184	—	Crawley Wod F	193	super Longe stokking	Stockyng F begynnyng at agg grove
185	in Tunstale slade	Dunstall Slade F	194	in le Stokkyng-slade	Stockyng F begynnyng at a dyche next to Catesbies pece called goldes
185A	Balney mede	Balney mead (meadow)	195	—	Parages Stockyng (lees)
186	Super Catowell (super del Thornehyll, 1445)	F next to Catwell Balke called Thornhill	196	ad aquosam	Waterlondes F
187	—	The F buttyng on Bere Brouckes (?)			



Fig. 1: Chicheley during the period 1525-1557.

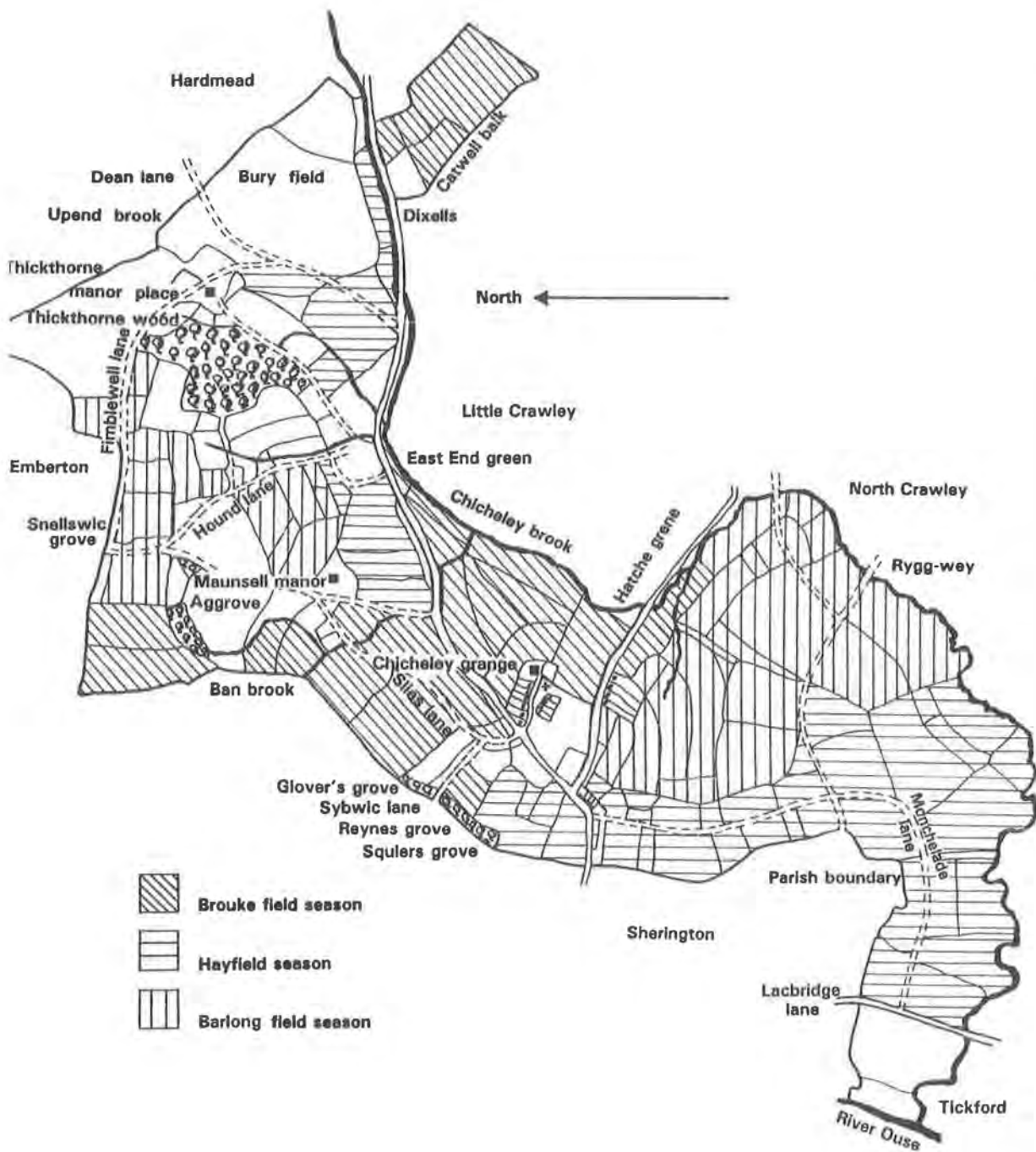


Fig. 2: Chicheley: field seasons in 1557.

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- 16 Ref. 2, p. 168
- 17 *B.S.*, 84
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- 31a *B.S.* 18–20. The priests had dispersed by c. 1135: 18n.2 and Table 21
- 32 The name and date given by Florence of Worcester (ed. Thorpe, v.162) are confirmed by an Ely kalendar and by sagas which call it the battle of *Hringmaraheidr*; refs. in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. G. N. Garmonsway (1960) 140 n.1
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- 34 The first mention of *Buc(c)ing(a)hamscir* as a shire; but S883 shows that the King's reeves at Buckingham and Oxford were acting effectively as sheriffs by 995, reporting directly to the king. K. Cameron (*English Place Names* (1996) 54) accepts that the county originated as the area made responsible by Edward the Elder (d.925) for the defence of Buckingham
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