

The Cheshire estates of John Tollemache of Peckforton, 1861–1872

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Cheshire has never been dominated by one large landowner but has been divided between a number of gentry families, ranging from well-known names like the Grosvenors to families unknown outside the county. The map published by the Cheshire Record Office lists fifty of them in the middle of the nineteenth century, but despite their national position the Grosvenors were not the biggest. By then their holdings and those of the Cholmondeleys were eclipsed by the 25,380 acres owned by John Tollemache, later first Baron Tollemache, of Peckforton Castle.¹

In the mid-nineteenth century the Tollemache estates in Cheshire comprised two well-separated units, Beeston and Woodhey in the south of the county, including Peckforton itself, Beeston, Bunbury with the surrounding townships, and in the east, Mottram, Longdendale and Tintwistle.² Figure 1 is intended to show the approximate extent of his lands and influence in relation to the county as a whole. It is not a precise record of all his holdings, and exaggerates their extent because it records all the townships in which he owned property. In some he had only a few, like Northwich, only one, and Leftwich, three, though both in contrast to Castle Northwich where he had 106. Despite this built-in exaggeration, his holdings are still shown to be only a small part of the county. Although Tollemache's estates were by far the biggest, his nominal rent roll was not. His amounted to £27,602, bigger than the Cholmondeleys' (16,842 acres) at £26,991, but the Westminsters' (15,001 acres) came to

¹ *Distribution of landownership in Cheshire, c. 1850*, Cheshire & Chester Archives and Local Studies (CCALS), undated.

² For convenience, these are referred to respectively as the southern and eastern estates.

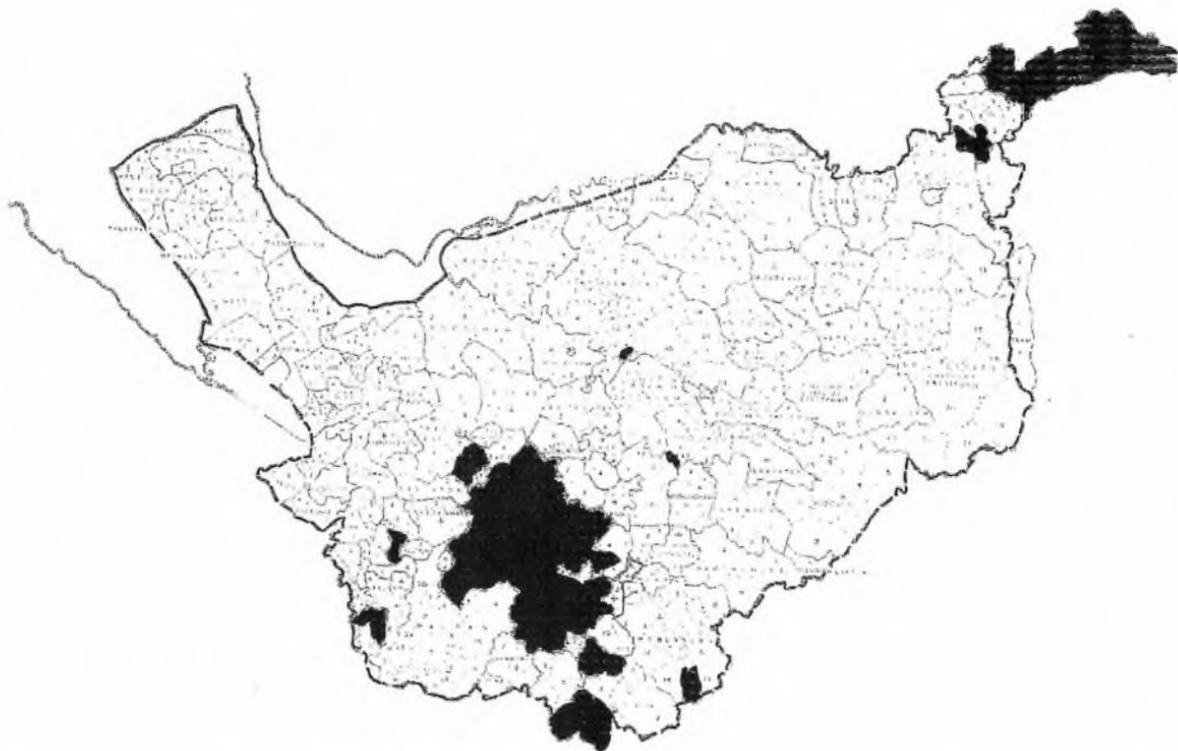


FIGURE 1 Representation of the principal Tollemache estates (base map derived from D. Sylvester & G. Nulty, *The historical atlas of Cheshire* (Chester, 1958), p. 37).

£29,249. This is a reflection of the quality of the land that each family owned, and in particular, the poor yield that Tollemache obtained from the eastern estate. Most of the townships were essentially rural, heavily involved in cattle rearing, for milk and meat which were supplied to the nearby cities, including Manchester and Liverpool, and cheese which had a national market, but there were a number of urban properties and moorland, of which more below. The rural dependence upon cattle made them susceptible to epidemics of foot and mouth disease, pleuro-pneumonia and rinderpest, all of which occurred during the decade under examination here.

There is no need to describe the epidemics in detail as this has been done elsewhere, though pleuro-pneumonia has received less recent attention than the others.³ Their respective effects upon the Tollemache estates will be shown in the tables that follow, but suffice to say that foot and mouth was not a killer, nor was it seen as one. Pleuro-pneumonia did kill animals and was described by Walley as 'one the most insidious diseases with which we are acquainted, and [he did] not hesitate to assert that it has been the cause of greater losses to British stock-owners and dairymen than any other single disease to which animals are subject'. He could not quantify the losses, partly because so many cases passed unreported, but Fisher put them at 30%.⁴ Nevertheless, for whatever reason, in the decade that concerns us, it did not seem to cause widespread concern and its financial effects could be contained by the network of local cattle clubs established either in the major estates or in groupings of townships.⁵ Both these diseases lasted for a considerable time, but the third, rinderpest, or cattle plague to give it its popular name, was a scourge for only seven or eight months, from the autumn of 1865

³ A. Woods, *A manufactured plague: The history of foot and mouth in Britain* (London, 2004); S. Matthews, 'The cattle plague in Cheshire 1865–1866', *Northern History*, 38 (2001), pp. 107–19; J. Fisher, 'To kill or not to kill: The eradication of bovine pleuro-pneumonia in Western Europe', *Medical History*, 47 (2003), pp. 314–31; for a thorough contemporary veterinary study, see Thomas Walley, *The four bovine scourges: Pleuro-pneumonia, foot-and-mouth disease, cattle plague, Tubercle (Scrofula)* (Edinburgh, 1879).

⁴ Walley, *Four bovine scourges*, p. 2; Fisher, 'To kill or not to kill', p. 320.

⁵ For early insurance arrangements, see S. Matthews, 'Cattle clubs, insurance and plague in mid nineteenth century Cheshire', *Agricultural History Review*, 53 (2005), pp. 192–211; British Parliamentary Papers (BPP), Report of the Veterinary Department 1871, 1872 vol. XVIII C.619.

to the summer of 1866. However, despite its brevity, it was by far the most disruptive, causing huge losses and bringing the agricultural economy of the county to ruin. Its effect is clear to see in the Tollemache accounts.

This article is based upon the volumes of estate accounts, which were drawn up in great detail by an agent, Thomas Cawley, who lived nearby in Bunbury, at Priestland, which was for decades the residence of the land agent until sold by the estate in the 1960s.⁶ The Cawleys were an established family in the area, whose names appear in the survey of the estate drawn up Joseph Fenna at the turn of the nineteenth century, and one is referred to below.⁷ Given the social status of the agent to a large estate in this period and his critical role as intermediary between the landlord and his tenants, his position within the farming community must have been an advantage in fulfilling the difficult role of intermediary between the parties.⁸

One must feel that he earned the £500 that he was paid, a salary that may be compared with that of Samuel Becket, the Grosvenor agent, whose salary was raised to £500 in 1871.⁹ Cawley also received an increase, and so maintained a slight lead. His attention to detail was justified by the care with which his master examined the records: each year was scrutinised, with Tollemache checking samples of the arithmetic, questioning any oddity and getting it explained before the year was finally signed off by both men as correct. Accounting for all the rents was a complex operation, especially in the larger townships. In Alpraham there were 144 rents to be accounted for from ninety tenants. In Mottram there were 184, represented by 124 tenants. To account for all these and total the results was a considerable task, and the finished accounts were based upon rent books that recorded the prime information.¹⁰ These survive as a separate run of ledgers but the underlying records of other income and expenses have not survived.

⁶ Information from Mr Doug Haynes of Tattenhall; Morris & Co., *Commercial directory of Cheshire* (1874), p. 223, where the name is also erroneously given as Priesthead. The OS grid reference is SJ 559587.

⁷ J. Pepler, 'Joseph Fenna and the Tollemache estate survey', *Cheshire History*, 44 (2004), pp. 86–98.

⁸ F. M. L. Thompson, *English landed society in the nineteenth century* (London, 1963), chap. 6.

⁹ G. Scard, *Landlord and tenant: Rural life in Cheshire 1760–1900* (Chester, 1981), p. 43.

¹⁰ CCALS, DTW 2477/A/11, numbered annually.

Income

Income was still governed in parts of the estates by the long-established custom of creating leases for three lives, usually those of the lessee, his wife and his son. This arrangement severely limited the ability of the landlord to increase rental income, and as Foster has argued, had in the past transferred substantial value from the landowner to the tenant.¹¹ By the mid-nineteenth century three life leases were going out of favour and we can see the transition in progress. On the south Cheshire estates rack renting was becoming more common, and there the great majority of farms were held on this tenure, in complete contrast to Mottram in the east. Table 1 sets out the numbers of each holding in the major townships.

TABLE 1 *Numbers of tenancies of each type, southern estates (by number), 1866/67.*

	<i>Rack rents</i>	<i>Tithe rents</i>	<i>Reserved rents</i>	<i>Chief rents</i>
Alraham	124		20	
Beeston	84		1	
Bunbury	89	17	26	
Burland	64	1	17	2
Castle Northwich	106		6	
Nantwich	30		51	
Peckforton	60			
Tiverton	109		19	

TABLE 2 *Leases from the eastern estates, 1866/67.*

	<i>Number of leases</i>	<i>Rental</i>	<i>Earliest lease</i>	<i>Chief rents (no.)</i>
Arnfield	27		1793	
Longdendale	29	£801 14s 11d	1848	
Mottram	184	£1,858 2s 2d	1786	4
Tintwistle	201	£1,272 1s 11d	1808	14
Hollingworth				13

Note: All leases were for 99 years; the value of the chief rents was £2 6s 11d.

¹¹ This is the major theme addressed in C. F. Foster, *Capital and innovation* (Arley Hall, 2004).

TABLE 3 Estate accounts: Income summary, y/e 31 March (£).

	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872
Southern	17,526	17,906	18,285	19,070	19,762	20,078	12,955	18,643	21,724	22,570	23,325	24,437
Eastern	3,907	3,896	3,860	4,062	3,976	4,089	4,210	4,469	4,302	5,503	4,613	4,625
Total	21,433	21,802	22,146	23,132	23,738	24,168	17,165	23,112	26,026	28,074	27,938	29,073
South as % of total rent	81.7	82.1	82.5	82.4	83.2	83.0	75.4	80.6	83.4	80.3	83.4	84.0
East as % of South	22.2	21.7	21.1	21.3	20.1	20.2	32.4	23.9	19.8	24.3	19.7	18.94
South (1861 = 100)	100	102.1	104.3	108.8	112.7	114.5	73.9	106.3	123.9	128.7	133.0	139.4
East (1861 = 100)	100	99.7	98.7	103.7	101.7	104.6	107.7	114.3	110.1	140.8	118.0	118.3

The smaller townships follow this pattern. In contrast, there were no recorded rack rents in the eastern estates, where table 2 shows a quite different pattern of holding. Table 3 compares the income from the two estates individually. The amount collected was not exactly the amount due for inevitably there were arrears even in normal times, the result of a whole range of causes, and amounts of rent forgiven or waived. The latter were normally small, the period starting with £723 outstanding and ending with £310: neither figure is substantial, nor is the variation in the tithe payments due and received, and both have been excluded to avoid unnecessary complication.

We can see from table 3 that income from the two estates increased at different rates. With the exception of the plague year income from the southern estates increased both earlier and overall by more than the east, that for 1871/72 being 139% of 1860/61. The eastern estates showed a slower increase until the later years of the period, rising to an exceptional peak in 1870 but dropping back in the last two years, ending at 118%. When the two are put together the increase is to 135%. What the separated figures show is the impact of the cattle plague on the southern estates. With a March year end, two years were affected, but as most rents had been paid before the plague struck, it was in the following year that rents received fell dramatically, by over £7,000, or 28% overall, whilst remissions made for inability to pay soared from £386 in 1865/66 to £6,678 in 1866/67. That represented money lost, not routine arrears, which were carried forward in the accounts to be recovered another year. The bulk of the loss was borne in the south, where rents received fell from £20,078 to £12,955. Collected income actually rose by £121 in the east.

In contrast, foot and mouth seems to have had little effect upon stock numbers although nationally it affected over one and three-quarter million beasts, over half a million being attacked in the final year.¹² On these estates income in the final year rose and expenditure proportionately fell a little. The effect of foot and mouth would be reduced because it was rarely fatal and deaths formed only a minute fraction of the beasts affected. Its immediate impact would have been to reduce supplies of milk and animals for slaughter, but that

¹² J. R. Fisher, 'The economic effects of cattle disease in Britain and its containment, 1850-1900', *Agricultural History*, 54 (1980), table 1; BPP, Report of the Veterinary Department 1871.

was a burden that fell mainly on the tenant farmers, not the landlords.

Not all the income came from farms for although in mid-century the county was essentially agricultural, John Tollemache's estates included much urban property. Northwich and Leftwich contained 109 holdings, almost all urban, whilst in the east, Mottram was also becoming urban compared with the more rural Longdendale.¹³ Even in the rural townships, only a small number of holdings were properly farms. Most were cottages, small holdings, private houses and a scatter of schools, public houses and shops. The descriptions attached to the personal names in the rentals enable us to see many of the rural businesses other than purely agricultural ones, such as Aldred Wright's boarding and day school in Alpraham, for which he paid a reserved rent of £4. There is no direct evidence, but it is unlikely that these were affected by epidemic.

As well as rents, the accounts reveal the casual income received by the estate, which was scheduled separately. The amounts were quite small, for example £373 in 1867/68 when the estate had returned to normal after the plague, but they serve to show the complexities of running a large estate. Most of the items are to be expected: sales of game from the estate to local merchants; a horse sold at Chester Fair for £34; oak bark, a gate and a load of earth were sold as well. 365 loads of stone were sold from Beeston Castle, which were matched by 161 loads of sand from the Castle and another 201 loads from an unspecified place but probably the same. There were some purely financial receipts. Edwin Stanley made over a refund of income tax (£52) abated through cattle losses the previous year, whilst interest was received from the Huddersfield Canal Company (£16) and the Tarporley and Whitchurch Turnpike Trust (£2). These small amounts were reduced during the plague but they were of little significance.

Expenditure

Although income from the two estates was kept separately, expenditure was not distinguished, and without a full analysis of the entries, it is impossible to establish how much was spent on each area. The combined totals are set out in table 4, with each category distinguished according to the headings in the ledgers. In table 5, the

¹³ M. Nevell & J. Walker, *The archaeology of twentieth-century Tameside* (Tameside, 2004), chap. 4.2, fig. 4.1.

TABLE 4 Peckforton estate accounts, expenditure summary, y/e 31 March (£).

	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872
Annual payments	130	128	107	118	102	112	102	112	102	82	55	65
Rents	167	95	90	72	74	74	80	160	227	471	741	637
Tax Paid	1,254	912	897	817	683	536	381	264	868	449	582	509
Rates & taxes paid	221	221	258	259	240	215	254	293	284	299	350	280
Buildings & repairs	1,939	2,436	3,158	4,744	3,519	3,774	1,836	5,810	8,750	6,490	6,790	5,790
Sundry pay	755	653	590	920	1,026	1,521	691	1,364	1,097	453	602	452
Drainage	338	407	434	336	1,976	3,590	4	2,252	1,995	1,221	1,204	665
Plantations	148	83	65	37	2	12	2	1	21	33	6	1
Subscriptions	236	270	258	237	259	230	196	221	224	254	255	234
Labourers	634	686	651	651	545	595	534	645	646	563	657	713
Tilstone School	80	87	94	121	80	80	u/k	80	80	80	80	80
Castle	63	67	57	142	241	142	42	83	153	104	114	269
Bone	69	0	64	102	273	368	114	2,091	658	376	309	1,099
Law charges	0	0	0	185	39	54	55	81	0	43	Ne	12
Improvements	38	24	35	200	384	892	110	17	154	6	Ne	310
Garden	71	52	72	58	62	71	49	139	130	1,022	832	231
Rent Days	126	126	127	119	118	116	117	117	122	126	126	129
Salaries	811	861	861	862	861	861	876	883	892	916	920	958
Insurance												
Farm	189					74	70					48
Total	7,269	7,108	7,816	9,928	10,484	13,317	5,513	14,610	16,401	12,989	13,624	12,550

TABLE 5 Indicative 'buildings and repairs' expenditure on the eastern estates, y/e 31 March.

	<i>Number of eastern entries</i>	<i>Value of eastern entries</i>	<i>Total expenditure, both areas</i>
1862	13	£53 1s 6d	£2,436
1868	10	£76	£5,810
1870	15	£24 16s 6d	£6,490

'building and repairs' entries relating to the eastern estates are identified for three years, and these as well as from general observation of the remainder, show that Tollemache spent far more upon the southern estates than upon the eastern. There was little opportunity to increase income from the east and he was not prepared to lay out money for little purpose. The amounts shown were increased by others in 'sundry payments' but most of those related to hunting and the preservation of shooting rights.

There is no need to examine in detail the expenditure entries set out in table 4. Some were more or less fixed, such as the rents that had to be paid. Instead, a few will be examined, to establish the extent to which they, like income, reflected the impact of cattle epidemic. It is at once clear that only the rinderpest outbreak had any effect and this was for two reasons: the need to reduce expenditure to match reduced income, and, probably to a lesser extent, the physical difficulty in spending money at a time when restrictions were placed on movement upon the land. In contrast, neither pleuro-pneumonia nor foot and mouth affected the tenant farmers' ability to pay the rent or caused regulations to be made restricting movement. The government's slaughter policy was directed at imported cattle rather than home-grown herds, where later in the century tail inoculation was to be preferred.¹⁴

One difficulty in comparing income and expenditure is the mismatch between the two sets of figures. Rents came on rent days, not evenly through the year, whilst expenditure was entered as paid, which was necessarily after the work had been done or the item delivered. Thus, although the plague months fell mainly in the year to 31 March 1866, much of the rent had been paid before it took hold and as noted above, the drop in income appears the following

¹⁴ Fisher, 'To kill or not to kill', pp. 320-21, 323-25.

TABLE 6 Analysis of 'buildings and repairs' by cost, y/e 31 March.

	Under £10	£11-£50	£51-100	£101-200	Over £200	Total entries
1862	81	17	9	6	0	113
1865	124	29	99	4	4	260
1868	154	71	10	11	7	223
1870	218	10	17	14	6	265

year. Similarly, the need to economise was felt the following year, and as we shall see, that is when the expenditure was reduced. With that background, we may turn to particular types of expenditure.

First is the largest category, building and repairs. During the decade, the bulk of entries were for minor maintenance and improvement. This is shown by table 6, which reveals the predominance of small sums paid, in contrast to the fewer larger entries for house or farm construction. A number were for very small sums: in 1864/65, eighty-nine were for less than £5. If we ignore the disruption of the plague year, the pattern is one of gradually increasing expenditure, to a peak of £8,750 in 1868/69, and then drifting for the remaining few years, declining at the end. This pattern was identified by Perren, as a feature of estates which were improved early, leaving mostly maintenance for later years.¹⁵ Some of the expenditure was always routine maintenance but some was for improvement, as in 1863/64, when over £21 was spent on installing new privies at cottages in Alpraham. Other references were to plumbing, glazing, tiling and similar matters, which suggest improvement rather than just maintaining the status quo. Generally, the properties had not yet reached their modern appearance for whilst there were many references to roofing materials, almost all were to thatch rather than to slates or to what are often perceived as traditional Cheshire stone. In 1860/61, out of twenty-seven mentions of roofing material, twenty-three were to thatch or straw and only four to slate. In 1869/70 there was only one reference to slate. Tollemache had no stockpile, for these were all for very small amounts. As slate was readily available and would have been more

¹⁵ Richard Perren, 'Landlord and agricultural transformation', in P. J. Perry, ed., *British agriculture 1875-1914* (London, 1973), pp. 114-15.

durable, the choice of thatch may have been aesthetic rather economic.

Tollemache's reputation for concern about the workers' living conditions is certainly borne out by the accounts. At the same time, there was a steady outlay on larger properties, some of which were expensive. 'The Moat House' in Alpraham, cost over £308 in 1861/62 with a small amount more in 1862/63. According to Morris (1864), it was occupied by Richard Crawley, presumably a relation of Thomas. In 1864/65, at least two substantial properties were completed, for £506 was paid to William Salman for David Hough's farm at Bridgemere and £565 to Samuel Vickers, described by Morris as bricklayer in Bunbury, for outbuildings at Groucott's, Haughton.¹⁶ In the same year, Isaac Cadman was paid £264 for building at Hull's. William Salman was paid £506 on 20 January 1865, for building 'house and extras at Hough's, Bridgemere'.¹⁷ On 24 December 1870, £316 was paid to Daniel Woodcock for 'building new house at Mr Dales', Tiverton'. Finally, on 7 February 1871, £495 was paid to James Parker for 'erecting outbuildings at Mr Roffey's, Burland'. The largest single payment of all was for charity: £948 paid to James Parker on 21 October 1870 for building the Alms Houses at Nantwich.

Massive amounts of bricks were required for these works: in 1861/62 there were two major orders, for 379,750 of them from Ephraim Jackson at a cost of a little over £294, with another payment of £72 to Henry Chesworth for an unspecified number.¹⁸ In addition, large quantities of straw were used and there were many reference to floor tiles and other building needs such as the iron window frames, brought into the estate in large numbers. The largest single payment not for a specific building was for £331 on 10 June 1870, for timber. Some of the ancillary works could also be expensive: pigsties at Mr Dales' cost £126.

Another continuing expense was drainage, which had long been of great importance in the heavy Cheshire clay soils. Here, expenditure rose in the middle years of the decade, except for the plague

¹⁶ Morris, *Commercial directory* (1864), pp. 114, 93.

¹⁷ Morris, *Commercial directory* (1864), p. 114, David Hough, farmer, Bridgemere.

¹⁸ For Ephraim Jackson, see Morris, *Commercial directory* (1864), p. 94 (tile-maker, Alpraham) and p. 97 (tile works, Wardle). Chesworth has not been identified.

year, when activity virtually ceased. Enormous amounts had been invested in the first half of the century, though often to little purpose as they were incorrectly laid.¹⁹ Although the accounts are not conclusive, the entries suggest that Tollemache arranged and paid for major new undertakings, but left the farmers themselves to do the work and the smaller jobs and increased the rent accordingly. This can be inferred from the numerous references to payments for drains compared with the few payments for labour. Many of these refer to ditching rather than laying drains. There were exceptions, as in 1864/65, when £1,592 out of a total of £1,976 was paid to William Clifford for 'drainage and pipes, work done in Alpraham'. A similar large undertaking is reflected the following year in a payment in January 1866 of £2,332 (out of £3,590) to 'Edwin [Drucker] drainage etc., in Alpraham, Rushton and Wettonhall'. We see the same pattern in 1867/68 when over £1,300 was paid to Samuel Jackson for 'draining, etc.' out of £2,225. These payments must reflect work done before the plague took hold. During the plague, work stopped almost entirely. Another aspect of land improvement was the spreading of bone, presumably powdered. The cost varied with no clear relation to other improvements, though that may be because sometimes the farmer, rather than Tollemache, paid for it. At most, one can say that more was spent in the middle years, when the cost of drainage was also higher.

The next concern was plantations, but Tollemache seems to have had little interest in increasing the area of woodland on his estates. Most of the payments were small and for labour, especially on fencing. In 1861/62, there were two more substantial payments for trees, of £45, at Woodhead, and £25, place unspecified. The present landscape reflects this, with extensive woodland only round the castle and along the Peckforton ridge and elsewhere largely confined to marginal areas and the edges of river valleys.²⁰ Some plantings were ornamental, Yew trees and Box, probably for the castle, in July 1864, and in January 1868, fruit trees to Beeston Gate.

There are two entries for insurance and these must reflect an attempt to establish an estate cattle club. Until then, like many landowners, Tollemache had not insured his cattle. Commercial

¹⁹ Stella Davies, *The agricultural history of Cheshire*, Chetham Society (1960), p. 109.

²⁰ N. J. Higham, *A frontier landscape: The north west in the middle ages* (Macclesfield, 2004), p. 105.

companies had offered cover in the past, but they had not been successful so that by the 1860s the only cover was provided by district or estate cattle clubs, most of which included pleuro-pneumonia and foot and mouth disease. There was a short-lived attempt to start a club on the Tollemache estates. Its records have not survived, but the Cholmondeley collection contains a copy of its rules.²¹ It was headed by a management committee of forty-one named tenant farmers and its Treasurer was the indispensable Mr Cawley. It was intended to provide cover against pleuro-pneumonia and to judge by the entries in the accounts it was established only shortly before the cattle plague struck. Tollemache effectively underwrote it at the start for a footnote to the advertisement stated that he would pay a subsidy of ten pounds 'for every general subscription of 2s 6d per head, paid by the members on the stock insured'. He himself contributed £74 subscription in the year to March 1866, £70 the following year, calculated on the basis of £10 membership, plus a 25% call on each beast at 2s 6d. This sum must have been calculated upon his own herd at Home Farm, which was to remain safe from rinderpest until at least April.²² He paid nothing thereafter so presumably the club was swept away in the financial chaos of that year, like so many others.

The ledgers include a cover-all category, sundry payments, which is a mine of incidental information, most of which is unfortunately irrelevant to the theme of this article. Just one item will be considered here, which is shooting. Tollemache used the eastern moorland for this and enforced his rights. In May 1866, John Whitfield was paid 14s 6d for his expenses in prosecuting poachers in Longdendale. The most illuminating glimpse comes in 1869/70. The accounts show the costs of a five day shoot at Arnfield in the autumn or early winter of 1869, when beaters were hired, mainly through a firm which also organised the game hampers etc.; gunpowder was bought for over £6 and, in a grim reminder of the past, 5s 3d was paid to Rob Sykes for clearing the traps and giving them to the gamekeepers. This raises a question since gin- and man-traps had been illegal since 1827. Was Tollemache still using them, as other landowners were said still to do, or were the traps intended

²¹ CCALS, DCH/CC/21 (the Cholmondeley account book itself is DCH/VV/1).

²² BPP, Royal Commission to inquire into origin and nature of cattle plague, 3rd report, 1866 vol. XXII 3656, evidence of William Crookes, April 1866, p. 198.

for rabbits, or for predatory birds, legal until 1904?²³ It would seem odd that either would have to be removed as a threat to humans. Shooting appears to have been a social rather than a commercial activity, though elsewhere the sundry receipts show the sale of game to local butchers, which is not surprising.

Impact of the epidemics

The records reveal a halt in normal activity during and after the outbreak of rinderpest. Regulations were imposed controlling the movement of cattle, reporting of outbreaks and slaughter of infected cattle and even when these were lifted it took some months for life to return to normal. Crookes's evidence, referred to above, describes the strict isolation measures adopted by Tollemache, which, coupled with whitewashing and disinfecting, preserved his herd until April, when the epidemic began to wane. In truth, their preservation was probably due more to isolation and the cleaning of cattle sheds than to the particular virtues of carbolic acid and fumigation with sulphur. Isolation was the standard remedy for foot and mouth and few preventative measures other than isolation appear to have been taken against pleuro-pneumonia, where control seems to have been exercised through the rules of the cattle clubs.²⁴ The only alternative remedy was import control, but this was resisted by free-traders.²⁵

Tollemache was concerned to find a remedy for rinderpest but in estate management his response to epidemic was determined by the consequential fall in income. The imperative was to reduce cost to keep the estates in the black. Overall expenditure fell from £13,317 to £5,513 but the bulk of this lay in two categories, building and repairs and drainage. As already noted above, some costs were virtually fixed with little opportunity for reduction, and the basis upon which the accounts were prepared makes direct annual comparison between income and expenditure difficult. Some aspects

²³ An entry for the supply of rabbit traps appears in 'sundry payments', 12 March 1868, £1 3s 9d.

²⁴ Woods, *Manufactured plague*, pp. 12–13; S. Matthews, "Our Suffering County": Cheshire in the cattle plague of 1866: Correspondence received by Rowland Egerton Warburton of Arley Hall', *Transactions of the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 96 (2000), letter 2.

²⁵ Fisher, 'To kill or not to kill', p. 324.

of activity in the southern estates came to a halt. Henry Cheswell was paid for drainpipes on 1 April 1866—probably for a southern location—but after that there is nothing until Thomas Scragg was paid two shillings in January 1867 for making a drain at Tiverton. Both represent a payment date, which must reflect previous activity, but apart from that, there is no reference to work being done after early 1866. Some types of payment did continue through the year, and the conclusion must be that Tollemache was reducing expenditure because his income had fallen, rather than because he was obliged by regulation to keep his workers off the land. The authorities were not yet prepared to shut down the countryside in the way that has become familiar today. The financial crisis must have been all the more severe for the tenant farmers but their account books, if they existed, have not survived.

Not all townships seem to have been affected equally by the rinderpest. Allowances made vary considerably between townships. An analysis of the eighteen where the rents due exceeded £300, gave a percentage range from no allowances at all (Acton) to 67.8% (Soond). If we exclude Acton, and Castle Northwich, which was largely urban, the range becomes 22% to 67.8%, with an average of 36.6%. Interestingly, there is no correlation between size and allowances made. Beeston, by far the largest, with a rent roll of £2,940, saw allowances of £1,205, 40.9%. The percentage at the second biggest, Tiverton, was 25%. Conversely, the highest percentage was at Soond, rent roll £358, while Bridgemere, rent roll £744 saw allowances of 45.5%. The pattern is not consistent: Bunbury (£1,274: 22%) can be compared with Faddiley (£1,062: 41.6%). These figures can only take us a little way, for the amounts and percentages reflect the value and size of the township not the concentration of cattle, which, elsewhere in the county, was a major factor. To bring us back to the underlying comparison, neither foot and mouth nor pleuro-pneumonia had an equivalent impact in the rental or expenditure figures.

Table 7 sets out the profitability of the estate in tabular form. Gross income rose by 35% overall, recovering rapidly from a sharp drop in 1866/67 whilst expenditure showed no clear pattern. We have already noted that expenditure on agricultural improvement tended to be greater in the middle years and this shows somewhat irregularly in the percentages. Careful management of expenditure ensured that the estates were profitable whilst at the same time being

TABLE 7 Income and profitability, y/e 31 March.

	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872
Income collected (£)	21,433	21,802	22,146	23,132	23,738	24,168	17,165	23,112	26,026	28,074	27,938	29,073
Gross income (1861 = 100)	100	101.7	103.3	107.9	110.7	112.7	80.0	107.8	121.4	130.9	130.3	135.6
Expenses as % of income	33.9	32.6	35.2	42.9	44.1	55.9	32.1	63.2	56.1	46.2	48.7	43.1

steadily improved. This was particularly important during the plague year. This improvement was, moreover, not exclusively directed towards increasing yield, for much of it went on what we must call social improvement, improving the living conditions of those who worked on the estates. This can be seen from the pattern of expenditure shown in table 4, which shows that a great part of the expenditure was on improvement to the infrastructure, by way of building, rather than in categories which would have an immediate agricultural return.

Conclusion

Leaving aside the 'blip' of the plague year, the accounts show estates which were managed in quite different ways for quite different reasons. There was little opportunity to make any dramatic increase in the yield from the east. Leases were generally fixed and although some ninety-nine year leases had been taken out before the turn of the century and had less time to run, others could be expected to continue for much longer. Nevertheless, they were profitable holdings and with careful management and minimal expenditure, which was largely limited to necessary repairs, the cash income increased over the decade by 18%. That was no mean achievement.

In the southern estates, the striking fact is that despite the sharp fall in 1866/67, rentals collected quickly rose to a level that exceeded previous years, which must indicate that the farming community restocked successfully and re-established its position as a supplier of milk and meat to the surrounding cities. In Cheshire the 1866 cattle total of about 138,000 before the plague was reduced to 93,044 by 5 March 1866, but had increased to 155,654 by 1872. This need not surprise us too much for it echoes the statement by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food that, nationally, the cattle population rose from 4.79m beasts in 1866 to 6.12m in 1892. Further, the outbreak of foot and mouth from 1869 to 1871 had no marked effect upon the tenant farmers.²⁶

Fisher's generalisation that most animal diseases, including foot and mouth, were commonly perceived as just an 'occupational

²⁶ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, *A century of agricultural statistics* (London, 1968), p. 49; BPP, *Agricultural returns for Great Britain 1872, 1872 vol. LXIII C.675*.

hazard that it was not worth the trouble of resisting' is valid for nineteenth-century Cheshire.²⁷ It was not yet, as Woods has shown, an illness that either the farming community or the government regarded as a major scourge. It caused little loss of livestock and the loss of income from the sale of milk and, indirectly, cheese, was borne by the farmer rather than the landlord. There has to be a note of caution here because the small annual allowances which appear in the accounts were rarely explained and could arise from a variety of causes. Some arose from normal changes, as when, in the year ending March 1868, Henry Bird at Beeston Hall Farm was compensated by allowance for the transfer of a field to William Kaye. Other causes could well be reduced income through foot and mouth, for there was no compensation for lost milk production. Pleuropneumonia was more serious than foot and mouth and did kill the cattle, which again had to be borne by the farmer. To counter this, the cattle clubs set up on many estates or in groups of townships provided an adequate system of insurance for the relatively small numbers involved.

Rinderpest was different. Because the losses were so great, both in actual numbers and in proportion, and because of the policy of isolation and slaughter adopted to control it, the effect was felt not only by the tenant farmers, but by the landowners as well. It was this epidemic rather than the other two which brought the countryside to a standstill and Tollemache was not alone in suffering a considerable fall in income. As a result, and partly because of the restrictions on working the land, expenditure too was slashed. The loss fell finally upon the landlords and it seems to have been one that they were prepared to accept. It hit them in three ways: by the waiving of rents, by their directly subsidising their tenants by cash hand-outs and by paying the increased county rate required to repay the loan from the government. With varying degrees of enthusiasm they seem to have regarded it as their duty and Tollemache shared in this. In reality, they had little choice, for, whatever their feelings, if they did not support their tenants, the rural economy would have been bankrupted. Unlike some of his peers, Tollemache had other income and was possibly better placed to bear the loss, but despite this, the Cheshire estates were operated as a discrete entity, in which, as income fell, expenditure was reduced to prevent an actual loss.

²⁷ Fisher, 'Economic effects of cattle disease', p. 283.

This was the unique effect of rinderpest and was not a result of either of the other two diseases.

It is wrong to concentrate too much upon the drama of the cattle plague, which, in retrospect was a monstrous blip upon a pattern of continuing activity and progress. Taking the decade as a whole, we can see that Tollemache invested heavily in the improvement of Woodhey and Beeston. Money was spent to improve the land by drainage, spreading bone meal, the maintenance of woodland, and by the improvement of existing buildings and the construction of new ones. It may be because of the way the entries are recorded but the majority of the new constructions seem to have been at the expensive end of the range. Construction was not only purely domestic, but included work-a-day piggeries and stables. No doubt self-interest played a part but Tollemache's expenditure bears out his professed desire to provide better conditions for the lower orders of society. His motives are less obvious in the eastern estates where most of the property was held on old-fashioned long leases with little prospect of a better yield in return for investment. He spent little on them, possibly restricting himself only to necessary repair and maintenance, whilst zealously guarding his game rights. Nevertheless, because of their urban character and freedom from rinderpest, at the critical time the continuing income from the eastern estates may have enabled him to weather the crisis.