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EDITORIAL

Members will notice that this volume is completely different in appearance from the preceding volumes of the MAS Journal. It is the result of an attempt to improve the production of the Journal both in terms of speed and cost, and it is hoped that if this volume is successful, future Journals will be in a similar format. The purchase of an electric typewriter by the Society has made it possible to produce camera-ready text of contributions, thus avoiding the high cost of typesetting, which is the most expensive item in the production of conventionally printed journals.

One of the principal aims of the Society is now to catch up on the backlog of Journals, and it is proposed that the next two issues will be double volumes, for 1980-1 and 1982-3. The editor has already received contributions for the next volume, which is planned for the end of 1983. The production of future Journals does depend, however, on the funds of the Society being able to cover the cost of printing, so it would be much appreciated if members could re-double their efforts towards the sale of Society publications!

Contributions to volume 5 would be very welcome, either in the form of articles or notes on work carried out by members.

The Publications Sub-Committee has produced a set of Guidelines for contributors, which set out the format in which contributions should be submitted. A copy of these will be sent on request, and members are asked to consult them before putting pen to paper.

The Editor would like to thank the former Editor, Dr Dorothy Downes, the members of the Publications Sub-Committee who have given unstinting help and encouragement during the production of this Journal, and Kay Lancaster, for help in preparation for printing.

Contributions and requests for Guidelines should be sent to the Hon. Editor, Rescue Archaeology Unit, 126, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5SU.

Farming on a south Lancashire estate 1066 – 1795: evidence from Speke Hall

Susan Nicholson

INTRODUCTION

Speke Hall and grounds as they exist today were, before the surrounding modern development, the centre of an estate farm situated within the rural township of Speke. The history of Speke Hall itself and its occupants has been studied in the VCH (3, 131-140) and in the various Guides to the Hall. However, the surrounding estate has not been studied previously in such detail and this article summarises a report of a limited programme of research into the development of the estate, undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of Merseyside. The early history of the rest of the township, outside the demesne of the Hall, has not yet been written in full, although much documentary evidence exists.

SOURCES

The published and unpublished material forming the basis of this article are detailed in the references. Due to the limitations of finance the study of manuscript sources has been largely confined to those in local depositories: Liverpool RO, Lancashire RO, Speke Hall and the University of Liverpool, although the British Library lists were also studied. These major collections date mainly from the period before 1700 and consist largely of grants of land, rentals, leases, inventories other manorial and estate papers and many letters. Three chance survivals of estate documents from after 1700: Wiswall's accounts of 1710-1719, Addison's estate survey of 1781 and the 1795 Sale details, pre-date the period of the Watt family.

The large accumulation of other manorial and estate documents which must once have existed for Speke include court rolls, surveys and later leases; rent-rolls and accounts have, with few exceptions, not yet been located. The limitations of the surviving documents must, therefore, be borne in mind. For example, Wiswall notes in detail specially commissioned work on the estate, but not the normal duties of estate workers, though the latter's wages are recorded by him. Similarly he notes goods which were brought in, and those which were sold, but not the details of those actually produced on the estate for home use.

Useful comparisons and contrasts may be made with other local, contemporary family records; the Blundells of Little Crosby (Tyrer (ed), 1968, 1970, 1972 also Leggett 1981), Derby of Knowsley (Lancashire RO; Liverpool RO), Molyneux of Sefton (Lancashire RO; Liverpool RO) and Moore of Bank Hall (Brownbill and Walker 1913). Ashmore's 'Household Inventories of the Lancashire Gentry, 1550-1700' also contains comparative material (Ashmore 1959).

THE BOUNDARIES OF SPEKE TOWNSHIP

'Township' is the term used of the area of land capable of supporting a particular settlement or group of hamlets in the medieval and early modern period. Each township required fresh water, soil fit for arable farming, facilities for stock rearing and enough raw materials for fuel and building. The acreage varied according to the type of land and the size of the community. The boundaries, generally natural ones, were defined by agreement with neighbouring manorial lords and local communities. The 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey 6":1 mile maps indicates the old township boundaries as known in 1849. Speke township is approximately triangular in shape and is bounded on the south by the Mersey (see fig 1). In 1781 it covered just over 2,379 acres.

The eastern boundary of Speke with Hale was settled in 1334 when Sir John de Molyneux, Aleyne le Norreis and Richard Erneys, then lords of Speke, agreed with Robert de Ireland, then lord of Hale, that the line should be drawn as '... three crosses, sikes and other bounds and marches commencing where the water of Brokwallebrok goes into the merce (Mersey) and following by the crosses and marches to the ditch of Spek and following that ditch to le Crossefeld to the north' (Lumby 1939, 4). Addison, in 1781, names one of the boundary fields between Speke and Hale as 'Nearer Conleach', and the VCH (3, 131) states that there formal challenge fights used to take place between the inhabitants of adjoining villages. For most of its length the Speke/Hale and Halewood boundary may once have extended slightly further east than the one on the 1849 Ordnance Survey (1st edition 6":1 mile, sheets 114, 118) which shows an almost parallel line of field boundaries about 100m in that direction. The 'Crossfeld' mentioned may be identified with any of the four 'Cross' fields shown near Hunts Cross by Addison.

The north west boundary of Speke separates it from Much Woolton, Allerton and Garston. The division from Much Woolton, now marked by part of the route of Hillfoot Road, was mentioned in c 1280 (Lumby 1939, 21). At the junction of Hillfoot Road, Speke Road and Wood End Avenue stood Hunts Cross, marked on the 1849 Ordnance Survey (1st edition 6":1 mile, sheet 114) as 'Pedestal of Hunt's Cross' and described in 1895 as 'A displaced massive square stone socket, lying by a barn, at the cross roads, near the station' (Cox 1896, 237). The boundary with Allerton was a

stream. There was also a stream as the boundary between Speke and Garston in 1343 '...le brok between Spek and gerstan...' (Lumby 1939, 71). However, although the latter stream is suggested by the ground contour, it is not shown on any existing maps.

Within the township the demesne, that is the land intended for the particular support of the manorial lord, occupied most of the coastal area. It was bounded by the river on the south, ran parallel with a small stream to the east, and then followed the line of Bailey's Lane to the north and the boundary between Speke and Garston on the north west (see fig. 1). In 1781 it covered just over 843 acres, a little over a third of the total area of the township.

Together with Allerton, Garston, Hale, Halewood, Little Woolton, Much Woolton, Thingwall and Wavertree, Speke formed part of the parish of Childwall throughout this period (VCH 3, 102).

TOPOGRAPHY OF SPEKE TOWNSHIP

The township lies on the north east bank of the Mersey, 11km south east of Liverpool. It is on the south west slope of a sandstone ridge. Over most of the northern part of the township the ridge is covered with glacially deposited boulder clay, a heavy, but potentially fertile soil. The southern part, towards the river, is covered by windblown sand which accumulated on the wet clay in post-glacial times. The mixture of these sands and clays provides a good basis for farming and the Hall and its estate are situated on the best agricultural land in the township.

The early vegetational cover at Speke is difficult to establish. Mixed oak forest probably covered most of the boulder clay area and the evidence for woodland in the medieval period is given below (p 19). At that time Speke lay within the Royal Forest of Lancaster, but it should be understood that the term 'forest' included not only hunting preserves and demesne forest proper, but also the surrounding land as well as villages and farmland. Speke was, therefore, subject to 'forest law', but it did not lie within the hunting preserves or demesne forest as, for example, did Toxteth Park (Shaw 1956, 10 and map opp p 6).

Heath or moorland, with some 'moss' (peat), covered part of the area beyond the demesne. 'Le Mor' of Speke was referred to in c 1280 (Lumby 1939, 21) and in 1360 it was stated that '...the moor of Spek shall be common to both (Sir John le Molineus and Sir Hen. le Norreis) and their tenants for pasture and for cutting turves' (Lumby 1939, 34-35). 'le Mosse' and 'le Mossfeld' are both mentioned in 1314 (Lumby 1939, 24, 32), perhaps indicating that some of this land had been reclaimed. The day work which tenants were obliged to do in 1468 included '...every man a day to delfe Turves...' (Lumby 1939, 14). Addison's map (1781) shows a group of 23 'moss'

named fields, largely on the boulder clay, beyond, but close to the northern boundary of the demesne. A document of about 1370 records '...it is said that the heath of Speke contains 7 ac(res).' (Lumby 1939, 37). A series of 'heath' named fields on Addison's map are rather scattered: three are in the demesne, while others lie in the eastern part of the township, generally in the more sandy areas. The area known today as Stockton's Wood and named 'Heath' by Addison, and shown by him to be wooded, is referred to under 'Woodland management' (p 22).

AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE MANOR OF SPEKE

The only evidence of man's activity at Speke before the middle ages is a bronze socketed axe (MCM 60.27) which was found during the cultivation of an allotment in 1946 (OS SJ 42458400). Bronze Age burials have been found at Wavertree (Chitty 1977), but there is no evidence to connect them with the Speke axe.

The earliest documentary reference to Speke, a name which perhaps means 'brushwood' (Ekwall, 1922, 110-111), is found in the Domesday Survey of 1086 where it is recorded that the manor of 'Spec' in the Hundred of West Derby had been held by Uctred, a Saxon, in 1066: 'Uctred held Spec. There (are) 2 carucates of land. It was worth 64 pence' (VCH 1, 284a). A caracuate was a measure of land sufficient to support a family and could vary between 60 and 180 acres according to the fertility of the soil. At the time of Domesday, Speke was one of the many manors held by Count Roger of Poitou. In 1102 Roger supported Duke Robert of Normandy in his rebellion against Henry I and the failure of the rising led to the confiscation of Roger's lands by the Crown (Shaw 1956, 12).

Before his downfall Roger of Poitou is thought to have created a 'fee' (hereditary land) for the master forester of the Royal Forest of Lancaster; Speke was included in the Forest and the fee by 1170. Vivian Gernet, in the reign of Henry I, was the earliest known master forester. His family and their descendants, the Dacres, received and retained the nominal overlordship of Speke until about 1334 (Shaw 1956, 43-44), though the actual tenure of the manor had been granted to Richard Molyneux by Roger Gernet in about 1170 (Farrer ed. 1903, 43).

The family of Molyneux of Sefton continued to hold the chief responsibility for the manor of Speke, but the manor itself was subdivided between the Haselwell and Norris families on the one hand and the Molyneux of Little Crosby and the Ernys families on the other. (VCH 3, 132-4; Lumby 1939, iv-vi). Sir Henry le Norreys married Alice Erneys in c 1390 and so united some of the divisions. The Charnock family, who inherited some of the interests of the Molyneux of Little Crosby, retained this tenure well into the 16th century when it was purchased by the Norrises (Lumby 1939, 36).

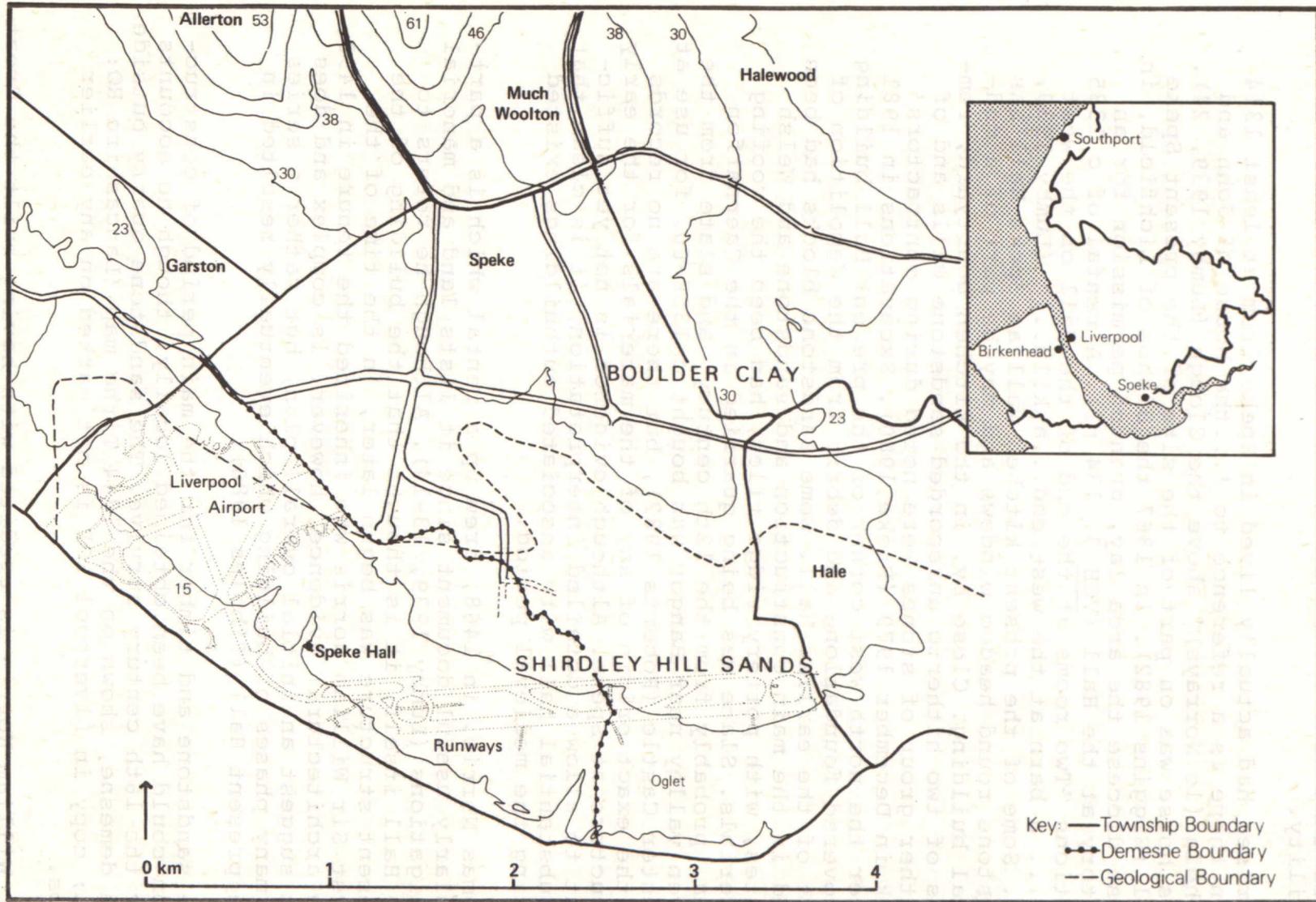


Figure 1 Drift Geology of Speke township
 Based upon the 1975 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map, courtesy of The
 Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Coypright Reserved

The nominal overlordship held by the Molyneux of Sefton was still in existence in 1568 (VCH 3, 135) but it seems after that time the Norrises assumed the manorial responsibility.

Norrises had actually lived in Speke from at least 1314 when there is a reference to '...the house of John and Nichola (le Norrays)' above the Clough (Lumby 1939, 24). This house was on part of the site of the present Speke Hall (Higgins 1982). In 1367 the Bishop of Lichfield, in whose diocese the area lay, granted permission for an oratory at the Hall (VCH 3, 134 n2). A rental of c 1385 mentions 'Two rooms at the end of the Hall on the west and... a barn at the west end...a kiln...' (Lumby 1939, 38). Some of the present kitchen wall at Speke Hall has sandstone round headed windows and may be part of a medieval building. Close by, in the kitchen courtyard, remains of two hitherto unrecorded sandstone walls and of another group of stones were noted during contractors' work in December 1979 (Freke 1980). Excavations in 1981 under the north west corner of the present Hall building uncovered foundations and debris from the demolition of part of the earlier Hall. Some sandstone blocks had been used in the main construction and sandstone and Welsh slates, with pottery ridge tiles, had been the roofing materials. Slate was being quarried in the Caernarfon area, probably from the 12th century, and slate from the Ogwen valley near Bangor was bought c 1358-60, for use at Chester Castle (Roberts 1982), but there are no records of the exact origin of any of the materials for the early structure at Speke. Although evidence is not yet sufficient to allow a detailed interpretation, it is clear that a substantial hall with associated outbuildings existed during the medieval period.

Thomas Norris, in 1468, drew up a rental which is a particularly useful document since it lists land and manorial obligations (Lumby 1939, 13-14). Although he refers to the Hall itself, it is thought that the building of the present structure was begun later, in the time of the first Sir William Norris who inherited the tenure in 1490. The architectural evidence, however, is complex and does not suggest an initial overall plan, but rather a series of many phases of building which eventually resulted in the present Hall (Tibbles 1980).

The sandstone and timber for the main period of construction could have been obtained locally, though no accounts for the 16th century survive. The sandstone quarry outside the demesne, shown on the 1844 Tithe map (Lancashire RO: DRL; copy in Liverpool RO) is not marked on any earlier maps.

Sir William Norris is credited with having built the Great Hall, which was originally of six bays, on the south side of the present courtyard. On his death in 1506, his son,

Henry, succeeded him. Henry's work is thought to have included remodelling the Great Hall and adding the Great Parlour wing. His inventory of 1524 lists the goods of the Hall and farm, but does not name the rooms and out-buildings. The east range, probably the domestic one, may have been entirely separate originally, and perhaps included the medieval structure already referred to. The west range was built possibly between 1540 and 1568 and perhaps utilised earlier foundations (Tibbles 1980).

Sir Edward Norris, who succeeded to the title in 1568 constructed the north range, possibly in different stages. It contained a new chapel and was completed in 1598. Sir Edward, a noted recusant, was also responsible for including in the Hall various priest holes (Hodgetts 1976, 274-277). He extended the south range, possibly reconstructing or modifying its two larger wings, and the south wing of the Great Hall, thus completing the present quadrangular shape of the Hall. In 1605 he constructed the Garden Gate by the south entrance to the Screens passage.

After Sir Edward's death in 1606 and the succession of his eldest son, William, the Norris fortunes began to decline. In 1612 Sir William Norris constructed the small porch linking the Great Parlour and the garden. Later he mortgaged the estate to his son-in-law, John Fleming of Rydal Hall (Lumby 1939, vii) and an inventory was drawn up in 1624 as security for Sir William's debts (Saxton 1946, 108). Sir William died in 1630, being succeeded by his son of the same name. The whole of the Speke estate was confiscated ('sequestered') by the Commonwealth in 1650 (Stanning ed. 1898, 227). At the Restoration in 1660 Thomas, William's son, regained the land and rights. Thomas had seven sons of whom four, in turn, held the estate. One of these four sons was Thomas Norris of whom a number of estate papers survive (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR) and at whose death in 1700 an inventory was compiled. Another of these sons was Sir Edwards Norris for whom John Wiswall compiled estate accounts between 1710 and 1719 (Liverpool RO: Rq 942.721.3 SPE). None of these sons had a male heir; in 1731, therefore, on the death of Richard Norris the inheritance passed to Thomas's granddaughter, Mary Norris. Five years later she married Lord Sidney Beauclerk, the fifth son of the 1st Duke of St Albans. Although in her will of 12th June 1766 (Liverpool RO: Speke Hall: Plans, 25-29) Lady Mary expressed her wish that their only son, the Honourable Topham Beauclerk, should change his surname to Norris, the request was not acceded to. He seems to have been an absentee landlord too, and the Hall and estate were neglected and despoiled by a series of local tenants (Winstanley, 1920, 8-9). In 1774, Topham Beauclerk directed Thomas Addison to carry out a detailed survey, with maps, of the whole of Speke township, a task completed in 1781, after Beauclerk's death. His son, Charles George Beauclerk, put the estate up for sale in 1795 (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/655). The purchaser was Richard Watt, a

Liverpool merchant who had made his fortune in Jamaica.

The history of the subsequent period is beyond the scope of this article, but a brief summary is as follows: the Watt family restored and improved the Hall and estate. On the death of Miss Adelaide Watt in 1921, trustees for 21 years were appointed. In August 1942, under an alternative clause in Miss Watt's will, the Hall, gardens and heirlooms were offered to the National Trust who accepted them in 1943, leasing them to Liverpool Corporation for 99 years. In 1970 the responsibility for the house was transferred to the City of Liverpool Museums, now Merseyside County Museums.

THE ORGANISATION OF LAND AND ITS FARMING

Under feudal law manorial tenure was not a statement of ownership, but of rights exercised by the lord who owed his position to the king or the king's tenant-in-chief. The land could, as at Speke, be divided among various sub-tenants.

The demesne land could be retained by the lord for the direct support of his household. In Speke its exact extent is known in 1781 when it was held as one unit and worked from the Hall. Presumably in 1314, when the house itself is first mentioned (Lumby 1939, 24), some land in its vicinity was used as the 'home farm' though until the mid 16th century the Norrises held part only of the township.

Thomas Norris's rental of 1468 (Lumby 1939, 13-14) lists 'The Demayn Lond Lyngge to the Halle - Ogglott Wode with the Brendhurth...The 2 faure acre heyas with Daynes crofte ...The Holbothe fylde...The Conyngry fylde...The Hall fylde...Mollenex fylde...the Wedyrs fylde with the calf hey...the 2 Plombe fylde ...the hey be greneway syde...' These would seem to have been enclosed fields. The list continues '...the narre 2 ac(res) in the Mosse... the fyrse 2 ac(res) with the Medo in the mosse...The Medowes in Hale ...2 ac(res) in the Mosse Shotyngs on Jameswh...(added in another, undated and unidentified hand) ye Wynde mylne...' At this time the Norris Speke demesne, then, included strips in the open fields and even land outside the township. This particular land listed was evidently rented out, but there is no complete early list of demesne land. Other rentals do not always mention individual fields, but give a total acreage: one, a Charnock rental, undated, but perhaps late 14th century includes '...Walt de Gerstan in demesne lying together 25 ac(res) for a term of 6 years and 3½ butts (strips) 2 marks (1 mark = 6/8) 6d' (Lumby 1939, 39).

According to general manorial custom, which might vary in detail from area to area (Hone 1906; Bennett 1937), free tenants carried out certain duties on demesne land, the duties varying according to seasonal activities. Thomas

Norris's 1468 list stated: 'This (be)longs to the Auerage (day work) In primis Euary tenant that payes 10s of rent or a bone (boon) gyffes a day with a plogh and a nother day with his worthyng (muck) Carte. And yf hit be under 10s he schall bryng his horse and his youle to fyll a day And also euary tenaunt that holds a bone 10s. shall fache a Ca(r)tfull a hay from Redall Medow (in Hale) and yf he be under 10s(,) a day to make hay or elles gyffe a ld and euary man a day to delfe Turves and euary house a day to schere (reap) in harvest or els to pay 2d'. Boon work was still being done in 1693: coal carrying, hay making and reaping (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/561).

Though at least two of the demesne fields were rented out in 1718 (Wiswall f 27a), many of the demesne fields referred to by Wiswall evidently supplied the Hall, as the accounts include payments for day-labour in them.

Beyond the Hall and demesne, as shown on Addison's map of 1781 lay Oglet, a place first mentioned in c 1285 (Lumby 1939, 20, 28). Also shown on the map are scattered groups of dwellings, and isolated farms, in other parts of Speke township, but there are few early references to the buildings themselves and they and their fields await a detailed study.

CULTIVATION AND CROPS

Land preparation

Reference to initial enclosure of land from the waste at any period are lacking, but there are detailed notes of land clearance and preparation from the early 18th century. Wiswall accounts: Oct. 9, 1711 'Pd to Wm Bridge...helping to get Roots up in Oglet Wood & filling holes 5 day and a half...' (f 16); March 29, 1712 'Pd to Jno Banner & Wm Bridge...ditching and levelling in Oglett Wood...' (f 22); Oct 2, 1710 'Pd to (Jno Charnley) for Ridding (clearing) and Gutting in Green Hea...' (f 2).

Once clearance and drainage had been done, the land could be fertilised. The 1468 'worthyng' or muck cart (Lumby 1939, 14) is the earliest record of manuring, but the 1624 inventory lists (3) 'muck wayne(s)', '2 muck forkes' and '2 muck rakes' (Saxton 1946, 140, 141). In 1700 the inventory included 'Two muck carts' 'Two dung forks' and a dung rake 'Dung in the fould and other places' (Saxton 1945, 121, 133, 132). Wiswall notes on June 16th 1711 'Pd to Samuel Ellison for...Filling Muck one day & spreading it ...' (f 11); May 24th 1715 'Pd to Edw. Webster for...sowing Pigeon dung in Green Hea...' (f 72). John Evelyn in the late 17th century had stated 'Pidgeons and dung of poultry is excellent when cold and well tempered & rotted with mould...' (Keynes ed. 1932, 78).

Another method of fertilising was burning; May 24th 1712 'Pd to Roger Thomasson for leading Gorse from Ms Croft to

FIELD LIST

Sources: Addison 1781; Lumby 1939; Liverpool RO: 920 NOR (all-number references); Saxton 1945, 1946; Wiswall.

No on map	Name in 1781	When first recorded		
		Name	Date	Source
1	Garston Hey	Garston Hey	1696	2/537
2	Bankfield	Bankfield	1700	2/122
3	Higher Eleven Acre	Eleven Acre	1696	2/537
4	Crabtree Close	Crabtree Close	1696	2/537
5	Round Meadow	Round Meadow	1781	Addison
6	Further Three Crosts	Further Three Crofts	1700	Saxton 1945, 122
7	Further Mill Field)	Le Milnefield	c1390	Lumby 1939, 38
8	Nearer Mill Field)			
9	Nearer Three Crofts	Nearer Three Crofts	1694	2/537
10	Banks Lane Pasture	Banks Lane Pasture	1781	Addison
11	Nine Acre	Nine acre end	1718	Wiswall f 111
12	Lower Eleven Acre	Lower Eleven Acre	1694	2/552
13	Six Acre	Six acre	1781	Addison
14	Wilders Brook	(?) Wythersclogh	c1450	Lumby 1939, 42
15	Banks Lane Meadow	Banks lane meadow	1601	17/7
16	Little Alder Plumb Field)	2 Plombe Fylds	1468	Lumby 1939, 14
17	Great Alder Plumb Field)			
18	Great Plumb Field)			
19	Green Croft	Green Croft	1781	Addison
20	Molyneux Meadow	Mollenex Fylde	1468	Lumby 1939, 14
21	Clough Croft)	le Clogh	1314	Lumby 1939, 24
22	Clough)			
23	Hop Yard	Hopyord	1624	Saxton 1946, 142
24	Orchard	Orchard	1781	Addison
25	Lower Orchard	Lower Orchard	1710	Wiswall f 1
26	Old Johns Yard	Old Johns Yard	1781	Addison
27	Swine Pasture Meadow	Swine Pasture	1700	2/180
28	Bleaching Yard	Bleaching Yard	1700	Saxton 1945, 124

29	Little Green	Little Green	1781	Addison
30	New Park	New Park	1715	Wiswall f 67
31	Heath	(?) Heath	1696	2/537
31a	Barn Croft	Barn Croft	1781	Addison
32	School House Hey	School House Hey	1717	Wiswall f 236
33	Limed Hey	Limed Hey	1718	Wiswall f 117
34	One Acre	One Acre	1781	Addison
35	Long Hey	Long Hey	1781	Addison
36	Green Slate Hey	(?) Hey by greneway syde	1468	Lumby 1939, 14
37	Six Acre Heath)	(?) Heath	1696	2/537
38	Eleven Acre Heath)			
39	Ten Acre	Ten Acre	1781	Addison
40	Barn Hey	Barn Field; Gt Barn Field	1710;	Wiswall f 2, f 51
		Little Barn Field	1714	
41	Hall Field	Hall fylde	1468	Lumby 1939, 14
42	Sheep Hey	(?) Shepekotefeld	1384	Lumby 1939, 5
43	Nearer Whole Batch	Houlbatch	1693	2/537
44	Coneytree Wood	Conyngry fylde	1468	Lumby 1939, 14
45	Barn Hey Croft	Barn Hey Croft	1710	Wiswall f 1
46	Further Barn Hey	(see 40 above)		
47	Little Brandereth	Brendhurth	1468	Lumby 1939, 14
48	Little Croft	Little Croft	1719	Wiswall f 128
49	Hey between Woods	Hey between the woods	1694	2/537
50	Further Whole Batch	(see 43 above)		
51	Fir Wood	Fir Wood	1781	Addison
52	Long Croft	Long Croft	1781	Addison
53	Roughs and Round Croft	Roughs and Round Croft	1781	Addison
54	Oglet Woods	Ogglotte Wode	1468	Lumby 1939, 14
55	Swingle Hey	Swingle Hey	1781	Addison
56	Mistress Croft	Ms Croft	1695	2/537
57	Great Brandereth	(see 47 above)		
58	Wood End	Woods end	1630	17/136
59	Old Fall	(?) Oldefeld	1353	Lumby 1939, 6

burn ground in Green Hea' (f 26); June 16th 1711 'Pd to Samuel Elleson for... Spreading Ashes on burned ground...' (f 11).

The mention of Richard le Marler's name in a document of 1329 (Lumby 1939, 25) indicates that even as early as this the local pockets of limey-clay (marl) were being exploited to provide additional fertiliser for the fields. The 1624 inventory includes '14 marle cartes' (Saxton 1946, 140) and in 1700 'Eight augers for boaring land' and 'One marle cart and wheelles...' (Saxton 1945, 133, 121). Wiswall has numerous references to marl pits and marling: August 29th 1710 'Pd to Mr James Chadwick for measureing the Hole Batch and New Marle Pitt 000.11s.0.' (f 1); September 4th 1710 'Pd to the Marler of the Hole Batch for getting out of ye Pitt 64 roods and a quarter of Marle at 15s 6d p. Rood 049.16.0' (f 1); May 23rd 1715 'Given to the Man that lent Augers to bore at Marl Pitt 000.00.6' (f 72). Special mention of the marl is made in the Sale particulars of 1795 (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/655).

Gate and fence making, hedging and ditching records probably refer to maintenance work, and not to initial enclosure: April 10th 1717 'Pd to Richard Barrow... for makeing and setting a Gate att Oglett Wood, makeing a Pale (fence) att Banks lane...' (f 99); January 14th 1711 'Pd to Jno Charnely for hedging...att bottom of Great Branderith ...And...ditching att side if Bankes Lane...' (f 6).

Other miscellaneous work on the land included: May 24th 1712 'Pd to Mary Wilkinson for...spreading mole-hills...'(f26): April 21st 1713 'Pd to Mary Wilkinson for gathering stones off marled ground in Oglett Wood...' (f 40).

Ploughing was evidently done partly with the help of tenants in 1468, as a day's work with a plough was compulsory for some (Lumby 1939, 14). In 1524 the list of Henry Norris's animals included 20 draught oxen and 5 work horses (Lumby 1939, 20); by 1624 the number was 12 draught oxen, 6 work horses and the equipment included '8 plows... 3 buckes (irons) for horse plowes...6 harrows...5 swingle-trees for the plowe foot' (Saxton 1946, 140-142). No oxen were listed in 1700 and the number of work horses is not given separately, but there were 'Five plowes...plow timber...Four harrowes...two pair of plow irons...' (Saxton 1945, 121-122). Work recorded by Wiswall included: June 16th 1711 'Pd to Tho. Hardman for Plowing in the Lower Orchard and Burned ground...' (f 11). The push plough was also in use: May 10th 1712 'Pd to Edw Webster and Wm Bridge for Pushplowing in Gardens Lower Orchard and Swine pasture for potatoes...' (f 25).

Cereals

In England wheat was generally sown in autumn to be harvested the following year; barley and oats were sown in spring to be harvested in the same year. Cereal crops grown at Speke are named first in 1524 when the list

included standing crops of 16 acres of wheat, 33 of barley and 20 of oats with, in the barn, 60 thraves of old barley (Lumby 1939, 20). (A thrave of barley usually consisted of 24 sheaves, each 10 inches in diameter). No mention of grain occurs in the 1624 inventory, though it was drawn up in September, the relevant items being 2 corn carts, 3 corn wains, corn measures, a bran barrel, a meal sieve and a stone mortar 'to knocke wheat in' (Saxton 1946, 134, 140-141). At the end of the 17th century wheat, barley and oats are all mentioned, but the surviving documents refer to just 4 adjacent fields in the west of the demesne: Further and Nearer Mill Fields, Nearer Three Crofts and Lower Eleven Acre (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/552, 2/46). The 1700 inventory, compiled in July, notes standing crops of 5 acres of wheat in Bankfield, 14 acres of oats in Three Crofts and 4 'in the fields towards Oglett' together with wheat, barley and oats in the garner (store). Two corn carts were also listed (Saxton 1945, 121-122). Barley and oats are referred to frequently by Wiswall: October 9th 1711 'Pd to Edwd. Webster for 4 days shearing Barley in Lower Orchard and Green Hea' (f 16). There were occasions when barley, oats and wheat were bought in: October 12th 1716 'Pd to Wm Tildasle for 24 measures of barley...' (f 92); October 29th 1712 'Pd to Wm Dicenson for 4 measures of wheat ...Pd to Ed. Latham for 25 measures of oats...' (f 31). Rye was also purchased: February 16th 1711 'Pd to James Almond for remainder of wt was owing him for 50 measures of barley & three measures of rye...' (f 6). Wiswall does not record wheat being grown on the demesne. Once the crops were gathered in, threshing could be done when required: January 29th 1715 'Pd to Edw. Webster & Geo: Laurenson for Thrashing Barley formerly of the course-sort that grew in Green Hea...' (f 66).

Hay

Part of this important crop was grown on '...the Medo in the Mosse' though the latter was leased out by Thomas Morris in 1468 (Lumby 1939, 14). Land in Banks Lane Meadow was evidently still divided up in 1601, since measurements of a half acre and a rood land of it are mentioned then (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 17/7 & 8). To the west of the Hall three adjacent fields: Molyneux Meadow, Wilders Brook and Banks Lane Meadow, together with Round Meadow close to Garston, yielded 139 loads of hay in 1696, the only year for which a full record survives. Details of storage are given: barns were used and some was stacked in the open (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/47).

It was July when the 1700 inventory was compiled and the note of 'old hay...In the Hay Barn' (Saxton 1945, 122) indicates that the new year's crop had yet to be gathered.

Wiswall has frequent notes of payment for mowing. Most of the fields were used as meadow in rotation with crops, for example, Barn Hey Croft which had oats in 1710 and 1712,

had hay in 1711 and hay in each year from 1713 to 1718. Even so, extra hay was required: February 23rd 1719 'Pd to Gabriel Pinnington for half of the hay grass in Bankslane Meadow mown in the year 1717' (f 120). Presumably Pinnington had rented half the meadow since Wiswall's entry reads: July 24th 1717 'Pd to Edw. Webster... for mowing...half Banks lane Meadow...' (f 104). Clover was grown in Green Hey in 1714 (f 55).

Root crops

Turnips had been introduced into England around 1550 or earlier, and by the 18th century had become established as winter fodder for animals (Whitelock 1965, 96-97). Turnips were sown in Green Hey in 1713 (Wiswall f 44). Potatoes were known in England from 1585-6, though for some years they were generally cultivated in gardens only. Lower Orchard and Swine Pasture Meadow were both used for potatoes in 1712 (f 25). They were grown in the gardens also (see p 16).

Other crops

Beans were grown in one acre of Further Three Crofts in 1700, and 10s worth were stored in the Corn Garner (Saxton 1945, 122). They were brought in during 1717 (Wiswall f 106).

Hops were used for brewing in England from the early 16th century (Whitelock 1965, 90). At Speke, the Hopyard with its picks and hook and a 'hop wiskett' (basket) are recorded in 1624 (Saxton 1946, 134, 142) but, although the name persisted, it is not known if the cultivation of the crop continued. Certainly 2lbs of hops 'for October Beer' were bought in 1712 (Wiswall f 32). The Hopyard itself seems to have been used largely for hay in Wiswall's time.

Apples for cider were grown in 1694 and 1695, presumably in the Orchards (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/561; 2/634a). However, Wiswall recorded barley in the Lower Orchard in 1710 (f 1) and a variety of crops there in later years. Addison's map of 1781 shows the Orchard as wooded, but the Lower Orchard was clear of timber.

Hemp was grown in the Bleaching Yard in 1700, hempen tow (ready for spinning) was in the Wool Chamber and more was stored in the Cheese Chamber, together with flax and tow (Saxton 1945, 124, 127). Two hatchells, used for combing flax or hemp, were listed in the 1624 inventory (Saxton 1946, 130), but there is no clear evidence that hemp was grown at Speke then. Flax growing is not mentioned, although many of the household items listed in the three inventories were of linen.

Crop transport

2 corn carts and 5 sleds were noted in 1624 (Saxton 1946, 140, 141), but there is no reference to a carthouse until 1700 when it contained not only 2 corn carts, but a wain

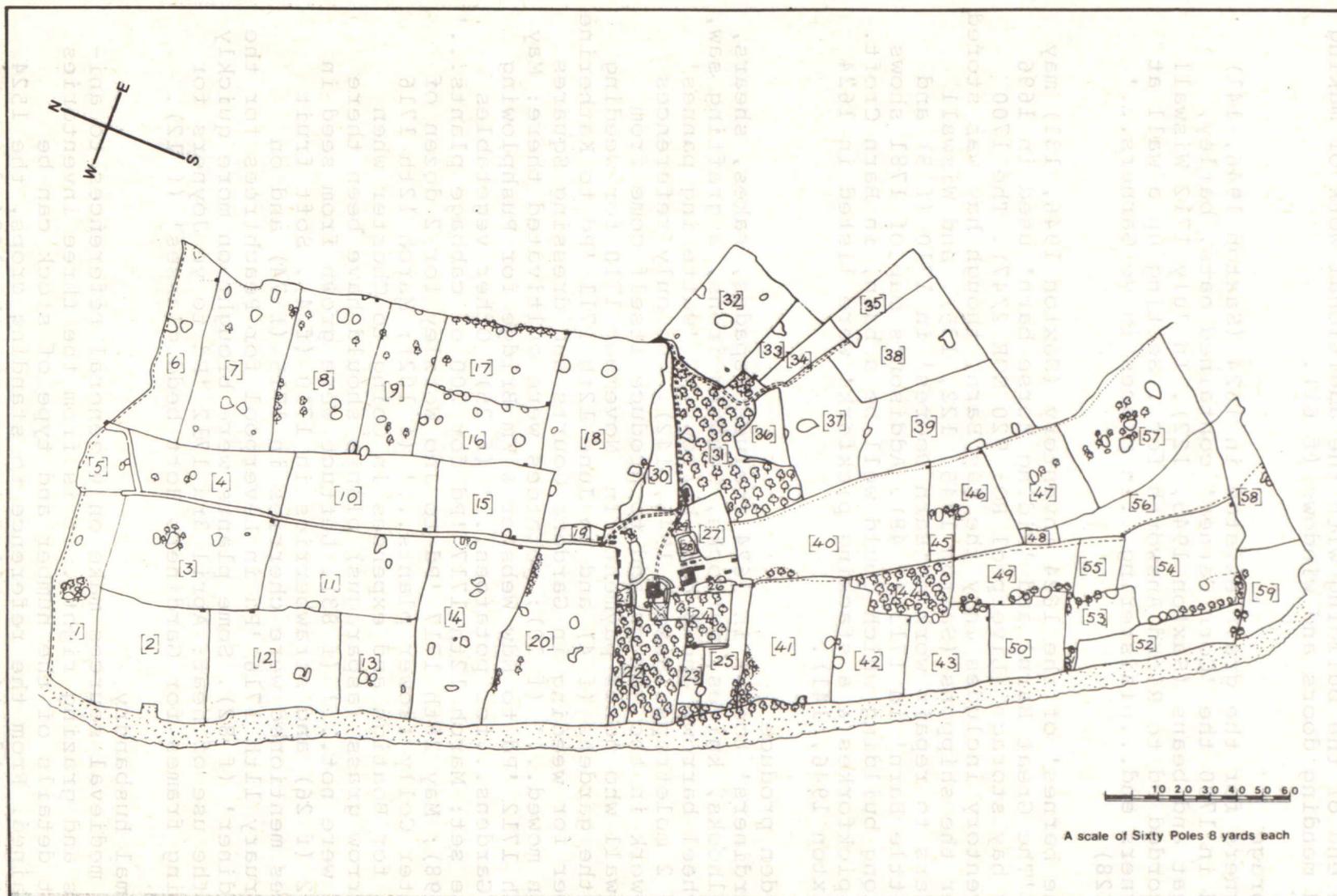


Figure 2 Speke demesne from Addison's map 1781

in addition (Saxton 1945, 121). Wiswall records thatching for the carthouse in 1712 (f 32) and, in 1714, repairs to the end of the building with the additional work of making and mending doors and windows (f 61).

Storage

Garners for the grain existed in 1624 (Saxton 1946, 141) and in 1700 the 'Corn Garner' contained oats, barley, wheat and beans (Saxton 1945, 122). In July 1712 Wiswall recorded 'Pd to Richd Answorth for...Setting up a wall at Garners end...plaistering...in places in ye Garners...' (f 28).

'The barnes' of the 1624 inventory (Saxton 1946, 131) may be 'The Great Barn' and 'Riding Horse barn' used in 1696 for hay storage (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/47). The 1700 inventory includes only the Hay Barn, though hay was stored over the shippens (Saxton 1945, 122, 135), and Wiswall refers to repair work on 'Barn Doores' in 1710 (f 5) and 'Little Barn' in 1713 (f 48). Addison's map of 1781 shows a long building which could well be a barn, in Barn Croft. '8 pickforkes & a stacking pickfork' were listed in 1624 (Saxton 1946, 141).

Garden produce

'Gardiners' tools' in 1624 included spades, rakes, shears, billhooks, knives, mattocks, weeding irons, a grafting saw, 3 wheel barrows and 3 hand barrows, 2 'wattering pannes' and 2 moletraps (Saxton 1946, 142). The only references to work in the garden and to produce itself come from Wiswall who notes payments in November 1710 for weeding in the gardens (f 4) and on June 12th 1711 'Pd to Katherine Tyrer for weeding in Gardens Courts and dressing Squares when mowed...' (f 10); potatoes were cultivated there: May 10th 1712 'Pd to Edw Webster & Wm Bridge for Pushplowing in Gardens...for potatoes...' (f 25). Other vegetables were set: March 12th 1717 'Pd for 200 of cabbage plants...' (f 98); May 28th 1717 'Pd to Jno Worsley for 2 dozen of Winter Colly flower plants...' (f 102); March 12th 1716 'Pd for Boatigs and expences in Going to Chester when Sparrow grass (asparagus) plants should have been there and were not...' (f 83). Lettuce were grown from seed in 1712 (f 26) and strawberries in 1710 (f 4). Soft fruit trees mentioned were cherries in 1715 (f 74) and on February 11th 1716 'Pd in Leverpool for Peachtrees for the Gardiner' (f 82). Some plants were brought on more quickly by the use of heat: April 3rd 1712 'Pd to ye Joyners for making frames for Gardiners Hott bedd glasses' (f 12).

Animal husbandry

The medieval sources make only general references to animals and grazing rights. It is from the three inventories that details of the number and type of stock can be obtained. From the reference to standing crops, the 1524 list was evidently compiled in summer, the 1624 date was September 30th and the 1700 notes were made on July 9th.

Oxen numbered 20 draught and 7 fat in 1524 (Lumby 1939, 20); 12 oxen in 1624 had an ox-keeper, and the equipment included 2 dozen oxbows (for forming collars) and 10 ox yokes (Saxton 1946, 132, 139, 140, 142). There are no records of oxen in 1700 or later.

Cattle owned by Henry Norris in 1524 were 'gelde kye 8; trynteris (3 year olds) 8; twynteris (2 year olds) 14; styrkis 15; kye with calvis 13, bullys 3' a total of 61 (Lumby 1939, 20). A century later the list comprised '23 melch kyne...5 kyne to bee fed...5 northern beastes to be fed...iij heffer calves...2 bullys...' 38 in all (Saxton 1946, 142). By 1700 the cattle were as follows: 'Ten two year old steeres...Four three year old steeres...The heifer and calf..Eight other heifers...The black bull...Six four year old bullocks...Tenn other bullocks...The branded bull...the redd bull...The broken bellied cow...Five milk cowes...The cow and calfe...The redd heifer and calfe... Fifteen calves...' 68 still on the estate and evidently housed in the shippons. Debts owed to Thomas Norris, listed near the end of this 1700 inventory included money for '...a cow...two bullocks...19 heifers...15 calves and other...cattell...' (Saxton 1945, 120, 134, 135). Wiswall has few references to cattle, and these are mostly to their slaughter (see p 24), however, flags were laid in the shippons in 1711 (f 19).

Horses were certainly used for draught by some of the tenants in 1468 (Lumby 1939, 14), but their use in the demesne is mentioned first in 1524 when there were 5 work horses and two mares (Lumby 1939, 20). A horse keeper was engaged to look after the 6 work horses and a mill horse in 1624 (Saxton 1946, 131, 142). By 1700 there were 6 coach horses and 10 other horses (Saxton 1945, 133); 'Furniture for the sumtier (pack) horse was also included (Saxton 1945, 125). Wiswall makes occasional references to the horses used in his time: November 3rd 1710 'Pd for 18 measures of oats...bought in the summer for Mares...' (f 3); July 11th 1713 'Pd at Woolton Smithy..for remove of two Horses when Garston Smith was out of the way...' (f 44). There was a smithy at Speke in 1680 (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/531).

One stable only is mentioned in 1624 (Saxton 1946, 139). In 1700 not only was there a draught horse stable and the 'Best Stable', but also a new 'Coach House' contained a coach and harness for four horses (Saxton 1945, 121-122). Wiswall noted various improvements and repairs: on August 29th 1717 'Pd to Rich. Answorth for 4 days pulling down the old stable...' (f 104); September 26th 1717 'Pd to Joseph Kenyon...dressing stone and setting walls att the Coachhouse...' (f 105); October 21st 1717 'Pd to Richd Barrow & Ralph Plumb for Carpenters work at New Coach House...' (f 106); April 18th 1718 'Pd to Richd Ballard for paving...att ye Coach House...' (f113); May 1st 1718 'Pd to Thomas Horrobin for...dawbing Coachhouse...' (f114); June 20th 1719 'Pd to Richd Ballard for Paving the stable att

ye end of the Carthouse...' (f 127).

Sheep: William 'le schepeherde' referred to in 1334 (Lumby 1939, 5) and, in the same document, a piece of land called 'schepekotefeld' are clear indications of early sheep rearing. There was a flock of 60 sheep and 8 lambs in 1524 (Lumby 1939, 20), one of 34 fat wethers, 3 ewes, 2 tupps and 5 lambs in 1624 (Saxton 1946, 142) but 112 (undifferentiated) in 1690 (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 1/3). The 1700 totals were 51 ewes, 29 wethers and 25 lambs (Saxton 1945, 120). Wiswall, on November 10th 1710 noted the purchase of 40 wethers, ewes and tupps at Haslington fair (near Blackburn) (f 4), and on September 21st 1711, 60 wethers and ewes at the same place (f 15). Tithes were paid on November 10th 1710 for 25 pairs of ewes and lambs (f 4) and on September 26th 1713 tithes on 27 wethers and 18 pairs of ewes and lambs (f 46). The position of the 'fould', mentioned in 1700, was not stated (Saxton 1945, 132).

Pigs are noted indirectly in the pannage (pig foraging) rights mentioned in various medieval documents (Lumby 1939, 21, 23, 28). Once again the inventories are a prime source: in 1524 the swine were 14 hogs, 2 boars and 12 pigs (Lumby 1939, 20); in 1624 there were 4 boars, 5 sows, 11 hogs 8 hogs 'of a second sort' and 12 pigs 'of a third sort' (Saxton 1946, 140); by 1700 the list comprised 'One white hogg...The black brawn (boar)...The best shote (young weaned pig)...The sowe and piggs...The white brawn...Two lesser shotes...' Wiswall has no list, but his notes include, on November 1st 1718 'Pd...for nine measures of Pease for feeding the Virginia swine and great sow...' (f 120). The 'swine houses' mentioned in 1700 had stone troughs (Saxton 1945, 133). A field close to the outbuildings was known as Swine Pasture Meadow, from at least 1700 (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/180).

Poultry in the care of Elizabeth Huchmoughe in 1624 included 28 capons, 56 hens, a cock, 3 turkeys, 18 ducks and mallards and 12 geese (Saxton 1946, 140). The 'cock house' was used for storage (Saxton 1946, 142). No detailed list was given in 1700, the entry reads 'Turkeys, geese and other poultry' (Saxton 1945, 133). Poultry feed was purchased on occasion in Wiswall's time: September 12th 1711 'Paid for a measure of oats for geese...' (f 15) and September 12th 1712 'Pd for 16 measures of barley for poultry...' (f 30). The poultry yard was paved in spring 1713 (f 40).

The first reference to pigeons at Speke occurs in the note of the 'Dove Howse Chamber' in 1624 (Saxton 1946, 129-130). The next references are from Wiswall: July 15th 1713 'Pd to Richd Answorth for...mending one of the Pidgeon houses ...' (f 44); June 22nd 1716 'Pd for a 1000 of Latt nails for Pigeon house and Gardiner...' (f 88); June 23rd 1716 'Pd to Richard Answorth..makeing dawb Dawbing & Plaistering at Pigeon house...' (f 88). The references to pigeon dung (see p 9) indicate large numbers of birds. The

remains of a dovecot are to be seen today in the Kitchen Court at the Hall.

Fish: the term 'fisheries' occurs frequently in the medieval deeds, but it may indicate merely fishing rights, if referred to in the plural. Evidence for fishing at Speke in 1624 is provided by the cork net and 'weels' (fish traps or baskets); perhaps other shore line activity is denoted by the 3 cockle pans listed (Saxton 1946, 126, 140, 136). A most detailed list of 1696 recorded the stocking of various pits, ponds, a stream and the moat with carp, tench and perch from 1685 (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/537): there was a concentration of sources of fish in the area around the Hall, and other sources included pits and ponds in 13 named fields scattered throughout the demesne, for example, 'Put into ye two marlepits (evidently abandoned and flooded) in ye lower suite (shoot-section) of ye further milfield 120 couple of carpe 1695'. A letter of April 16th 1695 mentioned 100 carp fry which Mr Holland of Sutton Hall had promised (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 1/21). The river Mersey was a good source of salmon trout which were caught frequently at Speke in the late 17th century (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 1/1/37, pub Heywood ed. 1846, 37-38). The room over the Dairy contained various fishing nets and a carp pan and a fish pan were kept in the store room in 1700 (Saxton 1945, 125, 128). Wiswall noted on July 2nd 1712 'Pd...for laving (cleaning) the Fish-pond in ye Gardens...' (f 28).

Other livesock: 'deryortcloughs' or deer yards, were referred to in 1336 as being near the Hall (Lumby 1939, 26) and in 1700 a hind was listed (Saxton 1945, 133). Venison was taken to Chester in 1710 (Wiswall f 94) and 9 woodcock taken there in 1710 (f 4). Rabbits and hares seem to have been used as a food supply; the 'Conyngry fylde' referred to in 1468 (Lumby 1939, 14) indicating perhaps a coney (rabbit) warren. The only surviving Court Roll for Speke, in 1699, included fines of 3/4 each on four people for coursing (hare hunting) within Speke Manor (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/173). A dog kennel was included in the 1624 and 1700 inventories and in the latter year it had a room over it (Saxton 1946, 132; 1945, 133). No list of dogs survives. A hive was bought for a stray swarm of bees in 1711 (Wiswall f 11).

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

It is clear that in 1066 some land was already being cultivated (p 4). Wooded areas are mentioned in the medieval period, but the references do not indicate if the woodland was of ancient origin, or had been deliberately planted. A document of c 1275 names '...the wood of Ogelot...' and in c 1285 'Hocwode' and 'the wood of Spek' are referred to and later, in 1314, 'le Clough...' is mentioned (Lumby 1939, 24, 28, 20, 22). Both Oglet Wood and the Clough can be identified on Addison's map of 1781 as being in the

demesne although the wooded areas of each may originally have been more extensive. An interesting note in 1334 reads '...(a) wood called Spekgreves (groves) enclosed by ditches ...' (Lumby 1939, 33) (see p 22). There are many other references to woodland, often unnamed, and to general woodland rights which might include the right to collect dead wood for household and for farm use, and the right to graze a number of pigs in autumn (Lumby 1939, 1-45).

The rebuilding necessary in Liverpool after the Civil War disturbances there meant that in 1649 a total of 500 'tuns' of timber was requisitioned by Liverpool Corporation from a number of local landowners, including Sir William Norris (Chandler and Wilson 1965, 363). A lease of 1647 included a 'Portion of land where timber trees have been felled, at the east end of Oglett Wood in Speke, containing two acres or thereabouts' (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 17/195). It would certainly seem that woodland management was being practised since, in c 1695, Sir Thomas Norris referred to '...my Timber woods' (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/634a). One presentment at the Manorial Court in 1699 was for the offence of '...getting Fyshyord wood within the demesne of the Lord of this said Manor...' (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/173). A fishyard was a net-and-stake method of coastal fish-trapping. Further references to timber may be gleaned from the 1700 inventory 'More timber and other wood in grounds ...', also one oak, two windfallen ashes and some bark had been sold and the debts were outstanding (Saxton, 1945, 133, 134).

Details of woodland management are abundant in Wiswall: the Clough and Oglet Wood are mentioned frequently with notes also about Barn Field, Coneytree Wood, Hall Field, the Heath (now Stockton's Wood), Hopyard, Lower Orchard, Molyneux Meadow and New Park.

The Clough: the modern woodland in the Clough is the result of natural regeneration after the clearance by the Air Ministry in 1942 (Tibbles 1980). The area has, however, been wooded to some extent from its earliest mention in c 1314 (Lumby 1939, 24). In 1700 'Coard wood (small upper branches of trees cut into lengths and stacked) and wind falls (of wood) in the Clough' were valued at 10s. Wiswall records the sale of crop wood from it in 1711 (f 6), and in 1714 young ashes were cleared from the Hopyard and Barn Field and were set in the Clough (f 51). December 1716 saw an inspection of the ash and oaks in the Clough and hedges, and they were sold shortly afterwards (f 95). A sale of oak bark was held later (f 97) and an ash, 'no. 92', was bought for £1 (f 22a). There are later references to clearing and to hedging (ff 98, 102, 111) and to the settlement of the sale bills (ff 23a, 28a). In 1781 the Clough was shown as a wooded area of just over 14 acres. (For the watercourse in the Clough, see 'Speke Hall Moat', p 33).

Oglet Wood had already been partly cleared by 1647, and again by 1712 (p 9). The numerous references to it between

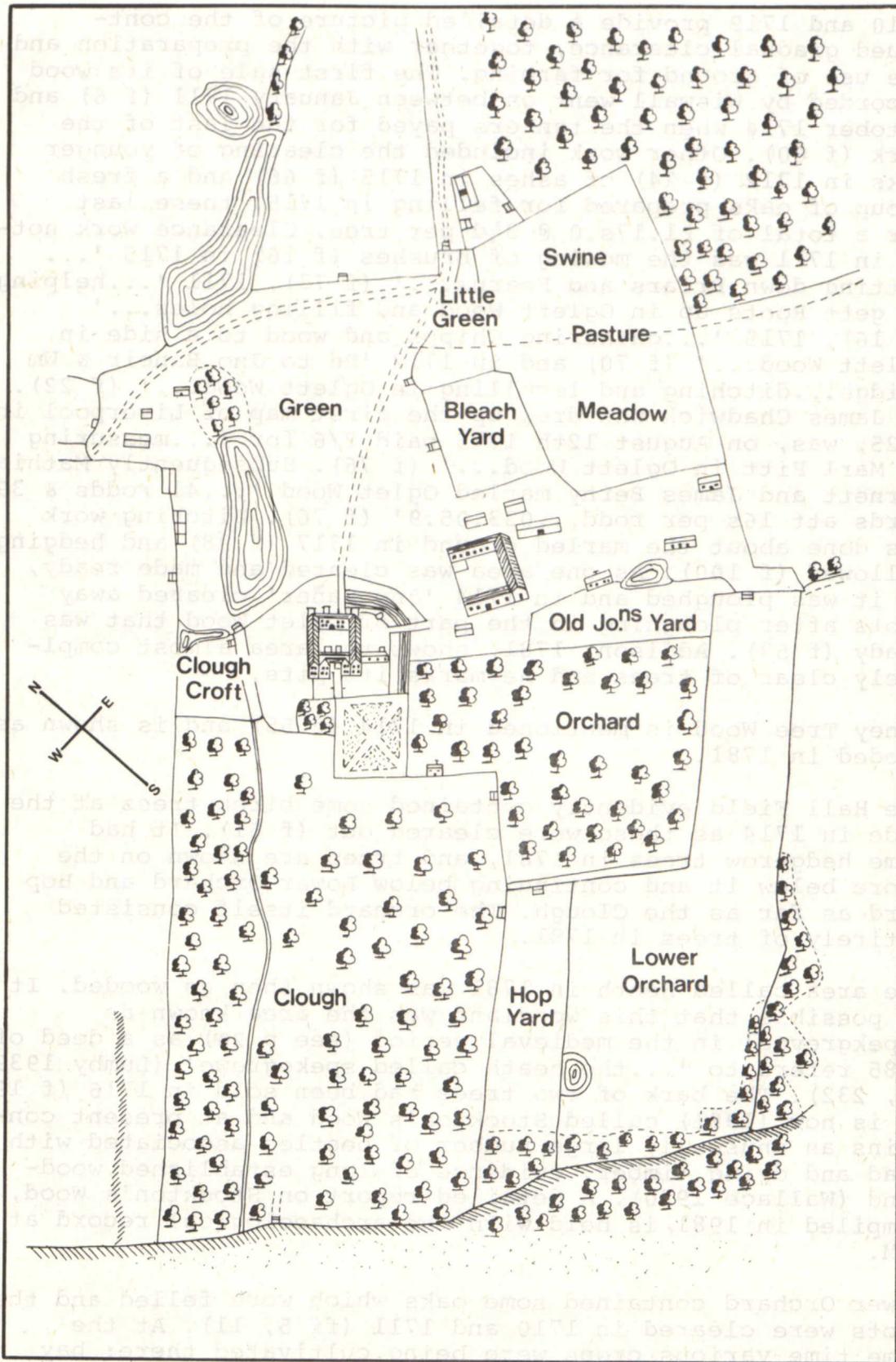


Figure 3 Speke Hall and associated buildings from Addison's map 1781

1710 and 1719 provide a detailed picture of the continued gradual clearance, together with the preparation and the use of ground for farming. The first sale of its wood recorded by Wiswall went on between January 1711 (f 6) and October 1714 when the tanners payed for the last of the bark (f 60). Other work included the clearing of younger oaks in 1712 (f 24) of ashes in 1715 (f 66) and a fresh group of oaks prepared for felling in 1715, these last for a total of £1.17s.0 @ 3½d per tree. Clearance work noted in 1711 was the mowing of brushes (f 16) in 1715 '...cutting down Briars and Fearnas...' (f 73), 1711 '...helping to gett Roots up in Oglett Wood and filling holes...' (f 16), 1715 '...gathering Chipps and wood to a side in Oglett Wood...' (f 70) and in 1712 'Pd to Jno Baneir & Wm Bridge...ditching and levelling in Oglett Wood...' (f 22). Mr James Chadwick who drew up the first map of Liverpool in 1725, was, on August 12th 1715 paid 2/6 for '...measuring ye Marl Pitt in Oglett Wood...' (f 76). Subsequently Mathias Garnett and James Berny marled Oglet Wood '...41 rodds & 39 yards att 16s per rodd...033.05.9' (f 76). Ditching work was done about the marled ground in 1717 (f 98) and hedging followed (f 100). As one area was cleared and made ready, so it was ploughed and in 1714 'Jno Bañer' cleared away roots after ploughing in the part of Oglet Wood that was ready (f 53). Addison, 1781, shows the area almost completely clear of trees and he marks its pits.

Coney Tree Wood is mentioned in 1714 (f 55) and is shown as wooded in 1781.

The Hall Field evidently contained some birch trees at the side in 1714 as these were cleared out (f 51). It had some hedgerow trees in 1781, and trees are shown on the shore below it and continuing below Lower Orchard and Hop Yard as far as the Clough. The orchard itself consisted entirely of trees in 1781.

The area called Heath in 1781 was shown then as wooded. It is possible that this woodland was the area known as 'Spekgreves' in the medieval period (see p 20) as a deed of 1385 refers to '...the heath called spekegrewe' (Lumby 1939, 37, 232). The bark of two trees had been sold in 1716 (f 19a). It is now (1981) called Stockton's Wood and at present contains an unusually large number of beetles associated with dead and dying timber, evidence of long established woodland (Wallace 1980). A detailed report on Stockton's Wood, compiled in 1981, is held with the archaeological record at MCM.

Lower Orchard contained some oaks which were felled and the roots were cleared in 1710 and 1711 (ff 5, 11). At the same time various crops were being cultivated there: hay was cut in 1711 (f 12) and in later years, while in other years barley, oats and potatoes were grown, often in two separate parts (f 45). The area had some trees in 1781.

Bark and timber from 87 trees in Molyneux Meadow were sold in 1716 (f 85) and it would seem to have been clear in 1781 except for hedgerow trees. New Park was cleared of some trees, especially hollies, in 1715 (ff 67, 68, 70), and it seems to have had no trees in 1781.

Some tree planting noted by Wiswall may have been of fruit trees and just possibly may have included the yew trees (see below), as on March 29th 1712 he recorded 'Pd for Carriage of 14lb of seeds and little trees from London...' (f 23).

The yew trees, still to be seen in the courtyard at Speke Hall, are mentioned on June 6th 1712 'Pd to Ezekiel Mason for...making Frames to sett about ye yew trees in the Court ...' (f 27).

The 1795 sale particulars mention that 'the Timber, Tellers, and Saplings are to be taken at a fair valuation'; 'Plantations' are referred to in the general description (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/655).

SOME DOMESTIC INDUSTRIES AND ACTIVITIES

The buildings situated near the Hall and illustrated in 1781 (fig 3) were located to the east (leeward) side of the Hall. They have not survived so it is not possible to date them or to identify precisely the use to which each building was put; also they may have replaced, or have been additions to earlier structures whose exact position is not known. All the industries and activities noted below took place in the ancillary buildings on the estate although the details revealed by inventories indicate that the use of the building might not always have been exclusively for one activity.

Milling: a windmill at Speke is mentioned in 1282 (Lumby 1939, 1) and 14th century references locate it in the moss field (Lumby 1939, 24, 30, 35). The moss fields were clustered to the north of the demesne, beyond the 1781 (Banks Lane) boundary (see p 3). The windmill was perhaps rented out in 1468, and in 1500 a grant from Sir William Norris included his mill of Speke, then in the holding of James Robinson (Lumby 1939, 14, 19). By 1566 there was a windmill and a watermill (BM Add Ch 52528). A valuation of the Norris property in 1620 referred to the mills of Speke and Garston (University of Liverpool: no 263) and the Commonwealth sequestration of 1650 noted 2 watermills and 2 windmills in Speke and Garston (Stanning ed 1898, 227). The only references to mills in the 1700 inventory and in Wiswall are all to those at Garston and the latter source includes a wealth of detailed information.

Boulting: once the flour was milled it was sifted in the boulting house. In 1624 and 1700 sacks, sieves, barrels, measures, a balance and weights were kept there (Saxton

1946, 134; 1945, 125).

Baking: the 'oven house' at 'Proffitts Howse' noted in 1624 contained 8 kneading troughs for bread making and there were 3 peels in the Dry Larder (Saxton 1946, 142, 136). The 'old Bakehouse' of 1700 had merely 3 spinning wheels; 5 old kneading troughs were in the 'further Kiln' (Saxton 1945, 125, 121). Wiswall notes the demolition of one oven in August 1713 and the building of ovens and a chimney, and roof repair over the ovens in September that year (ff 45, 46). The bread loft in 1624 contained a large number of miscellaneous vessels for storage, cookery, dairy and table use; also kept there was equipment for candle making (Saxton 1946, 134-135).

Brewing and cider making: the evidence for brewing in 1524 is from the note of 3 brewing vats listed (Lumby 1939, 20). A brewhouse, complete with equipment, existed in 1624 together with accommodation for a brewer, and hops were cultivated (Saxton 1946, 133-134, 142, 128-129). (Also see above p 14). The 1700 brewhouse again contained the necessary items (Saxton 1945, 125), but there is no note of special accommodation for a brewer. In 1713 Wiswall recorded demolition and rebuilding of a wall and chimney at the old brewhouse with the addition of slating and pointing (ff 45,46). In 1711 Wiswall had obtained slate from Mossbank, (possibly near Windle) and two loads had been led from there to Speke (ff 13, 18). Kilns at Garston and Hale were used for malting the Speke demesne barley in 1713 and 1714 (ff 36, 50). Cider apples were grown in 1694 and 1695 (see above p 14). An apple press was brought in 1714 and cider calk bought in Liverpool in that year (ff 61, 62). Payment was made in 1717 '...for helping to knock and Press Apples...' (f 107). The Great Cellar in 1700 contained 4 casks and 3 stillages and £6 worth of malt lay in the 'Mault Garner' (Saxton 1945, 123, 122).

Dairy work: the 1524 list includes no dairy equipment, but in 1624 some cheese boards were in the kitchen chamber, the work house and the cheese chamber, while the 'Dey House' (dairy) contained a wide range of the items necessary for butter and cheese making (Saxton 1946, 133). The 1700 'Dary' had less equipment, and the cheese chamber contained only miscellaneous goods related largely to spinning. Wiswall noted the mending of a lock and provision of 2 keys for the dairy door in 1716 (f 86). Some butter was bought in Liverpool in April 1712 (f 23) and in October 1718 the dairymaid took some cheese to sell (f 119).

Slaughtering and meat preparation: the first reference to a slaughter house is in 1700 (Saxton 1945, 121). Several slaughterings are noted by Wiswall: August 31st 1710 'Pd to Wm Mollyneux for killing a cow against finishing the marling 00.01.0' (f 1); swine were killed in January 1711 (f 6) and on October 26th 1717, 24 sheep were slaughtered for

house use (f 107). Evidently, at times, the beef was insufficient, as in November and December 1710 45lbs and 53lbs of beef were bought (f 4). 86lbs of beef were bought in Warrington in December 1717, not long after 98lbs had been bought, mostly in Liverpool (ff 109, 108). This meat may well have been largely for salting down for use throughout the winter. Salt was sometimes obtained from the Dungeon saltworks, at Hale, which commenced work in the late 17th century (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/134). There, Cheshire rock salt was refined. In 1711 salt was bought at Dungeon (f 13), in 1715 a bushel was bought at Northwich (f 80) and in 1718 some was purchased at Warrington (f 81). The 'Wet Larder' in 1624 had facilities for preparing beef, bacon and brawn (Saxton 1946, 137) and in 1700 it contained 6 old beef tubs, a wooden trough, 3 trestles and shelves (Saxton 1945, 126). Wiswall mentions, in 1712, new hinges and cover for a salting tub (f 29).

Candle making was done in 1624 as the inventory list included a trough to chop tallow in, a candle pan and various candle moulds, although the 'Candle Howse' also contained gardeners' tools and other equipment (Saxton 1946, 127, 135, 142). It does not seem that candles were made in 1700, and Wiswall in 1716 recorded a payment for the balance between tallow and candles (f 83).

The 'Fether Howse' of 1624 (Saxton 1946, 137), may have been used for poultry plucking and/or the stuffing of the many cushions, bolsters, feather beds, pillows and quilts listed then. 7 feather beds and 8 cushions were included in 1524 (Lumby 1939, 20) and down beds were used in various rooms in 1624. The room over the dairy had, in 1700, 2 old chests with some feathers in 2 bags (Saxton 1945, 125); once more, as in 1624, many household items were stuffed with feathers.

Spinning, weaving, needlework: the three inventories list large quantities of sheets, blankets, coverlets, counterpanes, hangings, tablecloths, towels, napkins, tapestry work and some sacks. Clearly the silken material, calico, Bruges satin and Spanish blankets had been obtained elsewhere, but a number of the other items of wool, linen and hemp could have been home made. 3½ stone of wool were recorded in 1524 (Lumby 1939, 20), and in 1624 10 tow hampers (tow is hemp or flax ready for spinning) (Saxton 1946, 130). In 1700 150lbs of fleece wool @ 7d per pound were listed, as well as 'flocks' (used for some mattresses), at a time when Speke had 105 sheep; also in that inventory were unspecified amounts of hemp, flax and tow, together with hemp in the Bleaching Yard (Saxton, 1945, 124, 127). Retting equipment is possibly included in 1624 (Saxton 1946, 139), and 2 hatchells for combing flax or hemp, 2 pairs of tow cards and 2 pairs of wool cards were noted; there were also 8 spinning wheels, 2 winding wheels and 10 pairs of skein winders with 'reedes and lathes for a webster', 4 bobbins

of wood and a warp stock and posts, (a weaver's reed being an arrangement of this strips of reed between 2 parallel bars of wood used for separating the threads of the warp and beating up the weft) (Saxton 1946, 126, 127, 130). The equipment in 1700 included 3 old spinning wheels, yarn and 2 yarn winders 'Reeds and furniture for a weavers use...' (Saxton 1945, 133). The indications are that some material, at least, was made at the Hall. Wiswall notes in 1717 that twill was bought for a winnowing sheet (f 106).

Woodworking: a great deal of wood must have been used for heating, cooking and drying purposes at the Hall, although coal was being used by 1693 when 120 baskets of coal were carried as boon work for Sir Thomas Norris (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/561). Carts and coal feature in the 1700 inventory (Saxton 1945, 121, 132) and in 1711 coal was taken to Speke from Tarbock (f 16).

Very many of the items inventoried were made wholly or partly of wood: furniture, utensils, tools, carts. Much of the construction and many of the fittings of the Hall and outbuildings were wooded, as were the gates, fences and hurdles used in farming. A John Fennall, carpenter to Edward Norris, is mentioned in a document of 1605 (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 17/21).

In 1624 the timber was brought from felling and trimming on 2 'drugg' carts (Saxton 1946, 140), and was stored in various locations. The 'Chip Hillock' included 'One peece of parke tymber... Divers other seuerall peeces for seuerall uses and some bases... Two trees newe fallen for boordes... Some ould dores & other odd peeces of ould broken tymber...' 'Cowperie ware' included some barrels, wooden hoops for barrels, and a bathing tub; equipment noted was '2 whipp sawes & 2 framing sawes... 3 iron wedges... one cutting axe...' (Saxton 1946, 139, 141).

The 1700 stocks of wood were kept in the work house yard, the garden, the 'Clay Chamber', the cart house, 'Wheele timber, plow timber and axel trees' in the 'Wood House', and in the Clough (see p 20), together with 'More timber and other wood in the grounds...' Equipment included 'Chains with other lomber (lumber) goods' one axe, a crow (bar) and a hatchet (Saxton 1946, 121, 122, 133).

Amongst the furniture a twig chair is noted (Saxton 1946, 124; 1945, 130), hampers in 1624 (Saxton 1946, 130) and numerous baskets, 2 specifically of twigs in 1700. (Saxton 1945, 128).

Wiswall refers frequently to woodworking: in 1713 'Pd to Richd Barrow for Loading and Croscutting Timber Sawing Sparrs...' (f 46); in 1711 'Pd to Tho & Richd Tatlock for breaking wood into Cooperie ware', 'Pd to Jno Ireland for making a new Setting (winding) wheel & mending the old one'

(ff 18, 19); 'Pd to Jnr Leney for makeing a little Bed sted for Ms Kitty...' (f 11); in 1714 'Pd to Richd Barrow for...makeing a cart...' (f 61). Spade handles were made in 1712 'Pd to Ralph Plumb for...Croscutting & dressing Two dozen and a half of Spade trees...' (f 34). Another use for wood may have been prepared on the estate: in 1712 'Pd to Jno Banner for helping to remove Charcoal into ye house in Lower Orchard...' (f 31).

Brick and lime-burning: a brick kiln is mentioned in the 1700 inventory (Saxton 1945, 133), but the notes by Wiswall on September 2nd 1713 and on September 29th 1716, to the purchase of bricks (ff 46, 91), may indicate that this practice had been discontinued. Other notes in the inventories and Wiswall (ff 28, 35) referring to 'kilns' do not specify for what purpose they were used.

In 1700 'Lime in the Limehouse with limestone thereby...' (Saxton 1945, 132) indicates another industry on the estate. The limekiln was mended in 1712 (f 30) and one 'laid' in 1713 (f 45); on May 8th 1712 Wiswall recorded 'Pd for 12 measures of Limestone att Liverpool for white-washing and Plastering in the Galleries and other places ...' (f 25). In 1712 the limehouse was thatched (f 20).

SUMMARY

This study of Speke Hall demesne has demonstrated that it is possible to reconstruct, to a limited extent, the land management and agricultural history of an estate from the incomplete series of documents which survive. At present, while this study is the only one of its kind for this area, it is difficult to make useful comparisons with other manorial estates. It is clear, however, that the mixed farming economy of the Speke demesne aimed at self-sufficiency rather than specialisation. The constant references to both stock rearing and to arable farming, together with the later references to horticulture indicate that most of the meat, dairy products, grain, fruit and vegetables required by the Hall were supplied by the demesne farm. Sale of surplus products, in season, together with rents received, helped to provide the ready money to buy in salt, slate, limestone and coal, for example, as well as to pay wages for estate workers.

It is hoped to follow this with similar studies of estates in the south Lancashire area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The initial research was undertaken in 1979-80 as part of the Archaeological Survey of Merseyside, using personnel employed by the University of Liverpool on a Manpower Services Commission Special Temporary Employment (STEP) Scheme. The editing and presentation of a Report on the work were subsequently commissioned by the Merseyside

County Council Planning Department. A selection of the material has been used in this article.

The Survey team members contributing to the original research were Penny Jones, Dave McLoughlin, Susan Nicholson and Brian Sheppard; subsequent help has been given by Gill Chitty. Art work by members of the MSC team Archaeological Survey of Merseyside, MCM, and by the Graphics Department, Merseyside County Council.

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Messrs Sykes, Waterhouse and Co kindly gave permission to study the Addison Survey of 1781, a copy of which is now held with the archaeological record in MCM.

SUMMARY

This study of Speke Hall Gardens has demonstrated that it is possible to reconstruct, to a limited extent, the land management and agricultural history of an estate from the incomplete series of documents which survive. At present, while this study is the only one of its kind for this area, it is difficult to make useful comparisons with other manorial estates. It is clear, however, that the mixed farming economy of the Speke domain aimed at self-sufficiency rather than specialisation. The constant references to both stock rearing and to arable farming, together with the later references to horticulture indicate that most of the meat, dairy produce, grain, fruit and vegetables required by the Hall were supplied by the Speke farm. Sale of surplus produce, in season, together with rents received, helped to provide the ready money to pay in salt, slate, limestone and coal, for example, as well as to pay wages for estate workers.

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Abbreviations

- | | | |
|---------------------|------|---|
| c | | circa |
| <u>Chet Soc</u> | | <u>The Chetham Society</u> |
| ed(s) | | editor(s) |
| f, ff | | folio number(s) |
| Lancashire RO | | Lancashire Record Office, Bow Lane, Preston |
| Liverpool RO | | Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool Central Libraries, William Brown Street, Liverpool |
| MCM | | Merseyside County Museums, William Brown Street, Liverpool |
| OS | | Ordnance Survey |
| <u>Rec Soc</u> | | <u>The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire</u> |
| <u>THSLC</u> | | <u>Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire</u> |
| VCH 1, 3 | | see Farrer and Brownbill (eds) |
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Speke Hall Moat

Susan Nicholson

At the time of writing, Spring 1982, the now dry and partly landscaped moat exists on the east, north and west sides of Speke Hall. It is bridged in two places: at the main entrance and at the kitchen courtyard. There is no visible evidence of it, except from the air, on the south side.

This note gathers together all the available documentary and field evidence for the moat in an attempt to discover its history.

In 1314 the brook of Mykelderyord (Great Deer Yard) flowed through the Clough below the house of John and Nichola le Norrays at Speke. It also had a tributary joining it at an unspecified point. It has been suggested that the house mentioned was on or close to the site of the present Speke Hall (Lumby 1939, 24).

The medieval documents do not refer specifically to a ditch or moat at the Hall itself, although watercourses nearby are mentioned (Lumby 1939, 24, 32), but recent evidence shows that one existed at this period. The major restoration work being carried out at Speke Hall afforded the opportunity for an excavation inside the north west corner of the building in 1981-2. The evidence indicates that the medieval hall covered a somewhat smaller area than its post medieval successor. A channel cut in the sand to 3.3m below the present floor level of the billiard room, and almost parallel with the new dry moat on the north front, contained a waterlogged filling with wood and other plant remains, pottery dating from the 13th century to about 1550, including some imported French wares, and an heraldic pendant of 14th century date. Borings made along the line of this channel, but outside the west front of the present building, have indicated waterlogged silts at a depth of 3m and the channel may represent a boundary or moat which was resited in the post medieval period (Higgins 1982). Other details of the excavation are on p 6.

The 1624 inventory of Sir William Norris lists the contents of '...the Chamber next the newe bridge where the gardeners lye' (Saxton 1946, 129). Evidently there was a deep ditch or moat to be crossed and either there had been an old

bridge at that spot, or there was an old one which still existed, crossing the same ditch or moat at another point. The fact that the gardeners used the room may indicate that it was on the east or kitchen side of the Hall, though not necessarily part of that range of buildings.

Sir Thomas Norris's fish-stocking records of 1685-96 (Liverpool RO: 920 NOR 2/537) include the first direct references to the moat: '...into ye moate 46 coupell of Carpe 1693/3 yeare oulds into ye moate 70 coupell of Carpe this yeare bread into the furthest side of ye moate 190 couple of Pearch 1693...' These indicate that the moat existed on at least two sides of the Hall.

The 1700 inventory of Sir Thomas Norris has a reference to '...the Servant's Chamber att the Back Bridge' (Saxton 1945, 125), perhaps the same room occupied by the gardeners in 1624.

Wiswall's accounts of 1710-1719 for Dr Edward Norris (Liverpool RO: Hq 942.721.3 SPE) note work on two bridges: 12 September 1712 '...pailing the Wood Bridge...' (f30) and 7 April 1713 '...paveing on the stone bringe...' (f40); he also refers, on 9 November 1713, to '...Filling rubbish at Bridge end...' (f49) and on 8 March 1716 records '...Setting a Gate att Moat side...' (f83). Possibly the stone bridge was the one crossing the moat to the main entrance on the north side of the Hall, and the wooden bridge may have been by the kitchen courtyard and so possibly the one referred to in the inventories.

Wiswall also has several entries concerning drainage work, especially in 1713, and these may have had some connection with a water supply to the moat: 7 February 1713 '...Helpint to open and lay bare ye lead pipe at Higher Damme head ...' (f36); 13 February 1713 '...helping to fill the (sluice) up when the box was fixed att Higher Dam and Lead pipes laid ...' (f37); 10 March 1713 '...Timber work for Plumber to cast Lead pipes, laying Sole trees & making a Box at the Higher Damne...and making covers for the Brick work on the Green...' (f38) (Sole trees = beams of wood laid on the ground to support upright beams); 15 July 1713 '...Laying soughs (drains) with flagg and Brick on the Green...' (f44). Later that same year, on 2 September, payment was made for two days' work '...at Washhouse Damme...' (f46). There were, then, two dams. The water from the higher (north) dam was controlled at its head (lower end) by a sluice and was channelled through lead pipes. In addition, work was carried out on a covered drain across the kitchen court (f65).

Addison's map of 1781 (fig 1a) (copy in Archaeological Survey of Merseyside, MCM), the first known map of Speke, shows a brook whose source is not clearly marked, forming the boundary between New Park and Great Plumb Field and flowing into the higher dam just beyond the point where an outlet from a pond joins the brook. The lower dam lies a short distance

south of the higher one. A water filled moat is shown on the east and north east sides of the Hall and the bridges are in the same position as the ones seen today. It is possible that Addison indicated only those areas which actually contained water, and that a moat existed on the other sides, but it is not shown there because it was dry. The watercourse through the Clough to the Mersey is marked clearly, and it would seem that an underground drain led to it from the lower dam. There is also a small pond at the top of Clough Croft.

A map of c 1800 (fig 1b) (Liverpool RO: K) seems to accord closely with the 1781 depiction of the dams and watercourses. A view published in the Gentlemans Magazine in April 1804 (297, 11), shows the south front of the Hall, but there is no indication of a moat on that side. Gregson in 1817 noted 'It (Speke Hall) was surrounded by a moat the remains of which are pretty entire' (Gregson 1817, 202). Walker's view of the west front of the Hall, which Gregson reproduces opposite the text, shows a water-filled moat on that side of the Hall, though, unfortunately, the view is printed in reverse. Bennison's map of 1825 (fig 1c) (Liverpool RO: K) omits any indication of bridges and shows what appears to be a continuous watercourse on the east, north and west sides of the Hall, with the brook in the Clough flowing directly from it. The two dams are marked, but not the small pond by the higher dam nor, apparently, the one at the top of Clough Croft. The Pynes' view of 1829 (Baines 1836, 3, 755) shows a dry moat to the west and north west of the Hall and this feature occurs on all subsequent views from that point. The tithe map of 1844 (fig 1d) (Lancs RO: DRL; copy in Liverpool RO) is a close copy of the 1825 map, and the watercourses show little change from it, although it does show the Clough Croft pond.

The Ordnance Survey 6" to 1 mile 1st edition of 1849 (fig 2a) (sheets 114, 118) names the moat and marks it on the east, north and west sides. The small portion south east of the kitchen courtyard bridge has water in it, the rest appears to be dry. The two dams and the small pond are shown, but there is a leat from the head of the higher dam and the water flows west to the far side of Molyneux Meadow and then south to the Mersey along what is evidently an old watercourse to judge by the 50' contour line; the line of this old watercourse formed the boundary of Wilders Brook field and Molyneux Meadow from at least 1781. The 75' contour line indicates a watercourse north of Stockton's Wood and it seems to appear above ground again at a point east of the Hall and then flows into the Mersey. The 25' contour certainly shows the channel of a watercourse in the Clough, but it appears to be dry.

Shelmerdine's 1869 map (fig 2b) (copy in Liverpool RO: K) indicates the landscaping activity which had been undertaken by the Watts. The dry moat and its two bridges are well defined features, the higher dam and its pond are shown, but

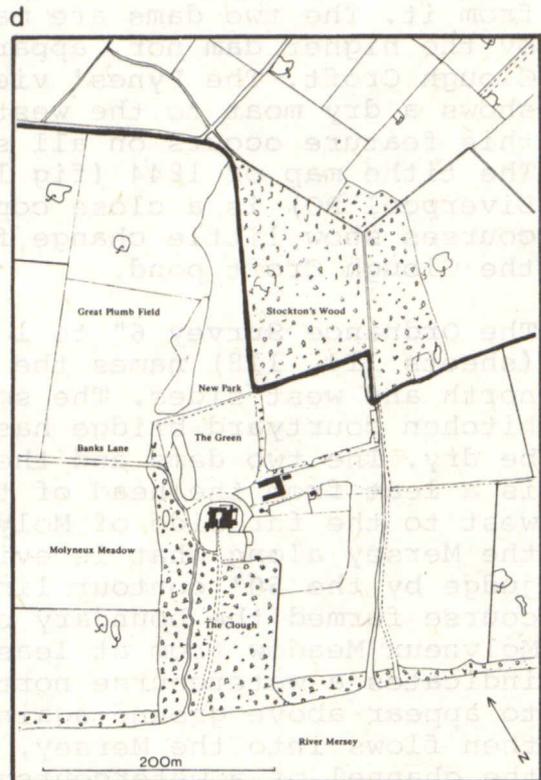
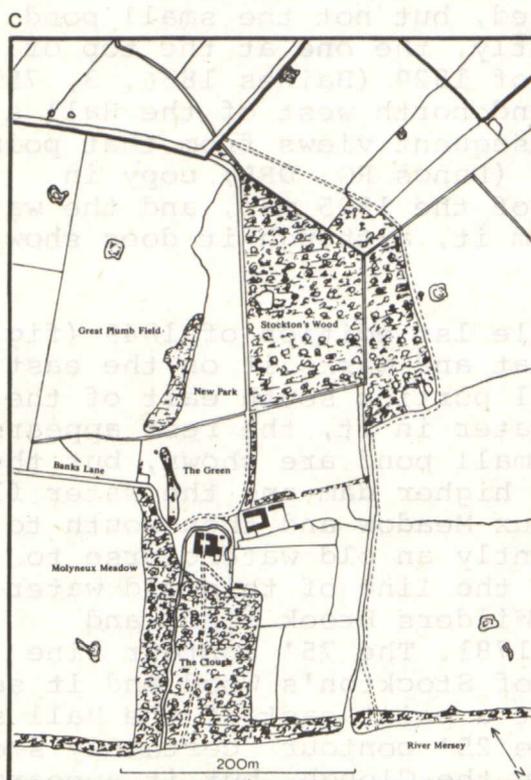
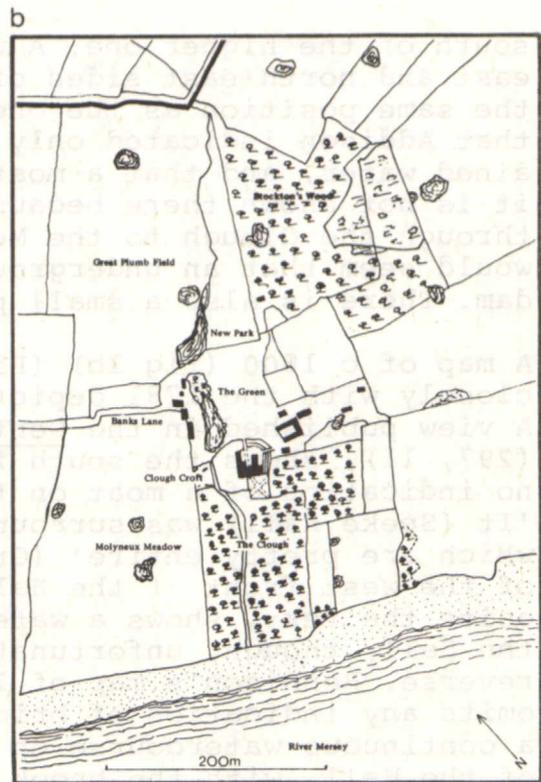
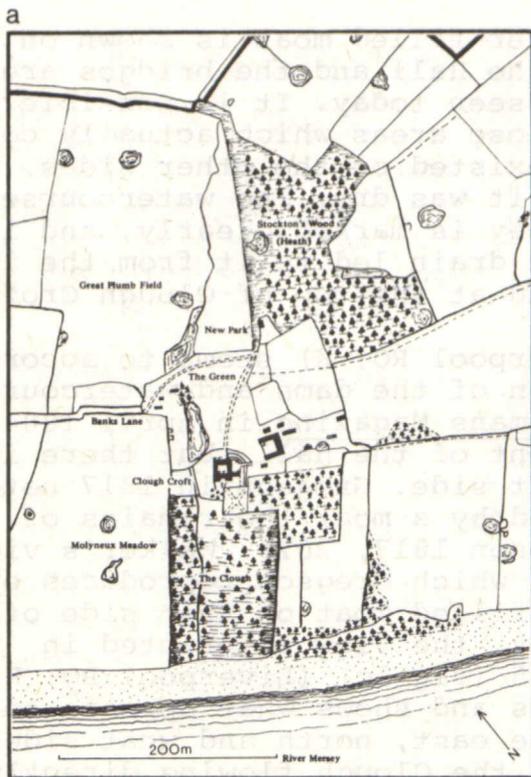


Figure 1 a Addison's map 1781
 b Map of c 1800
 c Bennison's map 1825
 d Tithe map 1844

Modern grid north is indicated
 The thick black line indicates the demesne land boundary

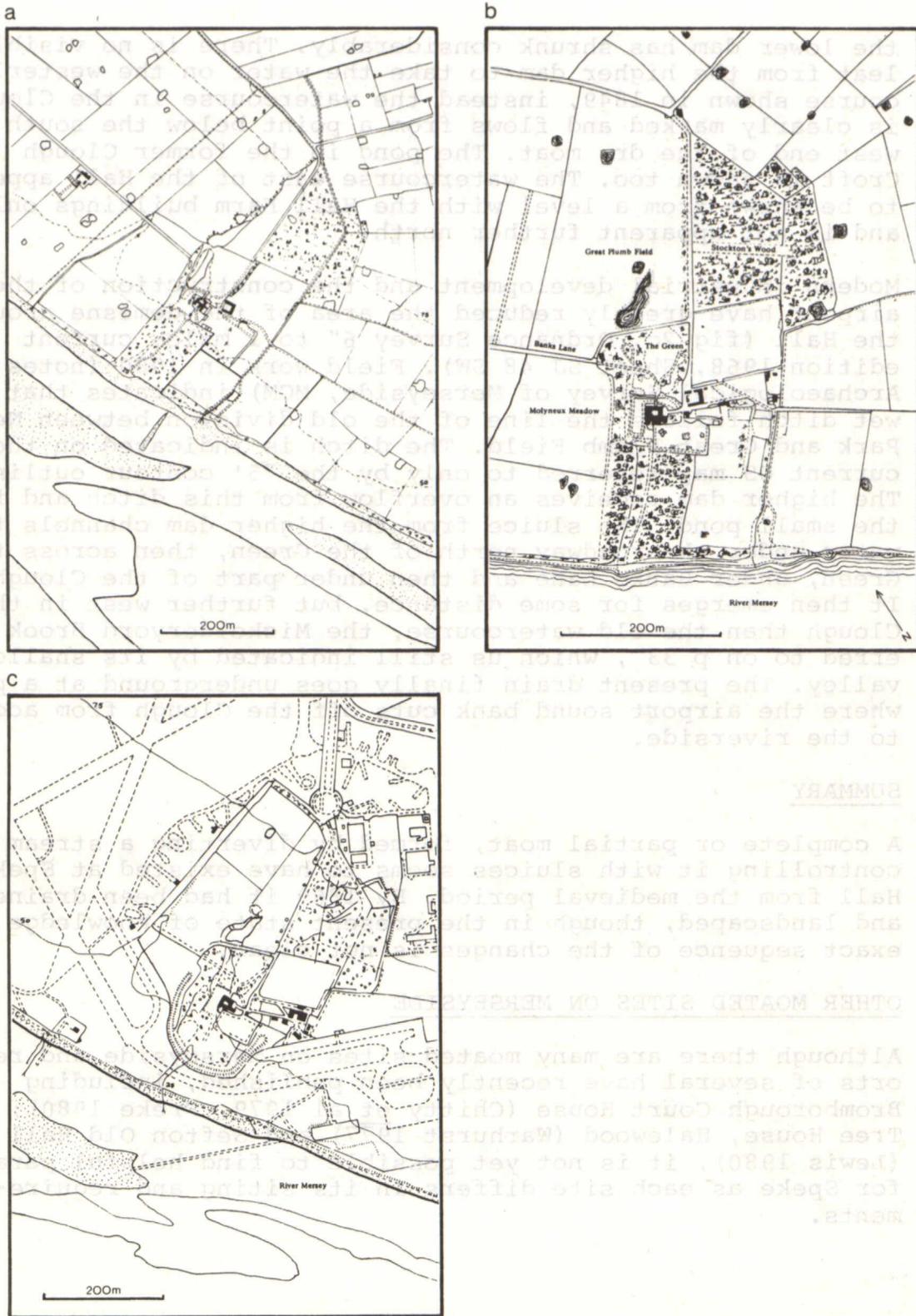


Figure 2 a Ordnance Survey 1st ed. 6" 1849 Sheets 114,118
 b Shelmerdine's map 1869
 c Based upon the 1968 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map, courtesy of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright Reserved
 Modern grid north is indicated on b

SUMMARY

A complete or partial moat, controlling it with sluices Hall from the medieval period and landscaped, though in the exact sequence of the changes OTHER MOATED SITES ON MERSEY Although there are many moated sites of several have recently Bromborough Court House (Chil Tree House, Halswood (Warbur (Lewis 1980), it is not yet for spoke as each site differ means.

the lower dam has shrunk considerably. There is no visible leat from the higher dam to take the water on the westerly course shown in 1849, instead the watercourse in the Clough is clearly marked and flows from a point below the south west end of the dry moat. The pond in the former Clough Croft is shown too. The watercourse east of the Hall appears to be shown from a level with the Hall Farm buildings only, and is not apparent further north.

Modern industrial development and the construction of the airport have greatly reduced the area of the demesne around the Hall (fig 2c, Ordnance Survey 6" to 1 mile, current edition 1968, Sheet SJ 48 SW). Field work in 1980 (notes in Archaeological Survey of Merseyside, MCM) indicates that a wet ditch follows the line of the old division between New Park and Great Plumb Field. The ditch is indicated on the current OS map referred to only by the 75' contour outline. The higher dam receives an overflow from this ditch and from the small pond. The sluice from the higher dam channels the water under the roadway north of the Green, then across the Green, under Banks Lane and then under part of the Clough. It then emerges for some distance, but further west in the Clough than the old watercourse, the Mickelderyord Brook referred to on p 33, which is still indicated by its shallow valley. The present drain finally goes underground at a point where the airport sound bank cuts off the Clough from access to the riverside.

SUMMARY

A complete or partial moat, formed by diverting a stream and controlling it with sluices seems to have existed at Speke Hall from the medieval period. By 1869 it had been drained and landscaped, though in the present state of knowledge the exact sequence of the changes is not clear.

OTHER MOATED SITES ON MERSEYSIDE

Although there are many moated sites on Merseyside and reports of several have recently been published, including Bromborough Court House (Chitty et al 1979, Freke 1980); Yew Tree House, Halewood (Warhurst 1977) and Sefton Old Hall (Lewis 1980), it is not yet possible to find helpful parallels for Speke as each site differs in its siting and requirements.

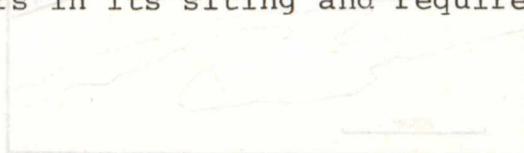


Figure 2 a Ordnance Survey 1st ed. 6" 1849 Sheets 114, 115
b Sheldrake's map 1869
c Based upon the 1968 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000
map, courtesy of The Controller of Her Majesty's
Stationery Office, Crown Copyright Reserved.
Modern grid north is indicated on b

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Art work by Colette Cowan, Archaeological Survey of Merseyside.

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Coastal Change and Early Settlement on the North Wirral - 2

Ray Kenna

INTRODUCTION

This paper forms a second part to 'Early Settlement on the North Wirral Coastal Area' which appeared in volume 2 of this Journal (Kenna 1978, 27-34). Additional pollen and diatom analyses have now been carried out, with new radiocarbon assays for samples from the area. The results of this further research are considered with a view to determining the sequence of events affecting the coastal environment and are related to events which affected adjacent coastal areas in Lancashire and north Wales. The implications for human activity and settlement are also considered and a table of radiocarbon dates relating to the area is appended to the paper.

ADDITIONAL DATA AND INTERPRETATION

Pollen and diatom analyses have mainly been carried out on samples from biogenic strata immediately above or below sands, silts and clays of marine, estuarine or terrestrial origin. Radiocarbon dates enable the nature of the environment at a particular time to be determined. While the major vertical changes in lithology reflect major environmental changes, transitional strata (or stages) have rarely been found in the North Wirral (eg the change from marine conditions to saltmarsh conditions). This is because the Flandrian strata of North Wirral originated mainly in the earlier 'perimarine zones' (Tooley 1978, 3) and the transitional strata (or facies), eg from intertidal to perimarine, were mainly seaward of the present coastal area and have since been submerged. The absence of a transitional facies may also be due to a sudden marine incursion caused by surge tide conditions. Where a marine stratum overlies a biogenic stratum and a transition facies is not evident, a radiocarbon date for the immediately subjacent biogenic stratum may in fact antedate the marine event by several hundred years. For example, this would be the case where the upper part of a biogenic stratum had been removed by erosion caused by the subsequent marine incursion. Further sections are shown in figure 1 together with radiocarbon dates. The effects of post depositional consolidation and slumping are evident in these sections.

A) PREHISTORIC

Section C (Kenna 1978, fig 1, 31) is now shown with radiocarbon dates. Although the radiocarbon date for the base of the black peat of 4,700 years BP seems to err slightly on the late side, it substantiates the late Flandrian II pollen assemblage. At the base of the black peat there is slight evidence from the pollen assemblage of the transition from marine to saltmarsh conditions. The radiocarbon date of 2,620 years BP for the top of the eroded brown peat in which the pollen assemblage is typical of an alder fen community increases the possibility that the tree trunk dated at 3,695 years BP (Godwin and Willis 1964, 116 and Kenna 1978, 29) lay in later peat. If this is the case, the Scrobicularia in the silts and clays (with marine/estuarine diatoms) overlying and channelling into the peat are more likely to be related to the incursion that occurred after 2,620 years BP and not that after 3,695 years BP (Tooley 1978, 136-143 and Kenna 1978, 29). The wood debris at the junction of the black and brown peat may be related to the rising water table (probably contemporaneous with a relative rise in sea level) between c 3,910 and c 3,695 years BP (Kenna 1978, 29). Pollen zones within the brown peat at C and near Leasowe Castle can be correlated with some of those in the brown peat at Bidston Moss 1,200m to the east of C (Innes and Tomlinson 1982).

At P, peat (detrital in appearance) overlying grey silty clay was freshly exposed during ditching operations. A slight variation in the thickness of the brown detrital peat is mainly due to erosion of its upper surface. Here the peat has a puckered appearance where it is channelled into by the overlying silt and clay, which contains a varied assemblage of freshwater diatoms. The pollen assemblage at the very eroded top of the brown peat, dated at 4,315 years BP, point to the local vegetation being an alder fen community, although forest clearance indicators are present, suggesting that the regional picture was that of an open oak woodland. The thin clay parting below the peat sample contains marine/brackish diatoms and pollen from the base of the sample suggests that saltmarsh conditions preceded the alder fen stage. A north west-south east trending channel 14.5m across at its widest point, with an infill of clayey silt and silt, cuts through the full thickness of peat 40m to the south of the sample point. The nature of the channel section suggests that it formed after some consolidation of the peat had already occurred and considerably later than 4,315 years BP. As the sample was from detrital peat this also suggests channelling occurred some time after the period of peat formation and the sample date should be treated with caution. The main thickness of predominantly freshwater silts and clays both in the channel and above the peat has thus been deposited considerably later than 4,315 years BP. The form of the channel is such as to suggest that it was formed by a rapid release of blocked up fresh water. Such an origin

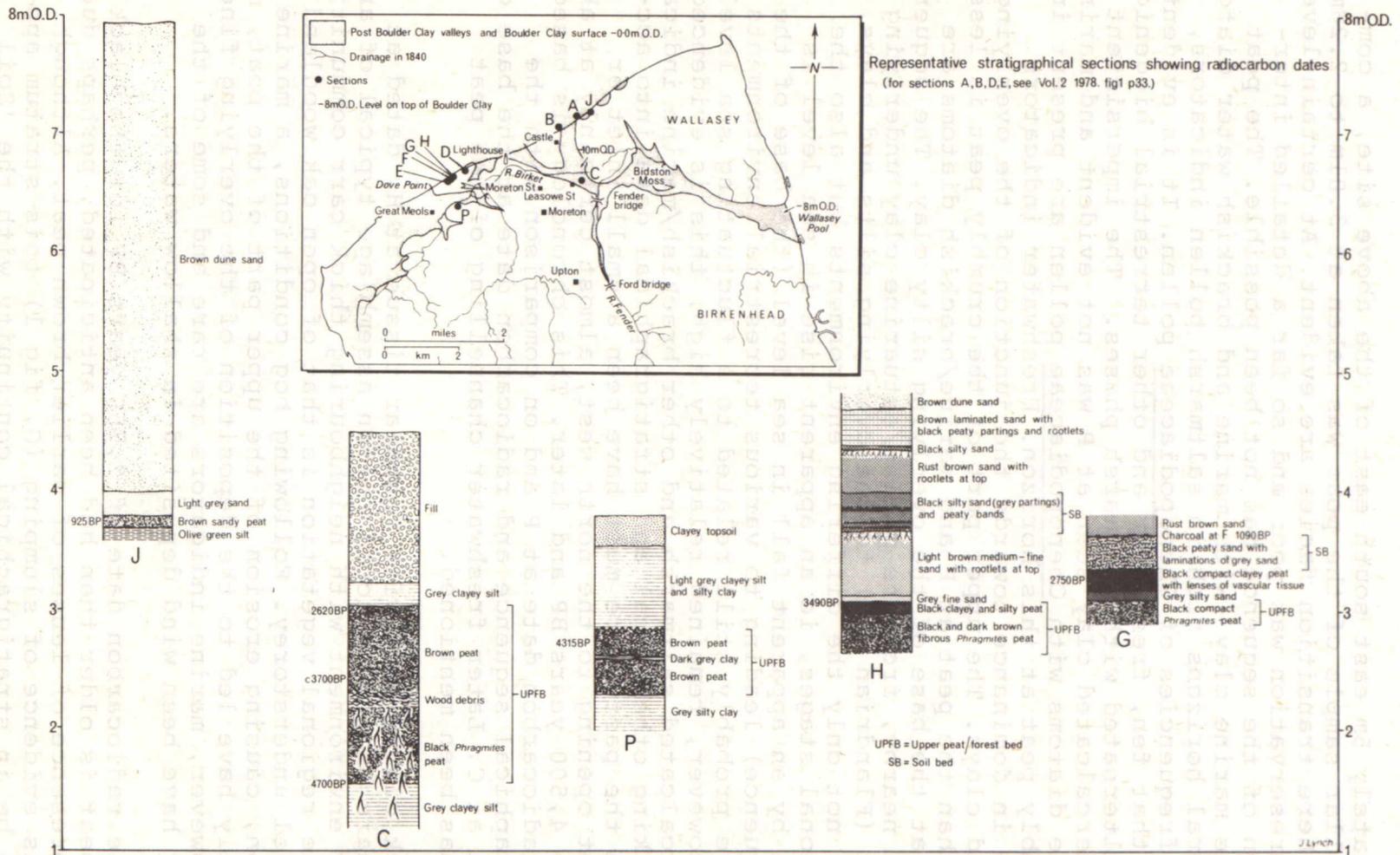


Figure 1

would account for the eroded and slightly feathered surface of the peat adjacent to the channel.

Approximately 5m east south east of the above site, a complete pillar sample of the peat was taken at 3.01m to 2.28m OD, and here transition facies are evident. At certain levels pollen preservation was poor and so far a detailed interpretation of the sequence has not been possible. The peat above the marine clay (with marine and brackish water diatoms) has several horizons rich in saltmarsh pollen indicators, eg high frequencies of Chenopodiaceae pollen. It is evident, however, that fen, freshwater and other terrestrial biogenic phases alternated with saltmarsh phases. The impersistent thin intercalated clay seen at P was not evident and marine/estuarine diatoms with Chenopodiaceae pollen are present in the crumbly peat at this horizon. Freshwater indicators increase in dominance towards the junction of the overlying silts and clays. The upper part of the crumbly peat is less eroded than the peat at P and marine/brackish diatoms are present at the base of the overlying silty clay. The sequence at P and nearby, from the marine/estuarine clay underlying the peat (Flandrian III) to the overlying silts and clays, reflects not only the differing environments but also the transitional stages, ie an apparent rise in sea level is followed by an apparent fall in sea level (the base of the peat sequence) leading to various terrestrial environments that were probably still related to a fluctuating sea level which, however, remained relatively high; this is evidenced by intercalated saltmarsh and other brackish/marine indicators. Taking other local and stratigraphical data into account, in the past there must have been a small inlet or embayment opening to the north west, almost certainly at about 4,700 to 4,500 years BP and later. This chronology is based on the radiocarbon date at P and on comparison with the stratigraphical sequence and radiocarbon date at the base of the peat at C. Later freshwater channelling of the peat nearby has been mentioned.

The black clayey peat with vascular tissue at H, dated at 3,490 years BP, has a local pollen assemblage typical of an acid bog environment with neighbouring thick carr communities, while the regional vegetation is that of open oak woodland with hazel understorey. Following bog conditions, a marine incursion, causing erosion of the upper part of the peat, may eventually have led to the deposition of the overlying fine sand. However, marine indicators are rare and some of the sand may have been wind deposited in shallow waters.

At G, the radiocarbon date of 2,750 years BP for the black clayey peat is older than had been anticipated, perhaps due to the presence of lenses of earlier brown peat. Although there was evidence of slumping (G, fig 1) this stratum appeared to be in stratigraphical continuity with the 'Soil Bed' nearby, (Kenna 1978, 29, fig 1, 31); the sample was taken with a view to dating the lower level of the 'Soil Bed'.

This may be an ancient soil or disturbed stratum, which here underlies the 'Soil Bed' already referred to. (Pollen data relating to the sample and indicative of varying environments tend to support this view, hence the radiocarbon date should be treated with caution). With improved drainage poor soils overlying peat would, if cultivated, be expected to contain lumps and lenses of the subjacent peat. This clayey peat is succeeded by black peaty sand, a lateral variant of the 'Soil Bed'. As this stratum was not observed in other sections its stratigraphical significance is unclear.

B) HISTORIC

At J, a hole 4.3m deep was excavated by contractors' machinery in a low area of the Wallasey sandhills. Here, 0.10m of sandy peat is overlain by 0.23m of grey sand which is succeeded by 3.92m of brown dune sand with a marked absence of shells. It was not possible to determine the thickness of the olive green silt underlying the peat for which a radiocarbon date of 925 years BP has been obtained. This peaty band is the highest organic bed under the dune sand in this area and, although the pollen is poorly preserved, the assemblage suggests that it formed under damp dune slack conditions (although not necessarily in a dune slack) before being covered by existing dune sand. Thin, more recent black organic bands are present in the higher parts of the sand hills.

A peaty band recorded in this area by Travis (1922, 207), is equated by him with the 'Soil Bed' at Meols (Travis 1922, 213). To avoid contamination, the central part of the peat was used for radiocarbon dating. The date is earlier than that indicated for the 'Soil Bed' at Meols (Kenna 1978, 29 and fig 1, 31). However, a radiocarbon date on charcoal humics of $1,090 \pm 120$ years BP from the 'Soil Bed' at Meols, originally disregarded, is now considered to be significant. The charcoal was removed from the top of a sea-washed bench of the 'Soil Bed' at 3.75m OD near F on the map (fig 1). A date of 550 years BP from the upper part of the 'Soil Bed' at E is considered to err on the late side (Kenna 1978, 29); however, a soil layer subject to cultivation and tillage, together with natural plant colonisation could well span 500 years. The presence of medieval objects in the 'Soil Bed' at Meols (Smith 1865, pl II and 214 and Chitty and Warhurst 1977, 21) is compatible with the radiocarbon date limits, and in the subjacent silts, clays and sands, Saxon and Norman objects would be in their correct stratigraphical position (Smith 1865, pl II and 215-226). A radiocarbon date on the base of the 'Soil Bed' at a lower level may extend the age of the 'Soil Bed' beyond 1,090 years BP.

Artifacts would be expected to occur in greater abundance to the north (Kenna 1978, 30-32) and further comment is made below. Near Meols, the nature of the 'Soil Bed' varies; in places it is silty or sandy (eg near G and H, fig 1) and in

others clayey. Its thickness varies, and in places it is absent due to channelling or lensing; this is also the case in respect of the immediately subjacent strata. Slumping at G may have been caused by the sea washing out the underlying sands and silts immediately before the embankment was built.

There are apparent chronological gaps between the top of the Upper Peat/Forest Bed and the 'Soil Bed' (Kenna 1978, 27), and the intervening strata in places (eg at G) seems to be condensed in thickness. This may in part have been caused by a sand trap such as a lagoon, to the north of the present coastline, or blown sand may have been deposited further to the east. Where sand is replaced by silts or clays, once again sediment supply must have been limited. Subsequent erosion of strata could also have contributed to the attenuated thickness. Plastic flow of silts and clays caused by hydraulic gradients is still occurring in certain areas, but more so in the lower silts and clays of the buried channel of the early Fender drainage system.

CORRELATION WITH THE LANCASHIRE AND NORTH WALES COASTAL AREAS

The stratigraphical data with pollen and diatom assemblages, particularly near junctions exhibiting obvious lithological changes, can be used together with some of the radiocarbon dates to relate the coastal events that have affected the North Wirral Coastal Area to those of adjoining areas. These additional data, together with that of Kenna (1978) indicate that the main North Wirral Marine episodes (or associated evidence of rising water tables) after 7,000 years BP fall within or close to the time limits of the 'marine transgressions' recognised by Tooley (1978, 113) in respect of the Lancashire Coast. Two of the marine 'transgressive episodes' recorded in North Wales (Bowen 1977, 250-253 after Tooley unpublished and Tooley, written communication) can also be associated with marine events that affected the North Wirral. Not all the biogenic or 'regressive phases' which separate the 'transgressive phases' elsewhere are evident on the North Wirral. This could be due to local conditions, subsequent erosion and the relationships of present coastlines to those of an earlier period. As stated earlier, on the North Wirral the pollen record has not so far indicated such obvious periods of saltmarsh formation (except at or near P) as those recognised by Tooley (1978) in many of his sections relating to the North West Coast. These areas may, in some cases, have been further seaward in North Wirral, and lack of evidence may be due to the subsequent erosion of the coast. From the pollen assemblages of the peats, together with diatom assemblages reflecting prevalent high water tables, contemporaneous rising sea levels can be inferred: however, high water tables are not necessarily directly related to high or rising sea levels and 'raised bog' peats are found in hollows on the coastal plain.

One of the more obvious regional correlations is shown by the horizon indicating the end of marine conditions and onset of biogenic conditions recorded at Lytham Common (Tooley 1978, 135) with a radiocarbon date of 4,895 years BP, and at Rhyl Beach with a radiocarbon date of 4,725 years BP (Tooley 1978, 135). These dates correlate with that of 4,700 years BP at the marine/biogenic junction at C and also with this horizon recorded elsewhere on the Wirral coast. The levels of these junctions for correlation purposes require adjustment to allow for different tidal ranges, different levels of MHWS, the relative positions of the sites to the palaeo-coastal area and subsequent consolidation. Bowen (1977, 252 after Tooley, unpublished and Tooley, written communication) cites evidence for the commencement of biogenic conditions at the end of North Wales Transgressive Phase V at 4,725 years BP at Rhyl Beach at 1.76m OD and for the same event at Abergele at 2.42m OD: the former level is close to that at C in the valley area and the latter level is close to that at E (Kenna 1978, fig 1, 31) and the section near P.

Although no direct evidence has been observed in the Wirral for a 'Romano-British transgression', when sea level (MHWS) is purported to have been at 5.44m OD in West Lancashire (Tooley 1978, 137), the evidence does indicate a considerable loss of land to the sea about this time and later, and as a consequence the Mean High Water Mark would have 'retreated' to the south. Evidence for the 'migration' or 'retreat' of Mean High Water Marks related to sand dune erosion, surge tides and related coastal phenomena is referred to in detail by Parker (1971) in respect of Formby Point on the Lancashire Coast.

Direct evidence for the period of sand dune building proposed by Tooley (1978, 148) from 4,000 and 2,400 years BP in respect of the Lancashire Coast is lacking on the Wirral Coast. However, the later dune building period for the Lancashire Coast (Tooley 1978, 145, 148) can be correlated using the thin peat band dated at 805 ± 70 years BP and 830 ± 50 years BP in the south west Fylde dunes (Tooley 1978, 148) with the peat band at J in the Wallasey Sandhills which has a radiocarbon date of 925 ± 50 years BP. In places west of J and in the channel area near Leasowe Castle, a thin black laminated sandy peat is evident overlying grey silt and clay at levels similar to J, and this may represent the lateral continuation of the thin peat at J. Although Tooley (1978, 144) rightly states 'there is no evidence from the dune systems either for dune building or for dune instability', for two millenia after c 4,000 years BP in respect of the Lancashire Coast, this by no means proves that other dune systems were not present further to the west and to the north in respect of the Wirral Coast. Conditions similar to those leading to the formation of the coastal dunes of the Western Netherlands may have persisted (Jelgersma *et al* 1969, 335-342) and the accumulated sands and sandbanks in the Liverpool Bay Coastal Area could, in part, be the remnants of old

coastal sand barriers and dune systems. From c 4,000 years BP many of the conditions for dune building could have been satisfied, for example sand supply (Kenna 1978, 32), long-shore drifting and prevailing westerly winds. Indeed, periods of dune stability could have occurred in the Bay area up to recent times and dune building could occur on parts of the North Wirral Coast today were it not for the presence of concrete sea defences. Sandbanks at Meols are rapidly narrowing the easterly migrating remnants of the Old Hoyle Lake channel and without the scouring effects partly caused by the presence of the sea wall, the channel entrance would already have been sealed off by the sandbanks.

SETTLEMENT

The presence of man in the area from c 5,000 years BP is evident from the pollen record and this is substantiated by other indicators after c 4,000 years BP (Kenna 1978, 30). Pollen and other data indicate that after a rise in the water table (in most instances probably the result of a relative rise in sea level) between 3,910 years BP and 3,695 years BP, the water table of the hinterland remained high. The pollen record indicates that between c 4,000 years BP and at least 2,620 years BP there was a persistence of alder fen, swamp, raised bog and open water in the hinterland and this is further substantiated by detailed pollen data from a peat section on Bidston Moss (Innes and Tomlinson 1982). During these times, the hinterland with its high water tables would not have been attractive for continuous settlement, except on the rocky promontories of Wallasey, Bidston and Caldy and the knolls of boulder clay which may have supported woodland and, at times, 'soils' suitable for cultivation and settlement (Kenna 1978, 30). Settlement associated with pile dwellings may have occurred. Had sand dunes formed periodically from 4,000 years BP, they would have attracted settlement as they apparently did from Roman times onwards (Kenna 1978, 32). The ecosystem of such dune areas, particularly the dune slacks and adjacent sand filled lagoonal areas, would have provided soil and vegetation suited to arable and pastoral farming. However, whether or not sand dunes were in existence at other times, perhaps the most influential single factor controlling settlement was the relative position of the water table which would have been governed primarily by sea level, drainage and indeed climate.

CONCLUSION

The sediments of the North Wirral Coastal Area reflect the eustatic Flandrian (Post Glacial) rise in sea level, but shortly after 3,500 years BP the rate of the rise seems to have decreased and local factors may have been more influential in affecting coastal and environmental changes. Additional pollen analyses and radiocarbon dates have helped to clarify the sequence of events and changing environments after c 3,800 years BP, but where direct evidence is lacking,

Map Location Figure 1	Laboratory Reference	Conventional Radiocarbon Date Years BP (+1 σ)	Level Metres OD	Converted Calendar Date AD-BC	Material	Site Location and Reference	National Grid Reference
F	SRR 1404(a)	'Modern'	+3.75	1598 AD	Charcoal	Wallasey Embankment (RK4)	SJ 2373 9085
D	SRR 1403	540+40	+2.98	1404	Peat	Wallasey Embankment (RK2A)	SJ 2410 9104
E	SRR 1402	550+40	+3.66	1400	Peaty 'soil' and sand	Wallasey Embankment (RK4BU)	SJ 2367 9083
J	GU 1311	925+50	+3.79	1050	Peaty sand	Leasowe Sand Dunes (WR/1T)	SJ 2754 9261
F	SRR 1404(b)	1090+120	+3.75	894 AD	Charcoal (Humics)	Wallasey Embankment (RK4)	SJ 2373 9085
C	SRR 1574	2620+40	+3.02	856 BC	Peat	Reeds Lane, Moreton (SRL/1A)	SJ 2710 9086
G	GU 1270	2750+55	+3.18	975	Peat	Wallasey Embankment (RK550)	SJ 2375 9086
H	GU 1271	3490+60	+3.08	1887	Peat	Wallasey Embankment (RK5/U)	SJ 2378 9088
*	Q 620	3695+110	+3.05	2154	Wood	Reeds Lane, Moreton	SJ 268 909
E	SRR 1495	3800+40	+3.0 (+2.30)	2305	<u>Pinus</u> wood	Wallasey Embankment (RK4BP)	SJ 2368 9082
E	SRR 1493	3910+100	+2.7 (+2.27)	2468	<u>Quercus</u> wood	Wallasey Embankment (RK4Q)	SJ 2368 9082
A	Birm 1013	3980+70	+1.82	2565	Bone (<u>Bos</u>)	Mockbeggar Wharf (1h/M67)	SJ 2722 9284
P	GU 1312	4315+70	+2.86	3050	Peat	Park Road, Meols (PR1/U)	SJ 2383 9015
C	SRR 1575	4700+70	+1.50	3530	Peat	Reeds Lane, Moreton (SRL/2A)	SJ 2710 9086
D	SRR 1494	6420+60	+0.41	5320	Peat	Wallasey Embankment (RK20)	SJ 2410 9104
B	SRR 1496	6460+40	+0.38 (-0.18)	5363 BC	<u>Quercus</u> wood	Mockbeggar Wharf (LB/B)	SJ 2665 9218

(C¹⁴ half-life = 5,570 years)

* (Godwin and Willis, 1964, 116) - near C.

Converted Calendar Dates (without limits of error) after Clark 1975.

Levels shown for peat are actual strata contact levels except for SRR 1404(a) and (b) and GU 1270. Samples submitted for radio-carbon dating were trimmed to reduce contamination. For in situ tree stumps the sampled level is shown and the level at the base of the roots in brackets.

due mainly to recent severe marine erosion, the interpretation remains somewhat conjectural. The need to treat certain radiocarbon dates with caution has been referred to, especially those related to peat immediately subjacent to a marine/estuarine stratum and where transitional facies are absent. An age range for the 'Soil Bed', the remnants of which are under the dune sand of the embankment, has been established and this is compatible with the evidence based on artifacts found in and below the stratum (Smith 1865, pl II, 214 and Chitty and Warhurst 1977, 20). Future evidence may allow the age for the 'Soil Bed' to be extended retrogressively. Correlations can be made with some of the contemporaneous events that have affected adjacent coastal areas. The main exceptions are the early period of sand dune building and events apparently occurring elsewhere during the Romano-British period. Settlement in sand dune areas before Roman times may have occurred and the level of the water table seems to have been the most influential factor affecting settlement.

It is evident then that pollen analyses and radiocarbon dates (even though the samples have been submitted to rigorous decontamination processes) should be interpreted with caution, and that consolidation and other post-depositional processes should be taken into account when interpreting the Flandrian environments and chronology of the North Wirral. When considering coastal processes, it should be emphasised that their results can trigger off new processes, particularly in localised areas. The factors affecting the rates of accretion also require consideration.

FOOTNOTE

In 1980, several excellent sections were visited in excavated parts of the projected course of the early river Fender channel (Kenna 1978, 27), and in these places its early course can be defined with greater precision. The extent of landward penetration of marine incursions at various horizons is being determined from diatom assemblages in the silts and clays. Movement of sandbanks and channels near Meols is being monitored to provide examples of the rapidity of coastal changes and geophysical work is continuing. It is hoped that more detailed analyses of the peat near P can be carried out.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BP Before Present
 OD Ordnance Datum
 MHWS Mean High Water Springs

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St Ann's Well, Sutton, St Helens

W. Highcock

St Ann's Well lies close to the boundary between Sutton and Rainhill townships about 10m east of Pendlebury Brook, 800m south of Eltonhead Farm, Sutton (SJ 4997 9142). The isolation of the site and the reputation of its water's healing properties have given rise to local legends associating it with a medieval monastic house and burial ground (St Helens Leader, 1878).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

'St Anne's Well' is marked in gothic letters on the first edition Ordnance Survey 6" map of the area (sheet 107, surveyed 1845-7) and is shown just to the north of a track running north east to Eltonhead colliery. On the tithe map for Sutton township (LRO DRL 1/77, 1808 and 1843) the well is indicated in the field named Well Meadow. An interesting description of the well, written in about 1850, has been preserved in the Owen MSS in Manchester Public Library. It is accompanied by a sketch of the site as it appeared in about 1843 (fig 1). 'The well is of a square form and is lined with masonry. On one side, the eastern, there is a flight of four or five steps...It is about 4 feet in depth and the diameter from east to west is 5 feet 9 inches; from north to south 5 feet 6 inches. The overflow is conducted by a stone channel 14 feet 7 inches long to a stone basin 18 inches diameter sunk level with the ground. Close by is a square block of stone said to be for sitting upon whilst making use of the basin...The tradition of the neighbourhood says that here stood a chapel and burying ground; but there came a time when the building fell into decay and the stones were used for the construction of a stable at the hall Eltonhead. It appears however that there was some impiety in the removal of these stones which had been dedicated to a holier purpose. The stable had not long been erected when it fell killing the unfortunate animals enclosed therein. Some time having elapsed a mill was erected at a short distance and the old stones were removed again and employed in its construction but ill-luck attended the mill as it had done the stable and fatal accidents occurred to two or three of the millers in succession which caused the mill to be abandoned and eventually become a ruin... About 1794 the remains of the mill were removed, the ground

since ploughed over and when I visited the spot in 1843 there was not the least trace to show that a building ever stood there. At the same time I was taken to the well by my grandfather; around the well were many rough stones just peeping through the soil which he said were the remains of headstones marking the burial place of people belonging to a former generation.' (Owen MSS, 77-8).

The sketch which accompanies this information is headed 'Santon's or St Ann's Well, Sutton near Prescott, now destroyed'. It shows a bird's eye view of the well with the steps, the stone channel, basin and block described. In the lower left hand corner, there is a small additional sketch showing what would appear to be a stone block with an engraving on it of a figure holding a jug or pitcher (fig 1).

There are two published descriptions of the well. In 1866-7, Rev W.H. Higgins noted 'a cavity filled with water almost overgrown with grass and weeds: this is the St Ann's well, which formerly enjoyed a rather extensive reputation for the healing virtues of its water especially in cases of diseases of the eye. I once saw at the well a poor girl who, with her companion, had come from the neighbourhood of Billinge to bathe her eyes with the water' (Higgins 1867, 66). Forty years later the well was also described by Henry Taylor in his book Ancient Crosses and Holy Wells of Lancashire. He noted that the well 'is now nearly filled up' and also 'Rev J.E. Gull informs me that he has discovered that an ancient burial ground adjoined the well...Sixty years ago the farmer ploughed up the bones and deported the ancient gravestones' (Taylor 1906, 192 and 487). The Rev J.E. Gull was vicar of St Ann's church, Rainhill, from 1897 until 1911 (Dickinson and Dickinson 1968, 18).

The history of the Eltonhead estate in which the site lies is well documented. In 1194 William, son of Ivo, granted four oxgangs of land to Hugh le Norreis who later enfeoffed William le Norreis (?son of Hugh) with Eltonhead. William took the name of Eltonhead and the family lived there until 1684. The hall and lands were sold to Thomas Roughley and by 1712-13 had passed into the hands of Isaac Greene. The estate then descended to the Gascoyne family through the marriage of Isaac's daughter, Mary. On the death of Bamber Gascoyne junior in 1824, the estate was inherited by the only daughter, Frances Mary, wife of the 2nd Marquis of Salisbury. The estate is still held by the Salisbury family (VCH Lancs 3, 359-360; Rankin 1957). No reference to a chapel, burial ground or, indeed, the well has been found amongst the estate papers. However, a grant of six acres of land at Eltonhead was made c 1267 by Hugh le Norreis to Cockersand Abbey (Farrer ed. 1900, 600). It is possible that the memory of monastic ownership of land in Eltonhead is the origin of the local tradition concerning a priory there. The exact location of the lands held by Cockersand Abbey is not known.

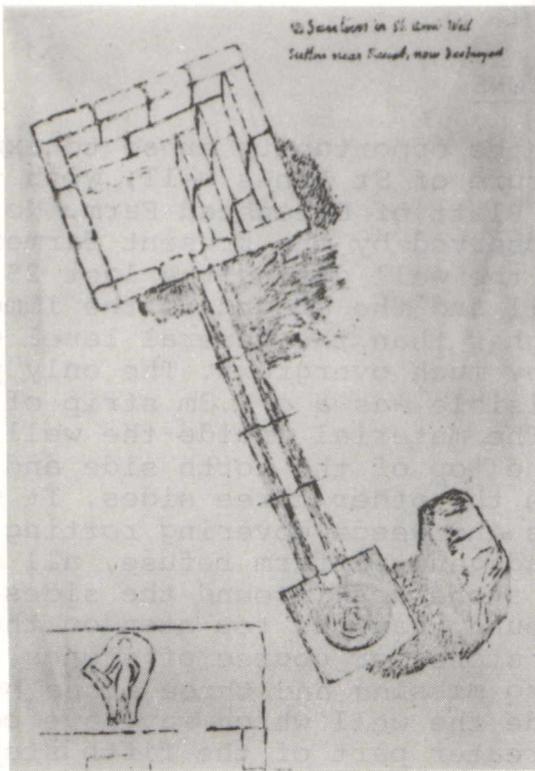


Figure 1 St Ann's Well

Sketch reproduced from the Owen MSS by kind permission of Manchester Public Library

FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

In October 1976, the opportunity arose to examine and record the structure of St Ann's well, with the kind permission of Mr T. Platt of Eltonhead Farm. No stonework or bones had been observed by the present farmer in ploughing the field around the well during the last 25 years. At this time both the well and the ground in the immediate vicinity were somewhat higher than the general level of the surrounding field and very much overgrown. The only part of the well which was visible was a c 0.3m strip of masonry along the north side. The material inside the well came up to within 0.5m of the top of the north side and sloped up over the stone work on the other three sides. It was made up of a thatch of grass and weeds covering rotting vegetation, field boulders and general farm refuse, all rather lightly packed. When the stone work around the sides had been exposed it was found that the top step on the east side was missing. The top stone, or course of stones, on the wall opposite were also missing and three stone blocks were later found inside the well which may have collapsed from this wall. The greater part of the fifth step was missing, the two pieces that remained bonded into the side walls were badly eroded. About 0.05m below the fifth step on the south, west and north sides, a stone shelf projected from the walls of the well. When the loose refuse had been removed to this level, a compact floor of fine silt was reached. This did not appear to have been recently disturbed and was not further excavated. The well was quite dry at this level which is 0.5-0.6m above the level of water in the brook to the south. It was noted that there were a number of roughly dressed stone blocks embedded in the banks of the brook and these were not disturbed. Subsequently the well has been infilled to protect it from weathering and vandalism. Copies of the photographic record taken of the remains uncovered are deposited in the Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record, MCM.

Comparing the well in its present state with Owen's sketch, it would appear that, in addition to the stones whose absence has already been noted, the stone channel, basin and block had also been removed since the mid 19th century. Although the sketch gives a good idea of what the well must have looked like, a close comparison shows differences in detail which suggest that, like the manuscript, it may have been drawn up some time after the event. There is one irregularity worthy of note. There was no sign of the channel being continued through the top stone of the well on the south side, as is shown on the sketch. Could it be that this small section of channel was included in error on the sketch? Does this suggest that the channel was a later addition to the well? It seems unlikely, given the height of the well above the brook, that the natural water level in the well would ever have been sufficiently high for water to flow down the channel without mechanical aid. From earlier

writers it would appear that the well has been dry or silted up for many years. In 1866-7 it was described as filled with water (Higgins 1867, 66) but Owen does not refer to the water level in his description neither is it clear from his sketch. Coal mining has been carried out in Sutton from the 16th century and continues to this day. It is more than likely that this has resulted in a general lowering of the water table in the local area.

All the material removed from the well during excavation was of very recent date and it would appear that the well has been investigated several times in the last seventy years. No dating evidence for the construction of the well was discovered. However, two sherds of later medieval pottery were recovered from within 5m of the well during field walking in 1978 (Davey 1980, 81).

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Mr A.R. Foster of Crank Hill who initiated this project.
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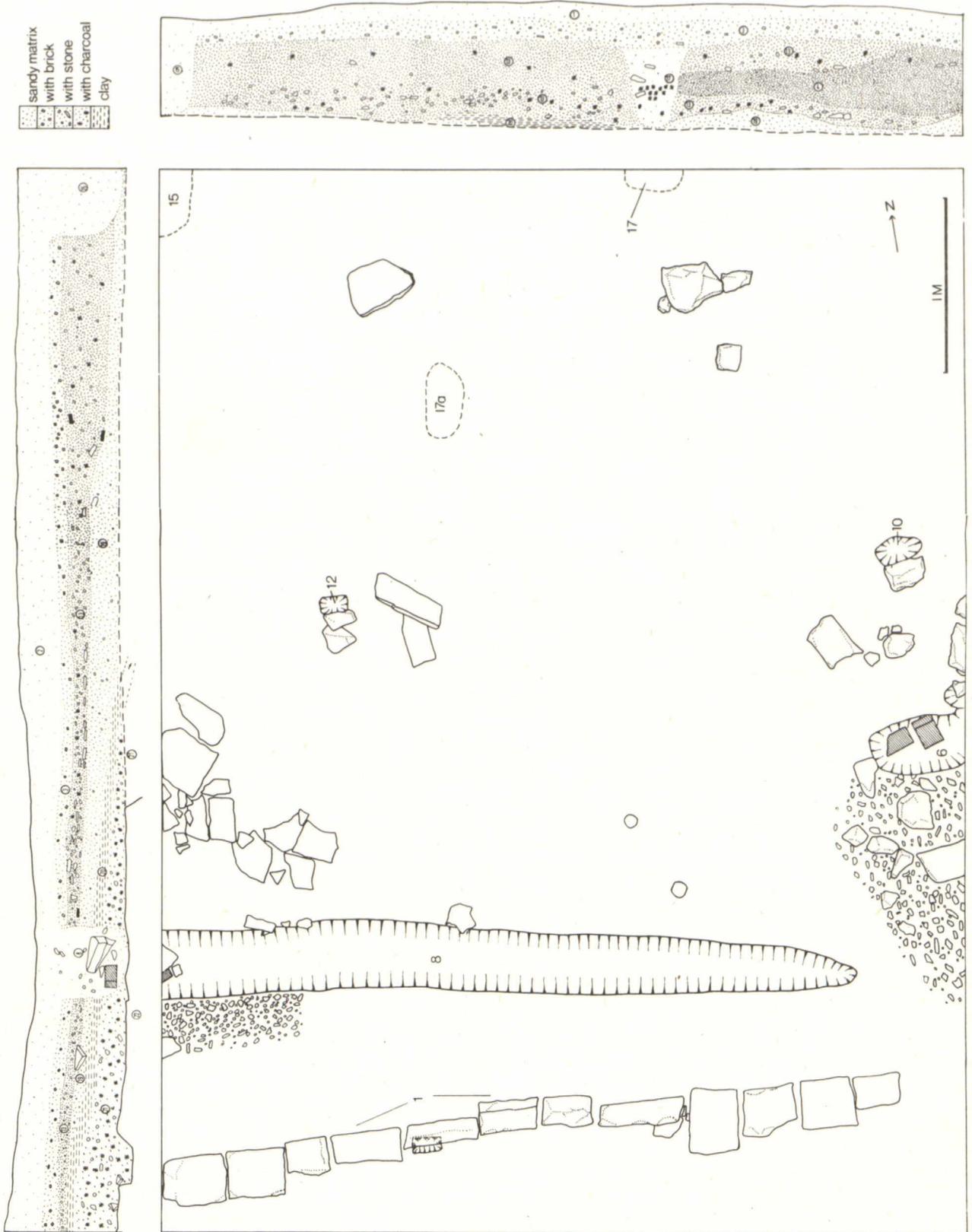


Figure 3 Irby Mill Excavation 1979.
Plan and Sections (see volume 2 (1978) 37-45)

