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central Durham, 1600 - 1850: a study in historical
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J. S. Ingleson

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Settlement, Agrarian Systems, and Field Patterns in Central Durham, 1600 - 1850: A study in historical geography.

Abstract

The thesis is concerned with the study of changes in the landscape over a small area in Central Durham composed largely of Brancepeth Estate lands. A broad general outline of landscape evolution right across the county is given in order to provide a background against which to see this local study. Then, using estate records, a description is given of the area 1840-50, and several elements in the landscape are identified as important before being examined individually. The section on organisational features deals with the political, civil, and ecclesiastical framework underlying landscape and attempts to assess its importance on landscape change. The main body of the work concentrates on two main aspects of landscape, settlement, and land use and field patterns. The chapter on settlement is concerned mainly with the nucleated settlements in the area of study and identifies certain morphological characteristics which can be found on a much wider scale. Similarly, it would appear that with regard to its agricultural practice over much of the period the area was fairly typical of much of the county, although by the beginning of the nineteenth century forward looking stewardship had done much by way of innovation. Enclosure is seen as one aspect of the whole question of agrarian change. Byers Green is anomalous here, providing something of a contrast although discrepancies between the source material relating to lands here as opposed to those in Brancepeth prevented much useful comparison.

The work is drawn together with a description of landscape circa 1600 which provides an artificial base-line in time against which to see and evaluate the changes in landscape over the following two hundred and fifty years. In conclusion, emphasis is laid once more upon the importance of the underlying framework - particularly that of landownership - in any landscape evolution.

SETTLEMENT, AGRARIAN SYSTEMS, AND FIELD
PATTERNS IN CENTRAL DURHAM, 1600 - 1850:
A STUDY IN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY.

A thesis submitted towards the Degree of
Master of Arts in the University of Durham.

J.S. Ingleson

September 1972

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from it should be acknowledged.



PREFACE

This thesis is the result of research carried out in the academic year 1968-9. Owing to the time lag between the initial development of some of the ideas and their written presentation, gaps in the author's knowledge have been filled and some suggestions put forward here can now be seen as oversimplified versions of ideas which are constantly being updated by on-going research.

Much material of value can be found in the British Association publication of 1970 - "Durham County and City with Tees side." Some of this was made available to this writer before its publication, which accounts for its inclusion. Another recent item of use and interest is that by B.K. Roberts in Local Historian Vol. 9 No.5 (1971) 233-40, entitled "The Study of Village Plans".

Part of Chapter Four in this work was published as "Stockley - A 'Lost' Village of the Nineteenth Century" in the Journal of the Durham County Local History Society, Bulletin 12, (April 1970) 5-10.

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List of Abbreviations used in footnotes

References to primary source material take the following form:

Location / collection / document number.

A description is sometimes added where the document is felt to be particularly important or obscure.

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| P.R.O. | Public Record Office |
| C.R.O. | County Record Office, County Hall, Durham City. |
| Northumberland C.R.O. | Northumberland County Record Office, Melton Park, Gosforth. |
| D.C. | Dean and Chapter Library, The College, Durham City. |
| Sc.S. | Paleography Department, Science Site, Durham City. |
| G.A. | Gateshead Archives, Reference Library, Shipcote. |
| V.C.H. | Victoria County History. |
| N.S.A. | Newcastle Society of Antiquaries. |

References to printed materials in publication take the form:

Name of author / date of publication / page number(s).

Full details can then be found by referring to the bibliography of secondary sources, which is set out in alphabetical order (Vol. II).

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INTRODUCTION

The boundaries of the area studied and described in the following pages were arrived at only after considerable pruning of a much larger area of Central Durham. Some source material was available for most of this larger area, but the time to look at it and arrange it for presentation unfortunately was not. The Brancepeth estate held by the Russell family in 1850 offered a large if somewhat heterogeneous body of source material relating to the entire area within Brancepeth parish, and was virtually co-incidental with township boundaries (Compare Fig. 2.1, 2.3, 3.2). Although these boundaries can themselves in part be picked out on the map, following streams and hedgerows, on the ground no such distinction is immediately visible, and it should not be imagined that the landscape inside these boundaries differs greatly from that outside them. The area is defined almost solely in terms of land ownership as it was in 1850. The exception to this is Byers Green, which, although in the same physical area of County Durham (the middle Wear Valley), falls outside the aegis of the Russell family and offers scope for an interesting comparative study.

The aim of the work was two-fold, although an attempt was made to combine several differing approaches to the problems involved. The thesis is concerned firstly with the explanation of several elements present in the landscape at different times between 1600 - 1850, a study of changing landscape, and, secondly with relict features which are present (and may or may not be anomalous) in the landscape today and which can be explained in terms of the past. The primary task was seen to be concerned

with a deeper understanding of the evolution of rural settlement and field patterns in this one particular area in so far as it can lead to a critical appreciation of the role of these elements on the wider scale.

Because this approach might seem to involve a certain dichotomy, it was felt that without some explanation the text in parts might well appear to contain some inconsistency. Although basically retrogressive in outlook, this thesis does at times adopt a retrospective stand (1). Generally, where analytical, as in Chapter Four, then the questions and, where possible, the answers, relate to a search for origins, and are almost entirely concerned with working towards an understanding of the past taking the present as the starting point. In the more descriptive passages the author tended to become somewhat retrospective in expression using his study of early or past conditions to throw light on later or present conditions. Both approaches require the use of similar methods in that it is felt to be desirable to work from the known to the unknown, from fact to theory to hypothesis. To do this for 'a landscape' in entirety was not practical in a work of this scope, nor, indeed, was it felt to be wholly desirable. Several elements in the landscape were taken to be basic and vital, and these were pursued in relative isolation as far back in time as possible, only being drawn together again at the beginning of the period under consideration. One vital factor they have in common is the way in which they can be used to show change as a continuous process - the need for an intermediate stage of description was considered, but it was felt to be of little value in view of the difficulties inherent in any study artificially limited to a narrow time span (2). This selective thematic approach was felt to offer the

most suitable means of untangling the complex interactions which are discussed in the following pages. Each chapter was written to stand as complete in its own right; although this may have given rise to some duplication of material, in general the author has tried to avoid undue repetition.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a clear definition of these terms see Baker (1968)
244 - 5.

Recent methodological work would seem to indicate that the boundary between the two is a markedly artificial one. See Baker (1970) 13 - 4.

2. Baker (1970) 13 - 4.

The aim of this chapter is primarily to provide a black-cloth of information, of trends and movements in County Durham, against which the local features characteristic of Brancepeth Estate from 1600 to 1850 may be seen in perspective. In order to understand the picture after 1600 it is necessary first to look at the history of the county from early times. Several people have attempted in the past to define a "unique personality" of the North-East, and after commenting on these definitions the present author will try to show something of the physical and cultural differences which were regarded as subordinate to the generalisations relating to this particular character. The relationships between man and land (and, also important, between man and man) will be examined from prehistoric times onwards, emphasising settlement and land utilisation as the principal modes of expression of man's role in this relationship, and it will be seen that in general the rural settlement pattern in County Durham 'has emerged in response to a zonal distribution of resources'. (1)

North-eastern England has undergone a remarkable historical evolution, for which geographical factors may be regarded as partly responsible. The area is bounded by the extensive and almost continuous upland arc formed by the Cheviots, North Pennines, and the North Yorkshire Moors. Within this topographical framework, and isolated from the rest of the country, there grew up a unique political unit: a county Palatine ruled by a Prince Bishop of very great power. (2). It does in fact form a quite clearly defined physical area, and in its cultural and economic advance this natural cohesion has been the more strongly emphasised, in spite of the political setbacks. Its individuality

is proudly proclaimed by Angus:

This thinly inhabited border province has remained something of a land apart from the rest of England. Geographical position, geology, climate and industrial structure contribute to this result. So do the dialect and temperament of its inhabitants. If they were born here, they are seldom willing to leave it; and if they come here from elsewhere, they have usually lost three parts of their heart to it. (3)

and this uniqueness is a feature which Thirsk believes was already standing out vividly by the end of the fifteenth century:

Much of the district was remote from large industrial and trading centres; much of it was inaccessible to the traveller, and all was generally regarded with repulsion by outsiders. There might be striking differences between the way of life and farming of the stockfarms and corn growers in this province, but to the gentle southerner, and particularly to government officials who waged a losing battle in trying to enforce the laws of Westminster, the whole province was a wild savage country, the inhabitants primitive in their passions and morals, and entirely without understanding of the rules of a law-abiding society. (4)

Whilst recognising that the area has strong claims to a character and individuality of its own, North-eastern England has always had within its bounds many contrasting physical and human circumstances forming part of the essential whole, and this section is concerned with these differences in so far as they affect County Durham. Several general physical divisions can be identified within the county (Fig. I.1), and there can be little doubt that the progress and evolution of patterns of human occupation were closely related to the underlying physiographic framework.

Much of the western part of the county is peat-covered moorland in excess of one thousand feet in height. The deep valleys of the Tees and Wear have allowed isolated settlement clusters to maintain a precarious hold on favoured locations deep in the hills, but in general the wet and exposed moorlands have not proved attractive to the farmer. The well drained but bleak sandstone plateau of north-west Durham, between the Derwent, the

Brownney, and the Deerness, is readily accessible if not particularly favourable, and it does allow some scope to the farmer willing to risk the hazards implicit in tilling thin soils and suffering a harsh winter climate. The land between the Bedburn Beck and the Gaunless is somewhat similar, if rather more broken. It is in areas I and II in Figure I.1., that conditions were suitable to the establishment of farming communities in any force. Here a rainfall of thirty inches or less permits relatively easy cultivation of the loamy soils which overlie the heavy clay, and the dry, fertile loams of the Tees Valley and parts of the limestone plateau positively invite cultivation. The area between Seaham, Sedgfield and Hart provides something of a contrast, for the heavy clay is infertile, producing very poor grain crops.

Soils provide the tapestry, so to speak, upon which man may weave, and his efforts have a cumulative, self-reinforcing effect. The majority of soils in lowland Durham have been cultivated for many years and man's influence as a soil forming factor has been strong. Ploughing, artificial drainage, and the addition of lime and fertilisers have all played a part in improving soil drainage and nutrient status. Climatic and topographical difficulties are at a relative minimum in this part of the county, although by comparison with land values on a national scale today, nowhere is the land much better than of medium quality. (5)

The general historical evolution of settlement in the county from prehistory to the nineteenth century furnishes a field of study as yet relatively untapped. The pre-Roman folk between Tees and Tyne were probably an outlying group of the Pennine Brigantes, and were not at the centre of power. Richmond sees their distribution, on the flanks of the upper dales and on the

foothills and cliffs of County Durham, as suggesting that the grim hill country and the forest-choked lower valleys cut them into isolated communities, unaccustomed to united action (6).

In comparison, by the end of the third century A.D., the area now known as County Durham had become a homogeneous series of communities, centred more and more upon the Roman forts and the small townships growing up around them. There is a very marked paradox here, in that while these forts and their civil settlements were present, at the same time there are few field remains of rural settlements. Birley tentatively suggests a distribution very much like that put forward by Richmond, the apparent lack of substantial farms in the 'hinterland' to Hadrian's Wall meaning that farmers chose to live in these compact and growing communities in the environs of the fort, and to cultivate their fields at a distance (7). Loose archaeological finds suggest that the area is hiding far more than was previously suspected (indicating a great need for air photography), but perhaps this should not be entirely unexpected. As was seen earlier, the area is only partially a highland zone, while for the rest spacious valleys and varying expanses of coastal plain lend themselves to intensive modern land usage, thereby presenting a bias in favour of the uplands in the survival pattern of early settlements. In addition, certain inequalities have yet to be remedied in the amount of field work carried out in the various localities (8).

In the post-Roman period, routeways into the area from the south provided relatively easy passage over the lowlands around Northallerton, while remaining Roman roads and the natural routeways of the river valleys must have formed a fairly comprehensive coverage of the central and eastern parts of the county. It would seem that to some extent the early penetration of the Angles was influenced by much the same physical controls that affected the

ingress of the prehistoric peoples, particularly with regard to favourable conditions for landing and establishing initial settlements. In this respect the Tyne Valley must have offered the best facilities for penetration, the coast elsewhere proving somewhat unattractive from the cliffs of North Durham to the marshland of the Tees estuary. At the same time, the area was exposed to almost constant warfare, a feature not normally conducive to the encouragement and expansion of settlement, and it does seem likely that in comparison to the rest of the country Durham was a land not heavily populated for many centuries after the disappearance of the Romans. (9). However, too extreme a view of this should not be taken. Although in the sixth century Symeon of Durham wrote of the land between Tyne and Tees as "a deserted waste....and thus nothing but a hiding place for wild and woodland beasts", (10), this generalisation may be doubted, for the occurrence of definitely Anglo-Saxon place names suggests clearance and colonisation of the forested lowlands, the people extending their settlements at the expense of the woodland and establishing from them daughter townships in new clearings (11). Thorpe was convinced that many of the sites of present day 'green' villages were occupied in Anglian times (although not necessarily in their present form)(12), but very little is as yet known of settlement in this period.

Except in its southernmost parts the county lay beyond the northern limit of Danish appropriation, and Scandinavian settlement is strikingly absent in Durham. Smailes points out that most of the "-beck" names are post 1500 in origin, and that "-by", "-thorpe", and "thwaite" names are rare in the county except in the south and some small isolated areas (13).

Agricultural colonisation on the wider scale must have begun by the twelfth century, if not earlier, and the distinction

between corn-growing and pastoral villas was already becoming apparent in 1183, the time of Boldon Book. Over much of Durham, particularly in the north and west, the organisational framework had little in common with that of the more southerly counties of England (14). The seigneurial demesne often played only a small part in the functioning of the 'federal' manors which predominated, with a corresponding degree of independence of the villar community. As will be seen later, here again the distinction between the north and west and south and east of the county is preserved. The still somewhat mysterious 'shire' was apparently the prime whole unit of lordship, with a manor only seldom being co-extensive with village or township.

Spontaneous colonisation may well have been held up after the Conquest by the extensive nature of the heavily wooded areas, but it does seem that disforestation and gradual settlement in this woodland were important aspects of colonisation from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. A comparison of the villas recorded in Boldon Book (1183) with those recorded in the Halmote Rolls of the fourteenth century shows clearly the progress of colonisation in the western part of the bishopric, with many new settlements, of which there was no mention in Boldon Book, making their appearance in the Rolls and in Bishop Hatfield's Survey of 1381. Many of these settlements are noticeable for their names ending in "-ley" (15). In view of the evidence in Boldon Book showing how services were extracted from each new settlement, (16), it appears that when it was to their convenience the lords did not hesitate to permit or even encourage, fresh colonisation in their "forests".

Work in progress today points to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as a vitally important formative period for settlement in County Durham. On the one hand was the steady pressure from

land hungry peasants, leading to the expansion of old settlements and the creation of new, while on the other were the financial needs of the great landholders on whose estates the villages were situated, not least the Prince Bishops (17). Much work remains to be done on the closely allied question of the development of field systems in the area, but in general it can be seen that farming and habitation, stimulated in various ways, were making progressive encroachment upon the woodlands and the moors. In the process, the pattern of settlement was not only extended and increasingly filled in, but apparently also became more and more dispersed (18). By 1200, the pace of village foundation was slowing sharply, and much colonisation after this date did not in fact produce new villages; rather it resulted in a scatter of hamlets and single farms, such as is found in the uplands to the west of Lanchester. Almost all the nucleated villages that exist today were already established by the twelfth century, and there were many villages occupied then which have subsequently been deserted.

Greenwood's map of 1820 shows a marked contrast in the distribution of rural nucleations between the south and east, and the north and west. Although demonstrably incomplete in their coverage the great medieval land surveys of the Prince Bishops clearly showed that this same contrast was already in existence, a contrast accentuated by differences in tenure and economy (Fig. I.1 Areas I,II as against III and IV). The principal concentrations of settlements were in the Vale of Tees and in Mid-Durham along the Wear Valley and the scarp edge of the Magnesian limestone plateau. Here the nucleations were numerous and close set in a remarkably uniform distribution, "for when the total pattern is considered, including the deserted settlements, they are seen to occur at intervals of between one and a

half and two miles" (19), while on the plateau further east they were fewer and more widely spaced. In the hill districts and the western part of the coalfield there were large empty tracts on the watersheds, while in general the valleys were settled and encroachment from them upwards on to the waste progressed considerably between 1183 and 1381, settlements mainly consisting of small and scattered hamlets. (20).

As early as 1183 Boldon Book had demonstrated that it was the south and east of the county which had emerged as the relatively prosperous, developed and settled zone, populated by servile cultivators (Fig. 1.1 areas I and II), while in north west Durham (areas III and IV) development was limited to a few favoured locations such as Lanchester and Wolsingham, and in the outlying farms and hamlets the emphasis lay upon service in the Bishop's great hunting preserves. In 1381 the lands to the south and east of a line along the Gaunless-Wear held the vills which contained large amounts of bondage land, land upon which were incumbent the heavy servile labour services - week work, plowing, harrowing, mowing, and carting - while in the north and west exchequer land predominated, usually rendering no more than a money quit rent to the Lord Bishop, The estates of the Neville family were already sizable by the twelfth century, yet it is difficult at the present time to assess the importance of their rule and its effects on settlement and agrarian organisation. Members of the family were politically strong enough to openly challenge the Bishops in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (21), and it would seem likely that their power in the socio-economic sphere was also considerable. The failure of the Rising of the North signified the partial breakup of these estates, and the general disruption from the Rising was no doubt greatly

increased by the plague which inflicted real devastation on parts of the county at the end of the sixteenth century (22).

The early contrast north and west/south and east comes out strongly again in terms of the enclosure movements. Tate quotes from Bishop Kellawe's register that frequent grants of waste were being made by the beginning of the fourteenth century (23) yet Slater inferred from Leland that the process of enclosing the town fields was almost complete in Durham by 1536 while at the same time the enclosure of the waste had hardly begun (24). Both these points are somewhat inaccurate, and as Leonard had shown before him a major feature of seventeenth century Durham was the enclosure of sub-divided fields by private agreement (25). The majority of these fields were in the south and east of the county, although their presence was by no means confined to these areas. They were town field lands, open subdivided fields worked under the rules of communal agriculture, and their enclosure reached a peak between 1625 and 1675 (although several examples are still to be found, such as at Hamsterley, Cornsay, and, until recently, at Coundon). Reasons for the enclosure of these fields were varied and have proved complex to grasp today, but in general there appears to have been a trend towards taking out of cultivation land which had been exhausted with continual ploughing and cropping and turning it over to pasture. Work in progress here indicates that the amounts of enclosure in this period have been seriously underestimated, and that present available figures for the total acreage involved may stand in need of considerable upward adjustment (26).

Until late in the eighteenth century marked features of the north and west of the county were great expanses of fell land stretching down into the lowlands; for instance, Lanchester common, enclosed in 1773, involved over fifteen thousand acres

(c. 6,080 hectares); Wolsingham (1765) over ten thousand acres (c. 4,050); Chester-le-Street (1794) nearly three thousand acres (1,215 h.); and several more over two thousand acres (c. 810 h.). The century 1756-1856 saw the enclosure and allotment of some one hundred and thirty-nine thousand acres (c. 52,250 h.) of common land, much of it the common waste lying in the north and west of the county. This century also saw the pastoral bias of Durham agriculture reinforced by a progressive outlook in livestock breeding, which produced the famous Durham ox, and by the growth of cattle fairs at regional centres such as Newcastle, Durham, Darlington and Barnard Castle. However, motives for this later period of enclosure seem to run contrary to this, as the incentive to grow more grain (in particular rye and bigg) increased with an expanding industrial population and the high prices of the Napoleonic wars. Relict "ridge and furrow" patterns in the present landscape indicate the extremes at which improvements were attempted, notable examples being at heights of 1,000-11,200 feet to the south of Wolsingham, and at St. John's Chapel also in Weardale.

Within this framework of settlement, physical features, and tenurial organisation, the types of farming apparently varied only little over the centuries. The extent to which the enclosure movements fostered real and lasting improvements in agriculture remains very much open to debate. There was undoubtedly increased output, but there seems to have been very little introduced in the way of new husbandry techniques. Clover was becoming widely used only in the early eighteenth century, while turnips and potatoes were still being grown on a limited scale as late as 1850, most of the county retaining a basic three-course rotation with bare-following. This was a state of affairs severely criticised

at the turn of the century by Granger (27) and Bailey (28), who both advocated the adoption of a rational system of "convertible husbandry", although Bell, half a century later, took a much rosier view of things (29). However, outside pressures were very great, and beyond the two immediate goals of more grain and better livestock breeding industry offered positive disincentives for agricultural improvements; the damages paid by mining adventurers often provided a return in excess of twice the rental or commercial value of the land.

The same basic division between the north and west, south and east, is still reflected, as in 1183, by a general pastoral/arable contrast, and Brancepeth estate, as will be seen later, represents a fair cross-section of agrarian practices in the county. The enclosure movement carries one on to the beginnings of the sustained industrial growth which was beginning to affect the landscape over much of County Durham by the middle of the nineteenth century (indeed, the two may be causally inter-related), (30), and the rural landscape has changed only little from within since that date. The railways had dissected Brancepeth lordship by 1845, and mining activity on the larger scale was then just getting under way here, as will be shown in the following pages, but the rural settlement pattern, the product of these hundreds of years growth and development, can still be clearly identified in 1850.

It is hoped that this introduction, albeit a very brief one, will have given sufficient background information against which the changes and events in Brancepeth can be judged as (a) part of the wider scheme of things or (b) of local importance only.

Attempts have been made where possible to relate discussion of trends within the estate to the broader scale, and it is felt that detailed study such as this is a necessary part of the build-up

of information which permits generalisations to be made, theories to be put forward and tested.

CHAPTER ONE - NOTES

1. Roberts (1970b) 237.
2. Dickinson and Fisher (1959), describe the Bishop's power as "almost sovereign". The present author feels that in the light of the power and extent of the Neville estates and others it must be remembered that the Bishop's authority was by no means enforced over the entire county. See also V.C.H. County Durham Vol.II 146; 160. Roberts (1970b) 248.
3. Angus (1949) 73.
4. Thirsk (1967)
5. Atkinson and Stevens (1970) 56. Survey of the Agricultural Land Service. In a five-point scale, I - V with increasing limitations towards agricultural use, no land in County Durham achieved a higher grade than grade II.
6. Richmond (1949) 61.
7. Birley (1958) 58. A similar conclusion was also reached by Salway (1958) 227 et seq.
8. With these factors in mind, a certain amount of caution is necessary in general conclusions relating to any period of time for which substantial map evidence is not available. The work of George Jobey in Northumberland is a remarkable illustration of what can be achieved by one determined worker. See "A field Survey in Northumberland", being pp 80 - 109 in Rivet (ed) (1966)
9. See Angus (1949) 72 et seq.
10. Surtees Society Publication 51 (1868) 339.
11. Smailes (1960) 88 - 9.
12. Thorpe (1949)
13. Smailes (1960) 97.
14. See Jolliffe (1926) for a detailed discussion of the institutional background.
15. Smailes (1960) 97.
16. Surtees Society Publication 32 (1857) 13.
17. It is worth noting that Hugh de Pudsey (1153-95), the initiator of Boldon Book, is reputed to have doubled his income from his estates during his years in office.
18. Here again there is great scope for future research. The importance of colonisation and enclosure in the genesis of single farms is often stressed, but too little is yet known of the balance between nucleated and dispersed settlements in both upland and lowland Durham during the Middle Ages.

19. Roberts (1970b) 237
20. See Chapter Five for the situation in Brancepeth, where The Acts of the eighteenth century saw considerable amounts of waste enclosed in the valleys, the sides being occupied, certainly from the thirteenth century onwards, by single farms. It may be that the presence of the lord's seat at Brancepeth influenced this somewhat unusual evolution.
21. V.C.H. County Durham Volume II 146; 160.
22. Barnes (1891) 171
23. Tate (1943)
24. Slater (1907b) 279.
25. Leonard (1905) 111 - 2.
26. Hodgson (1970).
27. Granger (1794)
28. Bailey (1810) 200 - 20: 359 - 65.
29. Bell (1856)
30. Hodgson (1970)

CHAPTER TWO BRANCEPETH: THE PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING
IN 1850.

In 1850, the landscape (1) of Central Durham was gradually being swamped by the steadily advancing tide of pits, spoil heaps, pitmen's cottages, waggonways and railways. In 1853 the officers of the Ordnance Survey began to map a landscape which was undergoing a remarkably rapid rate of change, such that by 1860 when most of their work was completed substantial shale tips had arrived, and by 1862 when the first edition six inch Ordnance Survey map was published we are forcibly reminded that Durham was an active coalfield.

Brancepeth estate was in this respect typical of much of County Durham. Mining had been going on for centuries (see Chapter 5 footnote 1.) but only after about 1840 did it really intensify and take on the mantle of mining as we know it today, with the coming of the railways and the great capital outlay made possible by the fortunes of the Russell family. Sinkings on the estate took place in 1841 (Brancepeth Park); 1844 (Brandon); 1853 (Pagebank); and 1855 (Oakenshaw), with nearly a dozen more between 1855 and 1870. Indirect effects of earlier industrialisation on Tyneside were probably being felt by this time, not least of which was the money it afforded the Russells to permit the fantastic prices they paid for their lands in Brancepeth (2). By 1854, Bell was greatly disturbed that

No other county is so interwoven with a network of public and private railways. In no other is there so large a quantity of land occupied by collieries, manufactories, quarries, waste heaps, etc....(3)

and some idea of the rapidity with which the virulent growth spread across the landscape can be gained from a comparison of Helmington Row township in 1838 and 1862 (Fig. 2.2). 1850 is the latest date at which we can see the traditional rural landscape in its entirety, before industry began to devour and destroy the

agricultural land. This section is, therefore, in essence a straightforward one of description, a subjective view of the landscape in a particular area of Central Durham (as shown in Fig. 2.1) in 1850, and it is necessary view if we are to proceed to pick out the major elements in the landscape which are discussed in the chapters to follow.

The general overall appearance must have been little different from the present view of many parts of the estate, giving at first sight the appearance of a heavily wooded area, some of it under plantations; of rolling topography rising from the Wear valley to heights of over eight hundred feet on the main spur (fig. 2.4). Slopes in most cases were fairly gentle, although locally very steep, especially where the smoothness was broken markedly by the incised valleys of the undernourished Stockley Beck and the River Deerness. There were no outstanding physical features, and it was basically a landscape in which the various elements blended together to produce an effect which could only be described as peaceful and harmonious.

Human habitation on the estate fitted well into this natural calmness, confined as it was to three small, attractive villages and a multitude of scattered single-farmsteads (Fig. 2.1). Brancepeth village was a loosely agglomerated huddle of rather splendid houses and cottages under the northern walls of the castle, with parkland stretching away to the south and east, but Willington and Brandon, both including farms in their building line, could definitely be seen as street villages. Neither of the two townships of Helmington Row and Stockley possessed any nucleated settlement, although Fordyce had commented in 1857 that Helmington Row "old village" had nearly gone by this date. Byers Green village still showed clearly the former layout of the building lines in relation to the central green, but infilling

had already begun. The single-farmsteads were widely scattered, and in plan most of them showed the traditional arrangement of buildings around two, three, or four sides of a square.

Reference to contemporary six inch Ordnance Survey maps shows that there was considerable variation in field size and in the patterns made up by the field boundaries (Fig. 2.1). Most of the fields were either fenced or walled, or had boundaries set with quick thorn and trees, a feature which must have reinforced the impression of an area heavily wooded. Several areas showed a pattern of striking regularity, while others, especially in parts of Willington township, suggested old enclosed lands. The fields in the estate must have exhibited a considerable variety of crops at various times of the year, including wheat, turnips, barley, oats, and potatoes, while the livestock present included horses, cattle, and sheep, as well as pigs and poultry.

The landscape in 1850 was a product of a great deal of change over a long period of time, yet several facets of this landscape were relatively fixed, and in these we can see something of a physical framework. There were also controls of ownership and civil and ecclesiastical organisation, and these will be examined in a later chapter.

As noted above, no part of the area shows any outstanding physical features (Fig. 2.4), and, similarly, no part appears to have offered adverse conditions detrimental to farming of one kind or another, or to have afforded any great advantage or attraction. Questions of height aspect, and slope do not appear to have had any major influence on the location of man's activities here (4). For instance, the site of Brandon Village is probably the coldest, windiest spot in the area, yet it still seems to have afforded sufficient incentive to men in the Middle Ages to set

up homes and cultivate the land there. Although not particularly high, the land here still has some influence on agriculture, and climatic conditions are such that the length of the growing season decreases rapidly with only small increases in altitude. At Durham City (336 feet, 103 metres) the average length of growing season is about 220 days per annum, but there is a decrease of about ten days for every 250 feet (80 metres) increase in altitude. As we shall see later, the harsh nature of the climate in this part of the country had been well recognised for many years (5).

The soil pattern underlying the fields here is one of great variety in texture, colour, and natural fertility, many changes occurring over very short distances (6). Of necessity, the picture given here can only be one of the broadest outline, although more detailed mapping and study may have gone a long way towards answering problems which as yet remain unsolved. Little published work is available for this area, and the only maps are on a scale of one inch to the mile. The primary source material presented many general descriptions which, although often vague, did enough to dispute Bailey's classification of all the soils in the area as "moist soft loam on ochery clay" or the Victoria County History's definition of them as "cold, stiff clays" (7). The general distribution of soils as shown on Figure 2.4 is taken from the one inch to one mile reconnaissance survey sheets of the Soil Survey of England and Wales, as were the details given in the key (8).

It is generally recognised that six factors govern soil formation, and hence the distribution mentioned above (Fig.2.4). These are climate, the biotic factors, parent material, relief, man, and time. The last two will be examined at different points as this thesis develops, but of the others only climate has much

direct relevance for the purpose of this study, as we shall see later in this chapter.

The complexity of ice movements over County Durham is reflected in the diversity of drift material which forms the parent material for the soils of this area, although two general trends are discernible. The higher slopes and ridge tops are mainly covered by thin drift, (9) the lower parts of the valley sides by thicker boulder clay, with occasional patches of fluvio-glacial sand. It may well be significant that Brancepeth village is situated on an island of thin drift in an area of boulder clay. As a result of topographical conditions here, the type of soil most commonly found is an imperfectly drained Brown Earth, which occurs mainly on the valley sides, with profile characteristics including a grey-brown sandy loam or loam surface horizon, and a mottled yellow-brown sandy clay loam B horizon which overlies the grey sandy clay loam or clay loam till. These generally provide the best agricultural soils of this area, and have also formed on some of the free-draining patches of fluvio-glacial sand and gravel under the influence of the dominant woodland vegetation, mixed stands of deciduous trees.

In depressions on the higher inter-fluves up to 800 feet (246 metres) very poorly draining soils have formed with a peaty or humose surface horizon. Usually developing from surface-water Gley soils, they are generally given over to grassland, although some areas have been drained and planted with spruce. Alluvial deposits are associated with the lower spreads of the rivers, particularly of the Wear. Profile morphology is very variable but soil textures are generally light since, in the main, the alluvium has been derived from fluvio-glacial deposits. These spreads are occasionally liable to flood, as, for instance, at Pagebank, but they are usually well drained.

Climate exerts a strong regional control on soil processes, chiefly through the elements of precipitation and temperature, and it is these factors which also exhibit a strong influence over man's activities, climatic criteria here being sufficient to limit the agricultural use to which land can be put. The harsh nature of Durham's climate had been recognised in the eighteenth century, and as early as 1794 Granger was bemoaning the fact that:

The climate is uncertain in all the seasons of the year, in so much that the cultivator seldom reaps all his crops to such advantage, as from the nature of the soil might be expected, the weather in the spring being either too harsh, or in the beginning of summer too cold and dry, and in the autumn too wet and windy; and the whole face of the county declining from west to east is exposed to, and annoyed by, the north-east wind, which often prevails long in the spring (10).

The two most important general influences on the climate of the area are the North Sea and the Pennines, the latter being significant for their creation of a rain shadow. Several generalisations can be applied to County Durham:

Within the region minor differences in climate result from differences in latitude, longitude and topography; rainfall, amount of snow, duration of snow cover, and temperature range increase from east to west; mean annual temperatures, summer maximum temperatures, thunderstorm frequency and fog frequency increase from north to south (11).

Brancepeth Estate, in its central position in County Durham, touches no extremes of climate, yet the length of time for which snow lies here sometimes makes it appear much further than five miles away from Durham City! Occupying as it does the lower Pennine spurs to the north and west of the middle Wear valley, the area is not quite high enough for climatic factors to cause it to remain as uncultivated moorland today. Although the average annual rainfall is about twenty-five to thirty inches, spread out over some two hundred days, there is a great yearly variation in both these features, with winter rainfall generally (although

not always) greater than summer, leading to some shortage in June and September. Severe drought is, however, very rare. The number of days with snowfall and snow cover also varies a great deal from year to year, not only with the severity of the winter but also with very localised features of aspect and topography. Annual temperature range is from about ten degrees to eighty-five degrees fahrenheit ($-12^{\circ} - 30^{\circ}\text{C}$), with frost at any time between September and June, although it occurs with the greatest frequency in the months of January and February. The floor of the Wear valley in this area is particularly susceptible to frequent and often severe frosts.

The prevailing winds are westerly, and here again local topography and site features play a prominent part. The tributary river valleys provide little shelter from these, running mainly as they do from west to east, but they do afford protection from the harsh, cold north and north-east winds of the early months of the year. It is a peculiar feature of this area that until the eighteenth century settlement apparently preferred the wind-blown ridges to these relatively sheltered valleys. Pawson also pointed out the restrictions imposed on agriculture by climate, mentioning in particular the prevalence of severe frosts as late as May or June, although he does emphasise that the area is one well suited to the growth of permanent grass (12).

Thirsk recognised that broad generalisations can be made concerning (1) the limitations imposed by the geographical situation in the North East and (2) the significance of the industries there, while at the same time the striking differences in the scale of farming and the commercial opportunities - some of which were seen in the introduction - have to be acknowledged

between the mountainous Fells which constitute the core of the region, and the plains that lie on either side and reach to the coast. These in turn influenced the structure of distinct types of community. Brancepeth estate falls somewhat uneasily into the transition zone between these two areas, and it may have been fortunate that complications of landownership, which might have accentuated differences and pressures, seldom afflicted the core of the estate. The concentration of power in the hands of one man manifests itself clearly here, chiefly in the relatively new castle and the large areas of parkland, and one man did in fact own the whole of the area described above in 1850. We are looking at the physical and natural landscape within the invisible limits of man's ownership. The general appearance of most of the estate in the middle of the nineteenth century must have been one of wealth and tranquility, giving little indication of the violent, far-reaching changes which had brought about the landscape as it then was. It is to explanations of this pattern of fields and settlement, of agricultural practice, that the following chapters are devoted.

CHAPTER TWO - NOTES

1. See Brown (1969) for a discussion of the variety of meanings this term may utilise. In its present context, 'Landscape' is taken to mean the purely subjective view such as might be taken by an artist.
2. For example: Brandon
Greenwell's estate at Willington
Forster-Mills estate in Willington. See
Chapter three, Fig. 3.2. 3.5.
3. Bell (1856) 95.
4. The nature and type of slope is usually important with regard to soil formation and cultivation. Gentle slopes may be beneficial in aiding surface run off, but the steeper slopes not only affect the erosion potential of the soils but also hamper the mechanical operations involved in cultivation. For instance, two-way ploughing today is limited by slopes in excess of about fifteen degrees. Bearing this in mind, the author found it difficult to understand how certain areas in Brancepeth and Stockley were ever cultivated at all, and yet the steep valley sides appear to have been the site of the earliest cultivation in these two townships. The advantages afforded as shelter were surely not alone sufficient reason for this.
5. For a brief discussion of the impact of climate on the length of growing season see the beginning of Chapter Five.
6. Several surveys of the eighteenth century showed this clearly. Land on one farm, of similar height, slope and aspect, varied in value per acre from 4/6 to 20/-. See:-
Northumberland C.R.O. Swinburne Papers ZSW 171/19; C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection D/Br - Brancepeth, Deeds etc. Mortgage of 1770.
7. V.C.H. County Durham. Volume II 383.
8. The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Durham City branch of the N.A.A.S., in providing access to the map. He is grateful also to Mr. J.H. Stevens of the Durham Department of Geography for his help on this section as a whole.
9. Maling (1955)
10. Granger (1794) 32.
11. Watson (1949) 36.
12. Pawson (1949) 179.

CHAPTER THREE - THE FRAMEWORK OF ORGANISATION

1) Parish and Township, Estate and Manor.

Throughout the period from 1600 - 1850 Brancepeth church was at the heart of a very large parish, the boundaries of which were apparently co-incident with those of the estate in the seventeenth century (1) although the latter (with the exception of the Byers Green lands) lay comfortably within the parish bounds by the middle of the nineteenth century (Figs. 2.3 & 3.1). It is, however, difficult to estimate the importance at any one time of either the civil or the ecclesiastical parish as an institution.

A simple chronological development of the parochial organisation in the North-east has been put forward by Smailes:

When the ecclesiastical parish organisation developed, the population of the northern bishoprics was so sparse and so scattered in small groups that the ecclesiastical parishes were made to include several of the townships that have in modern times become civil parishes of our local government structure (2).

It is true to say that a parish as large as Brancepeth, with a number of hamlets and scattered farms of early date, was a characteristic feature of an area of relatively late settlement and colonisation, although the whole question of the origins of parishes and parish boundaries is clouded by uncertainty. It would appear that parish boundaries are a reflection of a complex set of interactions between accessibility, fertility, and the degree of concentration of political power (3). Here, as in many other fields, one is faced with a problem of chronology - which came first, the boundaries, or expansion of land use to a mutual meeting point? As will be seen later, the political element was almost certainly the most important, and as parishes came to mean a geographical area rather than a body of people, lay lords were founding many churches, and it was surely a

matter of convenience for ecclesiastical authority to exercise its powers within a framework of secular bounds. A parish of some 21,300 acres (8,600 hectares), Brancepeth in 1862 was bounded by Lanchester in the north, St. Andrew Auckland in the south, Elvet in the east, and Wolsingham in the west (Fig.3.1). It included the townships of Brancepeth, Stockley, Brandon and Byshottles, Willington, Crook and Billy Row, Helmington Row, and Tudhoe, all of which existed in a somewhat obscure relationship with the parish. It does seem likely that there had been very little change for many years before circa 1850, for in general, the parish at the beginning of the nineteenth century was for rating purposes (i.e. the civil parish) still for the most part co-extensive with the ecclesiastical parish as, in Elizabeth I's reign, the existing ecclesiastical parish had been taken as the unit for Poor Law Relief.

A comparison of the first edition six inch Ordnance Survey maps (4) with the present six inch sheets for the area (5) shows that Smailes's statement holds true for the several townships which made up Brancepeth in the first half of the nineteenth century. The key factor in determining the areal extent and permanence of the parish today would seem to be the number of people within this particular parish, and in Brancepeth's case the population increase brought about by the 'Industrial Revolution' almost certainly caused the breakdown of too cumbersome a unit, although the population of the parish was large for many years before this. In the mid-seventeenth century it was exceptional for a parish to have more than five hundred inhabitants (6), yet the population of Brancepeth (parish ?) in the time of Bishop Chandler's Visitation, circa 1736, numbered some three hundred and seventy-one families (7). The former townships of

Brancepeth and Brandon are now a parish and an urban district respectively, and Crook and Billy Row, Willington, and Helmington Row all fall into Crook and Willington urban district. While the process of evolution from 1860 to today was by no means a simple or direct one, it falls rather outside the scope of this study.

The hypothesis that the original parish contained several townships may partly account for the development of the particular pattern of intercommoning which existed here, for this almost always involved an agreement between townships within the parish. Although certain of the hamlets in Byshottles by tradition possessed the right of common on the Bishop's common at Ushaw Moor it was noted as being unusual (8), and it is the only example in the area which has so far come to light in which men held common rights in another parish without actually owning or renting property in this other parish. For the greater part of their length the township boundaries of circa 1850 utilised natural features such as streams and are today nearly always followed on the ground by field boundaries. It is difficult in this study to offer any explanation for the detached portions of the various townships, as they usually comprised only one field each and seem to have no outstanding quality which would make them particularly desirable (Fig. 3.1) (9).

The Church made its presence felt in the agrarian landscape chiefly through the medium of tithe collection, an institution maintained until the nineteenth century and about which there is much information in the estate records. The degree of collusion between Rector and Lord is very much open to question, especially in the early part of the period. The situation of the church in the castle grounds does perhaps indicate that the rectorship at some time lay in the hands of the lord, and this was almost

definitely the case at the beginning of the period. The relationship then suffered a severe setback in the second quarter of the seventeenth century and a state of open hostility and legal conflict persisted throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a major feature being the century-long legal haggle between the rector on the one hand and the lord and freeman on the other to determine whether tithes should be paid in kind, or by a modus or composition fee (10). The meticulous attention paid to matters of tithe collection, together with the lack of intercommoning across the parish boundary suggests that in organisational terms the parish possessed considerable influence, albeit indirect, on the agrarian landscape. It was not only an ecclesiastical unit, however, but also the centre of administrative and disciplinary control (11).

It is evident that both township and parish are related, albeit in complex fashion, to the manor. Blackstone firmly believed that as Christianity spread lords began to build churches upon their own demesnes or wastes and obliged all their tenants to appropriate tithes to the maintenance of the officiating minister (12). There can be very little doubt that the great majority of English churches was built by laymen, who often treated their churches in much the same way they did their mill, oven, or any other seigneurial monopoly. Many of the old minsters were by the eleventh century much weakened, and they were being crowded by newer churches built by the bishops, abbots, lesser nobility, and, sometimes, by groups of freemen, to serve smaller private estates and areas newly colonised. Barlow points out that in general (as here in Brancepeth in particular) the facility with which ecclesiastical parishes can be explained in terms of secular boundaries is most striking (13). Within the early bishop's 'parish' - normally equivalent to an ancient kingdom or major

part of one - the parishes of the older minsters often coincide with the hundreds, those of the newer churches with the manors or vills (14). There are quite clearly grounds to consider both Brancepeth lordship and parish as we find them in the seventeenth century to be of considerable age; the castle was built soon after the conquest, and records of officiating ministers date back to 1085 (15).

When William Russell agreed to pay out seventy-five thousand pounds in 1796 he did so to purchase the 'Manor and Estate' of Brancepeth. The question of the survival of the manor and its customs is an interesting one, all the more so in the light of Russell's attempts to revive rights long since fallen into disuse. Lavrovsky writes that 'the only thing that remained from the English medieval manor in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is the feudal term' (16), yet almost certainly aspects of it were being utilised in Brancepeth as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, their presence reinforced by the maintenance of customary lands and tenure.

The Brancepeth estate records contain a description of the lordship's boundaries at the end of the sixteenth century (17), and Russell attempted to ride these in 1798. There was no former evidence of a perambulation of this kind, and he received several verbal warnings not to trespass, as well as threats to file against him for the offence. It seemed also from several legal cases that any manorial rights had long since decayed, but a rigorous search by his London lawyers managed to establish the right of 'free warren' on the basis of a grant from the Bishop of Durham to the Nevilles in 1292 (18). Depositions were also produced from several people who could remember Belasyse exercising his rights to 'waifs and estrays' when he claimed, and received, a horse

found in Tudhoe in 1760 (19), but no evidence was forthcoming for similar rights in other townships, inside or outside the lordship as it then stood. Russell's lawyers emphasised the major obstacle of the 'almost total want of custom to support the Antient Rights' (20), but as late as the early eighteenth century the lord of Brancepeth had power over tenants and occupiers of lands to which he held no legal title, as the Court Books clearly show. Regulations in existence even at this date included some governing the keeping of certain livestock such as swine and geese, the killing of hares, the carrying away of corn to any other mill 'in prejudice of the Lord of the Manner's Mill', and during the period 1676-1716 many people with holdings in Brandon, Helmington Row, and Willington were fined by the court for breaking such rules (21).

Deeds to the estate as late as 1779 give an indication of just how extensive the rights of the lord must have been in past years, when, as well as the lands of the estate specifically described, he also held:

all and singular houses edifices buildings barns
stables parks plantations shrubberies lawns pleasure
grounds land meadow pasture glebe-lands heaths moors
marshes Wastes Commons Chaces Warrens Feedings Common
of Pasture and of Turbary Furzes Trees woods and
underwoods and the ground soil of such Furzes Trees
woods and underwoods Rivers rivulets waters water-
courses Fishings Fowlings Mines Quarries minerals and
Fossils Courts Leet and Courts Baron and all other
courts perquisites and profits of Courts View of
Frankpledge and all that view of Frankpledge belongs
Reliefs Heriots Fines amerciaments goods and chattels
of felons and fugitives Felons of themselves Outlawed
persons (illegible) waifs estrays Chief rents quit
rents and other rents services royalties jurisdictions
franchise Liberties privileges profits commodities
emoluments (illegible) and appurtenances.....(22).

Although allowances must be made for legal convention, some attempt was made, with partial success, to maintain these rights in the first half of the eighteenth century, and it was not until

after circa 1750 that many rights such as those above deteriorated into mere legal phraseology with no practical significance. The Court Leet and Court Baron survived as a single mutation definitely until 1798 if not later (23), as did lip service to the view of Frankpledge, which was probably never exercised after the sixteenth century, the stewards of the estate conducting the affairs of the courts from that time onwards. The Manor of the Rectory of Brancepeth maintained its own court until after 1760, but the Rector's tenants were attending Russell's court in 1798.

A survey of Brancepeth by Thomas Emerson, steward to Somerset, taken in 1615 (24), shows just how much the manorial organisation had decayed in little more than a century, although the extent of this decay comes as no real surprise in view of the years of anarchy between 1570 and the breakup of the estate in 1630-32 (25). Even as early as 1615 it was recognised that the services owing had not been done for years, simply because they had not been demanded during the period which saw the Crown's constables, the Sandersons, allow the estate in general to fall sadly into neglect. It was already proving difficult to exercise some of the rights still mentioned in the 1779 deed cited above; for instance, one William Pinckney of East Brandon was executed for felonie in 1603, but when the stewards attempted to claim the lord's due to 'goods and chattels of felons' they were hidden away and the stewards found no trace of them (26). Various 'antient royalties' such as those of hawking, hunting, fishing, and fowling still belonged to the manor, however, and services from different social classes in various parts of the estate were still in existence. Described in the survey as 'ancient customs and services to the Lord' they included:

- i) The tenants of East Brandon always carried all the

'Coles spent and burnt' in the castle, without any allowance for performing the task.

ii) Tenants paying less than forty shillings always mowed, made, and loaded all hay spent for the use of the castle and relief of the deer and wild cattle. For this they received an allowance of eightpence per acre for mowing, fourpence for 'making and wyning', and twopence for carrying. This service for hay was continued in all areas except parts of Tudhoe and other districts in which tenements had been purchased in fee farm and the occupiers refused to do the same service.

iii) Tenants paying over forty shillings were always charged with carrying wood, timber, rales, posts, and pales. They received no allowance.

iv) The township of Whit worth was charged with the loading of post, pale, and rale for the East Park, a service done when required at an allowance of twopence per load.

No mention of these services at any later date on Brancepeth estate has as yet come to light. Apart from these, demesne farming as it was traditionally known seems to have played very little part in the estate's economy. Besides the two large areas of parkland, still at this time maintained as such, demesne lands in the manor in 1615 consisted of only seventy-eight acres in a number of closes called Ladie Closes (Fig.7.1), and these were sold by Sir Ralph Cole in 1689, becoming part of Little White Farm (27). By the time the estate/manor passed into Cole's hands in 1636 all types of payment were in kind and money rather than services, and the village community in a 'federal' manor of this kind was seemingly relatively independent.

The terms 'manor', 'estate', and 'lordship' were no doubt synonymous at the end of the sixteenth century (28), only

assuming different, vaguer connotations during the years before 1636. After that date only the term 'estate' can be assigned any precise meaning, and it has been used by the author in the following chapters to indicate the lands to which the owner of Brancepeth castle actually held legal title.

3. 2) Landownership

Landownership in County Durham in the middle of the nineteenth century presented a structure dominated by the Church, in the guise of the Bishop of Durham and the Dean and Chapter, but one which also included several very influential men who had made their fortunes in the world of commerce and industry (29). The estates of these laymen were generally the end products of an intensive period of land buying by the merchants in the years before 1740 (30), a period which saw the decline of the 'mortgaged aristocracy' (31), or a later 'burst' of buying by the self-made men in industry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The estates accrued by the Russell family clearly fall into the second category (32). By 1850 the family owned a large estate at Byland Abbey in North Yorkshire and an even larger one at Bishop Middleham in Durham, as well as Brancepeth estate, several smaller estates at Usworth and South Follingsby, Newton Hall, Cornsay and Tow Law, Hett, Trimdon, and lands near Bolam, in Thornaby, and in Stockton (33).

Brancepeth estate as it stood in 1850 was the result of fantastic expenditure between 1796 and 1832, mainly by William and Matthew Russell (Fig.3.2) and the small area of the estate bought in 1796 as the initial step did at first come as something of a surprise in view of the fact that under the Nevilles Brancepeth was a large estate roughly similar in extent to that owned

by Russell in 1850. It was not until a detailed retrogressive examination was begun that the full extent of changes in the pattern of landownership within the sixteenth century boundaries of the estate became apparent, and something of the importance of landownership as a factor in the evolution of landscape could be seen. Changing ownership provides a dynamic concept, and if it is possible to differentiate between areas of stability and instability using this concept there can be no doubt that Brancepeth estate and the immediate surrounds stands out as an area of marked instability in the years from 1632- circa 1830. Although landownership often gives rise to a pattern which theoretically can be superimposed upon the physical landscape, it is a pattern seldom visible on the ground, and even then, by virtue of its nature, the picture is a fragmentary one.

Byers Green township and other lands to the south of the Wear are clearly distinctive throughout this period, being almost completely copyhold land held of the Bishop of Durham or the Dean and Chapter, with only a few small freehold estates. The distinction between 'freehold', and 'copyhold' or 'customary' lands (34) is less clear in Brancepeth estate as a whole, and as will be seen in Chapter Five the various means of holding land formed only part of a very complex set of relationships between landlord, tenant, and the land itself.

Several techniques offer themselves to any study of landownership carried out in any great depth. However, in view of the complexity of the situation in Brancepeth it was felt that for the purposes of this discussion a generalised picture was adequate. It was decided to concentrate on the title deeds to the estate, which are remarkably complete from the end of the sixteenth century, and the Land Tax returns were discarded after a consideration of the relative merits of these two sources. As Grigg put it,

The amount paid by each occupier has been used by some historians as an index of the acreage held by each occupier; doubts have recently been cast upon the validity of this view. (35)

To have given a detailed picture of trends in the size of estates and holdings would have taken far more time than was available, and such a picture may in any case be deemed irrelevant here. It was felt that the deeds could give a more reliable indication of changes in land ownership than any other documentation available.

Figure 3.5 gives some idea of the major estate changes between 1632 and 1850, and several distinct phases can be picked out. As has been seen, the years from 1797 to 1830 saw the virtual re-establishment of Brancepeth estate as it had been under the Nevilles. The years before this in the final quarter of the eighteenth century saw Brancepeth being mortgaged very heavily, a continuation of the trend begun by the Cole family in 1632 and carried on by the Belasyses until they sold the estate in 1777 (36). After 1636 the estate had declined in both physical size and social status, a notable event being the sale of West Park in 1719 (37). Between the Act of Attainder on Westmorland in 1569 (for his part in the Rising of the North) and the sale to Cole in 1636 the situation on the estate was chaotic, but, until the grants by Ditchfield and others in 1630-32, the property remained technically and legally, if not socially, intact (38). Between 1630 and 1632 most of Brancepeth estate was granted away in portions of varying sizes, and the lordship purchased by Cole was a sorry reflection of the once wealthy estate lorded over by Westmorland (Fig. 3.4).

While Brancepeth castle was occupied by the Coles and Belasyses, the surrounding area saw the growth of several relatively large freehold estates from the ruins and debris of the sixteenth century parent lordship (Fig. 3.3). Although sizable estates had

been granted by Ditchfield, the years after 1632 were marked in all granted blocks except Brandon by the sale of small farms to independent 'yeomen' (39). It was these small farms that were gradually engrossed and consolidated, particularly in Willington, to form the larger freehold estates purchased by the Russells after 1800 (Figs. 3.2: 3.5). Exchanges and marriage agreements formed vital tools in the growth of the smaller estates.

It is difficult to examine in detail the pattern of landownership; it is even more difficult to examine and assess the effects of this pattern in the landscape, especially when it is realised that important changes in ownership often occurred with no corresponding change in estate boundaries. To look at every man who owned land in this area is virtually impossible - each had his own social and business contacts, each exhibited a greater or lesser degree of interest in his lands (40), and this surely is the vital factor to be considered in any assessment of the importance of landownership in the evolution of the landscape and farming techniques. While generalisations are therefore difficult, it is hoped to put forward some trends, which can be seen in this area, as general factors which must be considered in any study of landscape evolution.

As will be seen in Chapter Five, landlords exerted a direct influence on farming techniques through leases, although this influence was usually used to constrain rather than to encourage, to keep tenants up to standard rather than urge them forwards. "It is reasonably clear that the landowners as such did not make a very substantial contribution to the discovery of new methods" (41), and the stewards must have been the key figures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the basis of evidence furnished by leases in both the Cotesworth and Brancepeth collections the main function of the landlord in this area

was apparently to provide permanent capital, while the tenant provided the working capital, but this division of responsibility between landlord and tenant differed not only from estate to estate but also from period to period.

The question of the provision of capital involves a closer look at the financial viability of the estates as a whole although here the records are sadly lacking and in the case of Brancepeth every owner of the estate from 1636 onwards had outside commercial interests. The over-riding impression is that, before it was purchased by Russell, Brancepeth was a relatively prosperous estate used and mortgaged to finance less profitable ventures elsewhere, especially under the Cole family, the decline of which was only equalled in speed by its rise. Sir Ralph Cole (lord 1636-55), the grandson of a poor Gateshead blacksmith, became sheriff, and later mayor, of Newcastle, amassing along the way sufficient wealth to buy Brancepeth. His grandson impoverished himself in a very short time and was forced to sell the estate in 1701. The fortunes of the family turned full circle when his son, destitute and landless, was buried at the expense of the common fund in Durham. Three generations of the Belaysse family occupied the castle, and it would appear that much of their money was borrowed to maintain social prestige, although the exceptionally heavy borrowing of the early 1760's may have been necessitated by the expense of enclosure. The increased rents which accrued from, and stimulated, this process however, would surely have repaid in large part the expenditure involved, rendering the heavy mortgaging unnecessary for this purpose alone (42). Unfortunately, the effect of continuous mortgaging on the general running of the estate, standards of farming, and the progress of improvement is not too clear on the basis of present evidence.

Many marked changes in the landscape of Brancepeth estate and the surrounding area between 1636 and 1850 must have been the result of personal decisions of the landlord, particularly in the case of the estate, with the sudden decline of Stockley village at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the disparking of nearly two thousand acres of deer park in the 1640's as notable examples. The lord's influence on enclosure is rather more difficult to determine. A witness in an enquiry of the early eighteenth century pointed out that the lords of Brancepeth until that date had been directly opposed to the enclosure of East Brandon Moor (43), and it is surely not unreasonable to argue that it was partitioned by agreement in the seventeenth century rather than by private act in the eighteenth entirely because of the change in landownership resulting from the Ditchfield Grant. Agrarian reorganisation such as that which occurred in Brancepeth at the end of the seventeenth century could only have been initiated, if not imposed, from above, by virtue of the fact that only tenant lands were involved. Localised variations in organisation within the area of study must to a great extent have depended on variations in ownership and the degree to which power and wealth were concentrated in the hands of any one man. Although this may seem a truism, it is not recognised often enough, and the author here feels that despite its only occasional manifestations in the landscape, landownership has not been credited with the importance it deserves as a critical guiding factor in the direction taken by landscape evolution.

An attempt has been made to examine personal and institutional organisations in Brancepeth estate from circa 1570 to 1850, and the author believes that this chapter shows the need for

clearly recognising that the social and political elements of this area must be constantly borne in mind when considering the development of the various facets of the landscape which are discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE - NOTES

1. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. Many early seventeenth century deeds refer to "the Manor, Estate, and Parish of Brancepeth".
2. Smailes (1960). 94, but it must be remembered, as Jolliffe pointed out, that the administrative units found in Durham may have been of very ancient origin, and although there is no specific reference to 'Brancepethshire' the large parish unit is comparable in many ways to a unit such as 'Aucklandshire'.
3. Mitchell (1965). 90.
4. Sheets: XXVI and XXXIV
5. Sheets NZ 24 SW; NZ 23 NW; NZ 14 SE; NZ 13 NE.
6. Ogg (1967) 490.
7. Proceedings N.S.A. Third Series Vol. 2 (1905) 187.
8. D.C. Raine MSS R.49., f.3.
9. The clue to this may well lie in landownership. From the deeds of the Brancepeth Collection it is almost certain that the detached fields of 1862 had been separated since before 1600.
10. It would seem that disputes of this kind were not uncommon in this period. See Evans E.J. (1970) 17-18.
11. See Ogg (1967) 490-494 for a description of parish administration.
12. Blackstone 'Commentaries' (1778). Quoted in Tate (1946).
13. Barlow (1963) 184-7.
14. See Moorman (1946) 3-5 for detailed descriptions of coincidental splits of manor and benefice.
15. Foley (1967).
16. Lavrovsky (1960) 354.
17. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E6.
18. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E8.
19. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E6. See especially the deposition from Sedgewick, Dodd and Gill.
20. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E8.
21. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E6. Brancepeth Court Book 1676-1716.
22. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds etc.

23. The heading in the Court Book of 1798 reads:

The Manor of Brancepeth The Court Leet and View
in the County of Durham of Frankpledge with the
 Court Baron of William
 Russell Esquire holden
at Brancepeth Castle.....Before Richard Wharton
Esquire Barrister at Law Steward of the said Court.

Fines levied were done so for cases of nuisance,
assault, and the like.

24. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E6

25. Brancepeth lordship between 1570 and 1615 rather resembled
a ship out of control, a reflection of the fact that there
was no strong guiding hand on the wheel. The general
importance of the lord has been emphasised by Thirsk:

His temper and sympathies, indeed, largely
determined the efficiency with which the law
was administered locally

Thirsk (1967) 17.

Not until William Russell bought the estate in 1797 was that
guiding hand replaced with any firmness and business acumen.

26. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E6.

27. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc.

28. 'Parish' can almost certainly be included here.

29. Bell's Map of the Great Northern Coalfield. (6 Volumes) 1862.

30. Hughes (1952) xviii.

31. Spring (1952)

32. In the twenty years 1828-47 Wallsend colliery alone made an
average annual profit of over £20,000. See Bruce (1863) 41.
Both William and Matthew Russell had many other business
interests.

33. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P L150; Bell's map
(1862).

34. 'Copyhold' and 'customary' are here taken to be synonymous.
See Chapter Five.

35. Grigg (1967) 89. For the arguments for and against the
reliability and value of the Land Tax returns in a study of
landownership see Davies (1927); Hunt (1959); Grigg (1963a).
Articles by Mingay (1964) and Martin (1966) are at the time
of writing the latest work available, and are of special
interest in that the views and ideas expressed conflict, to
say the least.

36. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc.

36. (Cont.)
Both families borrowed money from many people. Sums under circa £1,000 usually came from sources within the county - gents, merchants, clerics, even yeomen; for sums above that a notable feature of the borrowing is that it was mainly done in London or the south-east.
37. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc.
38. After the Attainder the estate should have been vested in the see of Durham, but Elizabeth changed her mind and decided to retain it for the Crown to defray costs of suppressing the Rising. Under the Bishop's rule it is unlikely that any such chaos would have arisen. See Short (1942) V.C.H. County Durham Vol. II 167 fn.
39. The term is used here as it is used in the title deeds and it is meant to hold no economic or social implications.
40. See above, footnote 25.
41. Habakkuk (1953) 189.
42. Whatever the reasons for this heavy mortgaging, it is difficult to know how accurately it reflects the family's financial state. It might well have come earlier - on the death of Sir Henry Belasyse in 1732 his son William was forced to sell the family's large estate at Pottoe, in North Yorkshire, to clear his debts. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc.
43. D.C. Raine MSS. R.49, f.2.

CHAPTER FOUR - SETTLEMENT

County Durham is an area of remarkable contrasts in settlement, ranging from the dense urban structure of the large towns on the eastern lowlands to the single isolated farm high in the Pennines; from the grim, grey mining villages to the picturesque truly rural villages such as Brancepeth. The county presents a landscape in which "from an aesthetic point of view good and evil strangely intermix" (1). The close juxtaposition of settlements of such varying character makes these violent contrasts seem all the more stark, lending them added impact on the mind of the observer. Conzen gives perhaps the best picture of this great diversity which renders a precise classification so very difficult:

There are agricultural villages and dispersed farms, fishing villages, market villages or rudimentary rural shopping centres, market towns, mining towns and villages, industrial towns....., ports, cultural centres, seaside resorts, and the commercial centre and capital of the region reaching the highest rank below London in the country's 'urban hierarchy' (2).

However, in spite of the extensive nature of the industrial growth in the north and east of the county, the rural framework underlying nearly all, and controlling many, of the older village settlements in the county can still be seen.

In this chapter an examination will be made of the general pattern of settlement in an area of Central Durham between circa 1600 and 1850, and using some techniques of morphological analysis some views will be put forward concerning village forms. The area studied was particularly distinctive because a large part of it, including no less than two of the villages and a large number of single farms belonged to one estate throughout the whole period, the lordship of Brancepeth. It is proposed to begin this systematic study of settlement by considering the area as it would have appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century,

say in the decades 1830 to 1850 (Fig. 2.1).

The villages in the area were quite small at this stage, and the 1851 census returns give a detailed picture of their make-up (3), setting out house by house the number of dwellings in the villages and elsewhere in the townships. Stockley township held only forty-four people in seven houses on five different farms, while Brancepeth village, relatively unaffected by the opening of the colliery, held only thirty-five dwellings (excluding the castle and grounds) and one hundred and thirty-one people out of a township total of eight-eight inhabited buildings and three hundred and seventy people. A decade or so earlier when most of the tithe maps were made for this area, it is evident that the village clusters were by no means large, especially in Brancepeth. Helmington Row can be seen as a creation of the 1850s (Fig. 21) and the isolated farm or hamlet was the dominant feature of the settlement pattern. The main building fabric at this time would seem to be brick, although as yet little has been written on this subject in County Durham (4).

Using the Brancepeth estate records (5), it has proved possible to trace back this pattern of rural settlement and to examine at least some of its developments and the causal factors underlying them. Until the beginning of the seventeenth century the whole of the area formed a part of the estates forfeited to the Crown in 1569 by Charles, Earl of Westmorland, and the centuries preceding this under the uninterrupted rule of the Neville family must have had a marked influence on the evolution of the settlements. The estate was split up in the third decade of the seventeenth century, and until it came together again under the Russells at the end of the eighteenth century elements of it saw many changes in ownership which are interesting to note (6).

Brancepeth and Stockley at no time passed from the hands of the lord of Brancepeth. The township of Brandon and Byshottles (7) was divided between the lordships of Brancepeth and Brandon (Fig.3.3), Brandon village belonging to the estate of the same name from 1630 to the end of the eighteenth century, while

Willington, in contrast, was divided amongst several landowners for most of the period, as was Helmington Row. Byers Green provides yet a different contrast, most of it being copyhold property under the Bishop of Durham from the beginning of the seventeenth century, although a small number of farms remained in the hands of the Brancepeth estate.

As has been indicated in Chapter Two, the relatively simple traditional rural settlement pattern was already being obscured by increasing changes in fabric brought about by the rise of mining and the coming of the railways (8). Because of this the main source of village plans has been the tithe maps (9), falling between 1838 and 1844, supplemented by detail from the first three editions of the Ordnance Survey twenty-five inch maps and the first edition of the six inch. Care was taken here to avoid crediting the tithe maps with an accuracy that they may not always warrant, and in this respect the earliest Ordnance Survey maps are invaluable. In general, the older nucleations have apparently changed little between 1850 and the present day, with the notable exception of Byers Green, which has suffered the indignity of having its open green infilled with redbrick terraced rows.

Brancepeth in 1838 was a typical estate village (Fig. 4.1) (10), with the concentration of power in the hands of one family expressed in the landscape and giving immediate visual impact - castle, parkland and gardens, numerous ancillary buildings, nearby church, and a small orderly village containing good quality houses

for the servants of the estate. Settlement in Stockley township consisted of no more than five farmsteads, although a large number of earthworks in a field overlooked by Brancepeth castle gave a hint that this had not always been so, for here can clearly be seen the banks, house platforms, tofts, and hollow ways generally associated with deserted villages of medieval date (11). The new stone castle, rebuilt in 1818 at enormous cost (some estimates say a quarter of a million pounds (12)), dominated the wooded parkland of the grounds, while the village, complete with the 'Georgian cottages' and 'showier nineteenth century houses' of Pevsner, must in 1850 have been, as it is today, a scene of rural tranquility uninterrupted by the harsh realities of pit and waggoning (13). In contrast, Brandon and Willington were probably less attractive, although in both villages, away from the colliery development, the farmstead, houses, and cottages must, from their state of repair, have reflected the fact that all were part of an efficiently run estate. The scattered single farms were generally large and often consisted of two or more houses (14), virtually being small hamlets, while the usual arrangement of barns, stalls, byres, and pig-sties around an enclosed yard reflected the harsh northern hill climate.

Nevertheless, although this rural pattern has changed little since then, in 1850 parts of it were little more than half a century old. A map of Brancepeth estate in 1797 (15) gives some idea of the rapid, almost violent, changes which overtook this area at the turn of the eighteenth century. Stockley village was then larger than Brancepeth (Fig.4.2), yet as has been shown the tithe map gives no indication that Stockley village ever existed (Fig. 4.1), and it would appear that this was the scene of relatively widespread demolition which failed to produce any comment or social reaction of note. The census

figures after 1801 do show a marked decline in the population of the township as a whole (Table 4.1), but the absence of any detailed documentation makes them of only limited use. An earlier map of 1741 shows even greater changes (Fig. 4.3) (16), and from this a clearer picture of the nature and degree of the landscape changes can be obtained. At this earlier date, Brancepeth village was substantially larger than in 1797, but Stockley was even then the larger settlement.

It would seem that the estate in general was in quite good repair in 1797, as Tempest spent over £5,000 on repairs to farm-houses and the medieval castle, and it is not very difficult to picture the two villages as they must have been in the first part of the eighteenth century. Both were spread out along a broad 'street' or 'green', broader in Stockley than in Brancepeth, with a track meandering down it and the fell sweeping right in at one end, a dust bath in summer and a quagmire in winter. The houses fronted directly on to this 'street', and seem to have been quite small, two deeds of this period giving examples of houses thirteen yards by six yards (a cottage in use as a shop) (17) and nineteen yards by sixteen yards (a cottage and a house) (18). A drawing of circa 1750 shows that the 'houses' were mainly two-storeyed, usually detached, occasionally joined in small terraces of up to four dwellings (19). Single tenements were being divided, and a typical single house unit might have two rooms upstairs, with two rooms and one or two outhouses on the ground floor. It is possible to get some idea of the nature of these dwellings from a deed of sale of 1730:

All that moiety or half part of all that Ancient Messuage or Tenement as the same is now rebuilt by the said Richard Threlkeld situate in Brancepeth....
...and now divided into two Tenements which said Moiety or Appartment agreed to be transferred to the said Henry Threlkeld contains two rooms on a floor and two upper rooms and a little building backward

and also piece or stripe or parcel Ground extending from the back part thereof containing about 27 yds in length the low end thereof is about 19 yds in breadth and the high end 14 yds or thereabouts.....(20).

The house was that of a customary tenant of the Rector, and it may well be that it was larger than the 'average' tenant's cottage.

This division of houses gives rise to difficulties in two ways. Firstly, it means that the number of tenants in either village is no real guide to the number of buildings, although it must be a fairly accurate reflection of the number of household or family units. In 1701, Brancepeth village held thirty-eight tenants (21) (The figure was the same in 1732 (22)), while Stockley contained twenty-four (twenty-three in 1732), and there were several free tenants in each village, yet the 1741 map shows Stockley to be easily the larger settlement (Fig. 4.3). These figures relate solely to the villages and do not include the few single farms which the estate contained at this time (Fig.7.1). Secondly, this division into tenements, along with infilling, is something often not fully documented in the deeds for years after the change occurs and these documents are characterised by the persistent use of a standard form. Further difficulties are caused by the fact that there were also trends towards the amalgamation of units at the same time, and examples occur such as the sale of a "Messuage (formerly two cottages)...." (23) with no indication of when the change actually took place. Amalgamations of this kind could account for some of the gaps already present in the building lines of both Brancepeth and Stockley in 1741.

Although little is known of the building fabrics, it seems that many of the houses were brick or stone built (24), with several having thatched roofs - one finds people such as one

Thomas Soulsby being paid for "two days thatching" (25) - and some with slate (26). Several years later Bailey was writing that "the cottages in this county (Durham) are in general comfortable dwellings of one storey, covered with thatch or tiles" (27). From the deeds, conventionalised though they may be, many houses apparently had a variety of outbuildings, with a long garth stretching behind them, usually down to pasture and only occasionally cultivated. Garth boundaries seem to have been of a rather impermanent physical structure, mainly fencing or quick hedge (28), although this cannot be taken as a measure of the duration of their existence. Some of these long enclosures, empty in 1741, may never have been occupied, for some of them were certainly vacant before the end of the seventeenth century(29).

Stockley was the more open of the two villages, by virtue of its being a 'green' village, although this was nothing like the smooth-mown greens known today, remaining rough pasture until the beginning of the nineteenth century (30). Both villages were dominated by the old castle set in only a few acres of parkland, with a church largely restored a century before, and the usual variety of estate outbuildings and retainers' cottages.

Several factors may underly these changes of the eighteenth century. In County Durham as a whole enclosure of sub-divided fields occurred mainly in the middle years of the seventeenth century, but large tracts of moorland survived, in Brancepeth as elsewhere in the county, to be reclaimed in the years after 1750 (31). This climate of improvement frequently had wide-ranging repercussions on the character of rural settlements, and it must have been a powerful factor in the decline of Brancepeth and Stockley. This impact may have been less severe if the estate had not, by 1741, already been undergoing a real re-organisation of the agrarian landscape, the medium sized farm becoming est-

abished at the expense of the small tenant farmer in something less than fifty years, a development to be more fully discussed in Chapter Five.

Turning to the closely related townships of Brandon and Byshttles, Brandon village in the eighteenth century probably possessed a more open plan, with each homestead occupying a clearly defined toft or garth, but by 1850 the settlement had become more densely structured, probably as a result of immigration from the outlying farms and hamlets. By 1851 none of these outlying farms consisted of more than one dwelling or held more than eleven people, although the farms nearer the village Langley (five dwellings, twenty-five people) and Low Burnigill (four dwellings, fourteen people) in particular, were at this date quite large. One house at Waterhouses was unoccupied, and Harum Chapel, mentioned frequently in earlier documents, had ceased to exist (32).

Brandon estate, as distinct from both village and township, contained in 1806 thirty-two houses (33), yet, assuming similar boundaries, there were already twenty-six present in 1608 (34). Brandon village in the seventeenth century was almost certainly smaller than in 1806 - any increase in the number of buildings will have taken place mainly in the village, and here the deeds do throw some light on the situation. In 1865, Boyne, then Lord Brancepeth, purchased a plot of land which had on it six messuages or cottages and a butcher's shop (35). Through the title deeds this same plot of land, fronting on to Brandon town street, can be traced back to the early seventeenth century, when it contained no more than one house. This was divided in 1638 and the two halves were sold separately (36). Here, as in Brancepeth, the formal texts of the deeds between 1638 and 1865 give no indication of any changes in the interim, yet clearly

infilling had occurred.

Byshottles township, adjacent to Brandon and closely linked to it, consisted in 1708 of six farms, which were actually called 'hamlets' in contemporary papers (Fig. 7.1) (37). It seems likely that the village growth at the expense of these 'hamlets' occurred because the increase in the size of tenant farms produced a 'surplus' population of agricultural labourers who gravitated to the village (38). The 1851 Census returns certainly seem to bear this out, and weight is lent to the argument by the case of some of the Brancepeth estate farms. 'Waterhouses' farm was occupied in 1701 by eleven tenants (39), while a map of the same date shows four buildings on the farmstead site (Fig. 5.5) (40). Later mortgage deeds mention "several messuages at Waterhouses" and it seems probable that there were actually four separate dwellings there (41). By 1838 there were two separate farms in this 'hamlet', and by 1851, as seen above, only one of these was occupied, by a farm labourer, his wife, and one child.

The lord's influence undoubtedly made itself felt on both village morphology and social structure, and this influence can be seen at work from 1676 to 1716 in the surviving court books for the manor of Brancepeth during this period. Examples include the fining of one Luke (surname illegible) for bringing Robert Jefferson, his wife and family into the township of Willington (April 20th 1676); of one Joseph Dorman for bringing in strangers and erecting a new house without the lord's consent (May 9th 1709) (42). Fines of this type occur in increasing numbers over the period, and may well reflect tightening control on expanding villages. It must be remembered that prior to 1569 such manorial control would have been much stronger in all the villages, belonging as they did to the same estate until its break-up after 1600.

All too little is known of the form of the villages circa 1600, although, presumably, the essential elements of the mid-eighteenth century plans were already present, and the pattern of single farmsteads on the old lands was already well established by 1613 (Fig. 7.1) (43). Brancepeth village would appear to have changed only little in form between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, for even in 1569/70 the castle buildings stood between two parks to the south of the village, which was

buylded all in lengthe in one streete
the buyldings very meane and for the most men of no
occupacon mayntened onely by the erles who for the
most pte made there abode at that castell, and the
town wyll soone decay yf no noble men lye there to
help to mayntene the poore occupyers as heretofore
hath been. (44)

The running of the estate as a whole by the Sanderson family (as constable to the Crown and the Earl of Somerset) was causing concern at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and it is likely that conditions in the villages were bad. A survey of 1615 found that the castle had most of its windows out, lead missing from the roof and guttering, the gardens overgrown, the whole place generally decaying. (45). One hesitates to think of the plight of the small tenant under this administration. The estate had been a prosperous one under the Nevilles, and, indeed, a castle of some sort had been present from the eleventh century, so it is very probable that Brancepeth and Stockley villages were present in a recognisable form in the Middle Ages. Brandon also probably dates from that era, and the single farmsteads were certainly being established as early as the thirteenth century (46). It is of interest to note that part of the site of Stockley village was at the time of writing (1969) under the plough (Fig. 4.1), and a careful search was made for pottery and structures. There was no surface evidence for building here, but a substantial volume of pottery came to light. This provided

an almost complete 'spectrum' of finds ranging from circa 1850 back to the fourteenth, maybe even the thirteenth, century. (47).

From this evidence, then, village growth in the area expanded in the years before 1750, while the rapid decrease in the size of Brancepeth, along with the decline of Stockley and its extinction in circa 1800, seemingly indicates that after reaching a peak in the mid-eighteenth century the villages in this particular area suffered a decline. This decline was especially marked in Brancepeth and Stockley at the turn of the century when the Russell family began to expand the parkland, reversing the policy of the years under the Belasyses (48). With the rise in the number of farms of medium size, it may be that this village decline was already under way before 1750, and, as a process imposed from above, the increase in farm size at the expense of the small tenant may well be the reason for this decline.

As some houses in Brancepeth were known to be empty at the beginning of the nineteenth century (49), it is surprising that so little information exists regarding the decay of Stockley village. Map evidence shows that this village remained virtually unchanged from 1741 to 1797 (Figs 4.3 and 4.2), although there was a slight decrease in size, and already some of the cottages were in ruins (50). Paradoxically there also appears to have been some division of the long tofts, which would seem to indicate a rising population rather than the reverse, although this apparent change may be no more than a reflection of cartographic accuracy. A further degree of re-organisation of the tofts had taken place by 1802, but the open space in the village, referred to as 'common' or 'waste', was still present (51). In 1805 William Russell paid a modus of only three shillings and four pence in lieu of the hay tithes for twenty garths at Brancepeth; for an unspecified number of Stockley garths he paid eight

shillings and sixpence (52). Stockley village is referred to again in several assize records relating to the building of a new road and bridge over Stockley Beck 1806-10, when one end of the old stretch of highway (to be closed) was at

a certain place called Stockley Green
at the east end of the town or village of Stockley...(53).

Ralph Fenwick, in exchange with Matthew Russell in 1820, signed over, amongst other things,

all such liberty and Right of Common
and Pasturage And all other estate right (etc.)
into or out of all that Piece or Parcel of Pasture
Ground (now or late a Common) called Stockley Green
within the Township of Stockley.....(54).

One would like to know very much whether this was done in preparation for the destruction of the green as such, or as recognition of a task already accomplished, but which ever was the case, the village had vanished completely by 1838 (Fig. 4.1) (55), only the name 'Stockley Green' surviving on the first edition six inch maps. The parish registers for Brancepeth provide no real clue in an examination of the numbers of baptisms and burials from 1780 to 1838 (56), but an analysis of cottage rentals shows some marked fluctuations with a clear fall in numbers after 1817 (Appendix 4.3). Unfortunately these relate to the two townships together, but the marked decline after 1817 is surely of significance (57). It is not, however, reflected in the census figures, although these do show that Stockley township's population more than halved in the fifty years 1801 - 51 without showing any marked break (Appendix 4.1).

The author found it very surprising that no mention of the demise of Stockley village can be found in copies of the Durham Advertiser up to 1828, but this should probably not have been entirely unexpected in the light of the influence of the Russell family in County Durham. In Brancepeth the lord's power was great, Matthew Russell being known as 'the richest commoner in England',

and the theory that the village of Stockley was pulled down in circa 1818-20 to make way for parkland expansion associated with the rebuilding of the castle seems a very probably one. The village site may have provided hard core for the castle - some digging certainly seems to have taken place on the village site - but it appears that the building stone used all came from the quarry at Brandon, entailing the building of a new road to transport it to Brancepeth (58). Many problems remain unsolved, many questions unanswered, but, while there may have been valid economic reasons for the decline of Stockley, not least the attractions of the expanding coalmines in the area, there is, nevertheless, a strong hint that in this case the destruction of the settlement may have been largely the result of Matthew Russell's whim to improve the view from his bedroom window.

In the light of the evidence for the remarkable changes in Brancepeth and Stockley it was thought necessary at this stage to assess some of the wider implications of the techniques used in the more formal analysis which follows. Inevitably there are dangers involved in making genetic statements from formal analysis, as can clearly be seen here, and although a retrogressive examination, carried out step by step, would largely eliminate these dangers, unfortunately material could not be found for any of the villages in the area other than Brancepeth and Stockley.

Some attempt will be made at functional explanation, vital as it is to an understanding of both formal and genetic developments.

Villages in County Durham have been subjected to a variety of classifications in recent years, with particular emphasis being placed on the 'green' villages which make up a substantial proportion of all village settlements in the county (59). Other types of classification, including those of Dickinson (60) and Uhlig (61), have also been discarded as unsuitable. Despite,

and maybe because of, their complexity, there are too many gaps and they lack in the author's eyes a simple yardstick which can be applied to any village settlements for use in comparison.

This surely is a necessary part of the geographer's task.

Classification here is carried out on the basis of the number of rows of buildings in each village, and with additional descriptive terms it is possible to produce a simple classification with both formal and genetic inference (62), straightforward yet giving an immediate mental picture of any village described, in any part of the country. The author is aware that no real evaluation has been made of the multitude of local site factors, and there is undoubtedly much scope for work of this kind in the area.

The classification is taken from the tithe maps except where stated. The villages studied here are:

- BRANCEPETH: A regular two - row street village, complicated by the castle complex at the south end (Fig. 4.1 and photograph 1).
- STOCKLEY: A regular two - row street - green village, (63) which must surely be studied in close conjunction with Brancepeth (Fig. 4.2).
- BYERS GREEN: A regular two - row green village with some building at the north end (a head-row?) (Fig. 6.4).
- BRANDON: A regular two - row village, built in a 'cul-de-sac' (Fig. 4.1 and photograph 2).
- WILLINGTON: An irregular two - row street village, with a hall complex at the eastern end (64) (Fig. 4.1).

The areas of subdivided field known to have existed in Brandon and Willington in the seventeenth century do not appear to have been tied to a village form with any marked variations from that of Brancepeth or Stockley (65). In none of the villages in 1838 was the church an important morphological element (Fig. 4.1).

The parish church, in Brancepeth, lay in the grounds of the castle, and the next church to be built in a village in this area was not

built until 1856/7, to the north-east of the old village of Willington (66). Whitworth church was an old one, but seems to have been associated with the hall and park there. Its precise relationship to surrounding parish centres is difficult to define, but by the middle of the nineteenth century it lay outside Brancepeth parish (67).

The castle was apparently a very important element in the morphology of Brancepeth and Stockley, and the 1741 map suggests a relationship between the location of the castle and the main street (Fig. 4.3). Although today the castle is almost completely hidden from the north and west by trees, and there have been several alterations of the roads since circa 1800, it is reasonable to assume that it had an influence at least on the growth of Brancepeth, particularly in view of the fact that the axis of the main building line in 1741 lay at ninety degrees to the main Stanhope - Durham highway and not along it as one would expect. It may well be that Stockley was the earlier village. The plan of Brancepeth in 1741 shows several features comparable to that of a medieval planned borough (68), and although no evidence has been forthcoming to substantiate this, the formal similarities do throw open a startling range of questions.

Several features are common to these settlements. A key morphological element in Durham villages would seem to have been the driftway or droveroad entering the settlements from the fell, and this is a feature present at some time in all the villages studied here. The 1741 map of Brancepeth and Stockley shows this quite clearly, and although the enclosure map for Willington has not survived, a close examination of the field boundaries shown on the first edition six inch Ordnance Survey map indicates that the common here came right down to the western edge of the village. The same seems to be true for Brandon, although here

the common was enclosed at a much earlier date, and it is difficult to be absolutely certain because it appears that no record of the process has survived. In the seventeenth century Brandon township contained several areas of common, although it was being stinted in parts as early as 1608. The largest, East Brandon Moor, was still unstinted and came right up to the village on the north end (69). The 'cul-de-sac' nature of the village may well date from the enclosure of this moor between circa 1660 and 1680 (70). The driftway has been emphasised by Roberts as an important element in the evolution of street-green villages, where it is possible that in those villages around a central green continuous with the unenclosed grazing of the waste there is an indication of the origins of more formal, regulated greens, and this must surely have been the case with Stockley and Byers Green in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (71). However, although formally very similar, these two villages differed, in that whereas Stockley green apparently remained as common waste until the beginning of the nineteenth century (72), Byers Green was by 1780 already centred on a green far more akin to the carefully cultivated grassy areas of today, on which games were played and meetings held (73). The same juxtaposition of village and common presents itself in all the villages here, and one begins to wonder whether the street villages were anomalies, or whether, in view of the fact that here are found cattle tracks and yet no greens, it may be that these tracks played no particularly significant part in the formation of the village green. This feature in any event surely indicates a much closer relationship between the evolution of villages with and without greens than has been previously recognised.

Work still in progress by Roberts on rural settlement in County Durham has shown that in many villages there is a marked

degree of regularity, the tofts being of equal or proportionate width, and all of the same length (74). The early map of Brancepeth and Stockley shows this feature really well, but the picture is less clear in Brandon and Willington. Highly regular village forms on the Continent have in fact been shown to be regulated, the house plots laid out with equal or proportionate width and along fixed lines (75). The formal patterns in many Swedish and Danish villages are strikingly similar to examples found in County Durham, and it seems logical to assume that some degree of planning is involved in villages showing this regularity, which in itself is a suggestion of regulation. Recent work on villages such as Kirk Merrington has shown this assumption to be justified. The question of the measure used is a difficult one, but Roberts has suggested a twenty-one foot Durham rod in some cases, and this was in use here in 1569-70, when it was used to assess the acreage of Brancepeth's parkland (76). It is possible to see in Brandon and Willington a relationship between garth widths based on this old Durham rod (Fig. 4.2), but this may well be a case of seeing what one wants to see rather than what actually is. Several features noticeable in Brancepeth, Stockley and Willington are of interest, however, in the light of Robert's suggestion that street frontages may have been laid out on a basis of eighty Durham rods. Willington north row, excluding the hall which is a later addition, measures to within a few yards of forty Durham rods, and Brancepeth and Stockley both appear to have grown up along street frontages of approximately eighty Durham rods (Fig. 4.3). Doubts about the accuracy of the 1741 map upon which this statement is based rule out a more precise assessment (78).

Variations in the length of the tofts have been used by Roberts and Sheppard (79, 80) to suggest growth phases in settle-

ment, but this feature is markedly absent in the five villages here. Whether or not this indicates a type of settlement planned - or regulated, maybe by the lord - through piecemeal development is a problem which cannot really be answered on the basis of such a limited sample. A comparison with other villages formerly lying in Neville estates could well give this answer. Some degree of regularity is observable in all the villages in the traces of a main building line which can still be seen along the street frontage.

Both Stockley and Willington show a distinct asymmetry of form absent in Brancepeth and Brandon. Roberts has suggested this may be significant, particularly in some street-green settlements, where he finds the tofts on one side (the north?) taking the form of long strips often of the order of two hundred metres long and something less than one hectare in area, while the opposite side shows a more diffuse structure with irregular tofts. Stockley fits this pattern very well, although the toft tails were much longer (up to three hundred and fifty metres at the western end of the village) and generally of a somewhat greater area, up to one and a half hectares (Fig. 4.3) (81). The tofts in Willington are shorter, less than one hundred metres, yet there was still this marked difference between the two rows (Fig. 4.1). This feature is so pronounced as to be clearly of significance, and it was these long tofts that Uhlig first interpreted as former infield area, possibly representing the land in the village which was first cultivated and therefore comparable to the Langstreifen of North-west Germany (82). Both Brancepeth and Brandon have a marked regularity in toft length, although in Brancepeth's case this may have been largely determined by the streams to the east and west of the village, both of which occupy steep-sided valleys. As mentioned earlier, the

possibility should be borne in mind here that Brancepeth was planned and laid out like this, in a manner very much akin to a medieval borough (83).

It appears likely that these villages had secondary settlements close by, almost 'overspill' developments. Brancepeth village in 1741 included several houses near Quarry Hill Farm (Fig. 4.3) and there is an indication of former garths (subdivided town field?) in Stockley township along the Willington road (Fig. 5.4). This is a feature which may also have been present in Byers Green (Fig. 6.3) and it will be examined in detail in Chapter Six. Whether or not this is true or of any significance is at the moment an open question, but if these 'daughter' groups did exist it would seem probable that they were of late medieval foundation, perhaps dating from the thirteenth or fourteenth century when settlement in County Durham was reaching a peak (84), and had greatly declined by the eighteenth century.

In conclusion, the settlement pattern of Central Durham clearly had medieval origins, possibly taking a distinctive form in the twelfth or thirteenth century and then remaining largely unaltered until the impact of enclosure made itself felt with a sudden increase in the number of isolated farms after the middle of the eighteenth century, accompanied by a sharp decline in village size. Here, as in following chapters, more could well have been accomplished if time had not placed stringent restrictions on the amount of material that could be used in this study. The broad outlines are reasonably clear, however, although with regard to origins and early functions of the villages any conclusions here would inevitably be hypothetical. One would like to try to take this study of small nucleations in Central Durham to its logical conclusion - indeed, it may be taken as axiomatic that human geography is concerned with a search for

origins - although here the sample is a very small one and any ideas put forward also carry with them the implicit dangers of any generalisation taken from a limited number of examples. No satisfactory answer was found to the problem of Stockley's disappearance at such a late date, and this must give rise to the question of whether or not there were other local social or economic factors which the author failed to appreciate. It seems unlikely that the villages in this area were anomalous to the general pattern in Central Durham or in the county as a whole solely because of the influence of lordship, although this must have had some effect.

As, then, it is an area fairly typical of Central Durham, this discussion of some aspects of its settlement pattern may help to throw light on general problems involved in work of this kind on the wider scale. As a final point, it must be recognised that too little is as yet known of the economic history of the county, for although settlement is undoubtedly the "geographical record of its own evolution", this evolution is itself a reflection of larger trends, economic, social and political.

CHAPTER FOUR - NOTES

1. Morris (1951) 115.
2. Conzen (1949) 75.
3. C.R.O. Microfilm M3/16. See Appendix 4.2.
4. Pevsner (1953) deals only with outstanding buildings and pays little regard to the less distinguished structures.
5. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br.
6. See above, Chapter Three.
7. Boundaries are based on the first edition O.S. six inch maps.
8. Compare the tithe maps with the first edition six inch maps. See also table 4.
9. Held in C.R.O. and Sc. S. See bibliography for list.
10. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 120
11. Thorpe (1949) Roberts (1970a)
12. See, for example, Brown (1878) 177
13. Proceedings N.S.A. Second Series Vol. I (1885) 310.
14. See Appendix 4.2.
15. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection D/Br/P 7.
16. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P L4, L5.
17. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. February 5th, 1714.
18. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. April 30th, 1694.
19. C.R.O.: Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc.
20. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. July 23rd, 1730. This plot of land can be traced through to the tithe map.
21. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. April 19th, 1701.
22. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. April 15th, and 16th, 1732.
23. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. May 12th and 13th, 1818.
24. G.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box Z, bundle 2, ff. 5,29,44.

25. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 30.
26. G.A. Cotesworth MSS Box Z, bundle 2. ff. 1,2.
27. Bailey (1810) 60.
28. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. August 9th, 1692.
29. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. August 16th, 1691. The 'closed' building line of many villages in the county, with buildings closely abutting each other, may well be a product of the last two centuries, for deserted village sites and the few surviving early seventeenth century maps show more open patterns, and this is being confirmed by excavation at West Hartburn, deserted by 1600.
30. C.R.O. D/Br/Vol. 107. Plan of Stockley Farm 1802.
31. See Chapter Five for a fuller discussion of the enclosure movement.
32. C.R.O. Microfilm M3/17. See Appendix 4.2.
33. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brandon-Deeds, etc. September 22nd and 23rd, 1806.
34. P.R.O. Microfilm LR 2/192. Crown survey of lands forfeited by Westmorland.
35. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brandon-Deeds, etc. May 20th, 1856.
36. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brandon-Deeds, etc. December 23rd, 1638.
37. D.C. Raine MSS. R.49, f.2.
38. It should be realised by the reader that the casual factors underlying this movement must have been highly complex, and the author feels that he is not in a position here to attempt a detailed evaluation.
39. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. April, 19th, 1701.
40. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 61. See also Chapter Five.
41. See, for example, C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. June 15th and 16th, 1763.
42. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 6.
43. P.R.O. Microfilm LR 2/192 Crown survey 1608;
D.C. Raine MSS. R.49, f.3.
C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 8. Inquisition in East Brandon 1615.

44. P.R.O. Microfilm E.164/37. Humberston Survey.
45. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 8.
46. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. See, for example, D/Br. Brandon-Deeds, etc., the deeds for Humbersledge Farm.
47. The author wishes to thank Eric Parsons of the Durham department of archaeology for his help in interpreting this find.
48. Compare the tithe map with the map of 1741. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.
49. For example - C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc., October 18th, 1807.
50. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc., September 25th, 1784.
51. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/Vol. 107.
52. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 32.
53. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 33.
54. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Willington-Deeds, etc. February 2nd and 3rd, 1820.
55. Sc.S. Stockley tithe map. Also in C.R.O.
56. C.R.O. Brancepeth Parish Registers. EP/Br/1-24.
57. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/Vol. 30,31.
58. Surtees (1930) 27.
59. For example: Conzen (1949); Thorpe (1949,1950); Roberts (1969).
60. Dickinson (1949).
61. Uhlig (1961).
62. Roberts (1970b). See especially footnote on page 235.
63. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 7.
64. Conzen (1949) maps Willington as a 'street village suggesting former village green'. The problem of differentiating between 'street' and 'street-green' is by no means a simple one. See Roberts (1970b) 237.
65. P.R.O. Microfilm LR 2/192. Crown survey 1608;
C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Willington-Deeds, etc. The title deeds of lands sold to Russell in 1815 indicate that these fields survived to some extent into the late eighteenth century. See Chapter Five for a fuller discussion.

66. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Willington-Deeds, etc. (December 1856).
67. Fordyce (1857); Whellan (1894); First edition O.S. six inch sheets 26 and 34.
68. Beresford (1967). See especially figs. 8,13,14. Such formal similarity suggests only the most tenuous of connections, and, in isolation, cannot carry too much conviction.
69. D.C. Raine MSS. Vol. 49, f.3.; C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 8.
70. D.C. Raine MSS. Vol. 49, f.2.
71. Stockley - C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/Vol. 107; D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. July 7th and 8th 1773.
Byers Green - Sc.S. Byers Green enclosure award and plan; Northumberland C.R.O. Working papers of the Commissioners of enclosure for Byers Green 1805-13.
72. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/Vol. 107.
73. Gentleman's Magazine (1793) See also Chapter Six.
74. A note on terminology may be helpful here. The house site is taken to include the house, outbuildings, and any enclosed garden that there might be, and, for purposes of simplicity, the enclosed space at the backside of these plots will be called the toft, or long toft.
75. Goransson (1958).
76. P.R.O. Microfilm E.164/37. Humberston Survey. Later work has cast doubts upon this, and, in general, a rod of 16.5 or 18 feet now seems much more likely. See Chapter Six, fn. 12.
77. Willington Old Hall lies to the south of the old village and forms no part of it. See Fig. 2.1.
78. Since these ideas were first penned, a more accurate set of measurements has shown them to be unfounded. Any relationship between the widths of the original tofts, in Brancepeth at least, was no longer detectable by 1741, but the author has been unable to rid himself of the feeling that some such relationship did exist.
79. Roberts (1969).
80. Sheppard (1966).
81. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. April 19th, 1690; D/Br/P L4.
82. Uhlig (1956, 1961). A fuller discussion of this can be found in Chapter Five.

83. See above, fn. 68.

84. Smailes (1960) 99.

CHAPTER FIVE - LAND UTILISATION AND FIELD PATTERNS

Within certain limits imposed by the patterns portrayed in the previous chapters, there came the development of areal differences in land utilisation, the fabric which clothed the basic skeleton of the physical landforms. It is in this pattern, found literally in the fields, that the themes discussed earlier begin to coalesce and provide something of an insight into the complexity of man/land relationships, a complexity in no way diminished by the smallness of the area studied. Although mineral extraction was known in many parts of the county from medieval times onwards (1), as late as 1840 the landscape under examination is almost entirely a product of man's labours in his most fundamental role, that of the agriculturist, and it is this landscape, the physical manifestation of these labours, that is discussed in this chapter. An attempt will be made to look at various aspects of the complex set of relationships by which farming was adjusted to its physical, social, and economic environment (2), and these will be drawn together later in the chapter to give some understanding of the general trends of development in the agricultural landscape of central Durham from circa 1600 to circa 1850. The particular aspects discussed will include crops and livestock, the size of holdings, and system of tenure, all of which must be seen against a backcloth of field and settlement patterns, social conditions, and changing techniques. After careful consideration it was decided not to look at enclosure as a theme in isolation, but to show its importance and impact in, and as part of, the overall development of the agrarian landscape in this particular area. As Chambers and Mingay have stressed:

Enclosure remained an important and indeed vital phase in English agricultural development, but we should be careful not to ascribe to it developments that were the consequences of a much broader and complex process of historical change (3).

After a brief definition of, and introduction to the nature of field patterns, the condition of agriculture in County Durham as a whole in circa 1850 will be examined, followed by a retrogressive study of the features outlined above. Inevitably, in a study of this category, it will in parts be rather more generalised than one would wish, for it is important to constantly bear in mind the knowledge that

Each village had its own peculiar features in relation to soil and topography, markets and communications, the area of commons and waste and the size of the remaining open fields, the existing system of cultivation, whether developed or still backward, and the structure of landownership and farm size, to mention only the more obvious variables (4).

The term 'field pattern' can be succinctly defined as

the arrangements adopted on the ground to make the best use of a particular physical environment with a given range of farming equipment and within the context of a particular structure of society (5).

and if settlement really does contain 'a record of its own evolution' (6) then surely the same can be said of field patterns, for they provide us with almost our only visible evidence of change in the landscape (7). Assuming a reasonably constant physical environment, changes in field patterns must surely indicate changes in social and technological factors influencing the allotment or use of land. The layout of fields in circa 1850 in Brancepeth hints at many such changes (Fig. 2.1), but the dangers of uncritical projection backwards make formal interpretation a difficult task. A glance at various estate maps of the early eighteenth century shows just how much change has taken place over the surface of Brancepeth Lordship. A detailed study of Willington brought to light a remarkable degree of impermanence in the field names there, and this was found to be typical of the

area as a whole, indicating further hazards in using documentary evidence for the recreation of a pattern of fields at any given time. In circa 1850 many of the field boundaries in Brancepeth were less than one hundred years old, and as one probes further into the history of the lordship several phases of enclosure can be picked out, each giving rise to marked areal differences in field patterns, all leaving a distinctive imprint on the landscape. The main features visible in the landscape are the rectangular fields characteristic of eighteenth-century enclosure, and the remarkably pronounced stellate formation to the north of Brandon (Fig. 2.1), a pattern found more haphazardly arranged to the west of Willington

In the years of the mid-nineteenth century the relatively backward condition of agriculture in Durham was causing some concern in knowledgeable circles (8). There was still an inordinately large amount of unproductive land, with large areas only recently enclosed and converted to several holdings, while in many places mining was causing the sacrifice of really good farming land for the sake of what lay beneath it. Small holdings prevailed, changing hands with great frequency during this period, and the considerable numbers of holdings under leasehold or copyhold tenure were in several areas suffering from a lack of any real encouragement to improve. Because tenancies were, in general, small, perhaps the most crippling factor of all was a lack of ready capital among the poorer farmers (9). Farm management was still primitive and out of date in comparison to that found in counties further south, indeed only at this late date were four- and five-course rotations becoming predominant, although they were present in Brancepeth almost a century earlier. The acreage of permanent grass was being maintained, even increased,

as farmers did not as yet have much confidence in stall feeding, but the quality of the pasture over a great deal of the county was poor. The emphasis in livestock was on horses and cattle rather than sheep, although all three were present in Brancepeth. Pigs were bred and fattened in great numbers, not only by farmers, 'but in all the colliery districts every pitman feeds his pig' (10).

Concerning the condition of farm property, Bell stated:

In this county too many of the buildings are in a very indifferent state of repair, as well as insufficient in size and unsuitable to the farm in their arrangements.....,

yet it seems that they had in fact been much worse, for

.....about fifty, or from that to one hundred years ago, under the old system of farming, the buildings were generally as poor as could well be imagine, and much has been done towards their improvement, though they are still far from being generally in a good state (11).

Bailey had commented in 1810 on the fact that he found no farm buildings 'meriting particular notice for improved convenience, or superior contrivance' (12). As will be seen later the influence of landlords such as the Russells and Shaftesbury had much to do with this 'improvement' after circa 1750, modifications including better accomodation for cattle, better lighting and ventilation, better preservation of stored crops, and a more effective storage of manure, lime, and artificial fertilisers. Implements in use in the mid-nineteenth century were not exceptional, and although here also some improvements were taking plce, the ordinary swing plough was still in use (13), with horses as the main draught animals.

Since Bailey's report in 1810, in a period when sharply fluctuating prices were a notable feature, several changes had had a marked impact on the agriculture of the county (14). Foremost among these was the enclosure, division, and cultivation of a considerable amount of common land, which, in the light of

increasing development, gave new scope for experimentation, and increasing use of better drainage methods was bringing about better yields and improved courses of cropping (See table below). It is, however, important to remember that the impact of enclosure on husbandry practices was very much less than has often been supposed. Changes in agricultural techniques rarely come about suddenly -

Enclosure generally accelerated or intensified trends towards more productive farming, but it was not always the initiating force of these trends (15).

In terms of husbandry practice the first half of the nineteenth century saw agricultural improvement in Durham still at an early stage, and a three course rotation, or the 'Two Crop and Fallow System' was still in widespread use. Although better drainage, with more and better manuring, was by the 1850's giving rise to better systems, there was still considerable local variation within the framework outlined below.

'Old' rotation (Traditional) (16).

| | A | B | C | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--|
| 1 | Fallow | Fallow | Fallow | Some clover or turnips being introduced here (C) by 1810. |
| 2 | Wheat | Wheat | Wheat | |
| 3 | Oats | Beans | Pease | |
| 4 | | | Oats | |

'New' rotations (17)

| | Light soils | Strong soils |
|---|--|---------------|
| 1 | Turnips, eaten off the ground with sheep | Fallow |
| 2 | Wheat, sown down with seeds | Oats |
| 3 | Clover, either pastured with sheep or mown | Seed (clover) |
| 4 | Barley or Oats | Wheat |

Something of the severity of the Durham climate was shown in Chapter Two, and inevitably this affected growth rates and harvest times:

(The) Hay harvest, upon new laid lands, commences soon after mid-summer, and old meadows generally are cut in July. Corn harvest adjoining the Tees, the sea, and some of the rivers, often begins towards the end of August; in other parts of the county it is a fortnight or three weeks later, and commonly lasts throughout September; beans throughout October, and sometimes not finished till the middle of November (18).

It would appear in fact that the old three-course rotation was already obsolescent in the 1790's, and the following extract from a letter of June, 1794, is of interest because it also shows how conditions were changing in Brandon Lordship before Russell bought the estate.

Agreeable to desire, I shall attempt to give you a sketch of some of the methods practiced in this neighbourhood. The former practice was two crops and a fallow; but for want of being changed, the land in tillage became tired of growing corn, especially oats. In order to remedy that inconvenience, a new system was established under a four-course shift, or what is here called 'four aders' viz. wheat, clover, oats, and fallow; and by that alteration great benefit was at first derived. As clover was then rather a novelty to the land in this quarter, it generally produced a plentiful crop, and was also the means of a good crop of oats succeeding it. But now the present mode of some places hereabouts is under the regulation of five aders; which is continuing the clover crop two years; and this was thought a probable means of greater improvement (19).

Despite Granger's recommendations in 1794 that the acreage of land laid down to pasture should be further extended (20), and some signs that this was in fact happening in the county (21), as late as 1854 Bell was still of the opinion that 'the proportion of old grass land is in some parts of the county much too small' (22). He had this to say about converting grassland to arable:

In the breaking up old grasslands paring and burning the surface used to be invariably the first step. This is still occasionally done in this county, though not so much as formerly. It has been more frequently ploughed up without paring; well harrowed after lying, and the weeds gathered and burnt. For the first crop, after ploughing out, oats is preferred by some, and turnips by others. It is not often that grassland is permitted to be ploughed out, and when it is, there is generally an agreement for an equal quantity to be laid away in some other part of the farm (23).

This 'agreement' seems logical in the conditions of the mid-nineteenth century, as will be seen later it is in fact a heritage from the late seventeenth century when in many leases this ploughing out and laying away was compulsory, raising the interesting question of why pasture should thus be preserved when very large tracts of common were available. (24). The key factor is probably the quality of the pasture afforded under a system of improved agriculture, and leading breeders such as the Colling brothers realised its importance.

By the middle of the nineteenth century plantations were being established at a rapid rate, although still not at a rate fast enough to satisfy Bell, who went to great pains to stress the advantages to be derived from this particular form of investment (25). Plantations were phenomena of the nineteenth century in Durham - Granger had remarked on their appearance, but he also talked of the general nakedness of the county (26), while Pybus talked of the 'new practice' of planting former arable land (27) - and although large areas were planted by 1850 it was not until the second half of the century that it was adopted as a means of land utilisation on the larger scale.

Certain elements of Brancepeth Estate had witnessed a series of good landlords after the early eighteenth century, and there is no doubt that by 1800 agricultural practice on the estate was relatively advanced for the county, although the quality of farming on Lord Barnard's lands at Raby was also particularly notable (28). The 'new' rotations of Bell in 1854 had been introduced in Brancepeth before 1800, a reflection of efficient stewardship combined with medium-sized to large farms run by progressive and fairly prosperous tenants. That William Russell did have progressive and clear-thinking stewards can be seen in the survey one of them made of Brandon estate in circa 1805 with

a view to purchase by Russell. In this survey, which gives a sound description of the soils in Brandon, he says

Towards the South End of the Liberty of Brandon, below the Village, and on both sides the Turhpike Road, there is a large quantity of clay land chiefly fit for tillage. If a Close of this were in Turf I should take the following course of Crops upon it

| | | |
|------|----------|---|
| i.e. | 1st Year | Oats |
| | 2nd " | Rape or turnips |
| | 3rd " | Barley and red clover |
| | 4th " | Clover |
| | 5th " | Wheat |
| | 6th " | Fallow |
| | 7th " | Barley, with hop and white clover and Rye grass |

To lie as long as it will keep a good quantity of stock (29).

This does lay open to discussion the question of whether Brancepeth estate was relatively advanced, or whether both Bailey and Bell were unduly pessimistic in their descriptions of agriculture in the county, but considerations of time forbid any comparative work elsewhere and little published material is available to date (30).

The manner in which control was exercised over the methods of individual lessees varied from estate to estate at the end of the eighteenth century. Leases from Ellison to farms in West Park and Helmington Row, for example, were conservative in some ways, yet they allowed considerable scope to the individual tenant; on the other hand, leases from Shaftesbury to farms in Brandon allowed the tenant no free play at all, laying down the scheme of husbandry for each field on each particular farm for the duration of each lease without paying suitable attention to the nature of the ground (31). The drawbacks to this latter method were brought out in Angus's letter to Appleby, where he says

Agents are too apt to make out the same scheme of husbandry for all varieties of ground, and when that is the case, some are great sufferers when they are tied down to fulfil their engagements by which they may be obliged to keep a piece of ground for two years in an unproductive state, when others who are under the same conditions may lose nothing by it, having land

adapted for the purpose. (32).

and its limitations in practice are shown in the survey of 1805, where good light lands suitable for turnip husbandry are kept down as permanent grass.

The Tenants say in excuse for the present state of this kind of land, that they are bound by their leases to keep one part of it in a continual state of pasture, and the other of Course will fall into a continual round of Tillage Crops, both of which are wrong (33) - The Pasture part carries a very trifling Proportion of Stock, perhaps about a third of what it would do, if plowed by a short Course of Crops and laid down again (34).

The stock that was being carried, however, was in very good condition - the sheep, mainly crossbreeds, were 'above a middle quality', and the cattle, shorthorns of the North Yorkshire kind, were 'as good as any produced in the kingdom'.

By the nineteenth century, farms on the Brancepeth estate were mainly of a medium size, circa 200-300 acres (80 - 120h.), sometimes coming together under one tenant to form holdings of over 500 acres (200h.), and they were generally compact in their layout (Fig. 5.3). Pybus pointed out in 1818 that most of the farms in the lordship were equally divided between pasture land and arable ground (35), but as the Tithe Maps show two decades later, this was a sweeping generalisation that hid many very localised variations (Fig. 2.1.). Some idea of the dynamic quality of the landscape can be gleaned from even the briefest comparison of early eighteenth century estate maps, the Tithe Maps of 1838-44, and the first edition of the Ordnance Survey Six Inch sheets, where it can be seen quite clearly that between the relatively fixed points of the settlement pattern field patterns were in an almost permanent state of flux (Figs. 5.4, 5.5).

A major obstacle to efficient and progressive farming was in some parts clearly the tenants themselves, and the Ellisons in particular found this a very real problem on their estates in

West Park and Helmington Row. In 1774, houses were dilapidated, farm buildings in a very poor state of repair, walls and hedges were down and closes were overgrown with rushes (36), yet this neglect was probably only a recent phenomenon. In 1737, although the hedges were not as well maintained as they might have been, both crops and buildings were looking well (37), and a decade earlier it seems that Liddell had 'laid out above five thousand pounds in Improvements of Westpark' (38). Without detailed eighteenth century estate records for the bulk of Brancepeth Estate (39), it is impossible to say whether or not this decay was typical of the area as a whole or confined to Ellison's lands, but in the light of Bell's comments in 1854 it would seem that West Park and Helmington Row were by no means exceptions to the general rule.

The period from circa 1750 to 1800 was a vital one in the evolution of the agrarian landscape in this area. Marked by the enclosure and division of all the remaining commons in the Lordship (although Byers Moor was not enclosed until 1805 - 9) it saw the reclamation of some 2,600 acres (c. 1,000 h.) of common waste and its subsequent conversion to tillage. Several farms in existence in 1800 had been apportioned out as single blocks in 1756-7 (for example Nackshivan, Tanners Hall (Fig. 2.1)), and enclosure in the Lordship gave rise eventually to the creation of twelve new single-farms. The rapidity of sub-division, enclosure, exchange, engrossing, and consolidation, with subsequent effects on the social structure of the Lordship, is astounding when one looks back through time. Much has been written about enclosure and its effects (40), a great deal of it from conflicting viewpoints (41), but in Brancepeth the effects were very marked indeed, a combination of enclosure and a powerful autocratic landlord coming together to produce changes

which completely altered both the landscape and the social structure within the space of fifty years. A comparison of estate maps of 1741 (Fig. 5.4) (42) and 1797 (43) leaves a vivid impression of the amount of change, which was even greater by 1838 (Fig. 5.4). There can be little doubt that the enclosure of Brancepeth and Stockley Commons in the 1750's lay directly behind the spectacular decrease in village size in both Brancepeth and Stockley, although the numbers of small owner-occupiers and customary tenants seem to remain fairly constant into the nineteenth century (44).

When looking at earlier enclosure it is often difficult to assess accurately the length of time involved in the process, but in the years after 1760 the speed with which the characteristic regular field pattern was apparently established can be appreciated. The time clause specified in the awards for each allotment may be responsible for this, but it is true to say, however, that this 'speed' may be an illusion, for while the award for Willington and Helmington Row Commons is dated 1756 it almost certainly did not become official until a relatively advanced stage in the enclosure process. Agreements for the enclosure of these particular commons were in existence in 1735 (45). On the staked out common hedges, fences, and walls were literally thrown up, and cultivation did begin within a very short time. Even within areas of formal monotony on the map there are marked differences on the ground, primarily resulting from differences in ownership which found expression in the erection of different types of field boundary, and high banks, quick hedges, fences, and impressive stone walls are all present in the landscape (46). The larger number of new, usually stone-surfaced, roads built during and immediately after enclosure must have made transport much easier and greatly encouraged local trade (47).

Details of the process of reclamation can be obtained from leases to the new plots, and tenants in 1759 were agreeing to

with all convenient speed pare burn plow up and convert into tillage all the said premises and at their own charge load and lay two fothers of good clot lime on each acre thereof when so pared and burnt. AND shall and will in the year 1762 Summer Fallow the same and provide and lay at their own charges on each acre therof when in Fallow three fothers of good clot lime and in such parts as may most require it when in Fallow a quantity of good Manure not less than forty fothers in the whole and upon reaping the first crop to be sown after such fallowing shall and will lay the same down to grass and continue the same during the term first sowing ten bushels of good Hay seeds.....on each acre there (48).

This succession of tillage and then pasture was not ubiquitous, and the whole of Byers Moor, for example, was still arable land in 1844, over thirty years after enclosure (Fig. 6.3). It does appear that this initial practice of paring and burning was far more common than previously thought (49), although the widespread importance of the technique had in some cases been recognised (50). Granger had remarked in 1794 that

Paring and burning is of ancient use, and continues in practice for lands that have long been in grass, and are grown mossy. The sods are pared thin, and dried; laid together in small heaps, set on fire, and burnt to ashes which are spread upon the ground, together with two cart loads of lime upon each acre, and ploughed in (51).

but, as has been seen, this technique was virtually extinct by the 1850's. Some idea of the variety of crops already present by the middle of the eighteenth century emerges from several disputes over tithes on the newly enclosed lands (52). The cultivation as early as 1762 of rape, mustard, lint, and hempseed, as well as the usual hardcorn, barley, oats, beans, and pease must throw some doubt on Bell's description of the county as one backward in its farming capabilities.

Of necessity, to get a clear picture of the changes brought about by enclosure an examination must be made of the area in the

period from 1700 - 1750 (Fig. 5.2). This is not to say that enclosure was unknown before that date, indeed it can be seen quite definitely as a continuous process in the century and a half before this, and it must have taken place over relatively large areas in Tudor times and earlier, but at no other time did it come so quickly or involve such a large area of land. An unusual feature of much of the common waste enclosed by Act in the eighteenth century is that it lay in the valleys, rather than on the ridges. This is markedly apparent in the field in the case of Brancepeth and Stockley Common (compare Figs 2.4 and 5.2).

In the middle of the eighteenth century there was a marked difference between the tenant lands of Brancepeth and the single isolated freehold farms, which were much larger, with field sizes in general far greater than those of the estate holdings (53). Although these tenant farms were, by 1741, all relatively compact holdings, (54), it is plain from the deeds to the estate that this compactness was a result of a very recent reorganisation, without which the impact of the 'Parliamentary' enclosure might have been far greater (Fig. 5.2)(55). As was shown in Chapter Four both Brancepeth and Stockley villages were at this date far larger than they were in 1800, and there can be little doubt that the natural trend towards medium-sized tenancies was greatly reinforced and accelerated by the enclosure of the 1750's at the expense of the small tenant. Only a very small area of subdivided town field was still in existence at this date, in Willington, where it apparently lingered under single ownership into the 1790's (56). Both Brancepeth 'Parks' were under cultivation, the actual area of Deer Park being only a fraction of its size in 1838, and the contrast between the common land and the interior of the walled West Park must have been a sharply

defined one in the landscape (Fig. 5.2). The general aspect of the countryside seems to have been a less wooded one than in 1800, when the woodland in the Lordship was worth between four and five thousand pounds (57), and there were very few large stands of trees in the cultivated areas (58).

The large freehold farms appear to have been little affected by the Parliamentary enclosure - apart from the loss of pasture - as most of the farmers sold or exchanged their plots in order to achieve compactness, sales and agreements often taking place before the allotment was pegged out. The customary tenants of the 'Manor of the Rectory' were also relatively unaffected in this context (Fig. 5.2), as they had no common rights before enclosure, and no allotments were made to them (59). The new farmsteads preserved the same timeless formal feature of the square building plan around an enclosed space, although they were in general smaller than the much older freehold farmsteads. West Park Farm in 1735 consisted of a dwelling house, a bakehouse, two stables, pigsties, pullet houses, a large barn, and at least four other buildings (60); the moated site of Littleburn in 1726 was even larger, containing a new dwelling house, a 'granary', a large old slate barn and a little thatched one, a slaughter house, cow house, ox house, stables, and several other ancillary buildings (61). The sixteenth, or perhaps fifteenth, century farmhouse still standing at Unthank gives some impression of the nature of these buildings at that time.

Schemes of husbandry seem to have changed only a little in the eighteenth century. West Park in 1735 was divided almost equally amongst pasture, corn, 'faugh' (fallow), and meadow, with a slight emphasis on pasture (62), and a similar fifty-fifty division between arable and grassland was present on

Little White Farm in 1711 (63). Clod lime and manure were in use on a wide scale and made up by far the most expensive feature of contemporary agricultural practice. The lands to be planted were sowed, harrowed, and water-furrowed (64), probably with oxen as draught animals, for they were certainly in use in Brancepeth at the end of the seventeenth century (65). The landlord's influence was considerable, with leases in almost exactly the same form that they were to be in 1850 (Appendix 5.2), and this influence could be strengthened by the useful, although not always effective, weapon of the manorial court, which in Brancepeth frequently fined people for not cutting hedges or scouring ditches, for general neglect of their holdings (66).

The question of how a man held the land he farmed in relation to his landlord is a complex one at the end of the seventeenth century (67). The larger single farms were no different in this respect from the lands of Brancepeth Estate in that they were all called 'freehold'. Fauconberg's advertisement for the sale of Brancepeth in 1776 described the estate as 'all of freehold tenure' (68), and a survey of 1615 stated quite categorically that there were no copyholders within the Lordship (69). This latter statement, however, appears to clash with a description in the Humberston Survey of 1569/70 when Brancepeth Estate contained lands and possessions said to be 'very good and Fyneable' (70), and the picture is further complicated by the existence of the Manor of the Rectory of Brancepeth, whose tenants were described as 'customary' tenants (a term Kerridge uses interchangeably with 'copyholders'). The customary lands were often confused with the glebe land (71), but this is not really surprising as the Vicar of Brancepeth was automatically lord of the Manor. The length and security

of tenure varied within each system, as did condition of service and obligations to the lord, many of which apparently had faded into disuse in the chaotic period between 1570 and circa 1635.

Agriculture in the seventeenth century is virtually a hidden province as far as Brancepeth is concerned, the only detailed information coming from probate inventories (72). It would seem from these that agrarian reform saw a sharp boost in the early part of the century, with yields rising quite sharply, and the increase in the size and capacity of Humbersledge Farm was typical of the farms looked at. That the farm was so scantily stocked in 1581 comes as no real surprise in the light of conditions hinted at in a letter to Lord Burghley in 1571 which stated that 'whereas Westmorland, Swinburne, and others kept houses, which are now empty, that part of the county is clean waste' (73). Crops grown on the farm by 1628 included rye, oats, bigg, and some lint, with livestock consisting of oxen, cattle of various kinds, horses, sheep, pigs, and poultry (Appendix 5.2) (74). Farms in Brancepeth were similarly stocked (75), although the estate holdings in general were much smaller than the independent freehold lands, often made up of only three or four closes, and fragmented to a far greater degree (Fig. 5.3). At this early stage, however, generalisations are difficult, for it is virtually impossible with present material to reconstruct field boundaries and patterns of tenure in the Lordship in circa 1600. Some estate holdings were large, in some cases with fields much larger than any outside (76), but although the documentary cover for the area has very few gaps it would be unwise to attempt too great a precision on the basis of evidence which is itself of doubtful accuracy. The Jacobean Survey upon which Gray based his classification of fields in the area has many gaps, as land outside the estate is not included, inevitably biasing some of his

conclusions. These gaps can be seen in the case of Humbersledge Farm, which is not mentioned in the survey. In 1602 Matthew Hinde inherited the farm and several other closes, which he passed on to his son in 1628; an inquisition of 1605 in East Brandon revealed that Matthew Hynde 'had divers parcels of Ground in divers parts of the Townfields and territories of East Brandon' (77), intermingled with lands there belonging to the King and other lands of one Christopher Hutchinson a freeholder, and he was allotted two more closes totalling fifteen acres (c. 6.h); in the Crown Survey he held only four pasture 'gates' which had been assigned to him by deed poll in 1595 (78). Clearly there was more enclosed land than appears in the 1608 survey, and closes in freehold hands were generally larger than those recognised by Gray (79).

The use of the term 'gate' as a measure of area also leads to complications, with the impact of local conditions and time giving rise to regional variations. According to Chambers and Mingay a 'beast-gate' or 'pasture-gate' as it was sometimes known, was a fixed measurement of about three or four acres (80). The lawyers delving into William Russell's manorial rights recognised the local variations:

A cattle gate or pasture gate may either be a certain share or proportion of the soil itself as a Ten.t. in common or it may be merely Comm of a pasture for a certain stint or number of cattle upon the Lord's waste (81).

Although the legal opinion here in 1800 held that the latter was the case in Brancepeth Lordship it is by no means certain that it was so at the time of the Crown Survey.

Sub-divided town fields were in existence in Brandon and Willington in 1608, and the name 'Town Fields' survives in many seventeenth century Brancepeth deeds. Gray recognised several trends for the area which for the most part seem to be correct,

but his work must be interpreted critically as he omits from his appendix of the Brandon entry in the survey the names of those tenants that do not fit into his thesis (82). Brandon's fields must have been completely enclosed shortly after this, indeed it seems that the process was under way in 1607, but Willington took much longer to lose the arable and meadow riggs to several closes, although it does seem that in Willington also much of its town fields had already been enclosed by 1600 (83). This puts it rather earlier than the generally recognised main period of town-field enclosure in Durham:

In this county the lands, or common fields of townships, were for the most part inclosed soon after the Restoration (84),

a conclusion also reached by Leonard (85). In Willington in the early seventeenth century many closes changed hands with the descriptive words 'as they lye now enclosed and divided' coming in the deeds after the specification of area (86). Although the two systems of holding in common and holding in severalty were not mutually exclusive, it is difficult, largely as a result of the chaos following the Rising of the North, to determine precisely in Willington their respective roles and importance, and the relationship in which they stood to each other. While ideas today are swinging towards the theory of an evolution of field patterns in the north-east around an early system of open subdivided fields developing from an infield/outfield relationship, it appears that these fields had largely decayed and been swallowed up by enclosure before 1570 in Brancepeth Lordship. There is, however, still a suggestion that they did survive here, even if in a highly modified and irregular form (Fig. 7.1). Although in several early deeds for Willington riggs are described as 'lying in common in the townfields of Willington' (87), these fields apparently shed the rules of communal agriculture shortly

after the beginning of the seventeenth century. For reasons not yet clear enclosure of the riggs appears not to have taken place in parts of the fields until well into the eighteenth century.

To trace accurately the extent of enclosure from the common waste in the seventeenth century is almost impossible in the face of the great amount of piecemeal reclamation (88) and the many agreements for large areas which were apparently unconfirmed by courts of law (89). The stellate patterns in both Brandon and Willington seem to date from the second half of the century, a result of agreements of this type, but there were several more large areas of common in Brandon in the early part of the century which it has proved extremely difficult to trace (Fig. 7.1). The phases of enclosure of the area to the north of Brandon village can be seen in contemporary writings if not on the ground. A certain Thomas Pinkney of Ushaw, yeoman, stated in 1708 that even before Cropley bought the estate in 1632 (90) tenants had been taking land in from Brandon Moor, and he had been informed by older people

that Brandon Highmoor and Brandon Low (Byshottles) moor lay together in Common and were (illegible) in Comon by ye inhabitants of Brandon and Byshottles without any limits or distinctions..... and that owners and farmers came out and made a separation of these moors by striking a wall between them (91).

Stinting was then introduced, tenants in Brandon having their stints and beastgates in Highmoor, those of Byshottles in Lowmoor. Further evidence in the same enquiry disclosed that the moor was subsequently converted to tillage, although by 1708 some meadow had been introduced (92), a process basically the same as the one a hundred and fifty years later elsewhere on the estate. Parcels already stinted in 1608 had been converted in a similar fashion, but as can be seen this piecemeal development over

almost thirty years from 1650 onwards gave rise to a field pattern markedly different from that of the eighteenth century Parliamentary enclosure (Fig. 2.1).

Apart from the known areas in Brandon and Willington there is little evidence for the existence of sub-divided town fields elsewhere in the Lordship. There are hints of their presence and later enclosure in parts of Stockley (Fig. 5.4) (93), Byers Green (Fig. 6.3) (94), and Waterhouses (Fig. 5.5) (95), but they remain only that - hints.

The landscape of circa 1600 bore little resemblance to that of today, and it appears that the seventeenth century saw as much, if not more, change than did the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Two very large areas of deer park were converted into arable and meadow land, and apart from alterations in field boundaries, the wooded appearance of parts of the estate suffered greatly from the foraging trips of several Naval Commissioners, particularly in 1635 and 1653 (96). Brandon's several areas of common were stinted and enclosed, chiefly in a few years before 1680, the lightness of the soil probably being partially responsible for conversion to tillage at this early date.

It is well known that the most profitable to inclose is a sandy or light loam, where the cultivation of turnips, clover, and the artificial grasses can be effected with certain success....On such soil abundance of food for stock is produced, which generally furnishes a great quantity of rich manure for the arable land, so that the courses of farming and grazing together are much more advantageously pursued than either can be to any great extent without the other (97).

The division of Burnighll Moor caused some distress because of the loss of really good pasture - 'there was such plenty of grass there than when an ox lay on ye ground scarce any parts of him but his hornes could be seen by reason of ye growth of grass there' (98). Such common waste land played a vital part in the

area's agricultural system, and the history of the evolution of the present field patterns is basically the history of the enclosure and cultivation of this reserve. It may be that in certain situations in the seventeenth century the enclosure of relatively large areas of common by the wealthier freeholders had as great an impact on the landscape as did the Parliamentary enclosures of the eighteenth century (99).

Without being able to reconstruct field patterns in the area for any date earlier than the eighteenth century, it is difficult to see just how much of the earlier landscape can be accurately reconstructed, especially in view of the rate of change which has been suggested. Gray's work emphasised the irregularity of field systems in this area at the beginning of the seventeenth century (100), but as has been seen in the case of Brandon, this picture may be more incomplete than previously thought, describing conditions only in very simplified terms. More recently, Uhlig has postulated that the long garths of the village settlements were old infield areas (101), a view violently opposed by Butlin, who feels that similarity of form does not necessarily indicate similarity of function or origin (102). Slater (103), Smailes (104), and Uhlig (105) have all pointed out comparisons with the run-rig systems used in Scotland, but there is no evidence to suggest any connection (106), while as mentioned Uhlig also believes that there are some parallels between the 'esch' lands of North-west Germany and the long tofts or garths found in Durham. Butlin concludes his article:

Gray, Tate, and Uhlig have suggested that if a Midland type of field system existed in Northumberland, then it did so as a late development of an infield-outfield system....The author's present opinion is, however, that the two systems, even in the Border area, had quite different roots, and he would certainly contest the assertion that the three-field system in Northumberland was a product of Anglo-Norman manorialism, for this was never a very influential

factor in an area of constant border fighting, where military rather than economic subservience was a dominating characteristic (107). x

Although this does not apply in entirety to County Durham, in the light of this present controversy, as a conclusion to this chapter one could do worse than this quotation from Bell, which gives scope for a great deal of relevant thought:

An antiquarian, referring to our past history, would easily explain both the smallness of the inclosures and the peculiar way in which we see the smallest of them gathered around the various villages. Formerly the whole county was in one vast uninclosed moor, excepting about the towns or villages, each of which had an extent of ground round it, which was called the 'Town-field', or 'Stinted Pasture', or 'In-Fell'. The inhabitants did not do much in cultivating either grain or green crops beyond what the stern necessities of nature would enforce, therefore each individual inclosed his little patch of tillage ground as near to his door as he could get it; and in addition to this tillage garth he had one or more 'ox gangs' or 'stints' upon the pasture; and an unlimited range upon the 'Out Fell' was open to him if he possessed an adventurous spirit; but the 'Out Fell' was the 'unsettled territory' in those days, into which few would venture their cattle for fear of the 'inroads of the Scots'.(108)

Before a history of Durham field systems can be written, there are many furrows to be ploughed and many problems to be solved.

CHAPTER FIVE - NOTES

1. Coalmines were present in Brancepeth lordship by 1638, and 'colepitts' were sunk in West Park in the seventeenth century. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/ES. A transcript of the Ditchfield Grant; D.C. Raine MSS. R.49, f.1. A deposition on lands at Brancepeth 1703.
2. For a general discussion of economic forces interacting with agricultural changes, see Jones (1965, 1967).
3. Chambers and Mingay (1966) 104. This view was advanced at the beginning of this century by people such as Slater(1907)(a); Johnson (1909); Gray (1910).
4. Mingay (1963). Reproduced in Minchinton (1968) Vol.2, 24.
5. Smith (1967) 193.
6. Conzen (1949) 76.
7. Provisions must be made here similar to those qualifying Conzen's statement in the conclusion to Chapter Three, i.e. '...this evolution is itself a reflection of larger trends, economic, social, and political.'
8. Bell (1856). For a comprehensive discussion of levels of agricultural improvement up to c. 1850 see van Bath (1963).
9. See Mingay (1962) 478-80. This surely applies in any period.
10. Bell (1856) 107. This widespread tendency to keep small numbers of pigs was apparently a recent phenomenon, one not observed in 1600. See Thirsk (1967) 192.
11. Bell (1856) 108.
12. Bailey (1810)
13. This was the Rotherham plough, a wheel-less swing plough with a curved mouldboard.
14. '....the new methods of farming had relatively little to offer the upland grazing districts, and changes here were more a response to price changes than to the adoption of new methods' Grigg (1967) 89. While changes in price were almost certainly very important here, owing to a shortage of evidence and time the author felt unable to do justice to an intricate topic and no conclusions are indicated.
15. Chambers and Mingay (1966) 95.
16. A and B are based on Bell (1856) 100; C is based on Bailey (1810).
17. Bell (1856) 100.
See Fig. 5.1. The three farms illustrated here show something of the local variation with space and time in the development of farming practice, possibly reflecting the changing ideas of the estate steward throughout this period. The lease for Redbarns dates from 1790, and the diagram shows three years

17. Continued

from a five-year rotation:

- Seeds:
- Seeds
- Corn
- Fallow
- Wheat.

Sleetburn saw the development of three variations of this rotation from 1792 onwards:

| <u>a</u> | <u>b</u> | <u>c</u> |
|----------|----------|----------|
| Seeds | Seeds | Seeds |
| Seeds | Seeds | Seeds |
| Oats | Corn | Corn |
| Fallow | Fallow | Fallow |
| Wheat | Wheat | Corn |

The small acreage down to pease was left fallow for a year, then included under rotation b. The rape, mustard, lint, and hempseed of the middle of the century are by now omitted. (C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/El.). The lease for Lowbarns was the latest of the three farms illustrated, dating from 1795. Physically very similar to Redbarns, which it almost adjoined, it was laid down to a simple three-year rotation which indicated that clover had already been introduced there:

- Wheat
- Clover
- Fallow

The letter from Angus quoted later in the text (See fn. 19) shows that clover had been grown for some years.

C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brandon-Deeds, etc. Leases for Slettburn, Redbarns, Lowbarns.

Appendix 5.3. shows fully the changes in land use introduced in laying down such rotations.

18. Granger (1794) 42.

19. Silas Angus, land agent to Shaftesbury, in a letter to Sir William Appleby, June 1794. This passage is quoted in Bell (1856) 103; the letter in full is reprinted in Granger (1794) 68. F. 17 contains details of practice on farms under Angus's stewardship.

20. Granger (1794) 54.

21. D.C. Longstaff Case 4, f.4. Letter from Pybus to Nesfield, 1818. This states that farmers in Brancepeth parish 'have alter'd their system and have (and are now) lying away to grass as much of their tillage lands as they possibly can.' This letter is also quoted in full in Surtees (1930) 18-19. See also the schedule referred to in footnote 17.

22. Bell (1856) 103.

23. Bell (1856) 105.

24. See appendix 5.1; C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 61, and various other leases in the Brancepeth and Cotesworth Collections. It does seem from these deeds that grass had previously played no part in arable husbandry in this area, the lands involved being permanently cultivated until this development. Chambers and Mingay (1966) regard this as the initial phase of an 'Agricultural Revolution'. See also Jones (1965).
25. Bell (1856) 120-2
26. Granger (1794)
27. D.C. Longstaff Case 4. f.4. Pybus to Nesfield 1818.
28. Bell (1856) 101-2.
29. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brandon-Deeds, etc. 'A Survey and Valuation of the several Farms, Lands, and Premises Belonging to the Right Honourable the Earl of Shaftesbury Situate at Brandon and Burnigill in the County of Durham'. (c.1805) 70.
30. Thirsk has similarly refuted the idea that the adjectives 'backward' and 'primative' were applicable to agriculture in the county in the sixteenth century. Thirsk (1967) 27.
31. Bell's description of landlord/tenant agreements in 1854 applies equally as well as early as 1699, showing either the conventionalisation of this type of document or suggesting an almost complete lack of change in this relationship throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with Brancepeth at a relatively advanced stage in 1699. See Appendix 5.1.
For a full general discussion of letting and leases see Curtis (1911) 1-70.
32. Angus to Appleby 1794.
33. See Appendix 5.1.
34. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brandon-Deeds, etc. Survey and Valuation of c. 1805.
35. D.C. Longstaff Case 4, f.4. Pybus to Nesfield 1818.
36. G.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box CI, bundle 3, f.46.
37. G.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box BV, bundle 5, f.3.
38. G.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box E, bundle 13, f.15. Liddell was the owner of this estate immediately prior to its purchase by the Ellisons.
39. To date (September 1969) no estate records have come to light for the years before 1800 except for the twelve months from Martinmas 1727 to Martinmas 1728. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/V 107.

40. For bibliographies see Chaloner (1954); Grigg (1967); Chambers and Mingay (1966) Chapter Four.
41. Compare, for example, the views of the Hammonds (1911) with those of Gonner (1912) and Tate (1944, 1948); the views of Levy (1911) with those of Mingay (1962, 1968).
42. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 4.
43. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 7.
44. The decline of the small farmer seems to have been a feature associated almost everywhere with enclosure, but it was in fact, in Brancepeth as elsewhere in the country, a natural process in operation long before the middle of the eighteenth century. See the standard works, also Chambers (1940); Hunt (1959). See especially Mingay (1962, 1968).
45. G.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box Z, bundle 2, f.38-40.
46. G.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box CI, bundle 3, f.3,4.

Instructions in agreement with the mason for building walls around Ellison's allotments after the division of Stockley and Willington Commons:

Foundations for the wall to be sunk at least four inches. The Wall to be twenty-two inches thick at the bottom, sixteen inches thick at the top, and to have two courses of throughs in the usual places and to be five feet high above the surface of the ground.
The sd Mason to cut and lay Casping sods upon the sd wall so as to raise it nine inches over and above the sd five feet of stone wall above the surface of the ground.
47. Northumberland C.R.O. NR0 404 (Bell) 253.
48. G.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box CI, bundle 3, f.38;
C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Stockley-Deeds, etc. June 1st, 1765. This lease also includes details of 'stubbing the whins'.
49. Lennard (1932), reproduced in Minchinton (1968) Vol.I. 175; Smailes (1960) 152.
50. Evans (1956) 229; Thirsk (1967).
51. Granger (1794) 46.
52. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E1. October 7th 1762.
53. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 4; D/Br/P 61;
D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. January 26th, 1694.
54. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 4.
55. This engrossing and rationalisation seems to have been a relatively common predecessor to enclosure in the eighteenth century. See Mingay (1962) 480-3.

56. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Willington-Deeds, etc.

In the light of conditions over the rest of the area it does seem likely that this was a reflection of the conventionalisation of the deeds rather than an accurate representation of the contemporary situation.
57. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc.
58. G.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box Z, bundle 5,f.13.
59. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 1.
60. G.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box BV, bundle 5,f.11.
61. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Littleburn-Deeds, etc. December 14th, 1726.
62. H.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box BV, bundle 5.f.11.
63. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brancepeth-Deeds, etc. March 9th, 1711.
64. G.A. Cotesworth MSS. Box E, bundle 3,f.11.
65. D.C. Raine MSS. Volume 49, f.1.
66. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 6.
67. For a detailed discussion of the complexity of the situation see Kerridge (1967) Chapters 1 - 3. For a commentary on the legal aspects of the landlord/tenant relationship see Curtis (1911) 333-43, 355-422.
68. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 6.
69. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/BR/E 8.
70. P.R.O. Microfilm E.164. 37.
71. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 15; D/Br/E 8.
72. For a general description of early agriculture in County Durham see Kerridge (1967) 159-60.
73. V.C.H. County Durham, Volume II. 162.
74. Sc.S. Probate inventories for the Hinde family of 1581, 1628, 1675.
75. As well as various probate inventories, see also D.C. Raine MSS. Volume 49, f.1.
76. P.R.O. Microfilm LR 2/192. 1608 Crown Survey. See also Chapter Seven fn. 3.
77. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brandon-Deeds, etc. October 25th, 1605.

78. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Humbersledge-Deeds, etc. October 30th, 1595.
79. Gray (1915) 105; C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Brandon-Deeds, etc. October 25th, 1605; Various deeds and inquisitions for Humbersledge and West Brandon.
80. Chambers and Mingay (1966) 97-8.
- 81; C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 6.
82. Gray (1915) 534.
83. Gray (1915) 106-7. See also Thirsk (1967) 27 for comment on the probability that enclosure was spreading rapidly by the beginning of the sixteenth century.
84. Granger (1794) 43.
85. Leonard (1905)
86. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Willington-Deeds, etc. See, for example, February 2nd, 1628. Several of these closes were in existence before 1608.
87. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br. Willington-Deeds, etc. See, for example, December 13th, 1632.
88. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 6.
89. D.C. Raine MSS. Volume 49, f.2.
90. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E 6.
91. D.C. Raine MSS. Volume 49. f.2.
92. Ibid.
93. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 4.
94. Sc.S. Halmote Court miscellaneous maps and plans, Box 2, number 44.
95. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 61.
96. Surtees (1930) C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection D/Br/E 8.
97. Stone (1789) 26-7, quoted in Chambers and Mingay (1966) 80.
98. D.C. Raine MSS. Volume 49. f.2.
99. See Beresford (1961)
- 100 Gray (1917) 105-7.
101. Uhlig (1961)
- 102 Butlin (1964)
- 103 Slater (1907 a)

104. Smailes (1960) 93.

105. Uhlig (1956)

106. See the papers of the I.B.G. Agrarian Landscape Research Group Conference, Musselburgh, May 15-16th, 1969.

107. Butlin (1964) 120.

108. Bell (1856) 111-2.

CHAPTER SIX - BYERS GREEN: A COMPARATIVE NOTE ON
SOURCE MATERIAL

This chapter, albeit a short one, was included for two main reasons. Firstly, it provides a chance to set out a more detailed formal analysis of a village plane than was possible in Brancepeth, and, secondly, it was intended to throw a little light on the difficulties of outlining differences in settlement and agrarian organisation which resulted from contrasting histories of ownership and tenure between the freehold estates of Brancepeth and the lands of the Church. As was seen in Chapter Two all these areas of study lie in the same physical area of County Durham, yet the organisation patterns underlying the landscape are sometimes markedly different.

Much of this chapter is taken from secondary sources and from results/^{of work} other than that of the present author. The primary source material reflected the contrasts in organisation and gave rise to many difficulties and frustrations when attempts were made at direct comparison between Byers Green and any of the lands of the freehold estates. Consequently, this aspect is not developed as fully as one might wish, based as it is on the themes picked out in the earlier chapters, and more attention is given to problems arising from the nature of the source material. With regard to the formal analysis of the village plans it is thought that several factors discernible in this context can be used to throw light on village development in Brancepeth Lordship, although it seems likely that here also some allowances need to be made for the role of ecclesiastical organisations in Byers Green. As with the main body of work, a retrogressive method of presentation has been adopted, but the nature of the source material rendered it virtually impossible to present spatial analysis of the themes with which the writer is concerned for a

time earlier than 1800

LAND OWNERSHIP AND TENURE

In 1841, Byers Green presented a pattern of landownership which contrasted markedly with that of most of the parish of Brancepeth. Figure 6.1. shows the main landowners in the township, and by this date the land held directly by the Bishop of Durham consisted solely of allotments made during enclosure in the first decade of the century, although he owned more in 1841 (Fig. 6.1) than he was awarded in 1809 (1). The Whitworth based Shafto family held most of the grassy steep slopes just to the south of the River Wear as well as somelands to the east of the village. These two owned the bulk of the township (Fig. 6.1) the rest being shared by some twenty-one landowners with several more people owning property in the village.

The relationship between these people and the Bishop is at present not very clear. Much of the land was 'copyhold', and some confusion arose here as this term appears to lack precise definition in this context. In Chapter Three, it was seen that copyhold, or customary lands, were held by the church. Here the term appears to imply some sort of manorial obligation. Exchange or sale of the freehold property is probably recorded in the deeds of such property, while the sale or exchange of all copyhold property had to be registered with the Halmote Court in Durham City.. The distinction between the types of tenure was maintained through enclosure of the moor, when land was allotted under the same conditions of tenure as the estates in right of which they were made. The implications (if any) behind this difference in ownership and tenure are not really clear - whilst as a landowner (owning both copyhold and freehold land) the Bishop would not exercise a great deal of control in the township, it might be

that as Lord of the Manor of Bondgate in Auckland his indirect legal influence was still quite strongly felt.

It is the legal and fiscal dealings with his tenants which appear to make up most of the available records. In terms of agrarian organisation the township certainly seems to have lacked the single guiding hand which led to the consolidation of farm plots across the river. As Figure 6.2. shows the emphasis was on small, often fragmented, holdings associated with cottages or houses in the village, with some forty-five tenants in the township at the time of the Tithe Survey. This may be a reflection of the diversity in time and space of the Bishop's interests as compared to the relatively close involvement of the heads of Brancepeth lordship in the running of their estates, although it seems unlikely that an organisation such as that of the Palatinate would not have maintained close control over the village.

The ages of both the pattern of ownership and that of tenure are difficult to estimated or even guess at, being as they are dynamic features subject to constant change. The records associated with Byers Green in the Halmote Court material are mainly financial, largely concerned with the assessment of land or the collection of rents. There are several comprehensive collections of records relating to the church lands in Byers Green (2), but several factors prevented useful analysis. The survey of 1647 is widely separated in time from the more recent material and there is no indication as to the precise area covered. Attempts initially to work backwards from the Tithe Survey using the rentals and, as a last resort, the Land Tax records, were largely frustrated by the absence of field names on the Tithe Map. Continuity can be achieved in a study of ownership or tenure in the church lands of the County, but such work is onerous and extremely lengthy. Recent work on a single farm

unit in Iveston has shown these difficulties well (3), even where field names are available from map evidence. The present writer felt at that stage in his research that he lacked the necessary expertise and time to attempt to pull this material together in such a way as to render it suitable for presentation at this level. Consequently, little light can be shed on patterns of ownership and tenure over this period in Byers Green.

LAND UTILISATION

This aspect of the township can be seen rather more clearly, although the spatial patterns are difficult to present owing to the difficulties outlined above, and while the probate inventories can provide much useful material in this context this information also is unsuitable to map on this small scale. The relationship between land use and the tenurial pattern must therefore be an obscure one in this case, and it has proved extremely difficult to put forward any deductions concerning the 'dynamics' of each in respect of the other.

The pattern of land use as represented by the Tithe Survey (Fig. 6.3) shows the township as being divided into two main areas, with the railway acting as a rough dividing line. The flatter lands to the South and West of the line, comprising the bulk of the late enclosed lands, are almost entirely arable. To the North and East land use is rather more mixed, with the steeper slopes of the Wear valley and Hags Beck grass covered and the arable land somewhat restricted to the flood plain of the river and the rolling land in the east of the township. The use of the enclosed land almost in entirety for arable husbandry comes as a surprise in the light of conditions on the earlier enclosures on the Brancepeth lands. In these, much of the land was laid to grass in a short time, as was seen in Chapter Five, whereas the

Act for Byers Green stressed the improvement of the moorland it remained arable over the next thirty years. Whether or not this was a reflection of the late date of enclosure, of physical conditions, or of landownership is not certain, but most of that land today (May 1970) is down to grassland.

Problems arise when attempting to estimate the effects of enclosure in this township in view of the shortage of suitable material relating to the last years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. Some of the papers of the Commissioners of Enclosure still survive (4) and, as in the final award (5), contain tantalising references to a pre-enclosure map of the village lands which had been specially drawn up for their use. To the best of this writer's knowledge no map evidence is at present available for the whole of Byers Green township before 1831; and the earliest partial coverage appears to be provided by the enclosure map of 1805/9. As will be seen later, it would appear that the village green before this date was a much more sophisticated piece of grassland than was that of Stockley or Willington, but little can be deduced as^{to} the nature or role of the moor. Information on rights relating to the common or its usage are sadly lacking, although as long ago as 1615, when it was almost certainly larger (6), it had been shared without stinting by a large number of people (7). It also seems likely, however, that it carried scrub if not mature woodland - one Thomas Wright of the village commented in about 1780 the 'plenty of fuel is to be had from the.....common' (8).

THE VILLAGE

This section relies for its source material largely on details taken from work which then had, or subsequently has been published or read at various conferences (9). It shows what can be done with a certain type of source material, and it throws light on a formal layout similar to that found in Brancepeth, Stockley, Willington and Brandon. Clearly, however, there are dangers in relating conclusions drawn from a study of Byers Green to the other villages, and the pitfalls in relating formal analysis and village function have been acknowledged in Chapter Four.

As was seen at the beginning of Chapter Two, Byers Green village in 1850 showed quite clearly a settlement that at one time had respected a clearly demarcated building line which was by this date in disrespect, probably as a result of growth and the coming of the pit in the years following enclosure of the common waste and the village green. It was also shown earlier that the driftway was an important formal element, but its function by the end of the eighteenth century is one which cannot be assessed fully. By then, the green which it entered must have presented an appearance vastly different from the rough pasture of Stockley's green:

"In the village front is an open view without the appearance of any inclosures, the town extending a full half-mile long and near a furlong wide, all of green turf, in beautiful verdure most of the year. There is a bowling green before the house and in the centre of the town, the whole being nearly in the proportion of a Roman circus: and here frequently are both horse and foot races. Many other sports and games are also exhibited here annually....." (10).

If the green is to be seen as common pasture then it must be at a date some distance removed, while the broad, funnel-shaped approach of the 'driftway' discernible from a formal analysis can only be seen as a fossil structure of some antiquity.

Although it would seem that the building line was clearly demarcated, it need not have been closed - indeed, in the light of the evidence for Brancepeth and Stockley it may be considered that a fully closed building line was probably anomalous to settlements in this part of the county. Byers Green by c.1809 had apparently suffered very little infilling of the street frontage, most buildings being set within their own tofts at some distance from their neighbours (Fig. 6.4.) (11).

As with the villages in the Brancepeth estate a degree of regularity of toft width suggested itself immediately on a first examination of the enclosure map and the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 for the area. The tofts on each side of the street are of broadly similar length (although there is a marked difference between the two sides) and appear to be of equal or proportionate widths. Within the general picture from the whole of Durham Roberts chose Byers Green as an 'excellent example' with which to demonstrate this regularity along the street frontage:

The tofts in the West Row, from north to south, have the proportions 2: 1: 2: 2: 1: 1: 3 and the measurements involved in this case appear to be units of eight standard rods of 16.5 feet, the total length being 96 rods, or twelve eight rod units and, irregular as the east row seems, there are grounds for believing that the original tofts, again running north to south, had the proportions $1\frac{1}{2}$: 2: 2: $\frac{1}{2}$: 2: $\frac{1}{2}$: 1: 2, also twelve eight rod units (Fig 6.4) (12)

It is his belief that such toft patterns 'strongly suggest planning if not deliberate regulation.' (13).

The marked asymetry in length of the toft tails on opposite sides of the village in Stockley, Brancepeth and Willington provoked comment in Chapter Four, and a similar unbalanced picture is also present in Byers Green (Fig. 6.4) although in a somewhat modified form. The villages in the Brancepeth Estate lands offer evidence of only dubious value here, as a regularity of toft width could not be accurately determined, although Stockley

in particular fits Roberts' general picture very well. The tofts of the north row in Stockley were of considerable length and apparent regularity, while the south side shows a much more irregular pattern. The relationship between toft length and regularity appears to be the other way round in Byers Green, although this may not be of any great significance. The village presents a situation where the very long tofts in the east present a more diffuse structure on the street front (although Fig 6.4 can be seen to suggest a former degree of greater regularity) while the more regular tofts in the west are much shorter.

In the light of Uhlig's interpretation of these tofts as former infield area, and considering the position of this village in relation to the former common waste, it is surely not unreasonable to suggest that the east row is the older of the two.

Whilst paying due respect to those deficiencies of formal analysis recognised earlier, in view of documentary evidence for the earlier period it might be possible to suggest that this row formed the entire settlement of Byers Green, facing on to the common waste, with the infield reaching down behind the buildings to the stream. If this was the case, and it seems probable in the light of findings presented by Roberts, it could be that his classification of rural settlement on the basis of 'rows' can be seen as a dynamic one moving from simple to more complex within a particular group of settlement forms (14).

Roberts suggests that this asymmetrical form of two row settlement is 'closely related' to one row villages. The documentary evidence cited below would appear to indicate that the settlement was only of very small size in the late twelfth century, being only clearly established by the late fourteenth. The relative age of Byers Green, when compared with that of the villages of the Brancepeth estate, is a matter of conjecture.

The castle at Brancepeth was first erected in 1086, and it seems unlikely that some form of settlement would not have appeared under its walls at an early stage. If this is the case, it may well be that an earlier date of foundation could be responsible for the more irregular pattern of these villages, either because they were not regulated in inception or because the pattern degenerated with the passage of time. Such a discrepancy in time could also account for the relative lack of regularity in Byers Green east row, if it is in fact older than the west. Such conjecture on the origins of Brancepeth and Stockley presupposes one very important assumption - that who- or whatever was doing the 'regulating' was making his/its influence felt on both secular and ecclesiastical estates alike. The author at this stage is forced to beg the many questions that this raises, feeling wholly inadequate to even begin to answer them.

Byers Green was the site of colonisation as early as 1183, when it was recorded in Boldon Book that one Ralph de Binchester held one clearing for half a mark, with one Philip de Gildford holding Byermoor (15), and by the time of Bishop Hatfield's survey in 1381/2 a recognisable village was clearly present. The survey records dwellings which were said to lie ex parte orientali villae de Byers and ex parte occidentali villae, a description which would not have been inaccurate at the time of enclosure. By this date, a farm appears to occupy the site of the early assart, while there is also a manor house with two carucates of land, eight farms and nine cottages with holdings of various sizes lying in diversis campis or in diversis locis (16).

As a means of throwing light on the initial stages of village growth on the estates north of the river, this examination of Byers Green throws up many possibilities. However,

one can only suggest similarities, and these may or may not be significant. It seems unlikely that much documentary evidence will be forthcoming directly concerning this earlier period in Brancepeth. Similarly, the detailed estate papers for Brancepeth provided a wealth of material which was lacking for Byers Green, and while the author may have some quite firm ideas about the development of the township he has no evidence - from the documents or in the field - to support these.

CHAPTER SIX - NOTES

1. C.R.O. ENC 6, 7. Enclosure award for Byers Green.
2. C.R.O. LTA/D/(SE). Land Tax records, an incomplete series from 1759.
Sc.S Halmote Court Rentals 190707-190836. Rentals from 1623-1800
Sc.S. C.C. 23375 Surveys and rentals box 162. 'Survey of Manor of Bp. Auckland by order of Parliament 1647'.
3. B.K. Roberts Personal communication.
4. Northumberland C.R.O. NRO 404 (Bell) 253. Working papers of the enclosure commissioners for Byers Green.
5. C.R.O. ENC 6,7.
6. Sc.S H.C. Box 2 No.44 Map of Byers Green in 1831. The map shows an area called Highfield 'which appears to have been divided and allotted by an agreement or award of 1754'. (Fig. 6.3).
See also Northumberland C.R.O. NRO 404 (Bell) 253. The Commissioners ruled that all encroachment which had been made in the last thirty years were to be deemed part of the common - they appended a lengthy list of such encroachments.
7. C.R.O. D/Br/E8. Thomas Emerson's survey of 1614. All tenants of Brancepeth Lordship who held lands in several farms in Byers Green and neighbouring hamlets 'ought and time out of mind have had common without stint together with the Bp's tenants on the Bp's common called Byers Moor'.
8. 'Mr Wrights Description of his villa in Byers Green'. in: Gentleman's Magazine LXIII (1793) Part 1. 213-16.
9. Roberts (1969); (1970a); (1970b); (1970c).
10. Gentleman's Magazine op.cit. 214.
11. Gentleman's Magazine op.cit. 215. Wright remarked that he was living 'in a village (with) no house nearer than a hundred yards'.
12. Roberts (1970 (b)) 242.
Criticism can be levelled at these measurements in terms of doubtful cartography of the original maps. The author is grateful to Dr. Roberts for permission to reproduce the following comment on methods of measurement probably used by the original mapmakers, and by him in his analysis of the early maps:

The margin of error which can be tolerated in such measurements is difficult to evaluate. It seems impossible that an actual rod of 16.5 feet (5.0 metres) was used in practice, no doubt a shorter rod, one half or even one quarter of this, was much

more convenient. Even on flat ground, and if care were taken, an error could be expected to accumulate as the result of the repeated measurements; on sloping, uneven ground, or if the work was not done carefully, this error could be substantial when a line of 50 or 100 rods in length was being laid out. Furthermore it is well to recall that at a scale of 1: 2500 a normal engraved line on a map is of the order of 2 feet wide (0.6 metres), while the expansion or contraction of paper by no more than 1/10 ins. (0.25 cm) accounts for 20.8 ft (6.4 metres) on the ground. Tithe and Enclosure maps are rarely accurate enough for exact measurements to be derived from them, although it must be noted that they do tend to reinforce the argument for the regularity of toft patterns. The earlier surveyors quite clearly often regarded the tofts as regular even when the clinical accuracy of the Ordnance Survey shows they are not.

The following table illustrates these points:

Byers Green: West Row (N S)

| | G | F | E | D | C | B | A | Total |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 260 [±] | 150 [±] | 235 [±] | 230 [±] | 135 [±] | 135 [±] | 440 [±] | 1650 feet |
| 2 | 264 | 132 | 264 | 264 | 132 | 132 | 396 | 1584 feet |
| 3 | 288 | 144 | 288 | 288 | 144 | 144 | 432 | 1728 feet |
| 4 | 16.0 | 8.0 | 17.5 | 14.0 | 8.2 | 8.5 | 26.5 | |
| 5 | 18.0 | 8.0 | 16.0 | 14.0 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 26.0 | |
| 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 12 |
| 7 | -4 | +18 | +26 | -34 | +3 | +3 | +44 | |

1. Measurements (in feet) derived from the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map (Sheet 34/8 County Series)
2. 'Predicted' measurements if a 16.5 foot rod was used in the ratio 1 unit : 8 x 16.5 (See line 6.)
3. 'Predicted' measurements if an 18 foot rod was used.
4. 16.5 foot units represented by the measurements in line 1.
5. 16.5 foot units derived from measurements made on the enclosure map of 1809.
6. Suggested pattern of regularity in terms of 8 x 16.5 foot units.
7. Degree of variation (in feet) between line 2 and line 1.

Toft A is markedly larger than expected, but clearly had opportunities for encroachment southwards which were denied all other tofts, even toft G, which was bounded on its northern side by a roadway. It seems reasonable to suggest that E and D could well represent

a 4 x 16.5 foot toft which has been sub-divided rather unevenly.

A rod of 16.5 feet has been selected because it is felt that over seven tofts the accumulated errors would be positive rather than negative. The total variation between the actual measurements (line 1) and the 'expected' measurements (line 2) is some 66 feet, curiously enough exactly 4 x 16.5 feet. Over a distance involving the measurement of 96 rod units 4 have been gained, an error of nearly 4%, not an intolerable discrepancy, more especially as we have no measure of the degree of accuracy expected. The long time perspective involved and the presence of modern buildings makes it difficult to check measurements in the field or indeed appraise the site through twelfth or thirteenth century eyes.

13. Roberts (1970 (b)) 242.
14. Roberts himself later advanced this conclusion in print: 'it is reasonable to postulate a sequence of development, the one row form becoming a two-row village with the addition of further homesteads as population increased.' See Roberts (1970 (a)) 601.
15. Greenwell, ed (1852)
16. Greenwell, ed (1857)

CHAPTER SEVEN . BRANCEPETH: THE LORDSHIP 1569-1632

Something of the difficulties inherent in a horizontal study of a 'whole' landscape has already been seen (1), but it was felt that some attempt had to be made to do this here to draw the work to a satisfactory conclusion, to set the scene, as it were, at the beginning of the period studied. Only then can many of the questions raised be framed constructively together and suggestions for further development be put forward.

The landscape in 1569/70 was already largely the product of the interaction between man~~d~~ and land over a fairly lengthy period. To avoid presenting a list of questions to which he has no answers, then the author must here content himself with a description of that landscape as it appeared at the end of the sixteenth century. By doing this it is intended to provide an artificial 'initial surface', and therefore the opportunity to see the way in which the underlying factors governing settlement and landscape evolution have affected this particular area through time. A base line of some sort is clearly necessary if these factors are to be evaluated in any way.

The overall visual impression of the area at this time was surely quite different from that found after another two hundred and fifty years. At the time of the Attainder on Westmorland, Brancepeth estate contained several large areas of open, common waste (Fig. 7.1). The largest of these was referred to in 1615 as 'a great common', (2) forming as it did a continuous area serving Brancepeth and Stockley in the east, Willington, Helmedon Row, and Crook and Billy Row in the south, and Thornley, Helme Park, and Greenwell Hill in the south-west. East Brandon Moor forms the only other definitely located area of common waste (3), although Brandon township contained at least two other similar

areas (Fig. 7.1), it is difficult to assess the amount of enclosure going on at this time, appearing likely that some farms in the area had expanded in Tudor times, while almost certainly piecemeal enclosure was taking place (4). Against this, however, stands the declaration in 1615 of a jury and nine witnesses that as long as they could remember they knew not 'any particion or division of Wastes or Comons within this Lordpp made by any Township tenants or other' (5).

In the years immediately after the Ditchfield Grant, Brandon gives a fairly detailed picture of the way in which enclosure by agreement could take place. In 1615, East Brandon Moor was open to all tenants of the township without stinting, but shortly after Cropley bought the estate the moor was divided up by means of walls and stinting was introduced. Conversion to tillage took place within a few years, and by the end of the seventeenth century there was no common waste left in Brandon Lordship (6).

The loss of the common was probably a severe blow to the poorer section of the community. In Brancepeth in 1608 there were several inhabitants who appear to have no other means of support than the rights available to them on the Lord's Common, and although East Brandon appears to have had no inhabitants quite so limited, the effects of the enclosure must have been felt quite strongly among the smaller tenants.

There were some large stands of timber on the estate at the end of the sixteenth century, the bulk of it apparently 'natural'. Although the area in 1569/70 was 'well replenished with wood and timber whereof there is no great sale because there is such plenty of trees.....' (7), it appears to have been confined in the main to the demesne parks and the immediate area of Brancepeth and Stockley, with outlying woods in

Waterhouses, Ivesley, and the Brandon 'demeanes'. (8). Not until the very end of the eighteenth century was any planting done on a large scale throughout the estate and in general the landscape must have appeared much less wooded in c.1600 than it did in 1850 (9).

With quite a strong emphasis on grassland at this time (10), fields held in severalty in some parts of the estate were very much larger than those of the nineteenth century (11), although many estate tenants held very small pieces of unenclosed-land in the subdivided fields found in close proximity to all the villages. Only in Willington does it appear that these fields are held in common, and the evidence presented in Chapter 5 would seem to show that even here the system was at an advanced stage of decay (12). Tenure was apparently freehold - the survey of 1615 states categorically that there were no copyholders within the Lordship (13), although the lands of the Manor of the Rectory in Brancepeth were clearly not included here.

The survey of 1608 shows areas of pasture in Waterhouses called the West Pasture and East Pasture, of 346 acres and 302 acres respectively (14). It would seem likely that these were little more than fenced areas of rough grazing (as they probably still were in 1707 (Fig. 5.5)), but, if that was the case, they represented an organisational change in the use of that land which may have had quite far-reaching repercussions. The same Crown survey shows West Brandon as a farm of some 290 acres, with 135 acres of meadowland in two fields and 155 acres of pasture, again in only two fields (15). What little arable land there was on the several farms appears to have been down mainly to hay, with some hardcorn, oats, corn and bigg (barley) becoming more important in the first quarter of the seventeenth century (16).

The bulk of the population was concentrated in the four main villages of the lordship, although many of the larger farmsteads had been long established (Fig 7.1) (17). Communications by modern standards must have been very difficult, the unfenced tracks across the moor and the hedged 'loanings' bearing very little resemblance to roads of today, in terms both of form and, to a lesser extent, of location. It would seem likely that the skeleton of the settlement pattern found in 1850 was already in existence, and within this the form of the nucleated settlements was probably little different from that to be found a century later (Fig. 7.1) (18), although both Brancepeth and Brandon villages included pinfolds which are unidentifiable at a later date (19). The fabric of these settlements appeared to be in surprisingly poor condition in 1569/70 (2), as indeed was that of the castle itself in 1615:

.....the said Castell was.....in verie good state and repare and well furnished.....but the same is now much ruyned wasted and decayed (21).

This picture clashes quite strongly with that given of the estate in general in the earlier survey. Before the rebellion, the farms were of a good quality, worked by wealthy and substantial tenants who had 'much land for their rent and great waste ground to keep their cattle in summer and plenty of enclosed ground for the succour and maintenance of them in winter' (22).

It is possible that there was one, or maybe even a group of, nucleations in the north of Brandon township. The farms indicated in Figure 7.1 were said to have been 'parcell to several out-hamlets laying and being within y^e Townpp of ye parish afores^d caled or known by ye name of Byshottles' (23), and Burnigill at that time was called a 'village or hamlet'. The disappearance of Byshottles as an independent unit of organisation may have been due to this multiplicity of small settlements and a lack

of one strong nucleation.

The organisational framework may have differed slightly elsewhere in 1608, with both Waterhouses and West Brandon appearing in the Crown Survey as part of Cornsay township (24). As was indicated in Chapter Three, the significance of the township as an administrative unit at this time is not particularly clear(25).

Despite the generally pessimistic view of decay which apparently was seen by all who came to Brancepeth for any kind of official purpose, the presence of a strong tradition of lordship must have been quite apparent to the eye, manifesting itself in the form of the castle at Brancepeth and the two large areas of wooded deer park close by. The picture must have seemed a tranquil one from afar, but was even then changing. A letter of 1615 points out that Brancepeth Park was being displanted, the deer being sent to Raby, and 'all was desolation' in the estate (26). The park referred to was probably the East Park, which in 1569/70 was enclosed by some three and a half miles of paling and bounded on its south side by the River Wear. It appears to have been converted to farmland by 1640 (27), and the deer park consisted of only a few acres by 1741 (28).

The detailed effects of the crushing of the Rising of the North are not very clear, but the immediate effects were apparently severe enough to provoke comment and concern. A letter to Lord Burghley in 1571 stated that:

The Bishopric is very weak, as there is none to whom they may resort for succour, for the bishop they make small account of; and whereas Westmorland, Swinburne, and others kept houses which are now empty, that part of the country is clean waste (29).

Although this surely must be something of an overstatement when applied to Brancepeth as a whole, it is possible that only Elizabeth's decision to spare the lives of rebels who were tenants on such estates saved a great deal of destruction.

Before 1570, the estate had been in the hands of one family which, in general, appears to have managed its estates well. The end of the Nevilles' lordship marked the beginning of a sixty year period of lordship from afar which only ended with the sale of the estate to Ralph Cole in 1636. It was this period, however, which saw the beginnings of accelerated change of the landownership patterns in the area and a rapid decline for the estate in terms of both size and stature (Fig. 3.4) (3). Not until the nineteenth century were some members of the estate brought back together again, and it is the changes, and reasons for these changes, in the intervening two hundred years with which this thesis has been largely concerned.

CHAPTER SEVEN - NOTES

1. See Introduction, fn. 2.
2. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E8.
3. Ibidem; D.C. Raine MSS. R.49 f.3.
4. The court books of the later years of the 17th century contain many pages of fines for 'intacks' and incroachments and it is surely not unreasonable to see this as a process carrying on from this earlier date. See C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E6, E8.
5. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection D/Br/E8.
6. See Chapter 5, text and fn. 91, 92. Almost certainly some division of the moor took place before 1632, but the pace of conversion to tillage certainly seems to have accelerated after this date when compared with surrounding townships.
7. P.R.O. Microfilm E. 164/37.
8. Ibidem. See also C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection D/Br/E8. Exactly what or where these were is not clear at this stage.
9. See Chapter 5, fn. 96; Compare the First Edition O.S. 6" sheet XXVI with, for example, maps of 1701 and 1741 - C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 61, P.L.4; See also Proc. N.S.A. (3rd Series) Vol.II 1905 178-9.
10. P.R.O. Microfilm LR 2/192 gives the following breakdown of land use. (Figures in percentages). Exclusive of the open common waste.

| | <u>Arable</u> | <u>Meadow</u> | <u>Pasture</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Brancepeth | 16.6 | 37.5 | 45.8 | 99.9 |
| Stockley | 17.2 | 64.2 | 18.6 | 100 |
| East Brandon | 8.4 | 24.5 | 67.0 | 99.9 |
| Willington | 21.0 | 42.8 | 36.1 | 99.9 |

11. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P 61 and Fig. 5.5, for the size of fields in the north of the area in 1701; P.R.O. Microfilm LR 2/192 for details in 1608.
12. See Chapter 5, text and fn.87.
13. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E8.
14. P.R.O. Microfilm LR 2/192
15. Ibidem. See also C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection D/Br. Brandon-Deeds, etc.
16. See, for example, Appendix 5.2.
17. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection D/Br/E8.
18. See Chapter 4, text and fn. 44.

19. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/E6.
20. See Chapter 4, text and fn 44.
21. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection D/Br/E8. See also Chapter 4, text and fn. 45.
22. P.R.O. Microfilm E 164/37.
23. D.C. Raine MSS. R.49 F.2.
24. P.R.O. Microfilm LR 2/192.
25. See Chapter Three, text and fn. 8, 9.
26. Proc. N.S.A. (3rd Series) Vol.II 1905. 177.
27. D.C. Raine MSS. R.49 fn.1.
28. C.R.O. Brancepeth Collection. D/Br/P.L. 4.
29. V.C.H. County Durham Vol.I 167.
30. See Chapter 3.

CONCLUSION

This section is not intended as a watertight argument to prove a point nor as a proposition of a 'theory' of landscape change. Rather it represents a summary of thoughts and ideas which have arisen over the last few years in the completing of this work as it stands at present, together with some ideas on the scope of future work. As seen earlier, within each aspect of 'landscape' examined immediate causes of change must have been mainly local, but it is difficult to assess the degree to which these represent modifications of and adaptations to movements and trends on a wider scale. It would be unusual indeed for a work of this limited scope to contribute much in the way of original ideas which can be applied in general, but it does have a part to play for all that. The author believes that such studies are important if people with more time, experience, and breadth of knowledge are to produce the generalisations and explanation of much in the past that is still hidden today.

The work set out in the preceding pages is largely concerned with the evolution of a landscape, albeit over a very small area. Attempts at explanation were made wherever feasible - by studying the landscape through time it has been possible with varying degrees of success to pick out a variety of causal and influential factors. It is felt that the way in which these factors affected the evolution of a particular landscape can be seen as relevant and applicable on a larger scale.

It would appear that the forces at work can be grouped into three main areas - i) initial and ii) causal factors, and iii) those which act as constraints (See Table I overleaf). 'Initial

Table 1 : SOME ELEMENTS OF LANDSCAPE CHANGE

| <u>FACTORS</u> | <u>DECISION-MAKING</u> | <u>AGENTS OF CHANGE</u> |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| 1. <u>Initial</u> | <p>Physical</p> <p>Administrative</p> <p>Technological - invention</p> <p>Economic - profit</p> <p>Military - defence, punishment</p> <p>Political - power</p> <p>Social - more houses</p> <p>Personal - combination of any/all of the others, or simply a whim</p> <p>Tradition/conservatism</p> <p>Limited technology</p> <p>Field sizes, shapes and patterns</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>Labour</p> | <p>Level 1, large scale landlord</p> <p>Level 2, small scale Tenant/occupier</p> <p>Basic link in man - land relationship.</p> |
| 2. <u>Causal/Control</u> | <p>A. Estate Lands</p> <p>i) Superimposition - emparking methods</p> <p>ii) Encouragement - freedom for better tenants to experiment</p> <p>iii) 'Agreement' - enclosure</p> <p>B. Small Freehold Estates</p> <p>i) Reception of printed/spoken word</p> <p>- rejection/acceptance of new ideas and techniques</p> | <p>(Patterns of tenure and occupation)</p> |
| 3. <u>Constraints</u> | <p>A more detailed model would no doubt show these elements in much greater detail and fully bring out the interaction between them.</p> | |

factors are taken to be those conditions prevailing in a landscape at any one time. They can be seen as basically physical - relief, drainage, soils, climate, vegetation - and although they do change with time it is unlikely that they would have changed quickly enough in this particular case to influence the speed of landscape change. They are responsible for much of what can be seen in a landscape at any one time, but within these initial limits they play only a small part directly in the way in which that landscape changes.

A case is also made here for including the administrative organisation of an area in any list of 'initial' factors. Units of both civil and ecclesiastical administration changed in this area several times during the period of study, yet they were not units unique to this area. Although personalities within either of these systems can make their presence felt - as, for instance, in the Brancepeth tithe dispute - as such systems are found in many other places, for purposes of comparison between areas any major changes in landscape and settlement can be taken to be brought about by factors other than both 'physical' and 'administrative'.

The physical and organisational backcloth to this area was sketched in at the beginning of the thesis. Against this it is possible to see the main groupings of factors which cause and control landscape change and those which place constraints upon it. Elements of 'cause' and 'control' are difficult to separate - the discovery of new crop strains may cause changes in an estate but it will probably be profit motives of the landlord that control these. Constraining influences are possibly the most fluid in terms of variation from time to time and place to place (Table I)

In view of the ideas expressed above it is surely not unreasonable to see 'landscape' as a function of the decision-making process, either directly or indirectly, on the part of landlords large and small. The face of the land is a complex variable depending largely in rural areas on the modification of physical factors by agrarian techniques and technological advance, but the ways in which these modifications take place are determined by landownership. The effects of decisions by landlords have been prominent throughout this work. For instance, the timings of enclosure can be seen as a direct result of changes in landownership, as can the changing of agricultural techniques especially in the later years, while the disappearance of Stockley provides the most striking example of the lord's influence. Patterns of tenure similarly depend on ownership, and although not usually directly physically expressed in the landscape, such patterns can often play an important part in landscape evolution, representing as they do a downward movement of the decision making process.

Settlement and field patterns, building fabric and crop types - such features are elements in a landscape, the end product at any one time of a whole series of decisions, either national or local, stretching back through time. The situation in which the pattern of nucleated settlement evolved in Brancepeth probably precludes to some extent conclusions applicable on any wider scale (2). Such a large freehold estate formed something of an exception in County Durham, and it is difficult to link some changes in the estate with those going on in the immediate vicinity outside it, although with regard to such movements as the early colonisation of the waste and later enclosure it seems to have been fairly typical. As Chapter Four showed, certain formal similarities are apparent between

the villages, yet it is not really possible to assess the effects of the long period of political stability before 1570 on the way in which these settlements originated and evolved. It seems that in such a situation of 'stable' ownership the speed of change in a landscape tends to extremes. It may be slowed down a great deal by a conservative landlord and/or agent, or, as a result of tenurial and technological changes which open new avenues for profit or 'progress', change imposed from above can be very rapid indeed. A steady evolution, a more 'normal' pace of change, would appear to go on where the pattern of ownership presents a fragmented picture of medium and small holdings where decisions by individuals tend not to be very far-reaching. It is the factors behind these decisions which need to be exposed more and more, and it is these which can only be determined as a result of many local studies in depth and subsequent generalisation.

Many questions have been raised without any answers being given; many gaps have become apparent in the time which has elapsed since parts of this thesis were completed. Apart from the filling of such holes, the work can be seen as incomplete in two spheres, both of which the present author hopes to explore more fully in the future.

The source material itself is by no means exhausted. In some cases the significance of documents escaped notice, much more material was available than there was time to consult, and more sources have come to light in recent months. The potential of this source material is discussed more fully in the section of the bibliography on primary sources. Further work, partially arising from new sources, can be seen to be concerned with developing the study of this one area in much greater depth, pushing backwards through time, exploring more themes, or

developing more local studies for a similar period in time for the purposes of comparison, and, ultimately, generalisation.

It is recognised that these words are being written against a background of on-going research in all these areas, but there are still many imponderables about the themes and the area which acted as subject material for this thesis.

CONCLUSION - NOTES

1. See Beresford and Hurst (1971) 121-2 for the way in which changing climate may have influenced settlement siting, morphology, and fabric.
2. 'Probably' is deliberately inserted here. Until more is found out about the early days of the lordship it is difficult at this stage to say whether such conclusions will or will not be possible in the future. Although comparison is quite easy in a formal sense, in a functional, explanatory way one wonders how valid it can be when the surrounding area apparently differed so much in terms of ownership, tenure, and political sovereignty.