THE COMMON FIELDS OF LANCASHIRE

IN Volume 113 the Society printed Mr. G. Youd's study of common-field farming in Lancashire. A few historians and geographers had previously written on some particular common field or on early methods of farming in certain areas of Lancashire, but Mr. Youd attempted to draw the picture of common-field agriculture in the whole of the county. Already his paper has inspired two other scholars, both members of the Society, to amend and expand some of its arguments. Mr. R. Cunliffe Shaw, whose detailed and careful studies, *Kirkham in Amounderness* and *The Royal Forest of Lancaster*, gives his words special authority on the points he raises, discusses who had the right to farm strips in the townfield, redefines some agricultural terms and examines the evidence for wheat cultivation and crop rotation. Mr. Frank Tyrer, who has spent so much time and energy searching the Blundell muniments, produces additional evidence about strip-holding and the consolidation of strips in Little Crosby. The editors are most willing to receive other papers on this much-neglected, difficult but fascinating aspect of the social and economic history of Lancashire.

I

THE TOWNFIELDS OF LANCASHIRE

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THE term *townfield* was ubiquitous throught the western arable belt of Lancashire, in the Ribble and Lune valleys, and in low Westmorland and Furness. It was not used in the bailiwicks or chases of the forest, but it is found in the purlieus. On page 3 of his paper "The Common Fields of Lancashire", published in TRANSACTIONS, Volume 113, Mr. G. Youd says that "the term *townfield* was generally used to describe part of, or all the common arable lands", and that "the presence of intermixed ownership in the field or fields" usually indicates common-field husbandry. He notes the earliest use of the term *townfield* at Speke in the fourteenth century. He also observes,

on pages 18-20, that the oxgangland of each settlement, arable and meadow, was unevenly distributed in strips in the fields, which, he argues, "suggests that a system other than the Midland two- or three-field course was in use". This conclusion I confirm, but it is possible to say more than Mr. Youd does about the farming of the townfields in medieval Lancashire.

I THE SIZE OF TOWNFIELDS AND THE LANDHOLDERS

Kirkham *common townfield*, as it was always termed in the rectorial leases, contained 18 oxgangs of arable and meadow at the rate of 16 customary acres per oxgang. Imbedded in it were 8 acres of demesne known as the half oxgang, or Old Eworth, and since, about 1800, this demesne together with 3 or 4 acres enclosed from former common pasture was estimated at slightly more than 24 statute acres, the 18 oxgangs in Kirkham common field must have exceeded 580 statute acres. The total area of Kirkham is 857 statute acres. This includes approximately 168 acres of former glebe land and the common pasture known as *The Moor*.[1]

Under the rectorial lords the immediate ownership of the common arable was determined solely by the payment of a fee of recognition, the "known fine" of 6s. 8d. an oxgang every ten years, and a yearly rent of 7½d. per acre. The earliest surviving rentals,[2] those for 1509, show that 20 people paid rents for land and burgages, and that 5, who lived outside the town, paid for land only. The rents, £2 for houses and £9 for land, did not change in subsequent years. The number of people paying for common land remained steady—25 in 1509, 24 in 1619 and 1682, and 23 in 1736: the number who paid for burgages had increased to 27 by 1736 due to the splitting of primary holdings, but in 1773, when Kirkham's population was approaching 1,000, the number had fallen to 23. Those who paid "the known fine" were entitled to alienate their holdings in the common field, and in the sixteenth century a number sold out to neighbouring landowners, who in turn became customary tenants of the rectorial lords, and were known as *charterers*.

Hence the common field at Kirkham was possessed by a small, static group of capital burgesses, who through inheritance or purchase each held one or more oxgangs or a part of an oxgang. Clearly, holding land in the field was limited to a

[1] For further details on Kirkham townfield see R. C. Shaw, *Kirkham in Amounderness* (1949), pp. 81, 97, 105, 242 *seq.*; also Christ Church, Oxford, archives *re* Kirkham, and Lancs. Record Office DD8.

[2] Farrer MSS. in Manchester Reference Library: Towneley MS.

group of principal burgesses and their heirs. If it had not been so, great subdivision would have resulted, and this the rentals show did not happen. Further, the seventeenth-century lawsuits between the rectorial lessees and the burgesses demonstrate that, although enclosure of the remains of the common field had taken place as long ago as 1553-4 and 1567, the various lands were still known by the name of the burgage to which they had been attached. A sixteenth-century will shows that the usual strip system had formerly existed, and that when enclosure occurred, the lands of each burgage were grouped and incorporated in fields such as Aldfield (the Old Earth), Barnfield, Gildfield, Millfield, The Wheat Acres, Copper Long, Plumpton Roote, Moor Heys and The Carrs, all of which can be clearly located, and were part of the original oxgang land.[3]

At Preston there were two distinct types of common townfield—firstly, the old oxgang land of the settlement, the townfield proper; and, secondly, the common purpresture of 324 acres granted by Henry III, which extended towards the forest of Fulwood and which burgesses could either assart to arable or graze as they wished, provided they did not encroach within 40 perches from the covert of the forest. In the forest, burgesses had common of pasture in Fulwood Laund for all beasts except sheep and pigs: there was also the common carr near the Ribble. The old oxgang land shows the usual agrarian pattern of multiple fields, with strip allocation of meered or marked holdings in the thirteenth century, as illustrated by various grants to Master William of Kirkham in 1240.[4]

Intermixed and meered holdings of oxgangland were scattered over at least four divisions of the townfield, and that on Oldfield was "with the assent of the town". Clearly, the burghal council controlled in this enfranchised community the alienation of these well-defined holdings, but, as in the case of Kirkham, the community in general had their pasturage on the moor and carr, as well as in the forest of Fulwood. Even the moor purpresture was allocated in shares, for we find that Master William was granted four shares of land, interspersed between those of other holders.

Lancaster also provides valuable evidence for the townfield system in a burghal community. In this common field there were a number of field divisions:— Highfield, Millfield, Gilmaynsland, Carrfurlong, Oatlands, Sourholm, Wolstreharvie, Jurdanheld, Longlands, Burghamgallies, Swartmoor, Edenbreck,

[3] See further Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 241, and Shaw, *Clifton Papers* (1935), p. 103.
[4] Shaw, *The Royal Forest of Lancaster* (1956), pp. 156-7, 331: *Cockersand Chartulary*, Chetham Society, O.S. Vol. 39, pp. 407-437.

Hungerhill, Stonebreck, Mawdale or Mahendale Annewyscoles, and Deep Carr Side. In 1345 the butts in Mawdale were described as part of the townfield of Lancaster. The Millfield contained 20 customary acres, and in 1325 these were divided between 10 holders, all of them local landowners of substance. A grant by Adam of Lancaster to Roger the chaplain was described as half an acre in the field of Lancaster "in the culture called le Milinfield", for which Roger paid 20s. 0d. The witnesses included the reeves of Lancaster. Therefore, as in the case of Kirkham and Preston, holdings in Lancaster townfield could be sold, but apparently the sale required the consent of representatives of the burghal council.

There is no evidence that the townfield was distributed among the townsfolk of Lancaster nor even exclusively among the burgess class. The commonalty of Lancaster, like that of Preston, pastured their cattle in the forest and on the common carr.

Bolton-le-Sands gives a good example of the working of a townfield system in a nucleated, non-enfranchised township. On page 19 of his paper Mr. Youd draws attention to a Bolton rental of 1538/9 when 14 people held land in two common fields, Wharnebarowe Feld and Sewerfeld. This gives the impression of a township with two common fields held by a few, but in the thirteenth century the common field of Bolton-le-Sands had many owners, whose scattered strip holdings of arable and meadow lay in numerous divisions of the field. The whole pattern of division is well defined. In the twelfth century William and Gamel each had a quarter of the vill, and Roger of Bolton the other half. In the next century the five daughters of Roger and their families as well as the children and grandchildren of William and Gamel divided the entire township and made numerous grants to monastic houses and various local landowners. Such partible inheritance and alienations produced an intricate pattern of ownership of the oxgang lands: strips, distributed over at least 32 main divisions of this townfield, were held by 43 different freeholders in the thirteenth century, but unfortunately we only catch glimpses of the tenantry. For example, between 1220 and 1250 Sir John of Cansfield was tenant of a quarter of the field of *Serholm* under Robert of Bolton, and half a century later the lord of Borwick was tenant of a culture under Adam, son of Orm of Kellet, who gave the land to Furness abbey. A list of Adam's tenants in 1300 names 14 people who paid rents ranging from ½d. for half an acre to 34s. 7½d. for a moiety of *Greenholm*, and the tenants ranged from the miller to landholders such as Thomas Travers and Andrew of Hatlex. Some of them gave land to the

church. One or two appear to have been cotters paying for a cow's grass or an arable plot. Some strips were farmed, along with neighbouring estates, by the men of the larger landholders; some by smaller landholders of the later yeoman type living near or in the township of Bolton; others by the parson, the miller and the cottagers of the village itself. In 1320 there were 87 acres 3½ roods of arable and 10 acres 2½ roods of meadow in desmesne distributed over 29 divisions of the common field. The strips, mostly 2½ acres in size, varied from half an acre to 6½ acres, and were farmed by nine local people and a bondman, Simon the reeve.

Here in Bolton, therefore, the could never have been an organised husbandry based on a coherent village community with balanced allotment of the arable and pasture as workable units on the Midland system.

Comparison of Bolton with the townfield of a dispersed township such as Hutton near Preston is instructive. Between 1200 and 1236 Abel of Hutton quit-claimed in this townfield the arable of Cockerden, which consisted of a group of lands. The customary acreage was probably about 7½ acres and was held by 12d. yearly of the canons, who held in turn of the barony of Penwortham by military service. This holding was again rented by five freemen, namely, Roger who paid 6d., Robert le Breton 4d., Gilbert of Meols, uncle of William of North Meols, 2d. and a pair of gloves, Swain son of Orm 2d., and Steve of the Moor 1s., which illustrates the degree to which sub-tenancy was carried. All these free men, especially Gilbert of Meols, had other holdings in the vill and neighbourhood.[6]

Mr. Youd mentions Stalmine and Stainall among townships with one common field, but these vills belonged to a triple hamlet type of township (*e.g.* Treales, Roseacre and Wharles; Little Eccleston, le Wall and Larbreck) which recalls the occasional division by thirds in Celtic lands. Analysis of the Stalmine agrarian pattern[7] shows that in this townfield in the thirteenth century there were 37 freeholders, including the monastic houses, the manorial family and its branches, the miller, the parson, Sir Mathew of Redmayne and Robert of Shirburn. In Stainall there were 20 or more freeholders. Every strip was meered in each division of this townfield, which included that of Arghole, where the furlongs were grouped around the Arghole stone on Arghole head.

[5] See further Shaw, *Royal Forest*, pp. 306-12, and for map of Bolton, p. 241 and references therein.
[6] *Cockersand Chartulary*, Vol. 40, p. 435.
[7] See Shaw, *Royal Forest*, pp. 297-306.

In 1518 the strips of Cockersand's holdings in Stainall were consolidated by agreement with the lords of the township, which shows that, as in Bolton, the monastic houses let their holdings to different people. They decided "to deyle theyr land and to lay it in dalez together". There were twelve tenants of Cockersand, of whom six were awarded a dale each, one a dale less 6 acres, one half a dale, one 6 acres, one 5 acres, and "my lord of Cockersand hath three dales lying together upon Cumbalall". These were of customary acreage. Therefore, if one could have a dale less at least twelve statute acres, the dales made from the consolidation of the townfield strips must have been of reasonable size. It was agreed at Stainall that no four beasts were to be driven across the field but only on the highway, which shows that the transformation of the townfield was first by consolidation of selions into dales lying together in the open fields. Only later were the dales enclosed with mounds (*cf.* Kirkham and the Isle of Man) and finally by hedges in the lowlands, stonedykes in the uplands, and ditches in the flats.

Analysis of burghal and of non-enfranchised townships shows, therefore, that the common townfield represented the whole of the old arable oxgang land, appendant meadow and grazing grounds, which was subdivided into many *fields* (sometimes called *cultures*), each containing groups of strips of land, every one of which was clearly meered and distinctive as regards ownership or tenancy. Each oxgang was disseminated in these strips over different cultures of the common field. In the boroughs the holders of these oxgang lands were definitely limited in number; the limitation was often determined by the possession of certain primary burgages, which appear to have been fixed for all time despite fractioning.

The holders of these townlands could buy and sell within the framework of the borough subject to burghal consent. The names of the actual holders of land in the common field show that in many cases they were landowners or men of substance who had a house in the borough, whilst in other instances they were extrinsic dwellers, But the mass of people had to use for pasture and possibly for arable plots the appendant "moor" and "carr", or by royal grant the forest launds. *The common field in Lancashire was never common to all and sundry.*

In the non-enfranchised vills partible inheritance produced great fragmentation of ownership and tenants scattered over a wide stratum of society. Many owners as well as tenants were extrinsic to the township, and husbandry must have varied considerably. It could never have been associated with the Midland system based on a coherent village community, but

more closely resembled that of the Irish ballybiataghes. There emerges very clearly the farmer owner and his men, the prototype of the yeomen of later times.

In the lands of Furness abbey an egalitarian distribution has been observed. West[8] mentions that the abbot redistributed his farmland on a quarterland basis, each under a principal villein responsible for the services of the quarterland farm. No lower division was permitted, but each quarter maintained a group of peasantry.

II THE APPENDAGES TO THE COMMON FIELD: MOOR, CROFT, MARSH, MOSS AND REANS

MOOR This word, which is found throughout the Lancashire common-field system does not always connote rough waste lands. From the thirteenth century and most probably prior to this, the *moors* appendant to every Lancashire vill contained cultures of land assarted to arable, strictly meered and apportioned on the usual strip system. On Poulton-le-Fylde townfield we obtain clear evidence of the use of the term *moor* as well as *culture*. Here Lancaster priory in the thirteenth century was given an acre, one part of which was on Standing Stone field and the other on the Moor; namely, three half selions with meadow on Aldfield, lying together in one culture, between the land of John of Arlith and that of Adam of Poulton. The moor in this townfield thus included an old arable field containing cultures or groups of selions with appendant meadow.[9] At Lea the moor was described as "within the arable", and upon this the tenants of the Lees had no common of pasture until granted the same in the mid-thirteenth century. In the case of Kirkham the town moor lay open for grazing until enclosed in 1553/4 and 1567 when it was apportioned to the oxeon landholders as well as to the demesne of Christchurch, known as Christdom. At Preston the moor purpresture was also held in shares by allotment, but it must be remembered that in these towns the relatively widely-spaced burgages with their gardens, orchards and crofts were sufficient for an animal's grass and adequate for those engaged in trade apart from agriculture: pigs were everywhere in sties adjacent to the houses. At Lancaster and elsewhere the moor was the common pasture of the township. Such pastures were frequently enclosed and assarted in medieval times. Sir John of Longford and Sir

[8] T. West, *Antiquities of Furness* (1774), p. xviii.

[9] *Materials for the history of the Church of Lancaster*, Vol. 2, Chetham Soc., N.S., Vol. 31, pp. 390, 394, 396-7.

John Byron, keepers of the lands of Manchester, enclosed 100 acres of the common pasture and assarted it to arable between 1282 and 1300.

CROFT The evidence of Claughton in Amounderness, a dispersed hamlet under Roger of Brockholes, is useful for defining the term *croft*. The towncroft embraced two-thirds of the central arable of this township, about 40 acres of the large measure and in addition 10 acres of meadow. There were several fields in which small strips of about half an acre each were granted to Cockersand in places with suggestive names such as Nun Housestead and Chapelfield. The term *croft* would imply that the lands themselves were actually enclosed by ditches or hedges at a relatively early date. There appears to be some distinction between croft and culture, and there are references to Pilate's culture in Plumpton later described as Pilate's croft. Similarly, near Sefton there was the Hassen culture later described as Hassen croft, but the example from Claughton seems to suggest that a relatively large area, the whole centre of a townfield, could be included in this term. One is reminded of the old quatrain which described as Christ's croft all the lands between Ribble and Mersey.

MARSH The term *marsh* would seem to indicate wet pasture land of a rough character, but this is deceptive. The *marsh* of Clifton in 1256 was corn-bearing land upon which William of Clifton granted to John of Lea and his men common of pasture after corn harvest.[10] At Kirkham the rectorial leases described the Kyrkholm as *a piece of marsh ground.* The land referred to was some of the best arable land belonging to the glebe, and constituted the vicar's carrs lying below the church, which were leased in severalty in 1390 to John of Berlyngton, mercer of Kirkham. They had probably been assarted to arable from a remote period. In Poulton-le-Fylde the marsh land of this township was apportioned in arable strips early in the thirteenth century.

MOSS Mr. Youd has mentioned on page 5 that in the south-western parts of Amounderness there was little arable development in the Middle Ages, and refers in particular to the extensive moss lands round Marton. But this requires careful qualification. Marton itself had a townfield system as early as the thirteenth century when the abbey of Whalley was given half a selion in this townfield in a place called Ketelesholmwathra, which lay between the land of William of Marton and Amery, son of Simon of Thornton. Various divisions in this common field are

[10] *Calendar of Hoghton Deeds and Papers*, Lancs and Ches. Rec. Soc., Vol. 88, pp. 84-5; Shaw, *Royal Forest*, p. 331.

named. In adjacent Layton Cockersand was given 20 acres in the west part of the culture of Wythroom, near the mill, and 50 acres in Threplands, between Marton and Layton. The acreage in these fields was customary measure and can be roughly doubled in statute measure. Other vills bordering the mossland also show early townfield systems, *e.g.* Lytham and Fylde-Plumpton. In many cases fields which had long been assarted to arable in medieval times were still known by such terms as *moss acre*, and were part of a fully developed arable system. The same may be said of the lands which now lie along the sand-duned coast of Ainsdale and Formby, where analysis of monastic grants in the thirteenth century proves that townfields with intermixed holdings was the usual agrarian pattern by this period.

In certain townships of the Fylde the Celtic principle of division by "fours" was operative. At Carleton the oxgang contained 16 acres, and in 1261 each oxgang in the townfield carried the rights to a sixteenth of the meadow and a sixteenth of the wastelands. In Preese, which was a quarter of a township, *viz.* Weeton, Mythop, Swarbreck and Preese, division was by sixteenths and Robert son of Gilmichael gave sixteen acres to Cockersand. At Ashton-on-Ribble there were sixteen acres to the oxgang, and Richard Spendmore granted sixteen acres, a sixteenth part of the meadows, and a sixteenth part of the waste, and a sixteenth part of the fisheries in Ribble. The Irish *ballybiataghes* contained sixteen family farms or *tathes*. In the Isle of Man the *treens* were quartered into four principal farms and these sometimes divided by four. In Lancashire the estate of 256 acres was often in sixteenths, that is into sixteen-acre oxgangs.

REANS The subdivision of the *fields* in each common townfield into *cultures* or *furlongs* was determined by well recognised boundaries, usually referred to in Lancashire as *reans* or *roans*. Mr. Youd rightly remarks that the holdings in the common field were not constant in size by the sixteenth century. The strips which composed these cultures in the field were never of uniform size, but depended on edaphic factors and the physical nature of the land. Thus we have *lands* which contained only a fraction of an acre, *longlands* which contained more than a Lancashire acre, *perches*, *selions*, *dales*, *gores* and *butts* all varying in size in different townships.

The divisions between the holdings of individual farms were often termed *reans* or *roans*, and usually consisted of depressions used for drainage still recognised as such to this day. In ancient times these contained meer stones. In the dispute between the

Hoghtons and the Catteralls regarding their land near Garstang a witness stated in the duchy court that he had "seen a great meyrstone lying in the said Crakmeyr in a rone and brakes and bracken growing about the said stone, which was usually called 'The Meyrstone', and which deseyvr the lands in variance, also a lesse Meyrstone lying at the south-east end of the said rone which also deseyvered the said lands".[11] Caton Charter 29 states that a division between Adam's land and that of William was by the "rane", and Hutton Charters 32 and 22, also prove this point.[12] In Freckleton "the old roan" was a long furrowed strip of ground, which was cultivated in the last century and was famous for its garden peas, Mr. Youd says on page 17 that in Lancashire *rean* also meant "the water furrows left when the ground is ploughed into ridges or lands. In this case reans would exist between all lands and not simply between holding and holding". This is true for the present-day meaning of the term, but it is fairly clear from the early evidence that reans actually divided separate holdings and were not just drainage furrows between individual lands. In some cases where the ground lay in ridges the reans appeared to have been unploughed balks of land similar to those which divided some of the townfields in Cumberland, and these were later brought under cultivation.

III THE RIGHTS OF THE HOLDERS OF THE OXGANG LAND IN THE COMMON TOWNFIELD

The ancient oxgang land of the townfield of all Lancashire vills controlled certain privileges associated with the township, namely, grazing of cattle on the common pasture, ability to assart the waste in proportion to the oxeon holding, apportionment of meadows on the same basis and of the moss land and fisheries when such pertained. In Preesall the holding of one oxgang permitted the grazing of 4 oxen, 8 cows, 40 sheep and 2 mares, whilst in Plumpton half an oxgang of Pilate's Croft carried pasture rights to half this number of animals. The oxgang land at Hambleton had an apportioned fishery in the river Wyre, and the same applied to the hamlets of Lea on the Ribble and Larbreck on the Wyre. At Ashton on Ribble Richard Spendmore gave 16 acres of his oxgang land along with a sixteenth part of the meadow, of the wastes and of the fisheries, whilst Alice, grand-daughter of Arthur of Ashton,

[11] *Pleadings and depositions in the duchy court of Lancaster*, Lancs. and Ches. Rec. Soc., Vol. 40, p. 242.
[12] *Cockersand Chartulary*, pp. 425 and 843.

gave her portions of the arable of Tulketh, of the carr of Tulketh, the wood of Ashton and of the fisheries in Ribble.[13] In the case of hunting the evidence of puture liability of the vills bordering the chase of Bowland shows that this imposition fell upon the owners of the old oxgang lands of the common townfields. For example puture was levied on the oxeon holders in the field of West Bradford, Grindleton and Slaidburn *etc.*, indicating that a linkage must have existed between the owners of the arable in the townfield and the privilege of hunting in ancient times.

As regards common of pasture associated with those who held land in the townfield, Mr. Youd has shown that in Great Crosby the general pasturing of animals was not permitted in the field after harvest, and Mrs. Joan Thirsk of Leicester has informed me that grazing rights over the arable were never recognised in many parts of Cumberland. In Lea common of pasture was only granted on the "moor" by the manorial family to their tenantry in the mid-thirteenth century. In Kirkham there was no such right for the commonalty of the town over the arable of the common field, grazing was exclusively on the common moor, the enclosure of which in the sixteenth century led to riots. Here again the evidence strongly emphasises the most outstanding feature of the Lancashire common-field system, that it did not include all the holders of tofts in the village within its privileges. Only a few of the primary oxeon holders and their kin enjoyed privileges in meadows, wastes and fisheries.

IV THE HUSBANDRY OF THE TOWNFIELDS

The townfields of the Lancashire arable belt, whether attached to a borough or to a nucleated or dispersed vill, whether under a single lord or stratified ownership, were all subject to the strip system of meered and irregularly dispersed arable units pertaining to each primary oxgang. Fertility of the land in relatively small and closely related townships, without an out-field potential in many instances, must have been related to a system of farming which afforded some measure of resuscitation to the soil. Mr Youd suggests that the practice in general must have been a succession of spring corns and fallow or "half yearly fields", and instances the failing production of corn due to over-cropping. Yet the rapidly expanding corn lands in Amounderness during the thirteenth century, the tithe corn valuations for the extensive rectory of

[13] Shaw, *Royal Forest*, p. 330.

Kirkham,[14] the increase of corn mills in the thirteenth century, and the steep upward production graph for corn during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, proves that fertility was well maintained or expanding in many of the vills of ancient origin. Any system of continuous cropping would not have produced these results. The evidence of Cockerham probably indicates winter and spring sowings on two parts of the arable yearly, the remainder being grass leys, and the various spring corns being sown in different cultures in rotation. The same seems to have applied in the Aigburth region. At Harwood some parts of the common field were pastured and ploughed alternatively year by year.

Acidic soils, poor climate and the observations of such people as Celia Fiennes are often quoted to show that wheat was not grown in Lancashire. The facts are the reverse, with the qualification that it was the smallest crop in medieval days. Its cultivation was quite extensive by the sixteenth century, and in many parts of the Fylde it was the greatest crop in the eighteenth century. On the demesne farm of West Derby in 1257, wheat was sown 5 bushels per acre and yielded 207 bushels on 11 acres. In Hale, John of Lancaster's return in 1323/4 shows that 12 quarters 5½ bushels of wheat were produced. On the Weeton estate of Theobald Walter the demesne farm had 32 bushels of wheat in 1286, and about the same period Lytham priory had 2 quarters of wheat. Even at Hope in Salford there was a residue of wheat in the barns in the thirteenth century. At the grange of Standen, the demesne farm in 1295 produced 2 quarters 1 bushel of wheat, and in 1304 8 quarters 5 bushels. Lytham priory in 1311 grew 28 quarters of wheat, but after the great Scottish raid only 2 quarters; the Scots were a greater hindrance to corn production in Lancashire than the climate. In 1400, "fine wheat" was part of the £40 worth of crops destroyed on Shaw Place, formerly Woolston Place, Heath Charnock.[15]

In 1558 Thomas Clifton of Westby had £21 7s. 0½d. of wheat in his barns and on the lands, and at Mowbreck in 1557 there were 20 metts of wheat growing and 18 metts in the barn worth £9 10s. 0d.[16] The Kirkham burgess Robert Taylor had £3 of growing wheat in 1669, and his fellow burgess, James Davie, the blacksmith, had £1 of growing wheat in 1670. In Wesham in 1667 Henry Johnson had £13 of wheat. At Treales,

[14] For details see *ibid.*, pp. 407-8 and 418.

[15] *Plea Rolls of the county palatine of Lancaster*, Chetham Soc., N.S., Vol. 87, pp. xviii and 28.

[16] Shaw, *Kirkham*, pp. 266-7.

Ralph Porter had £38 10s. 0d. of growing wheat and spring corn, and £3 15s. 0d. of wheat in the barn, Robert Moon of Woodplumpton had £2 8s. 0d. of wheat in the barn and £21 6s. 8d. of wheat and other corn on the land. In his diary William Stout of Lancaster in 1728 mentioned that corn was shipped from Lancaster to Liverpool and Manchester to supply Southern England on account of the poor harvest. For the eighteenth century there is Bower's valuable survey of the rectory of Kirkham,[17] which shows that wheat was either the largest grain crop or nearly equal to that of oats in the following townships: Freckleton, Warton, Bryning—46 acres, Great Singleton—62 acres, Little Singleton, Ribby—62 acres, Newton, Great Plumpton, Thistleton, Little Eccleston, Hambleton—72 acres. Arthur Young in 1770 observed that they sowed wheat in Garstang 3 bushels per acre and the return was 35 bushels. These figures compare very well with the returns in many other parts of England. Dickson and Stevenson in 1815,[18] observed the excellent quality of the wheat crop grown along the whole western side of Lancashire and especially in the Fylde. Finally one must recall the constantly recurring names of *wheat croft* and *wheat acres*.

The clue to the husbandry of the former townfields is to be found in a lease of Roseacre Place,[19] near Kirkham, which Miles Shaw leased for three lives from Lord Derby, and sublet to William Sanderson, who was tenant in 1825-39 and probably later. The farmstead was on the west side and north end of the hamlet, and the fields lay dispersed in all parts of the township in groups. The statute acreage was 112 a. 0 r. 38 p., or, at the local measure of 24 feet to the perch, 53 a. 3 r. 24 p. According to the lease the land had to be farmed on a seven-year course as follows:—

(a) 12a. 0r. 24p. of customary measure to be ploughed the whole term as from 2 February 1826.
(b) 3a. 2r. 34p. to be laid with grass seeds when sown with wheat the first time, and to be grazed for the remainder of the term.
(c) 4a. 1r. 23p. to be marled during the first year and ploughed through the remainder of the term: the landlord was to fley and fill and the tenant to cart and spread.
(d) 17a. 1r. 33p. to lie for pasture the whole seven years.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 283-5.
[18] R. W. Dickson and W. Stevenson, *State of Agriculture in Lancashire* (1815), p. 230.
[19] Shaw Papers, in writer's possession.

(e) 2a. 1r. 31p. to be ploughed the first year and no longer without the landlord's permission.
(f) 3a. 1r. 13p. to lie for meadow land for the whole term.
(g) The moss and carr lands "to be husband in a husbandlike manner": the tenant was not to pare or burn without the landlord's permission, not to set potatoes or dig turf in the moss or carr lands except for his own use.

This lease, which is drawn up on traditional lines, shows that the husbandry of the Lancashire arable belt depended on dividing the arable land of each holding into two equal parts, which were farmed on a seven-year principle. One portion was used for spring corns in rotation, with a small part set aside for winter corn: the other portion was ley land throughout the seven-year system, and was grazed. During the seven-year term marling was carried out systematically on a fraction of the land, one field after another in seven-year phases. The marl was spread during the course of one year, and ploughed for the six remaining years of the term. The Huthwaits of Carnforth in Warton parish were cultivated by a similar method—three years corn and six years pasture.

Such a division of the arable lands would provide a reasonable period for resuscitation, and the marling would add the necessary calcareous material and improve moss ground. This explains the general Lancashire apportionment of the lands into arable, pasture and meadow. That the system is of ancient origin is shown by the final concord concerning settlement of the lands around Shaw Place in Heath Charnock in 1433-4. William Shaw had 40 customary acres of arable, 16 acres pasture, and 12 acres meadow, exclusive of rough grazing land. Two hundred years later, in 1608. Thomas Shaw had 40 acres of arable, 30 acres pasture, and 12 acres meadow. The leys had been increased to approximate more closely to the size of the arable, and probably to rest the soil more adequately on this seven-year course.