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**Changing Landscape and Society in a Cotswold Village: Hazleton,
Gloucestershire, to c.1600**

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Changing Landscape and Society in a Cotswold Village: Hazleton, Gloucestershire, to c.1600

By CHRISTOPHER DYER and DAVID ALDRED

How and why did past landscapes and settlements change? This study subjects a section of Cotswold countryside to close examination in the expectation that basic questions can be answered about the formation of territories and units of landholding, the origin and decay of settlements (villages, hamlets and farms) in different periods, especially the creation and desertion of medieval villages, and the shifts in the use and management of land.¹ It will describe the changes and put forward some explanations of the choices made, bearing in mind the physical environment and the social and economic constraints and opportunities.

The Cotswold village of Hazleton was chosen for study because it offered a means of advancing our knowledge of settlement and landscape in the long term, focussing on the medieval period. Hazleton presents a number of puzzles; for example the lack of a well-defined settlement core suggests a chequered past. The village also offered chances for research, as it contains some old buildings, with patches of earthworks from abandoned structures among its irregularly-spaced groups of houses, while much of the surrounding farmland was cultivated and available for fieldwalking. The landowners welcomed our interest. The archaeological and architectural field work could be conducted alongside the study of documents, as a wide range of evidence has survived from the archive of Winchcombe abbey.

This paper is divided into two parts, the first based on the material evidence, the second on the written, and the two approaches will be brought together in the conclusion. If the two types of evidence are interwoven, the historical approach is sometimes said to dominate the story.² The first part will therefore be mainly concerned with land, boundaries, artefacts, buildings and earthworks, so that the material evidence can be given proper attention; the second will use documents to investigate population, lordship, social structure and farming practices.

1. Work on these subjects for other regions which have influenced our thinking include D. Hadley, 'Multiple estates and the origin of the manorial structure of the northern Danelaw', *Jnl. Historical Geography* 22 (1996), 3–15; R. Jones and M. Page, *Medieval Villages in an English Landscape. Beginnings and Ends* (Macclesfield, 2006); B.M.S. Campbell, *English Seigniorial Agriculture 1250–1450* (Cambridge, 2000).
2. e.g. M. Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape* (Oxford, 2007), 101–5; M. Bowden, 'The Medieval Countryside', in N. Holbrook and J. Juřica (eds.), *Twenty-five Years of Archaeology in Gloucestershire* (Cotswold Archaeology, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeol. Rep. 3, 2006), 182.

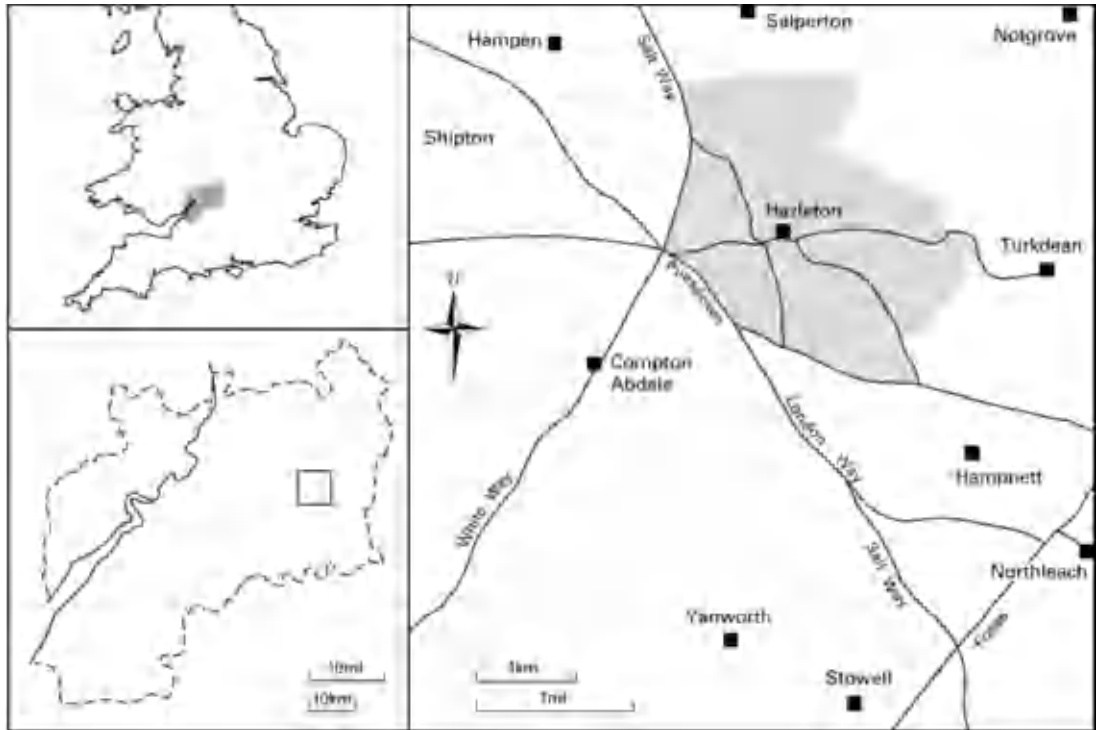


Fig. 1. Location map, showing Hazleton township, with roads and surrounding villages. The stippled area in the large map shows the extent of the township.

PART ONE: LANDSCAPE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Hazleton's Present State

Hazleton is a small, straggling and little visited village which in the Middle Ages stood near the centre of the northern section of the ecclesiastical parish of Hazleton. For convenience here this territory of 534 ha (1,566 acres) will be called a 'township' which refers to the land attached to the village for agricultural purposes (Figs. 1 and 2).³ The ecclesiastical parish for many centuries included the chapelry of Yanworth, a village situated in a detached and smaller territory a few kilometres to the south-east, but here we confine ourselves to the township of Hazleton, in which there were for centuries three centres of wealth and authority: a manor, a major freeholding and a rectory. The township's boundaries have not changed in recent times, and probably not in the last thousand years.

The land lies at a high altitude, reaching a height of 268 m (880 ft) at Pen Hill in the north-west corner of the township (Figs. 2 and 3). Fully a half of the land, on the western side, lies above 225 m (738 ft), and it dips down to the east. Five minor water courses begin as springs in the slopes

3. *Victoria County History (VCH) Glos. IX*, 91–106 provides an authoritative account of the whole parish (including Yanworth) mainly by J. Juřica. See also M. McCarthy, *Hazleton. 'Farmstead near the hazels'* (Hazleton, 2000).

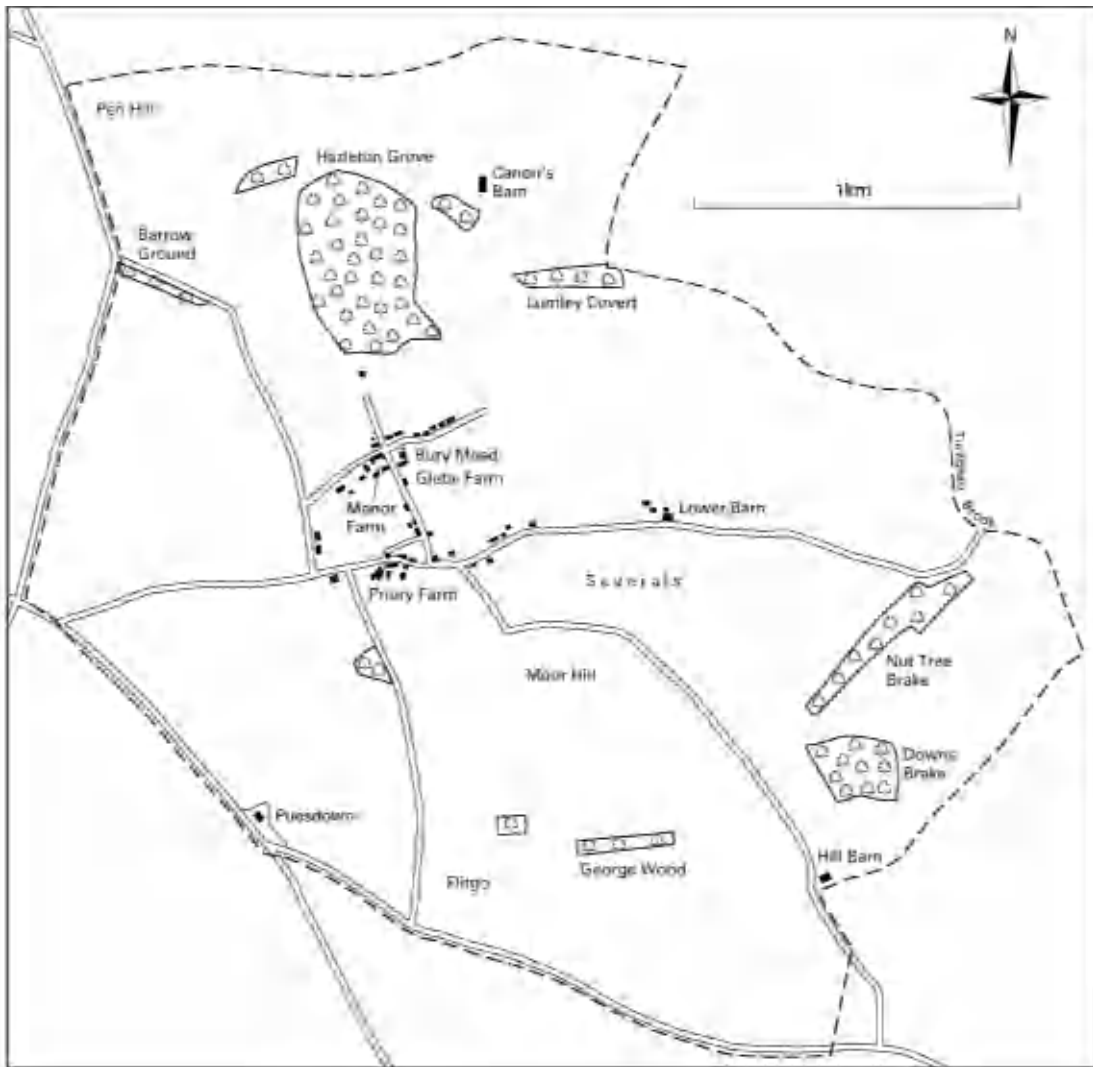


Fig. 2. Hazleton c.2000 AD, showing roads, woods, houses, barns and some significant field names.

of the higher ground, three of them very near to the modern village, and they converge in a long central valley (Fig. 4), a major topographical feature. The flow of water eventually runs into the Turkdean brook on the eastern edge of the township (at 163 m or 535 ft) and ultimately joins the Windrush and the Thames. The high ground in the west of the township forms part of the watershed beyond which rivers such as the Isbourne feed the Severn.

The underlying geology consists of oolite, with soils which tend to be stoney but are quite easily cultivated. Crops are not given an advantage, however, by the low winter temperatures and strong winds associated with high altitude.⁴ Much of the parish has been under the plough in the recent

4. '...vegetation is not a little retarded': S. Rudder, *A New History of Gloucestershire* (Cirencester, 1779), 479.

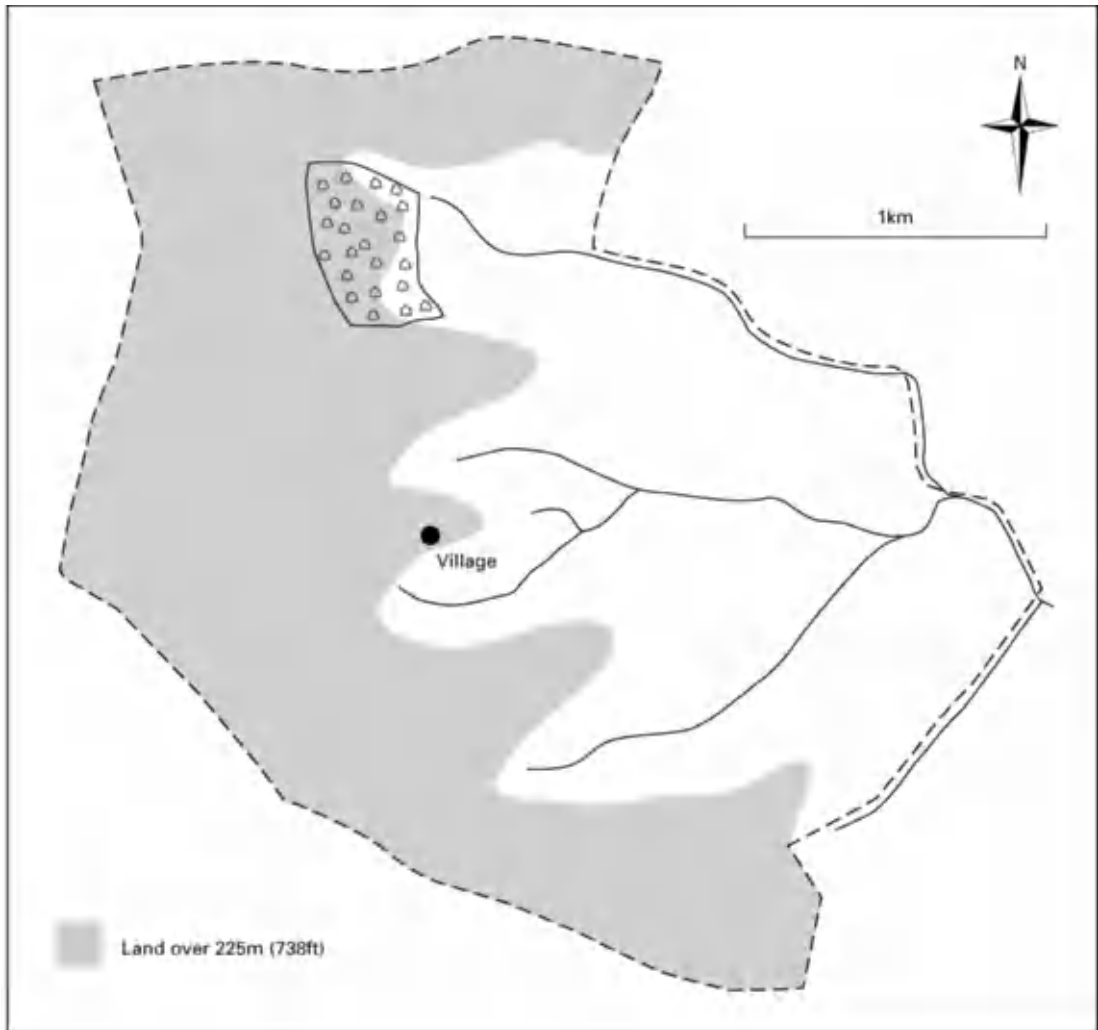


Fig. 3. Hazleton township showing relief and water courses.

past, though a substantial area to the west was left as long-term ‘set aside’ in the 1990s. The only areas of apparently permanent pastures lie in the fields immediately to the south and north-east of the village. Hazleton Grove has been woodland since the Middle Ages. The other coverts, plantations and ‘brakes’ were mainly planted in the last 200 years (Fig. 2).

Hazleton until c.400 AD

We know a great deal about Hazleton’s prehistory because of the thorough excavation in the years 1979–82 of the Hazleton North long barrow, which lay in ‘Barrow Ground’ on the slopes of Pen Hill in the north-west corner of the township (Fig. 5).⁵ An adjacent second barrow, Hazleton

5. A. Saville, *Hazleton North. The Excavation of a Neolithic Long Cairn of the Cotswold-Severn Group* (English Heritage Archaeol. Rep. 13, 1990); new dating evidence is published in *Current Archaeology* 209 (2007), 16.



Fig. 4. The central valley, seen from the church looking east to Lower Barn (foreground) and Turkdean in the distance (David Aldred).

South, was also examined but not fully excavated. Before the construction of the burial mound the site of Hazleton North had been used as a camp by hunter-gatherers in the late Mesolithic period (5th or 6th millennium BC): they left a distinctive deposit of microliths and debris from flint working. At the beginning of the 4th millennium the site was occupied by people who cultivated wheat and barley and kept cattle, sheep and pigs. Their settlement was permanent enough to have timber structures, including a possible building, as well as a hearth and a midden. The settlement stood in a clearing, which included an area of cultivation, in a scrubby landscape dominated by hazel, and when the settlement was abandoned the bushes re-colonised the land.⁶ Soon after 3700 BC the burial mound was built, correctly called a cairn because of its mainly stone construction, and over a century or so about forty people were buried in it. The building process suggests an organised society, which could recruit many workers for quarrying and depositing the stone. The construction of the dry stone walls as part of the cairn required considerable skill. People were sufficiently effective food producers to spare time and energy for non-utilitarian tasks, and they were influenced by ideas about the correct treatment of the dead and preparation for an after-life. The relatively few burials suggest either that the local population was not numerous, or that only members of a privileged élite were buried in a prominent and prestigious monument.⁷ When burial

6. Saville, *Hazleton North*, 13–22, 218–19, 240–67.

7. *Ibid.* 265–6.

ceased in the cairn around 3600 BC, the site reverted to bushes and trees, though a few potsherds and coins suggest that it came under cultivation in the Iron-Age and Roman periods.⁸

The excavations help us to understand the results of fieldwalking over the township (as it later became). More than a thousand pieces of worked flint were collected from the surface of the modern arable, most of it consisting of flakes discarded when making implements (Fig. 5). One of the most exciting finds from the Hazleton North excavation was the burial of a man aged 30–45, accompanied by a flint core (from which flakes had been struck) and a hammerstone. This ‘flintknapper’ had led a hard life, having at some stage suffered fractures which had healed both in a leg bone and in his foot. He had also suffered from osteoarthritis in his back and hip.⁹ Perhaps it was appropriate for him to take on this sedentary craft as it became too difficult for him to do heavy work in the fields or strenuous hunting and gathering. The grave allows us to connect the finds of struck flint with a particular individual, or rather a type of person, as a long succession of knappers must have created the mass of flints found at Hazleton over the main period of production in the 4th, 3rd and 2nd millennia BC.

Every modern cultivated field has yielded some struck flint, and especially high densities of the material may indicate settlement sites at six places. These are located to the north and to the north-east of Barrow Ground, to the south of the modern village, in the south-west near to George Wood, near to Lower Barn to the east of the village, and on the eastern boundary on the Downs. These concentrations of flint occur both on high ground and at sites at a lower altitude. All six of the fields where waste flakes are most numerous have also been the source of small groups of completed tools or weapons, mostly scrapers and arrowheads. This strengthens the belief that these may have been settlements where implements were used or kept, or at least camp sites visited by itinerants. If these finds of clusters of three or four implements point to settlement, even when the waste flakes are not so abundant, then two sites to the north and south-east of Nut Tree Brake, in the east of the township, may also be candidates for inclusion. The implements suggest a range of dates for this activity. Most of the arrowheads are of the leaf-shaped type, which occurred in some number in the Hazleton North cairn, and belong to the earlier part of the Neolithic. A probable transverse arrowhead has been found, not dissimilar to one from the cairn. There were also two barbed and tanged arrowheads, which are dated to the Beaker period and Bronze Age.¹⁰ Within this long period from c.4000 to c.1000 BC, the sites identified as possible settlements may have existed quite briefly. As the Hazleton North excavation shows, many artefacts could be deposited in short periods of occupation. We can still draw the conclusion that within the broad span of three millennia before 1000 BC almost every part of the later township was the scene of human activity, sometimes concentrated in settlements, and sometimes involving less intense use of the land, even cultivation, which could have led to the ubiquitous low-density scatters of flints.

A few sherds of Iron-Age pottery found in the excavations at Hazleton North suggest that the land near the cairn was under cultivation in that period. Occasional finds of Iron-Age pottery have been made in fieldwalking in other parts of the later township, but no strong conclusion can be drawn from their rarity as sherds of that period are prone to disintegrate under the plough. We know that other parts of the Cotswolds were extensively settled in the Iron Age, but can do no more than suppose that this may have been the case at Hazleton.¹¹ Sherds of Iron-Age type have been found on two of the farmstead sites occupied in the Roman period, but while these finds could suggest the continuation of settlement between the two periods, the inhabitants of a new

8. Ibid. 135, 152, 240.

9. Ibid. 125, 191–3, 262–3.

10. H.S. Green, *The Flint Arrowheads of the British Isles* (BAR British Series 75, 1980).

11. T. Moore, ‘The Iron Age’, in Holbrook and Juřica (eds.), *Archaeology in Gloucestershire*, 69–74.



Fig. 5. Hazleton, prehistoric evidence: the cairns and flints from fieldwalking.

settlement founded after the Roman conquest might have used pottery that was still being made in the Iron-Age tradition in the late 1st century AD.

Widespread scatters of Romano-British pottery tell a familiar story of a much-cultivated landscape, with concentrations of finds about a kilometre apart indicating settlement sites (Fig. 6). At Hazleton thirty-nine of the forty-two modern cultivated fields from which material has been collected have produced at least one sherd of Romano-British pottery. Thin scatters, often consisting of between one and a dozen sherds of pottery over a field of 5 ha, are thought to indicate land used as arable in the Roman period. Each of these fields at some time between the 1st and 4th centuries received cart loads of domestic rubbish in the course of manuring. Settlements, where the finds occur in very high density, have been identified in four places, at Flitgo in the south-west, Hill Barn in the south-east, around Lower Barn in the centre, and north of Canon's Barn



Fig. 6. Hazleton, Romano-British evidence: ditched enclosures from aerial photographs and pottery scatters from fieldwalking.

on the northern boundary with Salperton. These were likely to have been farmsteads, with ditched enclosures of the type familiar from excavations and aerial photographs. Crop marks at the Flitgo site show a group of at least three rectangular ditched enclosures, suggesting that the settlement went through some phases of development (Fig. 7). At the Canon's Barn site an irregularly-shaped enclosure is visible from the air as a crop mark.¹² The pottery from all four sites consists mostly of grey and red wares, including Severn Valley ware, which were made in the region, but black-burnished wares from Dorset, mortaria from Oxfordshire and north Warwickshire and coarse wares from north Wiltshire point to exchange over a longer distance. All of the settlement sites have produced at least a few sherds of samian ware of continental origin. This range of pottery is

12. National Monument Records, 4583/14; Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record, Area 4272.

more varied than is found on similar sites in north and west Worcestershire, for example, and the implication must be that the inhabitants of these Cotswold farms could generate a sufficient surplus to obtain non-local vessels, and aspired to tableware for display.¹³ The people who lived on the farmsteads were likely to have been of British ancestry, but they adopted Roman methods of food preparation, as implied by their mortaria, and no doubt came under other Roman cultural influences. The sites can be identified as farmsteads rather than villas because they lack large quantities of building material apart from the occasional fragment of ceramic tile. The buildings may have had foundations made from the local oolite, which would be difficult to distinguish from the stone found on the surfaces of many fields, but they do not seem to have been provided with hypocausts, mosaics, or roofs of tiles or stone slates. As the area subject to fieldwalking totals 383 ha, the settlements are distributed near to a density of one per 100 ha. If the sites were evenly distributed, the township as a whole, with 634 ha is likely to have contained a total of six or seven sites. Three of the four known sites were located in valleys, but one occupied high ground, so they were not confined to one type of terrain.

Was there a Hazleton Roman villa? The recent discovery of a large and opulent villa in the adjoining parish of Turkdean shows that new sites still remain to be found.¹⁴ A block of stone built into the churchyard wall of Hazleton might suggest a high-status building in the vicinity. This squared piece of oolite, paler and of finer grain than the local stone, has a visible face *c.*22.5 by 20.0 cm, carved in relief with most of a four-lobed ‘vegetal’ motif. It could have been part of a frieze on an important building.¹⁵ It may have been brought from the Turkdean villa (a distance of 2 km) or from a building in the more immediate vicinity. The adjacent field under permanent pasture to the east (Bury Mead) contains some enigmatic earthworks, which are likely to be pre-medieval in date. At a distance of 850 m to the east, near Lower Barn, a surface find of a piece of tufa suggests that a major building stood near by.

Whether or not a lost villa is waiting to be discovered at Hazleton, the relationship between villas and farmsteads is relevant to understanding the whole settlement pattern. Farmsteads deserve more attention in our general assessments of the countryside of Roman Britain.¹⁶ If their density in Hazleton (and other places which have been intensively fieldwalked) was reproduced across the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, the region would be estimated to contain 1,200 farmsteads, compared with about sixty villas and ‘villa-like buildings’ so far located. Many more people in total evidently lived in farmsteads than in villas, and we may suspect that a large area of land was cultivated by the inhabitants of the farmsteads, if their relatively small presumed groups of fields are added together. But did the farmsteads and villas co-exist as separate but unequal units of landholding and farming? Or did the farmsteads belong to villa estates, and did the villa owners extract rent from their social inferiors in the farmsteads or exercise some control over them? Were the Hazleton farmsteads attached to a yet undiscovered local villa, or to the villa at Turkdean or another at

13. We are grateful for Ed. McSloy’s comments on the pottery; the comparison with Worcestershire sites is based on, for example, C. Dyer, *Hanbury: Settlement and Society in a Woodland Landscape* (University of Leicester Department of English Local History Occasional Paper 4th series 4, 1991), 16.

14. N. Holbrook, ‘Turkdean Roman villa, Gloucestershire: archaeological investigations 1997–1998’, *Britannia* 35 (2004), 38–76; idem, ‘The Roman Period’, in Holbrook and Juřica (eds.), *Archaeology in Gloucestershire*, 103–6.

15. We are grateful for the advice of Dr Martin Henig; for a parallel see M. Henig, *Roman Sculpture from the Cotswold Region* (Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani 1.7, Oxford, 1993), no. 230.

16. e.g. R. Hingley and D. Miles, ‘The human impact on the landscape: agriculture, settlement, industry, infrastructure’, in P. Salway (ed.), *The Roman Era. The British Isles 55 B.C.–A.D. 410* (Oxford, 2002), 161–3.



Fig. 7. Air photograph of crop marks at Flitgo showing at least three adjacent ditched enclosures, from the south (English Heritage: © Crown copyright NMR).



Fig. 8. Schematic village plan, including roads and lynchet, to illustrate the possible 'framework' within which the village grew.

Compton Abdale 3 km to the east? The situation may well have changed over time. The pottery from the Hazleton sites suggests that they began in the 1st or 2nd centuries AD, and continued into the 3rd and 4th centuries, so they may have been founded before the villas. The Turkdean villa, for example, in a characteristic Cotswold fashion seem to have become a really large and wealthy establishment towards the end of the Roman period.¹⁷

The landscape of late prehistory and of the Roman period might be regarded as invisible in the later countryside, or it might be said that the late Roman period had a long-term influence by bequeathing extensive agricultural land, even if the settlements did not survive, nor the fields associated with them. But at Hazleton as elsewhere pre-medieval cultivation terraces may have influenced medieval boundaries. There is a particularly pronounced lynchet marking the southern boundary of the village, now to the south of Priory Farm (Fig. 8 and see below pp. 250, 252); but terraces on sloping ground both to the south of the village (marked 'a' on Fig. 9), and to the north-east ('b' on Fig. 9), could be the result of medieval cultivation, though their wide spacing and irregularity might suggest an earlier date.¹⁸

Legacies from the centuries before 400 AD include some of Hazleton's roads. The boundaries on two sides of the township are defined by important routes (Fig. 1). The western edge is marked by a north-south road, the north-eastern branch of the White Way taking traffic from the Worcestershire Avon to Cirencester, which here has joined a length of salt way that led across country from Droitwich to Lechlade. The south-western boundary follows the road now connecting Cheltenham to Oxford (the A40), which was the main road from Gloucestershire to

17. Holbrook, 'Roman Period', 106–8.

18. For the influence of earlier fields on a medieval settlement layout, see J. Bond and C. Lewis, 'The earthworks of Hawling', *Trans. BGAS* 109 (1991), 169–70.

London, and known in the 18th century as London Way. A track forming the southern boundary was once a road of local significance which branched off from the main road at Puesdown and was headed east towards Farmington and Sherborne. All of these roads must have been functioning before the 11th century. The White Way is thought to have been used in the Roman period, and the salt way is likely to date back to the beginnings of large-scale salt extraction at Droitwich in the late Iron Age.¹⁹ Briquetage, the remains of the clay vessels in which Droitwich salt was carried and stored, has been found on Iron-Age sites in south Gloucestershire, near to this route.²⁰ The salt way on its southward course divides at the Barrow Ground (one imagines the barrows/cairns serving as landmarks for travellers), with the main route heading past Puesdown to cross the Fosse south of Northleach and so through Bibury to Lechlade. An alternative route tended towards the south-east, but kept to the west of Hazleton village. This north–south road meets the east–west route from Compton Abdale to Turkdean in a T-junction, and then, after a short diversion, resumes its course to the east of Puesdown to join the road to Sherborne. The north–south road has a good claim to predate the foundation of Hazleton village, as it runs straight past the settlement, 300 m to the west of the church and seems to be related to the framework of boundaries within which the village is set (Fig. 8).

The edge of Hazleton Grove and the boundary of a furlong of ridge and furrow visible on an air photograph of 1946 follow a sinuous north–south line parallel to the road.²¹ That line continues as the north–south road from the church and Manor Farm to Priory Farm which formed the main village street. A significant east–west element in this simple grid, as well as the village street taking traffic to Turkdean, was the impressive lynchet on the southern boundary both of the village and also of the complex of structures which preceded Priory Farm. This lynchet, which was formed by ploughing before any buildings existed on the Priory Farm site, like the branch of the salt way to the west, has already been identified as a likely survivor of the Romano-British or prehistoric landscape. The main outlines of the village plan, both streets and other boundaries, were possibly influenced by the routes and lynchets that can be traced back before 400 AD.

Hazleton in the Middle Ages

Hazleton's long-term development in the centuries after the Roman period takes us, in a revolutionary change, from a dispersed to a nucleated pattern of settlement. Instead of farmsteads scattered at intervals across the land, presumably working small hedged fields, by *c.*1000 AD all settlement was concentrated on a single village, which contained the houses of the peasant cultivators, the church, the rectory and the manor house. The inhabitants of this central settlement worked in the open fields which stretched towards the edge of the territory. We have no precise dating evidence for the origin of the nucleated village or the open fields, but by analogy with dated examples elsewhere the likely date lies between the 9th and 11th centuries, for which *c.*1000 AD serves as an indicator.²²

Some local evidence suggests that settlements were dispersed in the centuries immediately after 400 AD. A single sherd of grass- or chaff-tempered pottery, which is dated between the 5th and 10th centuries has been found on each of three of the Hazleton Romano-British settlement sites, suggesting that occupation may have continued into the early Middle Ages. A group of four sherds

19. *VCH Glos.* IX, 33, 92–3; *Iron Age and Romano-British Monuments in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds* (Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, England, 1976), xlv–xlviii.

20. Moore, 'Iron Age', 80, 83.

21. National Monuments Record, 106G/UK/1345, April 1946.

22. Jones and Page, *Medieval Villages*, 89–104.



Fig. 9. The village c.2000, with existing roads, buildings and earthworks; 'a' and 'b' mark the terraces discussed in the text. The terraces at 'b' are cut by a later holloway, and there is some evidence of 'slumping' of soil. On the east the mill site lies near Lower Barn, with leats converging on it. The earthworks nearer the village are shown in more detail in Figs. 13 and 14.

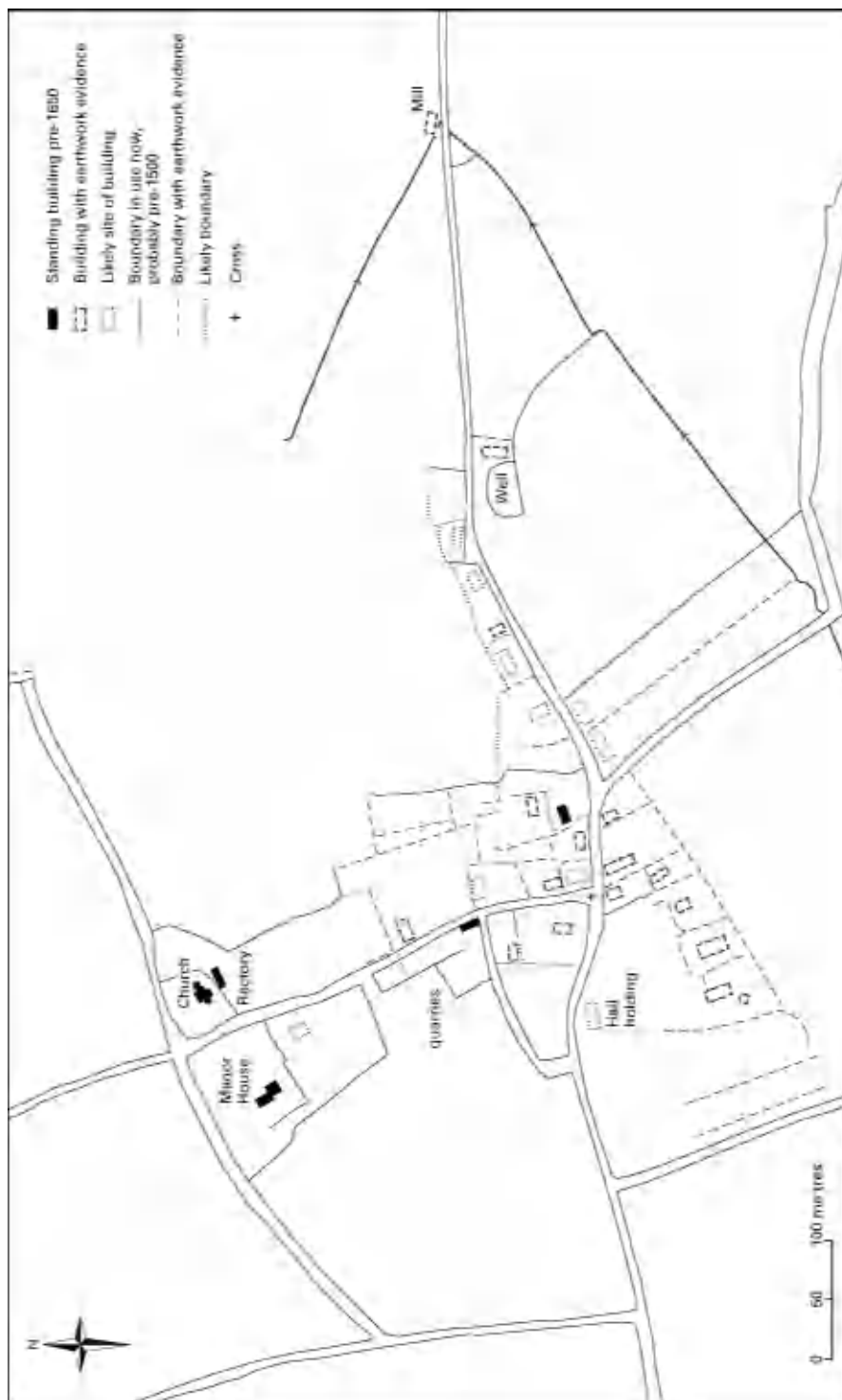


Fig. 10. The village with the outline of observed and presumed pre-modern features.

– a rare number by the standards of a period when pottery was very scarce – has been found near the Flitgo Roman site, but separate from the main concentration of Roman pottery, implying that the settlement shifted a short distance (a not uncommon event) after *c.* 400 AD, or even that a new settlement had been founded (Fig. 15). Similar sherds have been found very near to the Turkdean villa site.²³

At this time a large migration of people brought Germanic material culture and language to the whole of England. In and near to the Cotswolds known Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are few and scattered. The evidence in the immediate vicinity of Hazleton consists of 5th- and 6th-century burials adjacent to prehistoric barrows at Hampnett. Otherwise the nearest are at Upper Swell and Bishop's Cleeve well to the north-west and north-east.²⁴ This small number of cemeteries may partly be the result of the migrants' conversion to Christianity by the British clergy who discouraged burial in the pagan manner with weapons and jewellery.²⁵ We must also suppose that most inhabitants of the region were of British descent, and that a relatively small number of migrants, perhaps because they formed a political élite, exercised a disproportionate cultural influence. The most prominent of the invaders are visible historically as the rulers of the sub-kingdom of the Hwicce. This small political unit was subordinated to Mercia, and a bishopric was established in the 7th century to serve it, based in Worcester.²⁶ The inhabitants, both natives and newcomers, had been deprived by the collapse of the Roman province of manufactured and traded goods, and consequently their settlement sites are marked by few material remains, apart from the scarce hand-made pottery. The movement of people to congregate in nucleated villages and cultivate strips in open fields occurred centuries after the migration, the formation of the Hwiccean sub-kingdom, and the foundation of the bishopric, and therefore probably had no direct connection with that linguistic, political and religious upheaval.

In view of the fragmentary archaeological evidence for the medieval village of Hazleton and its surroundings, our reconstruction of events depends on assumptions that some elements of the modern village plan had their origin before the first written records. We can also use analogies with nearby villages such as Hawling and Aston Blank where much more is known of the medieval field systems.²⁷ Some evidence for the late medieval village still exists today (Figs. 9 and 10). The church is the most complete standing medieval structure. It occupies a prominent position on a spur of high ground. It is not especially large, and like many Cotswold churches it still retains much fabric from the 12th century, datable from the Romanesque chancel arch and the south door. It was altered in the 14th and 15th centuries, and the porch was added.²⁸ The incorporation into the 12th-century fabric of some large stones might suggest that materials were being reused from an earlier phase of building. The manor house close to the church (now Manor Farm) has an entirely modern external appearance but includes a room (6.5 by 3.2 m internally) with a door

23. A. Reynolds, 'The Early Medieval Period', in Holbrook and Juřica (eds.), *Archaeology in Gloucestershire*, 135–8, discusses problems of dating this type of pottery and its occurrence on Roman sites; Holbrook, 'Turkdean Roman Villa', 55.

24. Reynolds, 'Early Medieval Period', 141–7; A. Meaney, *A Gazetteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites* (London, 1964), 90.

25. S. Bassett, 'How the west was won: the Anglo-Saxon takeover of the West Midlands', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 11 (2000), 107–18.

26. D. Hooke, *The Anglo-Saxon Landscape: the Kingdom of the Hwicce* (Manchester, 1985), 3–23.

27. D. Aldred and C. Dyer, 'A medieval Cotswold village: Roel, Gloucestershire', *Trans. BGAS* 109 (1991), 139–70; C. Dyer, 'The rise and fall of a medieval village: Little Aston (in Aston Blank), Gloucestershire', *Trans. BGAS* 105 (1987), 165–81.

28. *VCH Glos.* IX, 104.



Fig. 11. The complex of high-status structures on rising ground to the north of the village, from the south, with Glebe Farm (originally the rectory) to the right, the church behind, and Manor Farm, the site of the manor house, to the left (David Aldred).

with a four-centred arch of *c.*1500. An adjoining cellar is lit by a small medieval window.²⁹ Glebe Farm, which stands on a terrace immediately south of the church, contains a four-bay section which represents the rector's house of the 16th and 17th centuries. Together the church, manor house and parsonage form an impressive cluster of high-status structures occupying high ground (Fig. 11).

In relation to the rest of the settlement they were superior in both senses of the word. At Priory Farm there are mouldings, including column bases, set in garden walls, which resemble stonework in the parish church so closely that they are likely to have been removed at the restoration of 1866. Mouldings in different stone from windows of *c.*1500 suggest that a substantial dwelling may have stood on the site. A house on the southern edge of the village contains a well-carpentered pair of raised crucks which are likely to date from the late 16th or early 17th century, and Hillside, a house of five bays with a Tudor doorway, stands on the north-south village street. Both are likely to have occupied the sites of medieval predecessors.³⁰

The present village is divided into four parts, with a knot of houses near the church, another around the T-junction between the north-south and east-west roads next to Priory Farm, and an

29. We are grateful to Mr Hopwood for letting us survey this house.

30. *VCH Glos.* IX, 93, 103.

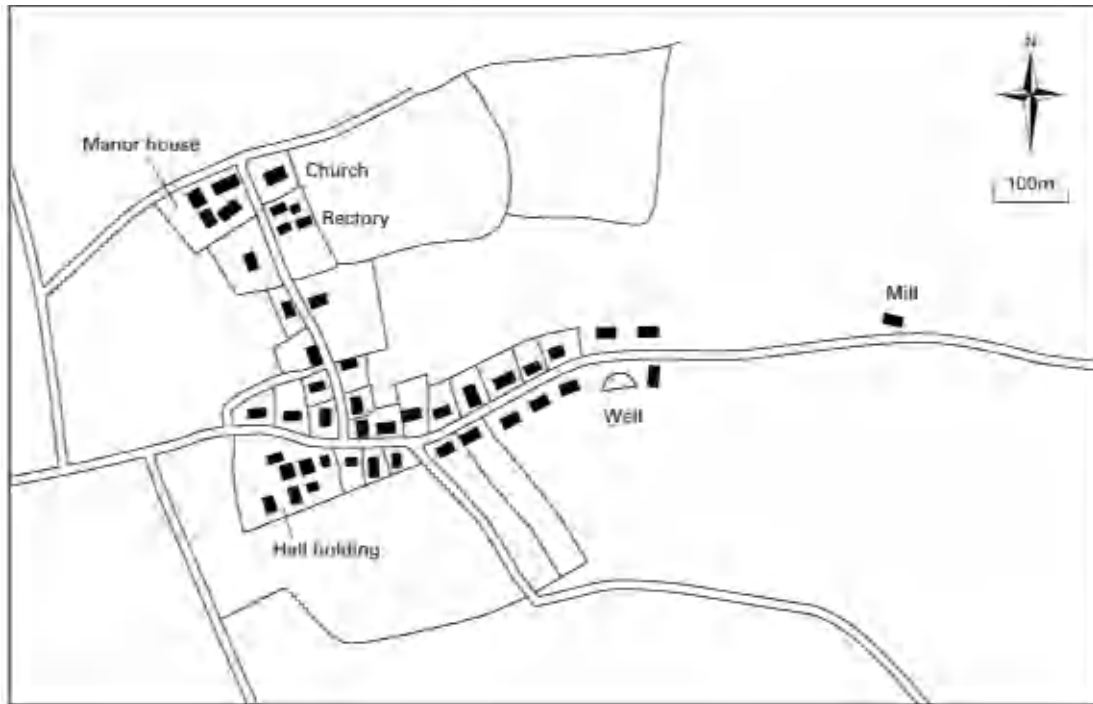


Fig. 12. The medieval village: a speculative reconstruction of the streets and buildings, c.1300.

irregular string of houses running down the lane towards Lower Barn and Turkdean (Fig. 9). The fourth part, consisting of the 19th-century rectory built on a new site to the west of the manor house, and the suburban-style houses of the 20th century to the west of that are too recent to be considered here. If we discount also the houses (and the windmill) built since 1826, which include all buildings to the north of the church, and take note of the house sites marked by earthworks or by empty plots, we see that the earlier village consisted of two streets at right-angles (Fig. 12).³¹ Houses occupied both sides of the north-south street, though not in regular rows. There were complexities of plan such as a holloway running 60 m to the west of the present road towards Northleach, through an area of ridge and furrow and almost continuing the line of the north-south street, which suggests that there was once a different route out of the village to the south. The village plan could be regarded as 'polyfocal', but we cannot be sure that there was a northern group around the church, rectory and manor house, where the existing buildings are of 19th- and 20th-century date. Most of the peasant houses, perhaps all, were built to the south of the manor and rectory, with a focus on the T-junction of roads near Priory Farm. This was marked by a stone cross of which the base with a socket for the shaft is preserved in the garden of Priory Farm itself.

The earthworks show a complex of remains of former settlement to the north-east of the T-junction, including building platforms, toft boundaries and sunken yards (marked as 'c' on Fig. 13). The earthworks of one building were sited well back from the road frontage. Nearer to the rectory are larger linear earthworks and a large rectangular enclosure, perhaps connected with

31. A map of 1826, Gloucestershire Archives (GA), Photocopy 1931, has been transcribed by G. Watkin and has been made available by the Archives.

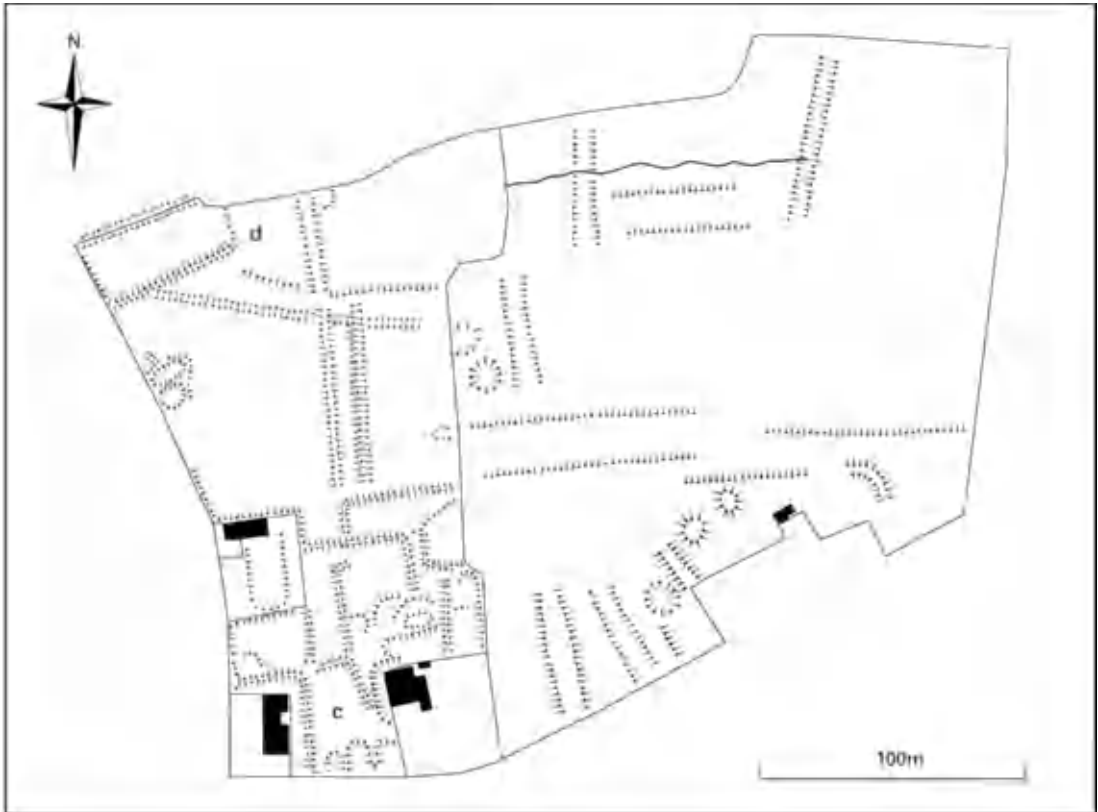


Fig. 13. Earthworks on the east side of village. In the western field at 'c' platforms, depressions and boundary banks mark abandoned house sites; rectangular enclosures at 'd' mark pens for livestock (?), probably belonging to the rectory. The eastern field has been cultivated in modern times, and the badly eroded earthworks hint at earlier settlement and cultivation.

management of livestock (marked as 'd'). A palimpsest of earthworks to the south of the T-junction again includes tofts and house platforms, including three well-defined house sites, presumed to be the houses of villagers (marked as 'e' on Fig. 14). Below them is a well-preserved stretch of ridge and furrow and the holloway already mentioned. North of the major east-west lynchet which bisects the field is a series of prominent earthworks (marked as 'f' on the plan) including holloways, a circular feature which may be the remains of a dovecot, and the foundations of a major building, probably a barn. These appear to have been part of the outbuildings of the predecessor of Priory Farm. South of the lynchet, as well as lynchets caused by soil slumping and disturbances associated with the modern water works and spring, are three large enclosures marked by grassed-over collapsed stone walls (marked as 'g'). The eastern wall has the remains of a small building attached to it. These are likely to have been closes or paddocks for livestock.

Two straight ditches running eastwards from the village, originally constructed as leats, carry water from springs to converge at a degraded set of earthworks near the modern Lower Barn, marking the site of a water mill (Figs. 9 and 10). There are slight remains of house sites along the lane that links the village and the mill, suggesting that the settlement projected eastwards for some distance. The water mill's site serves as a reminder that the village is located very advantageously

near three springs which rise on the edge of high ground (Fig. 3). The village site has the merit of both convenient water supplies and some shelter from western and northern winds. The village's layout, if the existing features still in use are combined with the empty plots left by the abandonment of houses, shows it was a more concentrated settlement than its modern successor. The material evidence does not suggest that Hazleton ever had a regular plan resembling the one-street villages with plots of similar size found at nearby Hawling and Aston Blank and at many other villages in the region.³²

Archaeological and topographical evidence throws valuable light on land use and farming. Areas of permanent pasture lay within paddocks and enclosures near the village and on sloping ground to the south and north-east of it. There was meadow to the east of the church (Bury Mead), and in the low lying ground near the mill amounting to at least 6 ha (15 acres). The medieval extent of Hazleton Grove may be marked by the oval area within the present wood enclosed with a bank, which amounted to about 15 ha (37 acres). There are traces of lynchets in the middle of the wood, and one near its eastern edge, so the trees may have grown up after the land had been cultivated, perhaps in the post-Roman period. The earthwork evidence for medieval cultivation is limited by the extent and intensity of recent farming. The ploughing out of the medieval ridges must go back well before the expansion of arable after the Second World War, as only one large area of ridge and furrow is visible on the air photograph of 1946. Fragments of surviving ridges, strip lynchets near the village, and faint traces visible from the air, expand the evidence for cultivation, but most of the survival was around the village and the grove. Traces of the medieval field pattern can be seen in the curving hedges of some fields, for example immediately to the south-east of the village on land known in modern times as Upper and Lower Severals, a name which implies that fields were enclosed out of the open field at an unknown date before the main act of enclosure in 1766 (Fig. 2 marks these field names). Similarly on nearby Moor Hill, an 1826 estate map depicts a long narrow curving field, known as Langgate, which had clearly been formed from the amalgamation and enclosure of perhaps five open-field strips or ridges. All of these clues suggest that the fields were once very extensive, which is confirmed by documents which tell us that by 1300 most of the township was under the plough.

A thin scatter of pottery of the 12th–14th centuries in the plough soil, found by fieldwalking, provides evidence for cultivation (Fig. 15). A rather dense concentration is found immediately to the east of the village and to a lesser extent to the west, suggesting that this land was subjected to quite intense manuring. A few sherds occur in fields more than a kilometre from the village. Compared with other medieval villages in the midlands, the quantity of medieval pottery is small, and its distribution over the fields is very restricted.³³ There are a number of explanations: the people of Hazleton may not have owned much pottery, reflecting either their relative poverty or their preference for containers and utensils made from other materials. If the manor house was unoccupied, its household would not have been contributing to the domestic rubbish spread on the fields. Some types of locally-made pottery do not survive well in the plough soil. All of these may be relevant factors, but husbandry practices may also have played their part, as sheep folding would have been a major method of manuring rather than spreading dung and domestic rubbish.

The small quantity of potsherds and their abraded state diminish the chances of establishing a chronology for cultivation and manuring. The bulk of the sherds belong to the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, with little from either the beginning or the end of the medieval period. This does

32. For planned villages in the region, C. Dyer, 'Villages and non-villages in the medieval Cotswolds', *Trans. BGAS* **120** (2002), 11, 13.

33. R. Jones, 'Signatures in the soil: the use of ceramic manure scatters in the identification of medieval arable farming regimes', *Archaeological Jnl.* **161** (2004), 159–88.

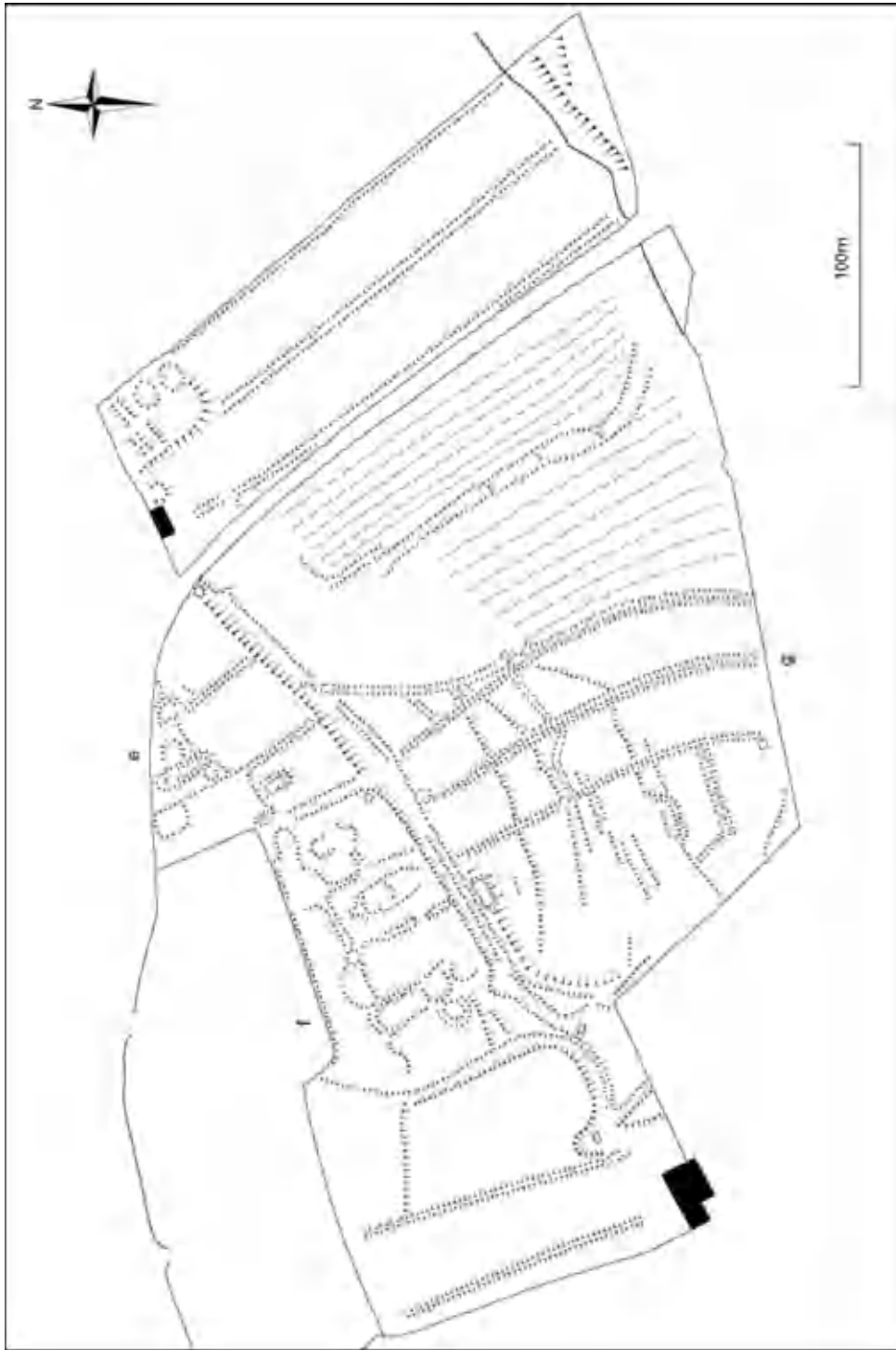


Fig. 14. Earthworks to the south of Priory Farm. To the east are two house sites with long banked enclosures running down to the stream. There are three more abandoned houses with well-preserved earthworks at 'e', and at 'f' larger scale platforms, enclosures and depressions, interpreted as agricultural buildings belonging to the predecessor of Priory Farm. The structures at both 'e' and 'f' have their southern boundary defined by the major east-west lynchet and holloway. To the south are three large enclosures at 'g' and, to the east, an area of ridge and furrow bisected by a holloway. This may have been a predecessor to the modern road 60 m to the east. The small terraces running at right angles to the boundaries of the enclosures at 'g' are likely to be the result of soil slumping down the relatively steep slope.

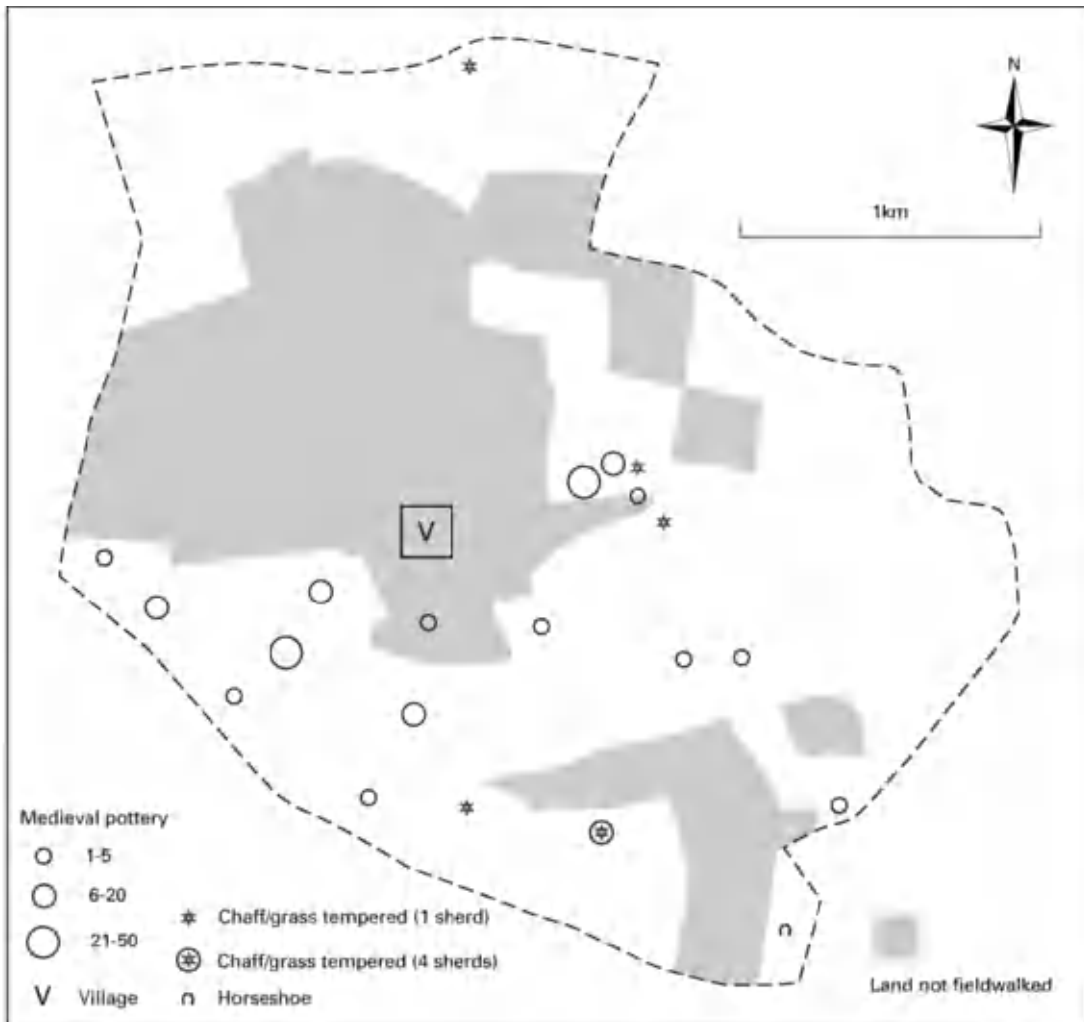


Fig. 15. Hazleton, medieval evidence: pottery and metalwork from fieldwalking.

not tell us much about the period before 1100, when pottery was scarce in the region. The absence of many sherds from the period after 1400 may reflect changes in agricultural technique in a period of contraction, in which manuring may have been reduced or ceased altogether on the areas which were converted to pasture. This might also have been connected to a shrinkage in the number of village households. The pottery and metal artefacts recovered from the modern plough soil remind us incidentally of the complexity of the peasant economy. The villagers, while practising a degree of self-sufficiency by consuming food grown on their own holdings, were drawn into exchange through the market. They bought pottery made in specialised centres, presumably from traders in nearby market towns. The places of origin of the pottery included Brill (Buckinghamshire), Hanley Castle (Worcestershire) and Minety (Wiltshire) as well as the Cotswold area.



Fig. 16. The main north–south street of the village, looking south from near the Church (David Aldred). The houses of the 18th and 19th century look on to a field containing the earthwork remains of an abandoned house.

The abandonment of houses in the village has left clear earthwork evidence, as there are at least a dozen sites of former houses, mainly in the vicinity of the T-junction of village streets east of Priory Farm (Fig. 16). Five buildings with visible collapsed walls can be seen, two platforms without signs of walls, and at least six empty closes or plots (Figs. 9, 10, 13, 14 and 16). The church was not radically rebuilt or enlarged in the later Middle Ages, as the walls of the nave and chancel of the 12th century were retained. As the porch was added in the 14th century, and a tower (later rebuilt) in the 15th, the village cannot be said to have been in total decline in the later Middle Ages.

The more modern growth of the village is reflected in the number of houses dated between the 17th and 20th centuries, though as we can still see abandoned sites interspersed among the modern houses the village has evidently not recovered its earlier levels of population. New buildings have been sited away from the old village core, to the west and north. Agricultural modernisation has imposed on large parts of the township straight-edged geometric field shapes, which give no clue of the previous divisions of the land, and as we have seen earthworks associated with earlier fields have been removed by intense modern cultivation. In one respect modern agricultural practice did not change old settlement patterns. Apart from 20th-century houses occupying the sites of two field barns, the farms have remained within the village, and we do not see in the far corners of the township new farms of the 18th and 19th centuries.

PART TWO: HISTORY FROM DOCUMENTS

History up to 1086

The first written source for Hazleton, Domesday Book, records fourteen villeins and six slaves living at Hazleton in 1086.³⁴ The slaves were attached to the lord's demesne and could have been housed on the lord's premises, though he may have settled them in cottages. The villeins represent the peasantry who had been living on the land, in unknown numbers, for centuries. The documents cannot throw light on the origin of these people, except to record the place-names of Hazleton and its neighbours. These were generally in Old English and therefore reflect the linguistic impact of German-speaking migrants from the 5th century onwards, but the survival of the British name Pen Hill in the north-west of the township, and the stream name *Turce* (preserved in Turkdean) on the eastern boundary, suggests that a British population survived long enough to perpetuate the pre-English names for these prominent natural features.³⁵

We can begin by asking when the territory of Hazleton emerged, with its defined boundaries. No documents relate directly to Hazleton from the period before 1086, but charters and chronicles provide a general context for the place. It belonged to the sub-kingdom of the Hwicce from the 7th century and consequently was attached to the diocese of Worcester which was set up to serve that kingdom in 680. When the kingdom of Wessex (later England) took over the former Mercian territories Hazleton became part of Gloucestershire, and it was located within that shire in Bradley hundred. People living at Hazleton at that time would have been compelled to contribute to taxes and duties to the State, of which we only learn any details in 1086, when it was recalled that its obligations had within recorded time been assessed on the basis of 10 hides. Their more immediate and frequent payments would have been to a lord, initially of a great estate, and to a minster church. Some well-documented minsters were located near Hazleton, such as Withington to the west, which included in its large parish Notgrove and Aston Blank. Bibury and Cirencester stood to the south.³⁶ In the absence of direct charter evidence of a minster, we can establish the connections of parish churches in the later middle ages in the hope of reconstructing their early affiliations. These show that Hazleton was not at the lowest level in the hierarchy of parishes because a priest is mentioned in 1086, and later it had a chapelry at Yanworth. Northleach seems more important because in addition to a large parish of its own, it served as mother church for Farmington and Stowell, and it may have been a minster church on which Hazleton was dependent (Fig. 1).³⁷

Villages and parishes became detached from the larger units of administration at an early date in this part of the Cotswolds, as is suggested by the naming in charters before 780 of such places as Cutsdean, Aston Blank, Notgrove, Andoversford and Chedworth.³⁸ Hazleton emerged as a separate unit of lordship at an unknown date. The place-name was coined well before it was first recorded in Domesday Book, and we are not sure of its original form. Its later spellings, ending in *-ton*, suggest its early recognition as an estate and/or settlement, but the earlier forms such as *Haseleden* could refer to the valley (*denu*) which dominates the topography of the eastern side of

34. *Liber Censualis seu Domesday Book*, ed. A. Farley (London, 1783), fo. 170b.

35. A.H. Smith (ed.), *The Place-names of Gloucestershire part 1* (English Place-name Society, 38, 1960–1), 177, 183–4.

36. S. Bassett, *The Origins of the Parishes of the Deerhurst Area* (Deerhurst Lecture, 1997), 6–13; J. Blair, 'Secular minster churches in Domesday Book', in P. Sawyer (ed.), *Domesday Book. A Reassessment* (London, 1985), 106–14.

37. *VCH Glos.* IX, 79, 135, 215. We are grateful to Dr Steven Bassett for his comments on this idea.

38. H.P.R. Finberg, *Early Charters of the West Midlands* (Leicester, 1961), 35–6, 40–1.

the territory. The similar valley with which it connects gave its name to Turkdean.³⁹ The hazel bushes, like the nut trees of adjacent Notgrove, suggest that at the time when the names were coined (8th century or earlier) woods were small and few, as nut bushes or groves would not have stood out as distinguishing features in a landscape densely covered with trees. In 1086 Domesday tells us that in the vicinity there was ‘not much’ wood.⁴⁰

The piece of land now called Hazleton probably had its boundaries defined for some centuries before 1086; the field-name Flitgo on the southern edge of the township (an early form was *Flytgor*) refers to a disputed triangular piece of land. This must recall a controversy over the acutely pointed corner of Hampnett parish, where it meets Hazleton and Compton Abdale near Puesdown. One can expect that in the pre-Conquest period pieces of pasture were subject to intercommoning between villages, which led to friction until precise lines were fixed.⁴¹

Hazleton’s territory by the late Anglo-Saxon period performed three functions. Firstly it was a manor from which a lord could gain an income from land and people. The first person known to us to have held the lordship (together with Yanworth and Hawling) was Godgifu, sister of Edward the Confessor, called Goda in Domesday Book, who died shortly before the Norman Conquest.⁴² She must have had many predecessors, as the manor had probably come into existence long before her time. Secondly Hazleton was also a parish (with Yanworth), with a priest mentioned in Domesday Book, and a church from which stones are probably still visible, built into the 12th-century walls of the present church. And its third function was as a village, in the sense that a group of peasants had legal and fiscal responsibilities to the hundred and shire and also managed its own fields.

Domesday Book shows that Hazleton was quite valuable: its old tax assessment of 10 hides had been reduced to 7, for unknown reasons, and it provided an income of £7 per annum for its lord, a similar sum to that generated by neighbouring large manors. The lord, Sigar de Chocques, who had acquired all three manors that had belonged to Godgifu, must have been a rare visitor to these outliers on his estate, but there would still have been a manor house with manorial farm buildings; a large barn, for example, is recorded in 1162.⁴³ No mill was mentioned. The population of fourteen villeins and six slaves could, if the slaves had been settled on smallholdings, amount to twenty households, some or all of which may have already been established on the site of the present village. A great deal of land was used as arable, as the lord’s demesne employed three ploughs, which could have cultivated 120 ha (300 acres), and the tenants held ten ploughs, which would have dealt with about 220–260 ha (550–660 acres), allowing for 50 acres for each peasant plough, or 40 acres per peasant holding, and adding the priest’s glebe of 100 acres.⁴⁴ Therefore with near to 340–380 ha (at least 850 acres), Hazleton’s grain-growing capacity was already well-developed, perhaps covering a half of the available land. The grove was not included in the Domesday survey presumably because it was mainly a source of fuel and fencing for local use, and did not produce a profit for the lord.⁴⁵ There must also have been unrecorded areas of meadow and pasture.

39. Smith, *Place-names*, 174; M. Gelling, *Place-names in the Landscape* (London, 1984), 97–9.

40. *Domesday*, fo. 165a.

41. *VCH Glos.* IX, 82, gives the spelling of 1383; we are grateful for Paul Cullen’s advice on this name.

42. *Domesday*, fo. 170b.

43. *Landboc sive Registrum Monasterii Beatae Mariae Virginis et Sancti Cenbelmi de Winchelcumba* ed. D. Royce (Exeter, 1892–1903), vol. 2, 308–9.

44. The acreages are debatable. See Dyer, ‘Little Aston’, 170.

45. S. Wager, *Woods, Wolds and Groves: the Woodland of Medieval Warwickshire* (BAR British Series 269, 1998), 10–26.

1086–1349

In the two and a half centuries after the Domesday survey the landscape and society of Hazleton were affected by three major changes. Firstly the population of the village grew, with a corresponding expansion of cultivation. Secondly the lordship of the manor was transferred from continental lay aristocrats to Winchcombe abbey. Thirdly a major freeholding developed, that of the Hall family. In addition as documents become more plentiful, we become fully aware of two of Hazleton's distinctive features, firstly the wealth and independence of the rectors of the parish church, and secondly the nucleated village.

The size and profile of the village community around 1300 can be reconstructed from the 1355 rental of the estates of Winchcombe abbey, which incidentally records many features of landholding from before the Black Death of 1349 and the agrarian crisis of 1315–17.⁴⁶ Among the customary tenants of the abbey manor c.1300 there were twenty-one houses and house sites (called messuages and closes) and 20 virgates or yardlands. The smallholders were few – three cottages, a close where a cottage had stood, and three other smallholdings of 2–4 acres, but with no record of dwellings or former dwellings attached. The two free tenancies consisted of one of 11 yardlands, with two messuages and four cottages (in the hands of the Hall family), and another with a messuage and 3½ yardlands. One of the messuages held by the Halls, and their cottages, were likely to have been held by subtenants. This would suggest that the village around 1300 contained two wealthy free tenants, about twenty-one customary yardlanders, and eight cottagers. There may have been some more smallholders among the tenants holding small acreages from the main manor, and unrecorded subtenants. The village would have contained a little more than thirty houses, and the fields would have accommodated 34½ tenant yardlands (Fig. 17).

This calculation is not dissimilar from the figures given in a survey of the rector's assets in 1313, which states that the titheable tenant land consists of 30 yardlands; 17 of them customary and 13 free.⁴⁷ The survey adds the useful information that the yardland contained 40 acres, which would allow us to calculate an arable acreage in the hands of tenants of 1,200 or 1,380 acres (480 or 550 ha), depending on whether we use the 1313 or 1355 figures. The 1313 document assigns to the glebe a carucate, about 100 acres, and the papal tax valuation of 1291 assesses the Winchcombe abbey demesne at two carucates (200 acres),⁴⁸ so we arrive at a grand arable total for all landholders of either 625 or 700 ha (1,500 or 1,680 acres), which as the township contained 634 ha (1,566 acres) leaves very little or nothing for the grove, permanent pasture or meadow. All of these statistics are flawed of course – the 1313 survey states that a yardland 'commonly' contains 40 acres, not that this was always the case. Surveys of the glebe in the 17th and 18th centuries suggest that the 3 yardlands of which it was composed each contained about 30 acres, so that the yardlands may have varied between 30 and 40 acres.⁴⁹ A local or customary acre, smaller than a statute acre, may have been used. The conclusion must still be that arable had taken over most of the land available and that the wood, pasture and meadow were likely to be confined to a very small area – perhaps the 6 ha of meadow and the 15 ha of wood and pasture closes near the village already identified

46. GA, D 678/rental 1355, fos. 21–22 (it was located in Safe 3 in 2005). By 1355 many holdings had no tenants or had been combined with others. The reconstruction is based on the assumption that c.1300 the holdings were separate.

47. *The Register of Walter Reynolds, Bishop of Worcester 1308–1313*, ed. R.A. Wilson (Dugdale Society 9, 1928), 62.

48. *Taxatio Ecclesiastice Angliae et Walliae auctoritate P. Nicholai IV circa A.D. 1291* (Record Commission, 1802), 234.

49. *VCH Glos.* IX, 102; GA, P 172/IN1/1; D 6577/3.

from field work. The acquisition in the mid 13th century by Winchcombe abbey of a meadow in Chedworth, which could have been for use by the managers of the demesne at Yanworth but perhaps for Hazleton too, indicates the shortage of hay felt at that time.⁵⁰

The figures allow us to be more precise about the expansion of the 12th and 13th centuries. The population of the village evidently increased by 50 per cent, from twenty to thirty families (Fig. 17), and the cultivated area expanded on a rather more accelerated scale, from 850 to 1,500 acres (355 or 625 ha), using the two smaller estimates. As there was little wood to clear, the expansion must have been achieved by taking in former pasture – the ‘newly broken land’ mentioned in a tithe agreement in 1301.⁵¹ The completeness of the Domesday survey must be doubted: if rent-paying tenants were omitted, as happened elsewhere, the numbers of people and ploughs may be understated, and therefore the growth in tenants and cultivated land between 1086 and 1300 becomes less dramatic.⁵²

The second change involved the transfer of the manorial lordship. The de Béthune family, who were the French descendants of the Domesday holder, Sigar de Chocques, sold their three Gloucestershire manors of Hawling, Hazleton and Yanworth to Winchcombe abbey, initially in 1201 retaining a substantial annual rent for themselves of £20 per annum, but then in successive transactions the rent was reduced and the abbey made its final payment in 1251.⁵³ The motives for the sale are not known, and may have been simply financial, as the de Béthunes may have needed a large sum of money at a time of rapid inflation.⁵⁴ Winchcombe abbey was ambitious to extend its landed estate and acquired other manors and properties in the 13th century, helping it to become a leading wool producer.⁵⁵ As a result of the sale Hazleton was to be part of the estate of a major Benedictine monastery until 1539. What influence did this change of lordship have on the social and landscape history of the village? A possible line of reasoning might be that an absentee French lord was replaced by a local lord who would supervise and improve the estate. The lay lords, however, were not complete absentees, and cross-channel contacts led to the marriage of John of Hazleton’s daughter Sibilla to Robert de Canasse of Béthune. The de Béthune family had other English lands, based in Northamptonshire.⁵⁶ The monks of Winchcombe, on the other hand, though located nearby (at a distance of 11 km), depended like their predecessors on reeves and bailiffs to manage the land. Perhaps we could expect that monks were more dynamic as lords than a not very powerful lay family? The increase in tenant numbers and the area of arable land may have occurred under the monks, but the 13th century everywhere saw an acceleration in growth.

A third development was the emergence of the major Hazleton freeholding of the Hall family. It is revealed in 1285–1303 as belonging to the Gayton Fee. The tenancy had not been transferred with the rest of the manor in 1201 and Robert Hall’s services were granted to Winchcombe c.1235, but the monks did not become the Halls’ lords fully until c.1290.⁵⁷ We have noted the Halls’ very large holding of 11 yardlands in 1355, and it was said to have been almost as big in 1313. It was,

50. *Landboc*, vol. 2, 365–8, 371–4, 375–6.

51. *Ibid.* 345–6.

52. H.C. Darby, ‘Domesday Book and the geographer’, in J.C. Holt (ed.), *Domesday Studies* (Woodbridge, 1987), 108–10.

53. *VCH Glos.* IX, 95; *Landboc*, vol. 2, 110–12.

54. The financial embarrassment of landowners at this time: E. King, ‘Large and small landowners in thirteenth-century England. The case of Peterborough Abbey’, *Past and Present* 47 (1970), 26–50.

55. G. Haigh, *The History of Winchcombe Abbey* (London, n.d. [1948]), 52–65.

56. *Landboc*, vol. 2, 323–5; I.J. Sanders, *English Baronies. A Study of their Origin and Descent 1086–1327* (Oxford, 1960), 141–2.

57. *Landboc*, vol. 1, 14; vol. 2, 368–70.

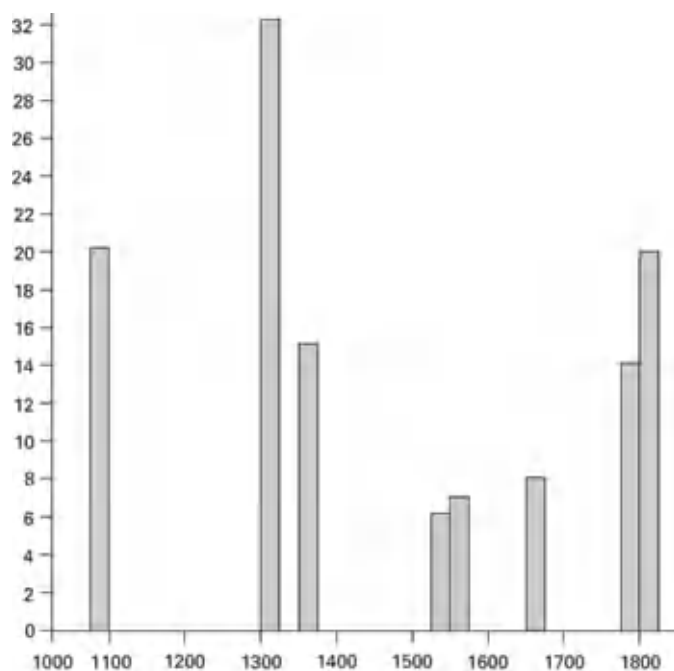


Fig. 17. Bar chart showing the numbers of recorded households, 1086–1801. Sources: cited in notes 3, 34, 46, 99, 100, and in A. Dyer and D. Palliser (eds.), *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603* (Records of Social and Economic History, new ser. 31, Oxford, 2005), 167; S. Rudder, *A New History of Gloucestershire* (Cirencester, 1779), 480).

however, only reckoned as 5 yardlands in 1285.⁵⁸ The source of the land may have been a grant made before 1162, as Domesday assigns three ploughs to the manorial demesne in 1086, but when the three manors of Hazleton, Yanworth and Hawling were leased in 1162 by Robert de Béthune to Walter of Hazleton, his clerk, he included with the lease six ploughs, presumably two for each manor, so the Hazleton demesne may have been reduced in size by a ploughland.⁵⁹ This land, equivalent to 3 or 4 yardlands, could have formed the basis of the Halls' holding. If this was the case, the Halls must have acquired other lands, either by ploughing up pasture, or by acquiring holdings from other tenants. The 1355 survey's statement that they held two messuages and four cottages points to their subletting of some of the land, in particular to cottagers who would have provided them with labour. The overall impression is that they had few tenants and cultivated an extensive holding which could have totalled 9 or 10 yardlands (about 300–400 acres: 120–160 ha). This would have been much larger than the abbey's demesne of about 200 acres (80 ha). It was not uncommon for gentry landowners, among whom the Halls must be judged to belong, to keep a high proportion of their land in direct cultivation.⁶⁰ The Halls' holding makes a prominent

58. *Ibid.* vol. 1, 14.

59. *Ibid.* vol. 2, 308–9.

60. R.H. Britnell, 'Minor landlords in England and medieval agrarian capitalism', *Past and Present* 89 (1980), 9–12.

appearance in the village plan. They had evidently acquired a messuage on the south-west corner of the settlement, which gave them space for outbuildings and enclosures for livestock on a considerable scale, as would be necessary for the management of such a large amount of land. The stonework found near the presumed site suggests that the Halls or their 16th-century successors, the Bannisters, built a substantial house (see p. 248). Their status and wealth tempts us to call their holding a submanor, but as they had few tenants and there is no evidence that they held a manor court, they should be called substantial freeholders. Their landholding was not confined to Hazleton, as William Hall, for example, until 1466 held a 180 acre (75 ha) tenement at Coates near Cirencester.⁶¹ The other freeholding, which was held by the Watkins family in the early 14th century, was also relatively large, with 3½ yardlands.⁶² Freehold land, which was not very common in the Cotswolds, and especially on the manors of large monasteries, accounted for more than 40 per cent of the tenant land in Hazleton.

Finally, we must consider the two dimensions of Hazleton's landscape and society which have their origins before 1086. In addition to the large lay holding of the Halls a third major player in the life of Hazleton was the rector, who enjoyed an unusually large endowment of land and income, and on occasion expressed a strong spirit of independence. The origins of the rector's wealth must lie in a generous provision made by a lord of the manor before the Norman Conquest. The survey of 1313 reveals that he held a ploughland, usually reckoned at 100 acres (40 ha), and this is confirmed by a glebe terrier of 1615 which recorded enclosures clustered around the church and the parsonage and 3 yardlands in the open fields.⁶³ In 1766 at inclosure the glebe's existing closes were reckoned at 13 acres (5 ha), and its open-field land at 82 acres (33 ha).⁶⁴

In the late 12th century Walter of Hazleton, clerk, took on a lease of the three de Béthune manors, and c.1200 John of Hazleton was parson of Hazleton. John was a land holder in his own right, and a trusted servant of the de Béthune family, and both he and Walter must have been dominant figures in the locality.⁶⁵ Winchcombe abbey gained the patronage of Hazleton church (which included the chapelry of Yanworth) in 1217, yet was constantly at loggerheads with the rectors that it appointed.⁶⁶ In the late 13th century the abbey had attempted to obtain confirmation of its exemption from paying tithes on its demesne lands on a number of manors, and the dispute with Elias of Gayton, the rector of Hazleton, was settled after two judgements by arbiters in 1301 and 1313.⁶⁷ The agreement eventually gave the rectors grain tithes of the customary tenants and the small tithes (of wool, lambs, hay, etc.), while the abbey was allowed to keep the grain tithes on the demesne and on the holdings of the free tenants.

Henry Benne, rector in 1357 and in 1367, can be seen in conflict with all sections of society in the manorial court rolls. As the court was held by the abbey, the rolls are not an entirely objective source, but the accusations cannot all be the result of monkish hostility. Benne impounded the abbey's oxen in 1357 and took timber from its manor in the following year.⁶⁸ Subsequently he was accused of allowing his livestock to trespass on the demesne and damage crops, once with as many as twelve oxen, reminding us that rectors were actively involved in agriculture on a considerable scale on their glebe. This also led Benne to quarrel with other villagers, by the

61. J.D. Thorp, 'The manor of Coates', *Trans. BGAS* 50 (1928), 189–90.

62. GA, D 678/96; 95.

63. *Reg. Walter Reynolds*, 61–3; GA, P 172/IN 1/1.

64. GA, D 6577/3.

65. *Landbooc*, vol. 2, 308–9, 332–5.

66. *Ibid.* 314.

67. *Ibid.* 345–6, 337–40.

68. GA, D 678/65.

trespasses of his animals on their land and of their animals on his. The most serious accusation was that the rector's dogs had worried the sheep of John Thommes. Benne had borrowed money from a villager, and from his own servant, Adam, who accused him of breaking into his house. He also fell out with the churchwardens, who accused him in 1358 of taking unjustly a silver chasuble (church vestment) worth 39s. 11d.⁶⁹ In 1366 Benne was in trouble with the abbey and the bishop for failing to appoint a chaplain for Yanworth.⁷⁰

The large establishment of the rectory has left a mark on the village plan because much of the sloping land to the south of the church is taken up, not just by the site of the rectory itself, now Glebe Farm, but also by a series of earthwork enclosures. The documents produced in the course of the tithe disputes in the early 14th century, and the later glebe terriers, tell us of a sheepcot, two barns and other structures, including a dovecot immediately to the east of the rectory.⁷¹ The location of the rectory and its outbuildings across the road from the abbey's manor house gave plenty of opportunity for the quarrels over straying animals and purloining of goods.

The nucleated village had formed well before the 14th century. The settlement had grown between 1100 and 1300 as new houses were added, including the complex of buildings and enclosures of the Halls' holding. One area of debate among landscape historians is the extent to which the lords of the manor planned villages on their estates. Hazleton provides some clues.⁷² A typical feature was the siting of the church very near the main manor house, because the church would have been built by a lord, initially for his household's use and for his tenants. The Halls' house may have been founded at the opposite end of the settlement because space was available, but it was also appropriate that there should be some distance between the manor house and the residence of this high-status tenant. At first glance the village's polyfocal appearance might suggest that the lords and the Halls were influencing the growth of different parts of the settlement, but in view of the lack of evidence that the Halls had many tenants, the lords of the main manor would have been potentially planners of the whole settlement. One stage of nucleation might have occurred when slaves were granted holdings from the demesne, often cottages or smallholdings. The successors of Yanworth's slaves can be recognised in the *bubulci* (tenants with the duty of manning the lord's ploughs) who lived there in the 12th century.⁷³ At Hazleton, however, where there had been six slaves in Domesday, only four cottagers are recorded as tenants on the main manor, so we cannot so readily equate a group of later holdings with the slaves who were 'housed' c.1100. The lords who could have played the most important part in any village planning would have been members of the Chocques or de Béthune families, as we presume that the settlement had formed well before the transfer to Winchcombe abbey in 1201. In any case, with no resident lord at any time, the most influential and powerful figures could have been the lessees or officials, like Walter of Hazleton from 1162, or the clergy who were also servants of the de Béthunes, like John of Hazleton at the end of the 12th century.⁷⁴ The village plan is not very regular, so it may not have been subject to any particular direction, but grew as peasants established their houses along the streets in plots of land of varied size and shape.

69. *Ibid.* The chasuble was probably worth more than 40s., but the court was not competent to recover such a large sum. Vestments often belonged to the church, not the clergy.

70. *Landboc*, vol. 2, 346–52.

71. *Reg. Walter Reynolds*, G1–3; GA, P 172/IN 1/1.

72. e.g. C. Lewis, P. Mitchell-Fox and C. Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field, Changing Medieval Settlements in Central England* (Macclesfield, 2001), 172–7.

73. *Landboc*, vol. 2, 333–4; for *bubulci*, see *Charters and Customals of the Abbey of Holy Trinity Caen*, ed. M. Chibnall (British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History 5, 1982), 59.

74. *Landboc*, vol. 2, 308–9, 332–6.

Nucleated villages are commonly associated with open fields, but is there any evidence for the development of Hazleton's field system? The place-name Puesdown, on the south-west corner of the township, is based on an Old English personal name (it means *Pefel's* down or hill) and suggests an early phase of land organization in which parcels of land were associated with individuals.⁷⁵ The field name *Edychfeld* (recorded in 1466) implies an enclosed field, and is most commonly found in districts in eastern England where 'old enclosure' was more common than in the Cotswolds.⁷⁶ The separate pieces of land, which are implied by these names, were broken down into strips that were grouped into furlongs, themselves subdivisions of the large open fields. These were planted with crops and provided grazing for the villagers' animals on the stubble and also in fallow years. By analogy with other villages with this 'midland' field system, the date of the formation of the open fields could have coincided with the nucleation of the village. In the later Middle Ages there were two open fields at Hazleton, North Field and South Field, presumably with a division following the stream valley and the lane leading to Turkdean.⁷⁷ They were alternately planted with crops and left fallow. No detailed description of strips and furlongs survives for Hazleton, but at adjoining Shipton Oliffe in 1236 a yardland of 30 acres consisted of twelve parcels in the furlongs of the East Field and twelve in the West Field.⁷⁸ The logic of scattered strips was that each cultivator had equal access to all parts of the field system, so the peasant houses were gathered together in a single settlement near to the centre.

The documents can reveal something about the village in its developed form. The survey of 1355, which preserved memories of tenancies dating well before the Black Death of 1349, seems to be arranged in topographical order.⁷⁹ A number of tenants' surnames were derived from prominent features such as the cross, lane and well. Beginning at the northern end by the manor house, church and rectory, the rental makers moved down the main street recording tenants such as John Thommes, Alice Blays and William Dobbes (Fig. 10). Alice held a cottage, evidently sandwiched between the messuages attached to yardlands. When the T-junction was reached John atte Halle appears, with his large holding on the site of Priory Farm, and the next entry in the rental is Richard atte Croys. The cross, the base of which is kept in a nearby garden, stood where the two streets met at the heart of the settlement. Richard also held a messuage and 2 yardlands that had been previously held by John in the Lone, who had lived on the lane leading eastwards to Turkdean. Then Thomas atte Welle is listed, whose house was further down the same lane (later called Townwell Lane), where a modern pond marks the main water supply for the community. At the end of the list – and presumably at the end of the lane – must have come the substantial 3½ yardland freeholding, once belonging to the Watkins family and later called Nether House, and two cottages, one once held by the Treweman family and the other by Agnes Ayllen. This is confirmed by a statement in 1313 that two cottages lay next to the rector's enclosed meadow 'outside the vill of Hazleton, on the east side towards Turkdean'. The tax list of 1327 seems to have been compiled in a similar topographical sequence, and ends with the 'in the Lone' family.⁸⁰

75. Smith, *Place-names*, 174.

76. GA, D 678/95; we were advised on this name by Paul Cullen; Gelling, *Place-names*, 242.

77. GA, P 172/IN 1/1; this record of 1615 is taken to apply to earlier centuries.

78. *Abstract of Feet of Fines relating to Gloucestershire 1199–1299*, ed. C. Elrington (Gloucestershire Record Series 16, BGAS, 2003), 60–1.

79. It is being recognized that a number of rentals and tax lists were compiled in this way: Dyer, *Hanbury*, 39–40; H. Fox, 'Taxation and settlement in medieval Devon', *Thirteenth-Century England* 10 (2005), 168–85.

80. *Landboc*, vol.2, 340; *The Taxpayers of Medieval Gloucestershire*, ed. P. Franklin (Stroud, 1993), 47.

Further along the lane to the east stood the mill, which is an enigma. The leats leading from springs in the village provide good physical evidence of a water supply for a mill. It is not however mentioned in Domesday, or the 1355 survey, or any other document until the late date of 1452, when in the manor court John Couper took on the tenancy of a 'watermill and an adjacent croft' for his life.⁸¹ This was not a new tenement, but when the mill was built is not known: usually mills were established well before 1349. Independent 'tenant mills' which became freeholdings in the 12th century, and which are found on other estates, made a limited impact in the documents, but it would be surprising that the mill is not recorded at all.⁸² The mill seems to have declined soon after we are aware of its existence, as in 1466 John Miller was reported in the manor court to be neglecting repairs to the building.⁸³

Court orders in the 15th century for repairs tell us about the complex of buildings that formed the peasant message, including barns and kitchens as well as houses. Timber was mentioned, which supports the generalisation that the remains of foundations still visible on sites of houses mark low walls which carried a timber frame, rather than high stone walls. Roofs were of thatch, though a find of a ceramic tile made at Minety (Wiltshire) from fieldwalking may indicate the practice of surrounding the smoke hole in the thatch with tiles, or of setting a row of ridge tiles on a thatched roof. This type of timber-framed building with stone foundations, as we know from excavated Cotswold villages, can be traced back to the 13th and 14th centuries.⁸⁴

After the Black Death of 1349

The monastery at Winchcombe suffered internal dissension and poverty in the mid 14th century, and in 1353 royal commissioners were put in charge.⁸⁵ They made a survey of the estates to help them resolve the financial problems, and this was the occasion for the 1355 survey of Hazleton which we have used as evidence for the size and layout of the village c.1300. At the same time the village was also experiencing difficulties, as the main manor which had about twenty-seven tenants in the early 14th century (excluding the sub-tenants of the Hall family) had been reduced to only ten by 1355. Six of the 20 customary yardlands lay in the lord's hands, that is without any named tenant, and one tenant held two yardlands and another, John Thommes, held four. If the Halls' tenants are included the number of occupied holdings reaches fifteen (Fig. 17).

The survey might be taken to reflect the disaster of the Black Death, which had no doubt carried off dozens of people and left holdings empty in Hazleton as in most other villages in western Europe.⁸⁶ Yet in reality the Black Death formed part of a prolonged period of difficulties, in which many villages in the Cotswolds and in other regions were experiencing loss of population, abandonment of land and poverty.⁸⁷ In 1327, when about about twenty yardlanders should have contributed at Hazleton to the royal lay subsidy, only thirteen people were included. Two of them were members of the affluent Hall family, though Richard was one of the tax collectors so they

81. GA, D 678/62.

82. R. Holt, 'Whose were the profits of corn milling? An aspect of the changing relationship between the Abbots of Glastonbury and their tenants 1086–1350', *Past and Present* **116** (1987), 3–23.

83. GA, D 678/95.

84. R.H. Hilton and P.A. Rahtz, 'Upton, Gloucestershire, 1959–1964', *Trans. BGAS* **85** (1966), 100–7.

85. Haigh, *Winchcombe Abbey*, 118–41; R. Hilton, 'Winchcombe Abbey and the manor of Sherborne', in R. Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism* (London, 1985), 21–6.

86. O.J. Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346–1353. The complete history* (Woodbridge, 2004), emphasises the universal impact of the epidemic and the high levels of mortality.

87. Dyer, 'Villages and non-villages', 29–31.

may not have paid as much as one would expect.⁸⁸ Most of the villagers either evaded or were exempted on the grounds of inadequate resources. The average individual tax payment was a modest 18*d.*, which was not unusual on the hills, but was well below the 30*d.* per head found in lowland villages on the Winchcombe estate, such as Long Marston and Admington.⁸⁹ The small number of tax payers, combined with the low assessments, suggests that the peasants of Hazleton were not making much profit from their yardland holdings. The same impression is given by the low rents that they owed, which, judging from the 1355 rental, even before the plague stood in the region of 3*s.*–5*s.* per customary yardland, less than half the rents that could be expected elsewhere in Gloucestershire at this time.⁹⁰ In the earliest manorial court roll for Hazleton, in 1341, the lord charged the servile tenants with two recognition fines of 9*s.* and 10*s.* These were owed every time there was a change of lord, one when a vacancy followed the resignation of Abbot Iddebury, and the other when the new abbot, William of Sherborne, succeeded. Having charged the servile community with this sum of 19*s.*, ‘by the lord’s grace’ the payment was remitted ‘because they are greatly burdened’.⁹¹ In the same year the collectors of the ninth reported that at Shipton Oliffe, the adjoining parish, land was not cultivated because of the poverty of the parishioners, and there were similar signs of distress in other Cotswold parishes.⁹²

From the 1350s until the last surviving court roll in 1466 the Hazleton community showed signs of severe stress. Holdings were engrossed into collections of 3 and 4 yardlands, but they do not seem to have been regarded as very valuable assets, as they were not treasured by families, but passed from one tenant to another. In 1443 for example a holding of 4 yardlands and two of 3 yardlands, that is almost half of the customary land in the manor, changed hands, but only one of these composite holdings was inherited. John Mason, the son of John Mason, on the death of his father took on his 4 yardlands, but Martin Curteys was succeeded by William Cuyte, and Thomas Roberts by Richard Payn. The three new tenants paid entry fines, not at the rate of 13*s.* 4*d.* for a yardland as is recorded in 1341, but mere tokens: two capons, two capons and two pullets respectively.⁹³

The monastic lords attempted to make these assets more desirable by allowing the old units to be broken up. Already by 1355 messuages (and plots where houses had once stood) were being detached from yardlands and held as distinct parcels of land, and acres of land were being rented separately – 4 acres from Bertram’s yardland, and an acre and a half from Newman’s. A dispute in 1391 over a parcel of land revealed that a yardland had been divided between three tenants.⁹⁴ Tenancy was unstable, as people from different families (or at least with different names) succeeded one another. A 3-yardland holding once in the tenure of John Walker was surrendered in 1466 by John Miller into the hands of Martin Halle.⁹⁵

As land was held in composite holdings of 2, 3 or 4 yardlands, only one house, barn, kitchen and sheepcot were needed, and the buildings on the other holdings decayed, leading to the sites of the former messuages being described as ‘closes’ or ‘tofts’. The discontinuity of tenants discouraged building maintenance. The abbey attempted to force tenants to repair buildings in

88. *Taxpayers*, 47. Richard ate Halle was a subtaxer, which may have been to the advantage of himself and Clement ate Halle, who paid 12*d.* and 22*d.* respectively.

89. *Ibid.* 63, 64.

90. H.E. Hallam (ed.), *Agrarian History of England and Wales 1042–1300* (Cambridge, 1988), 665.

91. GA, D 678/96.

92. *Nonarum Inquisitiones* (Record Commission, 1807), 414.

93. GA, D 678/95.

94. *Ibid.* 98C.

95. *Ibid.* 95.

the early and mid 15th century, without much success. For example, in the year 1452–3 John Rymeld, despite being ‘ordered many times’, had allowed his buildings to fall into ruin, and he also had a cottage in disrepair. He was threatened with a penalty of 40s. and the forfeiture of the goods and chattels on the tenement on which the buildings were defective. His neglect was thought to be so serious that the lord’s council was alerted. In spite of this threat, he had the confidence not to comply, as the scarcity of tenants put the lord in a weak position.⁹⁶

The court records imply a good deal of friction among the villagers, and between them and their neighbours at Turkdean, mainly about the straying of animals and disputes over pasture. In the period of crisis the numbers of livestock kept by some individuals apparently increased, though it is no surprise to find that William Hall, the wealthiest resident, in 1466 had placed 300 sheep on the stubble before Martinmas (11 November) in breach of a bye law which allowed the cattle first bite of the stubble grazing.⁹⁷ Complaints of ‘overburdening the common’, that is keeping more animals than the customary rules allowed, were alleged repetitively and suggest stresses and strains among the tenants in the mid 15th century.

Survival

Towards the end of the 15th century Hazleton village was in such severe decline, and its population so small, that it might well have been totally deserted like nearby Little Aston, Aylworth, Hampen, Roel and Stowell. Instead a series of lists of inhabitants, tax payers and tenants between 1522 and 1540 tell a consistent story that land had accumulated in the hands of a few tenants. By 1540 a gentleman farmer, Edward Dracote, held the demesne – the ‘site of the manor’; Giles Bannister of Apperley had the 13 yardlands of the Hall tenement; and Richard Malkyn held 4 yardlands of the other freeholding now called Nether House. There were three new accumulations, composed of the customary yardlands, 3 in the hands of Robert Gest, 7 held by William Lorde, and 4 by John Holway.⁹⁸ It is worth asking who provided the labour on these holdings which varied in size between about 90 and 520 acres (38 and 217 ha), not forgetting the 100 acres (40 ha) of the rector’s glebe. In 1524 the six taxpayers assessed on the minimum sum of 20s. on wages must have been either servants living in their employers’ houses or labourers occupying cottages as subtenants. In 1524 there were four wealthy potential employers, with goods assessed at £10, £10, £20 and £30.⁹⁹ The labourers must have sublet houses or smallholdings, as no-one rented a tenement containing less than 90 acres (38 ha) from the main manor.

Labour was especially necessary because the land was not, unlike that on other shrunken villages, converted in large measure to pasture. In the values assigned to tithes in 1535, the corn tithe was reckoned to be worth £7 4s. 0d. per annum, while wool tithes were estimated at £2 8s. 0d. and lambs at a mere 2s.¹⁰⁰ Total production can be estimated by multiplying the tithe by ten, so the wool crop was worth a respectable £24 representing the fleeces of 700 sheep, and the corn crop was being valued at £72, which at current barley prices would amount to the produce of near to 250 acres (104 ha). These crops came from the customary holdings only, and we should allow for a greater total from the demesne and the freeholdings.¹⁰¹ Relatively modest numbers of sheep are

96. Ibid. 62.

97. Ibid. 95.

98. The National Archives (formerly Public Record Office), SC2/175/1, fo. 32.

99. Ibid. E179/113/213.

100. *The Military Survey of Gloucestershire, 1522*, ed. R.W. Hoyle, (Gloucestershire Record Series 6, BGAS, 1993), 124; *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (Record Commission, 1810–34), vol. 2, 437.

101. Information about wool prices comes from Westminster Abbey Muniments, 12258; on grain prices J. Thirsk (ed.), *Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500–1640* (Cambridge, 1967), 814–70.

mentioned in mid 16th-century wills, when Richard Malkin (died 1545) owned twenty-nine and the rector in 1546 bequeathed 100. Those making wills in the 16th century regularly referred to oxen, yokes and ploughs, showing that arable farming remained an important part of the village economy.¹⁰² The continuation of mixed farming was a factor in the survival of the village, albeit in shrunken form.

CONCLUSION

We began with a series of questions, about the formation of territories, the rise and fall of settlements, and the shifting use of land. We have provided the basis for answers from both material and written evidence.

The territory of the modern township of Hazleton had been defined by the 11th century, though it was linked to Yanworth in a single ecclesiastical parish. In earlier times it is likely to have belonged to larger units of landholding, such as a possible minster parish of Northleach, which may also have functioned at some time as a large estate. Before 400 AD the farmsteads of Hazleton could have belonged to a land unit attached to a Roman villa, such as that at Turkdean. Smaller territories amounting to 400–800 ha (1,000–2,000 acres) were carved out of great estates in the period 800–1000 AD in a process which had profound consequences for the inhabitants, who now had a much closer relationship with a lord and whose production was focussed on a restricted area. The relative intensity of cultivation and social obligations that prevailed after *c.*1000 must have owed a great deal to the territorial subdivisions of the later part of the first millennium. The establishment of boundaries was not achieved without controversy, hence the disputes over the western edge of the township recalled in the name of Flitgo. The parish of Hazleton was established after the lord built a church near to his manor house.

The earliest human settlements consisted of seasonal camps in clearings in the scrubby woodland of the Mesolithic period. Between 4000 and 1000 BC people hunted, gathered, cultivated and sometimes lived in every corner of the territory, leaving traces of their presence in the form of flint flakes. As the episodic history of the Hazleton North site shows, a settlement with a timber building was succeeded by the burial mound and then by wooded country, which in turn was cultivated in the Iron Age. Other sites in the township presumably experienced similar varied histories. We must not imagine in the period before 1000 that the territory was continuously exploited by people living in permanent settlements. On the other hand in the Roman period perhaps six or seven farmsteads, with their extensive corn fields, filled most of the space available. After 400 AD a dispersed settlement pattern persisted – occupation of three of the Roman farmsteads, judging from finds of grass-tempered ware, continued for a time, and a new site developed near Flitgo in apparent succession to a nearby Roman farmstead. The continued use of a British place-name like Pen Hill suggests that the British population survived into the post-Roman period and had some influence on any Anglo-Saxon migrants. The long-term inheritance from the Roman period included roads and boundaries, and many acres of cleared and cultivated land, not all of which reverted to grass and trees. At some point probably in the later part of the first millennium AD the manor house, church and houses of peasant farmers clustered at the head of the main valley near a number of springs. Some of the new villagers were slaves working on the demesne and later to be granted smallholdings by the lord, but most were peasants who moved

102. Gloucester Diocesan Records (in GA) wills 1544/11; 1546/130.

presumably from dispersed settlements like that at Flitgo or from outside the neighbourhood. The location of the village within a grid of roads, related to a prominent lynchet, implies planning by someone in authority, presumably the lord or his agent. On the other hand the detailed layout of houses and the boundaries of their closes lack the geometrical regularity found in other villages, and the informal arrangement suggests a piecemeal growth without much coordination.

If we cannot be sure about the roles of the lord and the peasants in village foundation, then the connection between the village and the laying out of the fields is very difficult to resolve. The villagers cultivated strips in the fields at Hazleton from their central settlement, but we cannot tell if this was forced on them by economic necessity or was undertaken in imitation of villagers elsewhere. We can only observe the remarkable specialisation on arable cultivation which ultimately took over most of the land in the township.

The theory that expansion before 1300 caused ecological problems and precipitated a crisis of poverty and population collapse is now generally criticised, but the model fits the Cotswolds better than other areas. It was one of those regions where the collectors of taxes in the year 1340–1 reported poverty, uncultivated land and the first stages of depopulation. Hazleton increased its population between 1086 and 1300, and the arable fields were greatly extended to the point that little pasture, meadow and wood survived. The peasants who in theory enjoyed the ample resources implied by their yardlands of 30–40 acres were apparently so poor that they paid minimal rents and taxes. The lords were not extracting excessive amounts from their tenants, and through realism, not kindness, accepted that they could not afford to pay very much. Most of the peasants made a rational assessment of their problems, and abandoned their houses and land until by 1500 only a handful of substantial tenants made a living from fields that had once supported thirty families. The labour shortage was especially severe. The village teetered on the edge of disaster, but perhaps because of the influence of the two substantial free tenants, or through all of the cultivators achieving a new and healthier balance between arable and pasture, it survived. Not until the late 18th century did the population begin to recover, and even then it did not reach its level of the early 14th century.

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Postscript

After the research for this article was completed and the article was written in 2008, Mrs Barling, then of Priory Farm, Hazleton, showed us an iron knife in her possession. A label in the handwriting of a former owner of Priory Farm, George Wood, stated that it had been 'Found July 10th 1915 in the further Home Ground at Hazleton Priory – while making the tank. Also 2 skulls

and a quantity of bones'. The find spot is known precisely because the concrete reservoir is still a feature in the field called Top Home at SP 074177, west of Hazleton village, 300 m east of the main road, the A40. The knife consists of a complete blade and tang, 110 mm long, and the blade is 10 mm wide. The back of the knife is slightly curved, and the blade is triangular in section. The possibility that this marked the site of an Anglo-Saxon burial occurred to us. Expert opinion, however, suggests a date in the 12th century. The knife has now been returned to Mrs Barling, and a report made to the Gloucestershire SMR.

A possible explanation of the find is that the building of the reservoir, which is sited at a high point, disturbed the site of a Bronze-Age barrow, burials from which were reported by Mr Wood. The knife had been deposited at the same place by accident. By the 12th century the land now occupied by Top Home would have been part of the open fields of Hazleton, so the site might have been visited by a villager or employee of the manor during agricultural work. We are grateful for comments on the knife by Sally Crawford, Geoff Egan and David Hinton.