

## WORMLEIGHTON:

*The changing fortunes of a Warwickshire parish. Part Two*

### *The late Harry Thorpe, F.S.A.*

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*Part One of this article is published in the preceding issue of 'Coke & Cockhorse', vol. 18, no. 5. It describes the regional setting of the parish, its boundaries as in an Anglo-Saxon charter of 956, the Domesday Survey, and post-Conquest prosperity, to depopulation in the fifteenth century. The story continues with the advent of the Spencer family.*



Plate 8: *Wormleighton House from the Sheldon tapestry bearing the date 1588. The fine Tudor building and strong gatehouse are depicted from the south with the square tower of the church rising behind. The original gatehouse was clearly more impressive than that shown in Fig. 5.*

#### REHABILITATION AND THE RISE OF THE SPENCERS

The Spencers first come prominently to our notice in the latter part of the fifteenth century, when, as prosperous Warwickshire farmers, they began to concentrate on the raising of stock on land that they had purchased or leased, particularly within parishes that had already suffered depopulation. For example, in 1485 we find John Spencer, who lived in Hodnell, leasing for a period of one hundred years all William Catesby's lands in Hodnell and Chapel Ascote, with some additional land in Radbourn.<sup>5</sup> As

<sup>5</sup> Early Spencer Papers, Box 8, in the muniment room at Althorp, Northamptonshire.