

Canwick (Lincolnshire) and Melbourn (Cambridgeshire) in Comparative Perspective within the Open-Closed Village Model

DENNIS MILLS

Branston, Lincolnshire

Abstract Canwick Hall, near Lincoln, was the seat of the Sibthorps from 1730 to 1940. They represented the city in Parliament over several generations. The evolution of their estate village is seen here in contrast to the open village of Melbourn, in the context of the open-closed village model, and in comparison with two other estates of similar size and value (the Sneyds' estate at Keele, Staffordshire and the Fawkeses' estate at Farnley in Wharfedale). The Sibthorps were a ten thousand-acre and ten thousand pounds-a-year family for most of the nineteenth century, but the amount of attention they paid to Canwick varied considerably, depending on the individual circumstances and preferences of a succession of life-tenants.

Introduction

The estate village, with its hierarchy of resident landlord, large tenant farmers and labourers, is the 'village in the mind'. The received historian's view has been that English rural society in the nineteenth century was dominated by a tripartite structure of landlords (resident and absentee), their tenant farmers, and a proletarian mass of labourers.¹ Important as the estate system was, this view pays insufficient attention to the existence of significant bodies of small landowners, small farmers (sometimes owner-occupiers), and country craftsmen and tradesmen, often dual occupationists and often with an interest in the soil. These people might be regarded as a peasantry, as distinct from large capitalist, full-time farmers on the one hand, and landless labourers on the other. Their substantial reliance on family labour also prompts comparison with the continental peasantry, yet the fact that their enterprises were mainly aimed at the open market meant that they are not to be equated with subsistence farmers.

The English 'peasantry' was not distributed evenly across the countryside, but was concentrated in particular districts, or in particular parishes. Writers on the poor law described the latter places as 'open', to indicate ease of access to cottage accommodation, resulting in above average increases in population during the century or so beginning about 1750. Conversely, 'close', or 'closed' parishes experienced strong control over cottage accommodation by large landowners. Consequently, their labouring population was confined to essential workers, so it follows that closed parishes relied for some of their

agricultural labour on open parishes, where small owners were willing to build cottages at lower standards, for which they could charge an economic rent.

The monopoly of a single large landowner (or a small group) in a closed parish contrasted with the widespread dispersion of power amongst several substantial owners and many small proprietors in an open parish, perhaps totalling one hundred or more. Closed parishes were characterised by large farms, sometimes by the residence of a single dominant landlord. Strong social control was exerted partly through the established Church of England, accompanied by deference in politics and social organisations. In absentee landlord parishes, the principal tenant farmers or the Anglican parson often acted as social leaders on behalf of landlords. Cottage accommodation, whilst being limited, was usually of a high standard.

Many closed parishes were small in acreage, and consequently did not require large agricultural populations capable of supporting a significant range of trades and local crafts. This further depressed population levels in many closed parishes.² It was easier for trades/craftsmen to find suitable properties in large, open villages, where cottage accommodation was also available for their journeymen (workmen out of apprenticeship). Many cultivated small acreages of land and frequently inter-married with the families of small farmers. Also, many were members of nonconformist congregations, the independent organisation of which produced a self-reliance expressing itself politically, and in the running of friendly societies.

An important point discussed by several authors is the extent to which the open-closed village model is, or should be, based on poor law policy (settlement laws) or on landownership. For example, Howkins has written that 'In relation to the definition of 'close' a central confusion rests on the difference between cause and effect, with some commentators stressing landownership while others stress the restriction of settlement and labour supply'. In my own early writing, for example in 1959, I gave prominence to the settlement laws, but further original research and wider reading had convinced me by 1980 that landownership should be stressed, as it affected so many more variables, rather than levels of poor rates and the settlement laws.³

If he wished, a controlling landlord could maintain a strict settlement policy through his monopoly of cottage properties, rather than through any influence he might have on Vestry policies. Early Victorian poor law reformists much overdid the notion that controlling landlords took down cottages purposely to reduce poor rates. It is quite difficult to find examples of this happening 'on the ground' after about 1800 and in a period of rapid population growth (c. 1750–1851) the contrast in population densities between open and closed parishes could be widened simply by landlords not building extra cottages. It should also be noted that the evolution of estate villages (as distinct from most of those owned by absentees) was influenced by matters of prestige and the desirability of producing environments consistent with the *residential* requirements of their owners.

Most studies of the open-closed model have quite properly been at large geographical scales, with scores or hundreds of parishes in view.⁴ These scales allow the use of correlation tests necessary to give a satisfactory level of authority to the model. However, it is only at the local level of individual parishes or small groups that it is possible to

examine in detail the mechanisms at work within the general model. This paper, therefore, considers the extent to which the experiences of two selected parishes, one open, the other closed, corresponded to the model, both parishes being located in arable England. Here the model is generally thought to have been stronger than in pastoral England, where the lower demand for labour was associated with labourers working with stock who needed to live near their work.

Melbourn – a case study of an open village

The parish of Melbourn is a large one of about 4,500 acres situated ten miles south of Cambridge, and in 1841 it contained a population around 1,400. Its early nineteenth-century history is unusually well-documented. The tithe survey of 1839 was used as the basis for a community reconstitution also absorbing data from the enumerations of 1831, 1841 and 1851, land tax assessments from 1810 to 1851, the parish and Congregational registers from 1770 to 1851, Vestry minutes over the same period, many documents relating to the church rate case of 1848–51, records of one of the main manorial courts, and a multitude of smaller documents. Such a conglomeration of sources enables the researcher to observe many ‘actors’ from a number of different angles. The following paragraphs summarise some of the publications written by the author on Melbourn.

A complex web of relationships stemmed from the multiplicity of owners and a variety of tenurial patterns. Out of the total of 163 owners, forty-two persons could be described simply as owner-occupiers. A further thirty combined the functions of owner-occupier and landlord. In thirteen cases owner-occupation was combined with substantial renting (defined as more than a tenement cottage), and fifteen people combined the three functions of owner-occupier, tenant and landlord. Still further, there were forty-three entirely absentee landlords including several institutions, and three landlords who rented out all their own property but were tenants elsewhere in the village. Three other minor categories of players in the property market comprised a further ten individuals. Clearly, many of the ‘actors’ were playing two or three parts within the network.⁵

This picture contrasts with the simple tripartite structure of the estate system. Within the peasant system, much more complex situations arose from combinations of rational strategies adopted to obtain a viable living. Individuals and families frequently followed two or more occupations, making maximum use of family labour, as well as limited amounts of capital. The Melbourn peasantry of about sixty families, mostly dual occupationists, overlapped at the bottom end of their hierarchy with a few fortunate labourers who owned a tenement and a small field. At the top end were men like Joseph Campkin, grocer, with a fifty-acre owner-occupied holding and no less than twenty-two cottages.

Large farmers were not absent, since there were eighteen full-time farmers with holdings ranging from seventy-eight to 459 acres (median 152). They occupied about three-quarters of the farmland, mostly on the basis of a single tenurial status. Six of these large farmers were yeomen (owner-occupiers), two were lessees of the Dean and Chapter of Ely, and the remainder were on annual tenancies. The latter and their landlords belonged to the tripartite model, although there was no gentry owner with an

outstandingly large acreage. The Hitch family was the most important, Wortham with 469 acres and John with 1,030. What made Melbourn and other peasant villages distinctive was the large number of small owners, including owner-occupiers, and the many dual occupationists.⁶

In terms of population growth, Melbourn easily qualified as an open village. Increases were on a par with the national average and well above the average for rural Cambridgeshire. Yet Melbourn's poor rates were not exceptional for this area. Despite the survival of the Vestry minutes, it is difficult to work out its strategy, partly because the detailed accounts of the overseers have mostly disappeared. More significant, perhaps, are the data relating to cottage ownership. Out of a total of 225 'tenements', twenty-four were owned by agricultural labourers, forty-six by Melbourn builders and carpenters, fifty-four by other members of the resident peasantry, fifty-four by farmers (mostly tied cottages), thirty-two by the landlord class and fifteen by a miscellany of non-residents, including Cambridge and Royston shopkeepers. Such fragmentation must have inhibited strict discipline in the application of the settlement laws, even allowing for the possibility of a common understanding among those who regularly attended Vestry meetings. In general, the large farmers, being mostly Anglicans, took on the most prestigious role of churchwardens, whilst the overseers were recruited from the ranks of the peasantry. Among them were many nonconformists, and many landlords of tenement properties, rents of which were sometimes paid out of the poor rates.⁷

There was evidently much un- and under-employment in Melbourn in the 1830s to 1850s, to judge from the population increases, the limited expansion of the local economy, and the amount of emigration. There was a total of 181 known emigrants to various countries during the late 1830s to 1866.⁸ There must have also been much net loss by migration to other parts of the country after 1851, as population peaked in that year.

In the field of religion, the community lacked effective social control from 'above'. In the first place, the Melbourn christening 'custom' may be cited. Despite the Anglican prayer-book rule that children should be baptised within two or three weeks of birth, in the first half of the nineteenth century this was the exception rather than the rule. The median age at baptism was about four months, and ages at baptism often reached into the teens. Many nonconformist families made use of the baptism service, thereby helping to establish credentials and eligibility that could assist them in any subsequent settlement disputes. However, long delays between birth and baptism were not confined to nonconformists, and it is evident that baptism had generally become a social, as much as a religious occasion. A substantial number of families 'saved up' children for multiple baptisms, sometimes extending beyond sibling groups to include cousins. In the decades on either side of 1800, there was a marked concentration of baptisms in Melbourn Feast Week (early July), a holiday time when many young people came home from service outside the village. After that the concentration on that week declined, but July remained a favourite month for baptisms, with twenty to thirty per cent of the annual total from 1811 to 1840.⁹

During the 1830s and 1840s nonconformists were campaigning nationally against tithes and church rates. At least since the Reformation, Vestries had been able to levy rates on all ratepayers for the upkeep of the fabric of the church, in whose parish they

dwelt. Objections on a significant scale began among Quakers in the late seventeenth century, and by our period they had been joined by the rapidly swelling ranks of other dissenting denominations. In Melbourn the Baptists and especially the Congregationalists (Independents) were strong among the peasantry. Controversy over church rates came to a head in 1848 when Joseph Campkin, mentioned above, refused to pay his share of the church rate, and was taken to court by the churchwardens. The case was too hot for the consistory (diocesan) court in Ely and went to the Court of Arches, the highest court of the Church of England. Most serious church rate disputes occurred in towns or large villages without a single controlling landlord. At Melbourn the vicar was supported by his churchwarden, a retired army officer; by John Hitch, a lawyer and owner of the largest estate in the parish; and by several of the large tenant farmers. Campkin was supported by his fellow nonconformists, an especially prominent one being the Congregationalist minister. Another vocal opponent was a substantial builder, who contested the rate on the technical grounds that the churchwardens were proposing to spend more money than was needed.¹⁰

Comparisons

With 163 owners, Melbourn was an extreme example of a peasant village. Bell mentions 104 owners at Aldridge in Staffordshire and Banks cites seventy-four at Castle Acre in Norfolk; in Leicestershire, leaving out the industrial villages, there were 120 at Bottesford, 100 at Long Clawson, 110 at Wymondham and 128 at Great Bowden; North Scarle, south-west of Lincoln, was divided between ninety-three owners of more than one acre in 1839; and in the Wigmore Hundred of Herefordshire, Wigmore parish with forty-six owners had the most.¹¹

It is necessary to look at more than the total number of owners. Thus, for example, Banks showed that the Earl of Leicester was the absentee owner of ninety-seven per cent of Castle Acre, but there were also sixty-two owners of cottage properties, making the village an important source of labour for closed parishes in the area. Olney made a similar point with his study of Binbrook in the Lincolnshire Wolds, where four large proprietors owned over five thousand acres of land on outlying farms out of a total of 6,200 acres, but there were forty-two owners controlling the large numbers of cottages in the village. In his Staffordshire study, Bell cited the example of Alrewas, where sixty-five per cent of the land was in the hands of a single landlord, but there were sixty-seven more owners in the parish.¹² In large parishes, there was sufficient land and property to present possibilities for both the peasant *and* estate systems, and this is one reason why the systems approach should be kept in mind alongside use of the open-closed parish model.¹³

Canwick – a case study of an estate village

The study of Melbourn was concentrated on the first half of the nineteenth century, the period for which source material is much more plentiful than in earlier or later decades, as is true of most open villages, in which the historian has to rely largely on public documents. Conversely, students of closed parishes frequently find that, in addition to public records, plentiful estate records have survived, opening up the possibility of longer

term studies, as in the case of Canwick. As Broad has pointed out, most research on open-closed villages has compared village structures at one or more moments in time, but not the processes involved in creating a closed village.¹⁴ This study of Canwick is concerned with such processes, as well as with raising questions about how typical Canwick was of estate villages.

Closed parishes were of two types, those dominated by a single (or two or three) absentee landlord(s); and the type known as estate villages, defined as those in which a single dominant proprietor *resided*. Estate villages were in a distinct minority, depending on definitions. The writer categorized only thirty-nine of Leicestershire's 308 villages as belonging to this type and mapped only 124 gentry and aristocratic seats in Lincolnshire's 721 parishes.¹⁵

In the Leicestershire study a lower limit of fifty per cent of land tax was set for a proprietor to qualify as a controlling owner, but in practice most of the thirty-nine paid upwards of three-quarters, and seventeen of them paid all the tax except for that relating to church property. The limiting case was Stapleford, where in 1831 the Earl of Harborough paid every penny of tax on the 2,273 acres, the church being a donative (privately owned). Again, it is important to look under the surface: for example, the Lincolnshire parish of Tealby contained Bayons Manor, the centre of the Tennyson D'Eyncourt estate of 3,436 acres, but a further forty-one people owned property, mostly in the village, which Rawding classified as an open village.¹⁶ The lower limit of fifty per cent was empirically derived for Leicestershire without reference to other parts of the country. One purpose of the present study is to test its validity against the experience of one Lincolnshire village, where even after one hundred and fifty or more years of purchases the resident family's share of the parish never quite topped fifty per cent.

The basic reason for the fact that there were more absentee landlord parishes (ninety-five in Leicestershire) than estate villages (thirty-nine), is that it took more than the acreage of one parish of average size to sustain a gentry family. In the late nineteenth century Bateman defined estates of three thousand to ten thousand acres as those belonging to the greater gentry. The Sibthorps of Canwick Hall were at the top end of this scale and as the parish contained only about 2,100 acres, Canwick cannot, therefore, be treated as an island.¹⁷ Like many such families the Sibthorps had secondary residences at a distance from the main seat, as well as a London house. It is important to recognise that estate policy could change from one generation to another, through heads of the family bringing distinctive personal touches to its development. There were long periods when the head of the family was not regularly resident and some other person must necessarily have acted on his behalf. Moreover, it is to be expected that the experience of a consolidated estate would have been different from one made up of heterogeneous and widely scattered blocks brought together by the chances of marriage and inheritance.

Canwick was the main seat of the Sibthorps, located one-and-a-half miles south-east of Lincoln (Figure 1).¹⁸ The story begins in 1730 when Mary, widow of John Sibthorp, the first of the family to be a Lincoln MP, purchased a residential estate of three hundred acres at Canwick. Up to 1730 the Sibthorps had been only town gentry with some non-residential country property near Wragby, about twelve miles north-east of Lincoln. Mary's purchase of Canwick Hall was sufficient to allow her son to enter the county

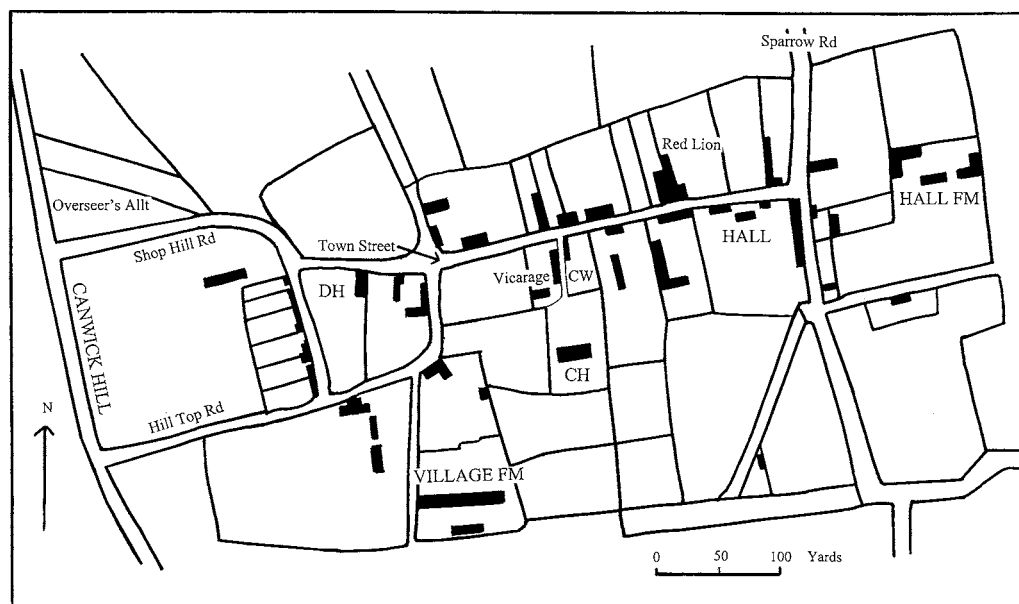


Figure 1. Canwick village 1787, based mainly on the enclosure map. Abbreviations: CH = church; CW = churchwardens' house, site of new cottages built in 1797; DH = first Dower House. Note that the Hall is shown as three separate buildings; although it is known to have been substantially rebuilt in 1811, this representation is something of a puzzle. (Map drawn by Mrs Joan Mills).

gentry in 1733, when Coningsby (the first of that name) became county sheriff and MP for Lincoln. Symbolically, as well as physically, his principal residence looked down upon the city. As a bachelor often away in London, he had less incentive than some later life-tenants to develop the Canwick property. From his mother's childless brother, he inherited estates in the Lincolnshire Marsh, in Nottinghamshire, and at Skimpans, a mansion in North Mymms, near Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

On Coningsby I's death without issue in 1779, he was succeeded by his brother Humphrey I, Sherardian professor of botany at Oxford. Humphrey's first marriage had brought City wealth to the family and his second marriage an estate in Devon and another in Oxfordshire, further diverting his attention away from Canwick. Nevertheless, Humphrey took advantage of the Canwick enclosure award of 1787 to improve the family property. The Sibthorps' old enclosures and enclosure allotments were consolidated into one neat block, within which the laying out of grounds and park could begin. This was achieved partly by negotiating exchanges with other proprietors, including Lincoln City Council, the manorial lords, who obligingly built a new farmstead in the fields allotted to them, instead of continuing to use the old farmstead and manor house in the village.

Meanwhile, Humphrey I's heir, Humphrey II, spent the first dozen years of his married life at Skimpans, but moved to Canwick around 1790, whilst his father was still alive, but living in Devon. Like his uncle Coningsby, Humphrey II had spells as MP for Lincoln and as colonel of the South Lincolnshire militia. Neither he nor his father separated the Hall from the village, as was the case with many estate parishes, probably



Figure 2. Canwick Hall, south front facing the main lawns, as in the period 1811–1913, cf. Figure 9. This photograph was probably taken about 1893 and was found in the 1990s in the Sibthorp fishing lodge in Norway (courtesy, Penny Smith).

regarding the commanding view over Lincoln as a good reason for not moving the Hall, as well as avoiding the expense involved (he also turned down a baronetcy on grounds of cost). Humphrey II, however, continued to develop the estate, removing the Red Lion public house from close proximity to the Hall, and suppressing the licence (Figure 1). In order to set the Hall in substantial grounds, the Sibthorps eventually reduced the houses in Town Street, where the Red Lion had stood, to the vicarage and only one cottage, the property of the churchwardens. He acquired a secondary residence built on former manorial property, to provide the family with a dower house. In 1811 he enlarged the Hall, though not with any great taste or practicality (Figure 2), and in 1813 purchased the 250-acre Village Farm estate lying westwards of, and contiguous with, Sibthorp land. In 1814 the Sibthorp vault in the parish church was constructed, so that Canwick could replace St Mark's, Lincoln, as the final resting place of the family, but the Sibthorps did little else in the church, as the Mercers' Company of London were the patrons.

Around the time of Humphrey II's death in 1815 the Sibthorps owned a total of about eleven thousand acres in three areas in Lincolnshire, and one each in Hertfordshire, Devon, Oxfordshire and Nottinghamshire. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Coningsby II, who also became MP for Lincoln and colonel of militia. Being unmarried, Coningsby does not appear to have done much to develop the house and estate until about 1822, when he began negotiations for the four hundred-acre Hall Farm estate on its eastern flank. He also applied to the magistrates for permission to divert public roads away from the Hall. At this point Coningsby died as the result of a carriage accident, bringing Charles, his brother, to the fore as life-tenant of the settled estate (Figure 3). Charles completed Coningsby's property transaction, paying the inflated figure of seventy pounds



Figure 3. Charles Sibthorp, 1783–1855. As a second son he was allowed to join the army even in wartime. From a miniature painted by Charles Jagger of Bath on his marriage in 1811, when he was a captain in the Fourth Dragoon Guards. He succeeded his elder brother, Coningsby II, when the latter died in 1822, but did not live much at Canwick after his estrangement in 1826 from his wife, preferring a rented house in London, or his house in Hertfordshire (photo in Lincoln Central Library, courtesy of Lincolnshire County Council, Cultural Services Directorate).

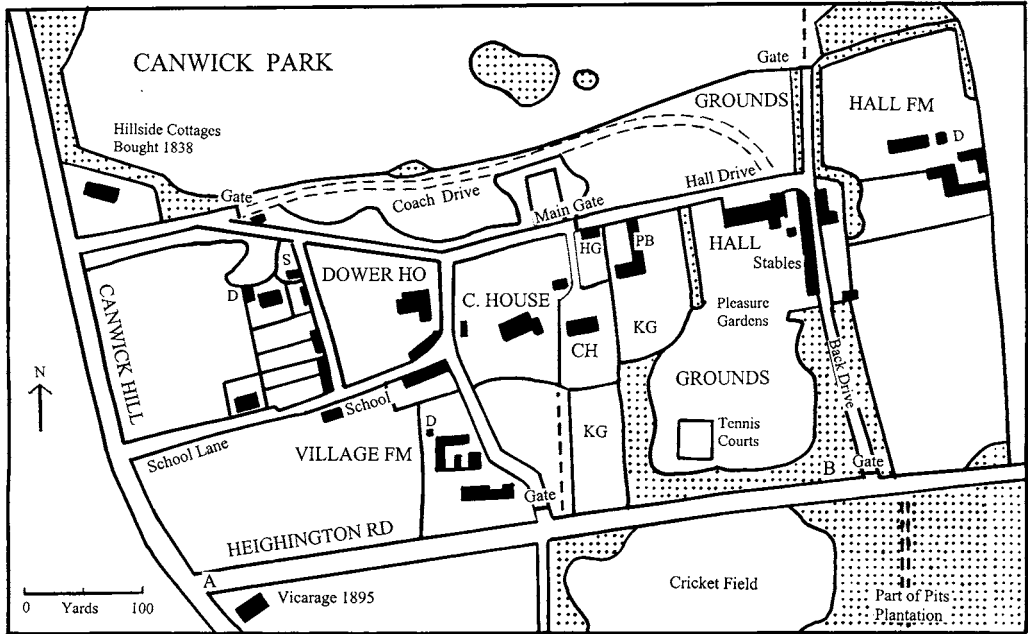


Figure 4. Canwick village about 1914 based mainly on contemporary Ordnance Survey maps. Comparison with Figure 1 reveals the re-engineering and realignment of Shop Hill Road. A to B = new length of Heighington Road built 1856 to provide a route avoiding the Hall, when the lanes between the gates were made private. Other abbreviations: CH = church; C. HOUSE = Canwick House, built as a vicarage and replaced by a smaller vicarage in 1895; D = dovecotes, probably c. 1820; HG = head gardener's house (see Figure 8); KG = kitchen garden; PB = potting shed, single gardeners' bothy, etc; S = smithy. The main woodland areas are stippled. (Map drawn by Mrs Joan Mills).

an acre,¹⁹ and selling the much bigger Devon estate at about twelve pounds an acre, but the failed road closure application to the magistrates was not pursued.

During the 1820s Charles made Canwick one of the social centres of the Lincolnshire gentry, but a combination of factors took him away from it for long periods thereafter. He is the best known of the Sibthorps, becoming an eccentric, ultra-Protestant and ultra-right Tory MP for Lincoln. He maintained a London house over many years, in which he accumulated a large art collection, dispersed in 1856 for over eleven thousand pounds. He also lived some of the later part of his life at Potterells in North Mymms parish, a house inherited through his godfather, and not much was done to develop Canwick.²⁰ However, in 1838, following the absorption of Canwick into the new Lincoln Poor Law Union, one of the Sibthorp trustees acquired the four surplus cottages built by the overseer on the allotment provided in 1787 (Figure 1).

On Charles' death in 1855, his eldest son Gervaise pointedly said that he would spend more time in Canwick than had his father, and many changes date from his time (1855–61) and that of his eldest son, Coningsby III. In 1856 Gervaise successfully pursued the road diversion proposal of over thirty years before (Figure 4). The public no longer walked within yards of the front door of the Hall, which could now only be approached along



Figure 5. The ornate lodge near the gate at the west entrance of the coach drive, c. 1860, the earliest of the brick and slate cottages (photo, 2001, Dennis Mills).

private roads through gates that were still kept closed in the 1930s. Probably in the time of Gervaise there was also a rearrangement of the gardens, the completion of the park, and the laying out of a new carriage drive with an ornate lodge and the re-engineering of the steep lane from the main road up Canwick Hill (Figures 1, 4 and 5). Inside a solid block of about one thousand two hundred acres (some over the parish boundary westwards), and practically unchallenged as owners within the village curtilage, the Sibthorp estate village had at last started to emerge.

From the early 1870s Coningsby III (Figure 6) took up the challenge, building a succession of model cottages bearing his monogram and the date, the earliest in 1872 being a replacement for the westernmost of the overseer's cottages. The pair in School Lane were built in 1879 (Figure 7) and another pair a little to the north in 1909, with others on the northern boundary of the park and for the gamekeeper near the Pits. Sibthorp dated cottages are all well-built and well-appointed, rather than being primarily decorative.²¹ In 1876 a new dower house was built with rearranged gardens and realigned northern perimeter wall. However, there was never a complete replacement of existing cottages, nor a complete replanning of the road system. Around this time a large farm was acquired at Bracebridge Heath, contiguous with the Sibthorp land inside Canwick parish.

Apart from a few years as one of the first county councillors, Coningsby III did not take up politics, but appears to have been heavily influenced by his family history. Having sold the Marsh properties, he acquired North Mymms Park in 1870, a much more splendid pile than Canwick, and once the home of the distantly related Coningsby family. He sold



Figure 6. Coningsby Charles Sibthorp, 1846–1932, the last male head of the family, from the life-size photograph in Canwick village hall, given when the Sibthorps erected the hall (an ex-Army hut) in the 1920s (photo, Dennis Mills).

the Oxfordshire estate at South Leigh in 1875, but acquired a new Lincolnshire residence at Sudbrooke, four miles north-east of Lincoln, in 1877, partly by inheritance. In 1885 Montagu, Coningsby's younger brother, had a thirty-room fishing lodge built at Suldal in western Norway, to which he went each season from 1885 to 1914.²²

This orgy of outlay took place just ahead of the agricultural depression. Coningsby was obliged to sell North Mymms Park and Potterells in 1888 and Sudbrooke Holme in 1919. However, development at Canwick continued. Garrett's Charity Farm (130 acres) was acquired in 1890, the Sibthorps having previously leased it for many years. In 1894 the last cottage acquisition in the village occurred with the purchase of the house belonging to the churchwardens (Figure 8). It had been rented for the head gardener since at least 1812 and several earlier attempts to purchase had been thwarted, partly by the opposition of the people's churchwarden, Richard Ellis, the village blacksmith. The purchase price was double the open market value of the house, thus making this trifling episode a talisman for the squire's eagerness to control all that he surveyed. It was not quite all, however, since the former vicarage was acquired later, in December 1914, and again at what was probably an inflated price.



Figure 7. Estate cottages of 1879 in School Lane, the wings being modern additions. The tablets in the gables carry the date and the initials CCS in monogram form (photo, 1997, Dennis Mills).



Figure 8. The head gardener's house (HG on Figure 4), built as two cottages by the churchwardens in 1797 for £118 1s 7d. Stone and pantile, typical of the pre-1860 period (photo, 1956, Dennis Mills).



Figure 9. Canwick Hall south front, as remodelled and extended in 1913. Comparison with the earlier house (Figure 2) is made easier by identifying the six central bays common to both houses (photo, 1977, Dennis Mills).

The major event of this period was the very substantial remodelling and extension of the Hall by Montagu in 1913, following considerable outlay on the gardens in 1906 (Figure 9). Although wartime taxation was yet to offer a threat to landowners, Lloyd George's onslaught on the landed interest through land value duties had already started. The Sibthorps were especially vulnerable, as Coningsby was childless, making double duties in a short period very likely. This probably accounts for the rearranged estate settlement of 1919, through which Montagu acquired the freehold of the Hatton estate near Wragby. The brothers' wills and related valuations demonstrate an over-reliance on farm rents, not relieved by a very substantial stake in the Fossdyke Navigation (linking Lincoln to the River Trent) acquired by inheritance, which had become ever more worthless under competition from the railways.

Montagu died in 1929, Coningsby in 1932, and Montagu's widow in 1937, following which their heirs (Montagu's daughters) looked for a buyer for the Canwick estate, all other properties having already been sold. On 1st December 1940 they sold 1,146 acres of land with several farmsteads and numerous cottages and four substantial residences, to Jesus College, Oxford, for £48,000.²³ Had there been a male heir perhaps the Sibthorps might have held out until they could benefit from sales of building land.

A number of summary points can be drawn out. Canwick was never a 'model' village on a par with villages totally rebuilt by earls and dukes, and the Sibthorps never became patrons of the Anglican living, nor manorial lords. Yet Canwick shared some of the characteristics of stereotypical estate villages and parishes.²⁴ Throughout most of the century-and-a-half from the enclosure of 1787 to the brink of the next revolution after 1945, the typical farm had an acreage of one hundred and fifty to three hundred, well above the national average. The parish had a static population of about two hundred to two



Figure 10. Some Canwick Hall servants just before the first world war. The men were gardeners, except for the two joiners standing second and third from the right (post card, courtesy of the Maurice Hodson Collection).

hundred and thirty throughout the same period, within which there was hardly anyone not belonging to the three classes of the tripartite hierarchy, apart from the Sibthorp servants (domestics, gardeners, gamekeepers, carpenters, grooms and coachmen, Figure 10). Not only was the public house removed, the village also never had a nonconformist chapel. Perhaps because they were relatively late on the scene, the Sibthorps never acquired the whole parish, but they were always unchallenged as resident gentry. Other farms belonged mostly to institutions, and small owners of the 'peasant' type were completely absent from at least 1787.

The Canwick estate was never the largest block of land in Sibthorp hands. Even at the end of their time, when much had been sold, there was a bigger acreage at Hatton, where no residence was ever built. The acquisition of estates away from Canwick had demanded their attention and arose mainly out of propitious marriages and inheritances, two of the latter quite fortuitous. The Sibthorps do not seem to have been good managers, or to have been well advised: there is no sign of a *professional* land agent having been employed before about 1920.²⁵ When Charles died in 1855 the trustees of the settled estate had to raise £105,000 from City men to pay off a series of mortgages and family portions, some of them going back well over fifty years (although it should be said that indebtedness was commonplace among large estate owners). In this period, the most prominent trustee was not Charles, the life-tenant, but the Reverend Humphrey III, one of his younger brothers, whose influence on the settled estate is seen in many of the surviving documents and who was effective in purchasing the overseer's redundant cottages in 1838. He exemplifies the

point made by Short, that a distinction needs to be made between ownership and actual exercise of power, which may not always come from the same person.²⁶ In the case of settled estates, the apparent owner was in fact only a life-tenant, having circumscribed powers as to the disposition of family wealth.

Coningsby III was able to work off the loan in the days of High Farming when farm rents were high, but this probably led him to over-reach himself. He had no option but to sell on a falling market when farming went into depression. Yet it was he and Montagu, with their interests limited to being country gentlemen, who had made sure that the residential attractions of Canwick, taken in hand by their father, were finally brought up to a high standard. Canwick became a village of high boundary walls and many trees, which, with modifications associated with post-war suburbanisation, it continues to be. Ironically, it was also their lack of business sense and/or advice that helped to bring about the end of the estate.

Comparisons

Most well-known and easily accessible studies of landed estates are based on the records of aristocratic owners, or commoners who could compete on equal terms. Acreages from twenty thousand up to much higher figures are usual. However, two well-documented studies are available for comparison with Canwick: the north Staffordshire (Keele Hall) estate of the Sneyds and the Wharfedale (Farnley Hall) estate of the Fawkeses.²⁷ The latter estate was in the range eleven to twelve thousand acres in 1873, larger than the Sibthorp figure of 7,700,²⁸ whilst the Sneyds had about nine thousand acres; in both cases the land was probably not of such good farming quality as that owned by the Sibthorps. All three families were without titles.²⁹

After the drawing up of a strict settlement in 1819, which involved selling off outlying parts of the estate, the Fawkeses' property contained ninety-five per cent of the land in the townships of Farnley, Lindley, Leathley, Castley, Stainburn, Pool and Hawksworth and about fifty per cent of Menston. The first six of these townships are contiguous around Farnley Hall, whilst Menston and Hawksworth are only about six miles from Pool.³⁰ At this point the Sibthorps had land in several far flung-counties, and even in Lincolnshire, where much of it was situated, there were three well-separated blocks, although with properties in the Marsh scattered through a couple of dozen widely-spaced townships, this part of the estate cannot really be called a 'block'.

As to residences, in 1792 the Fawkeses, not unlike the Sibthorps, much extended an older house of about 1600, but they employed J. Carr of York, whereas Humphrey Sibthorp II was his own architect, something admitted by the family to have been unfortunate. Farnley Hall stood in a township of about one thousand eight hundred acres with a population of 186 in 1861. The Fawkeses were patrons of the living, which was a perpetual curacy, a fact that gave them more than normal control over the incumbent. Farnley park at seven hundred acres was several times larger than that at Canwick; being situated in a pastoral area it was easier to use it for farming purposes. There were seven subsidiary halls, some of them used for minor members of the family, some for farm tenants, others let to well-to-do tenants, depending on family demography. The

Fawkeses were patrons of the arts, their collection of over two hundred paintings by J. M. W. Turner far outstripping Charles Sibthorp's buying both in quantity and taste. They played their part in local social improvements and occupied such offices as JPs, deputy county lieutenants and high sheriffs.³¹

Two members of the family were short-term MPs, but they generally eschewed national politics and were very serious about running their estates in what can be described as a professional way. They were in the forefront of agricultural improvements and diversified where opportunities arose, notably in the setting up of a creamery in the late nineteenth century. They were also quick to sell off substantial amounts of land for urban uses, in particular for a very large mental hospital at Menston and for several reservoirs.³² The Fawkeses also seem to have been a great deal more careful about getting good advice. From 1819 to 1914 they used two firms of London solicitors, as well as one in nearby Otley, whereas there is no sign of the Sibthorps having used any firm other than Burtons of Lincoln. Up to 1849 the Fawkeses had a steward responsible to the Otley solicitor, after that date a resident land agent with bailiffs.³³

Turning now to the Sneyds, their estates were also concentrated mostly in a solid block around Keele Hall and within about seven miles of Keele. Their first house was built about 1580 away from the village, rebuilt in 1757–62 and entirely replaced in 1855. The creation of the planned village accompanying this replacement was facilitated by many acquisitions of the 1820s. The village represented a much greater effort than that at Canwick, a good deal of the expenditure of about one hundred thousand pounds on the estate between 1845 and 1871 being spent in this direction. None of the Sneyds appears to have entered Parliament and for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there is much evidence of serious engagement with the business of estate management, including the employment of well-qualified advisers and diversification into major industrial and urban investments. Two quite outstanding features of Keele were the extensive pleasure grounds, kitchen gardens and greenhouses (the grapes won 108 prizes!); and the race course laid out in the park in 1895.³⁴

The work by Clemenson on a sample of 500 of the 1,336 English estates of over 3,000 acres in *c.* 1880 shows that the Sneyd and Fawkeses were much more typical than the Sibthorps. Within 450 of the estates, there was an acreage of over 3,000 acres in the home property (compared with about one thousand two hundred in Canwick and Bracebridge Heath parishes, or about ten to fifteen per cent of the total acreage held). The home property was one hundred per cent of total holdings in forty-five per cent of the estates, and over seventy per cent in seventy-seven per cent. Over half the estates of 10,000 acres plus contained ninety per cent of their land in one county, which was a very compact arrangement compared with the several counties in which the Sibthorps owned substantial properties over most of the period reviewed.³⁵

Conclusion

These studies of Melbourn and Canwick exemplify some of the processes at work in one peasant and one estate village, and illustrate the contrasts in documentation that typically apply to the two main types of parish. However, such studies are only isolated examples,

and cannot fully test the open-closed parish model operating on patterns across wide sweeps of territory, such as a whole county. A statistical approach forms a necessary background and balance to the behavioural approaches possible in local case studies. One such behavioural approach is the analysis of aesthetic considerations, as exemplified, for instance, in Throsby's 1791 comment on the Leicestershire village of Hungarton:

This is a village of beauty; it fits snugly on the side of a precipice, and is enriched by the good will of Shuckburg Ashby, Esq., who has made the habitations of his tenants comfortable with bricks, etc; even a blacksmith's shop has form and studied usefulness. Travellers would forget the Leicestershire dirt walls . . . were they here.³⁶

The adjectives 'romantic' and 'picturesque' recur at frequent intervals in the contemporary literature of estate parishes, referring to woods, parks, and gardens; the country house with its attendant stables and further outbuildings; and farms cottages and lodges scattered across the landscape, not to mention parish churches. By the Victorian period stiff formality in landscape design had given way to 'natural' curving lines, as seen in Canwick Park (Figure 4), contrasting with the rectilinear outlines of post-enclosure fields.³⁷

The aesthetic 'improvement' of landscape, however, cannot be easily separated from other interests of the landed classes. For example, their interest in aesthetics often led on to their properties being sketched or painted, often with the owners and their families also in view. Trees were not only appreciated aesthetically, but were also to be found in woods that were supportive of shooting and fox-hunting, whilst the timber could be an important source of income. Likewise, a picturesque lake in the park provided an opportunity for angling. A park could be utilised by the dairy herd based at the home farm and/or by a herd of deer, and the two elements together presented a romantic scene to be crossed by visitors, whom the owner wished to impress. Motivations of aesthetic taste, utility, prestige, privacy, country sports and of the demonstration of power were indissolubly bound together to produce the distinctive features and life styles of the estate village.

The behavioural approach can also be exemplified in the local study of poor law policy, where the documentation is full enough. Baines showed in the 1960s how parochial records could demonstrate the contrasting workings of a select vestry and an open vestry in neighbouring and similar parishes, the latter so generous that it became bankrupt. Bennett has further demonstrated, among other instructive examples, how two apparently similar open villages in Lincolnshire had widely diverging poor law policies in the period before the 1834 reform. After that date, the setting up of Unions narrowed down differences between parishes, but by no means wholly so in the transition period up to 1865 when Unions became the sole units for rating purposes. Even the sparse minutes in Melbourn's Town Book (1835–51) show up tensions between the overseers and Vestry on the one hand and the officials and guardians of the Royston Union on the other, especially in respect of who should and should not be sent to the workhouse, and what should be done with the money brought in by the compulsory sale of the parish houses.³⁸

In practical terms, the amounts of documentation involved mean that behavioural approaches cannot be applied across whole counties along all dimensions of the model.

Instead they can be applied only to particular aspects, or at the level of the parish, to a middle-sized locality such as a petty sessional division³⁹ or a poor law union, or to an individual estate. Future progress will depend to a considerable extent on a combination of approaches and work at different scales.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the staffs of the Cambridgeshire Record Office and the Lincolnshire Archives Office for much patient help over many years and Professor Brian Short for commenting on an earlier version of this paper. The editors have also been helpful and considerate.

Notes

1. This section is based loosely on D. R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1980), but especially on Table 6.1, p. 117. For trades/craftsmen and dual occupations see D. R. Mills, *Rural Community History from Trade Directories* (Oxford, 2001). See also B. Short (ed.), *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis* (Cambridge, 1992), chapters 2 and 3.
2. The proportion of the employed population engaged in trades and crafts ranged between nil and about twenty per cent in closed villages, but about ten to forty per cent in open villages. See, for example, C. Rawding, 'Village Type and Employment Structure: An Analysis in the Nineteenth-Century Lincolnshire Wolds', in D. R. Mills and K. Schürer (eds.), *Local Communities in the Victorian Census Enumerators' Books* (Oxford, 1996), p. 415. At Melbourn, an open village discussed below, the 1841 census listed twenty-eight per cent of the employed population as working in trades and crafts: D. R. Mills, 'The Quality of Life in Melbourn, Cambridgeshire, in the Period 1800–50', *International Review of Social History* 23 (1978), 382–404 (Table 3).
3. A. Howkins, 'Types of Rural Communities', in E. J. T. Collins (ed.), *Agrarian History of England and Wales, VII, 1850–1914* (Cambridge, 2000), pt. II, p. 1303; D. R. Mills, 'The Poor Laws and the Distribution of Population, c. 1600–1860, with special reference to Lincolnshire', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26 (1959), 185–95 and Dennis R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant* – see the brevity of the section on poor laws, pp. 119–20; S. Banks, 'Nineteenth-Century Scandal or Twentieth-Century Model? A New Look at "open" and "close" Parishes', *Economic History Review* 41 (1988), 51–73, was especially keen to pin the model down to poor law policy. In 1992 Short, *English Rural Community*, p. 29, accepted that 'the "close" parish, according to Dennis Mills' formulation, hinged around rather more than the character of the vestry' and Howkins, 'Types of Rural Communities', pp. 1304–05, expressed a similar view. Snell's remark that 'The right to *live* somewhere was *not* largely dictated by settlement' is interestingly pithy – K. D. M. Snell, 'Pauper settlement and the right to poor relief in England and Wales', *Continuity and Change*, 6 (1991), 400.
4. The list includes studies of Leicestershire; Nottinghamshire; Oxfordshire; parts of Lincolnshire; Berkshire and west Norfolk; Sussex, Kent and Surrey; and Staffordshire: D. R. Mills, *Landownership and Rural Population with Special Reference to Leicestershire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, unpublished PhD thesis (University of Leicester, 1963); D. R. Mills, 'The Geographical Effects of the Laws of Settlement in Nottinghamshire: An Analysis of Francis Howell's Report, 1848', *East Midland Geographer* 5 (1970), 31–38; B. K. Song, 'Parish Typology and the Operation of the Poor Laws in Early Nineteenth-Century Oxfordshire', *Agricultural History Review* 50 (2002), 203–24; D. R. Mills, 'Distribution of

Population'; J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825–1875* (Oxford, 1976); S. A. G. Bennett, *Landownership and Rural Society in Kesteven, c.1820–50*, unpublished PhD thesis (CNA, Nottingham Polytechnic, 1991), and 'Landownership and Parish Type, c.1830'; in S. Bennett and N. Bennett (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Lincolnshire* (Hull 1993, Chichester 2001), pp. 94–95 (map of the whole of Lincolnshire); Rawding, 'Village type' and *The Lincolnshire Wolds in the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln, 2001); S. Banks, *Open and Close Parishes in Nineteenth-Century England*, unpublished PhD thesis (University of Reading, 1982), and 'Scandal or model?', referring to Berkshire and west Norfolk; K. Leslie and B. Short (eds.), *A Historical Atlas of Sussex* (Chichester, 1999); D. Mills and B. Short, 'Social Change and Social Conflict in Nineteenth-Century England: The Use of the Open-Closed Village Model', in M. Reed and R. Wells (eds.), *Class, Conflict and Protest in the English Countryside 1700–1880* (London, 1990), pp. 90–99 (Sussex, Kent and Surrey); D. J. Bell, *Open and Close Parishes in Nineteenth Century Staffordshire: Testing the Causal Thesis*, Staffordshire Polytechnic Occasional Papers in Geography 14 (1990) and *The Geography of Landownership in Staffordshire 1840–1910*, unpublished PhD thesis (University of Birmingham, 1998); M. J. Kitchener, *The Rural Community: A Case Study of two Regions in Staffordshire, 1750–1900*, unpublished PhD thesis (University of Keele, 1987). The open-closed model is also part of the central argument in K. D. M. Snell and P. S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge, 2000). In 1990 Bell found that the open-closed model did not apply to his Staffordshire data, which is not surprising as that county was essentially pastoral in its agriculture. Banks rejected the model, but in fact the results of her main statistical tests (tables 2 and 3) provide support for it. Like Banks in table 3, Song, in 'Parish Typology', used cluster analysis but concluded that the model has a significant level of validity.

5. Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 70, table 4.3.
6. D. R. Mills, 'The Nineteenth Century Peasantry of Melbourn, Cambridgeshire', in R. M. Smith (ed.), *Land, Kinship and Lifecycle* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 481–519.
7. Mills, 'Quality of Life'.
8. P. Hudson and D. Mills, 'English Emigration, Kinship and the Recruitment Process: Migration from Melbourn in Cambridgeshire to Melbourne in Victoria in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', *Rural History* 10 (1999), 55–74, see p. 59.
9. D. R. Mills, 'The Christening Custom at Melbourn, Cambs', *Local Population Studies* no. 11 (1973), 11–22, republished in M. Drake (ed.), *Population Studies from the Parish Registers* (Matlock, 1983), pp. 36–47.
10. D. R. Mills, 'The Court of Arches and Church Rates Disputes as Sources of Social History', *Bulletin of Local History East Midland Region* 14 (1979), 1–11.
11. Bell, *Staffordshire*, p. 11; Banks, 'Scandal or Model', 69; Mills, thesis, app. 4; Lincolnshire Archives Office, North Scarle Tithe Award, 1839; Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 92. These examples relate to a variety of dates and to a range of township acreages.
12. Banks, 'Scandal or Model', 68; R. J. Olney, *Labouring Life on the Lincolnshire Wolds: A Study of Binbrook in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology Occasional Paper 2 (Sleaford, 1975), p. 12; Bell, *Staffordshire*, p. 15.
13. This point is elaborated in Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, especially chapters 2 and 3.
14. J. Broad, *Transforming English Rural Society. The Verneys and the Claydons, 1600–1820* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 4.
15. Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 77; and D. R. Mills, 'Country Seats of the Gentry', in Bennett and Bennett (eds.), *Atlas of Lincolnshire*, p. 106.
16. Rawding, *Lincolnshire Wolds*, pp. 62–65 and 170–73.
17. F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1963), Tables II and IV. These follow Bateman in defining the estates of the greater gentry as those with 3,000 to 10,000 acres and the greater estates (mostly belonging to aristocrats) as over 10,000 acres. Many English lowland parishes had acreages of only 1,500 to 3,000.

18. Space does not permit the full referencing of this section, but the most important documentary sources in the Lincolnshire Archives Office are in SIB, 2SIB and BS, especially BS1, BS3, BS16; also the Canwick Parish Deposit, but this lacks overseers' accounts. Secondary sources include A. R. Maddison, *An Account of the Sibthorp Family* (Lincoln, 1896); Joan and Dennis Mills, 'A Case Study at Canwick of the Enduring Influence of Monastic Houses', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 33 (1998), 47–54; M. Trott, 'Political Assassination in Lincoln? The Strange Death of Coningsby Sibthorp', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 34 (1999), 38–40 and Joan and Dennis Mills and Michael Trott, 'New light on Charles De Laet Waldo-Sibthorp, 1783–1855', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 36 (2001), 25–37. I would like to thank an audience in the Centre for English Local History at Leicester University for listening to my paper on the Sibthorps (November 1999) and for helping me to refine the material.
19. Paying above general market prices for land to extend an estate was probably not unusual. See, for example, the case of Earl Cowper who 'overpaid' for two blocks of land at Panshanger, which completed his undisputed control of three contiguous parishes: H. Prince, 'The Changing Landscape of Panshanger', *East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society Transactions*, 14 (1959), 46.
20. Canwick Hall was let by Charles to Sir Mark Wood for the hunting season in 1831: *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, 14th October 1831, p. 3; my thanks to Mrs Jean Towers for this reference.
21. This priority was typical of the period: T. Williamson and L. Bellamy, *Property and Landscape: A Social History of Landownership and the English Countryside* (London, 1987), p. 170.
22. P. Smith and D. Mills, 'Lindum – a Lincolnshire house in Norway', *Lincolnshire Life* (March 2001), pp. 22–3.
23. Jesus College, Oxford, LN1/1; my thanks to Dr Brigid Allen for this reference.
24. On villages see, for example, G. Darley, *Villages of Vision* (London, 1975) and M. Havinden, 'The Model Village', in G. E. Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside* (London, 1981), vol. 2, pp. 414–27.
25. One of the problems of studying the Sibthorp estates is the fact that surviving records are heavily biased towards the legal side of estate business, whilst data on the day-to-day business are scarce. Theobald has pointed out for part of Suffolk that the appointment of effective stewards or agents was at least as important as the residence or otherwise of the estate owner: J. Theobald, '“Distant lands”: The Management of Absentee Estates in Woodland High Suffolk, 1660–1800', *Rural History* 12 (2001), 1–18; see pp. 15–16. The Sibthorps probably compared unfavourably with estates in east Yorkshire: B. English, 'Patterns of Estate Management in East Yorkshire, c. 1840–c.1880', *Agricultural History Review* 32 (1984), 29–48.
26. Short (ed.), *English Rural Community*, p. 40.
27. C. Harrison (ed.), *Essays on the History of Keele* (University of Keele, 1986) and M. Sharples, *The Fawkes Family and their Estates in Wharfedale, 1819–1936*, Thoresby Society, second series 6 (for 1995) (Leeds, 1999).
28. By this date the Sibthorps had sold the Oxfordshire estate and extensive but scattered land holdings in the Lincolnshire Marsh, which in acreage terms were greater than their acquisitions in Hertfordshire and at Sudbrooke, near Lincoln; consequently their total acreage no longer added up to over 10,000 as it had in the earlier part of the century.
29. Sharples, *Fawkes Family*, p. 45; Harrison, *Keele*, p. 104; J. Bateman, *Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1883, reprinted Leicester, 1971).
30. Sharples, *Fawkes Family*, pp. 17, 27–28.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 21, 23, 26, 119.
32. The Sibthorps sold relatively small amounts of land on the fringes of Lincoln for urban and industrial purposes: D. Mills, 'An Edge-Land: The Development of the Witham Valley East of Canwick Road', in A. Walker (ed.), *Aspects of Lincoln. Discovering Local History* (Barnsley, 2001), pp. 134–46.

33. Sharples, *Fawkes Family*, especially pp. 21, 34–36, 44–54, 100–01.
34. Harrison, *Keele*, especially pp. 41–42, 68, 87–89, 103–19.
35. H. A. Clemenson, *English Country Houses and Landed Estates* (London, 1982), pp. 35–6. Broad's description of changes made by the Verneys shows how a concentration around Claydon House was pursued when the estate ran into financial difficulties and outlying properties were sold: *The Verneys and the Claydon, passim*. His work is a very important addition to the literature, but direct and detailed comparison with Canwick has not been undertaken, as the Verneys, with an earldom, were of superior status to the Sibthorps, and the period of study is rather earlier than this study of Canwick.
36. J. Throsby, *Select Views in Leicestershire* (Leicester and London, 1791), vol. 2, p. 132. The Ashbys lived about a mile from Hungarton village at Quenby Hall, which occupied a deserted medieval village site in a large park.
37. Williamson and Bellamy, *Property and Landscape*, especially p. 150.
38. A. H. J. Baines, 'The Vestry of Cholesbury 1820–1894', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 17 (1961–5), 57–71 and 'The Select Vestry of Hawridge', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 18 (1966–70), 34–42; Bennett, thesis, p. 224: the parishes were Bassingham and Billingham; Cambridgeshire Record Office, P117/ Town book, vol. 2, pp. 71, 146, 158, 170 and pp. 65, 77, 83, 114, 125, 135, 148.
39. Petty sessional divisions have been neglected by poor law historians, but those interested in the development of local government have been more industrious in this respect. A good introduction is to be found in B. K. Song, 'Landed Interest, Local Government, and the Labour Market in England, 1750–1850', *Economic History Review*, 51 (1998), 465–88; Song, 'Agrarian Policies on Pauper Settlement and Migration, Oxfordshire, 1750–1834', *Continuity and Change*, 13 (1998), 363–89; and Song, 'Continuity and Change in English Rural Society: The Formation of the Poor Law Unions in Oxfordshire', *English Historical Review*, 114 (1999), 314–38.