

homesteads may have been quickly converted to provide shelter for stock, particularly for use in lambing or calving time, while new shelters may have been provided for herdsmen or animals elsewhere. The problem of feeding larger numbers of livestock during the winter months gave a boost to hay production and storage, while any opportunities for irrigating pastures and meadows were quickly seized upon. All these activities left their impress on the landscape, and there is no doubt that many earthworks once thought to have been associated with villages before their abandonment actually came into being in the period immediately following the depopulation. Plate 6 must therefore be viewed as a three-stage or four-stage landscape at least.

Before following the story of Wormleighton after the depopulation, it would be useful at this point to examine briefly the fate of some of the neighbouring settlements in the difficult days of the fifteenth century. As we have already seen, Hodnell, Chapel Ascote, Watergall, and Radbourn (Figs. 1, 2, and 4) seem to have been relatively small settlements that had suffered gradual decline since the fourteenth century.¹ John Rous, a chantry priest of Warwick, who died in 1491, was so incensed by the ruthless depopulations both in the county and elsewhere that he presented a petition to Parliament in 1459 asking for legislation against it. Later in his *Historia Regum Angliae*² Rous gives a long list of villages in south Warwickshire that had been destroyed, adding; 'If such destruction took place in other parts of the kingdom as in Warwickshire it would be a danger to the whole country.' In his list, which was probably prepared about 1486, Rous mentions Hodnell, Chapel Ascote, and Radbourn as already depopulated, and it would seem that those responsible were either the monks of Combe Abbey or the Catesby family.³ From circumstantial evidence Stoneton would also appear to have suffered some depopulation, but the precise details are not known. By contrast Fenny Compton and Priors Hardwick seem to have suffered little, despite the fact that part of the former, like Wormleighton, had passed to the Mountforts after the death of Sir John Peche in 1386 and so came into the hands of the Crown in 1495. When William Cope, Cofferer to the king, obtained the manor of Wormleighton in 1498 he was also granted a manor in Fenny Compton to hold in socage,⁴ but whereas Wormleighton had been declining throughout the century and was ripe for final depopulation, Fenny Compton seems to have been a thriving settlement of several manors that stoutly resisted interference.

* Fig. 4 appears in Part 2.

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As the article is reprinted in facsimile, the numbering of Plates follows the original publication, from 6 to 8. There are no Plates 1 to 5.

¹ See M. W. Beresford, 'The Deserted Villages of Warwickshire', pp. 61, 65-67, 78, 86, 92-93, 94, and 98.

² T. Hearne, (ed.), 2nd edition (1745) pp. 122-3.

³ W. Dugdale (1656), p. 219a.

⁴ *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1494-1509*; grants to William Cope, dated May 7, 1498 and Nov. 12, 1503, pp. 133 and 340.