

fodder. Until about 1516 John Spencer I continued to live in his uncle's house at Hodnell until his cousin came of age.<sup>1</sup> After that he may have continued to live there for a while, or else moved temporarily into what he describes as the 'sory thached hows' which is presumably a reference to the dilapidated moated manor-house in the valley.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime he was engaged in building a fine red-brick house on the hill that was probably begun in 1516 and completed by 1519.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to find that John Spencer I had been given licence to castellate his manors of Althorp and Wormleighton in November 1512, though this does not appear to have been carried out until later.<sup>4</sup> The northern portion of this fine house still stands today and some idea of its original appearance may be gained from Plate 8 which shows Wormleighton manor-house, looking from the south, with the square-towered church behind, from the famous Sheldon tapestry map<sup>5</sup> of Warwickshire dated c. 1588. From this it will be seen that the house was a large Tudor building with a strong stone gatehouse and probably with embattled parapets. The prospect of 1588 may be compared with the etchings (Fig. 5) showing the remains of the manor-house and the considerably modified gatehouse in 1877.<sup>6</sup> The latter can be identified easily in the top left portion of the modern aerial photograph (Plate 7). John Spencer I also pleaded that he had spent a large sum of money in repairing the church 'whiche he found greatly in decay'. From the present architectural features of the church this does not appear to have involved any rebuilding, but rather a general renovation. He had also bought a 'Crosse, Bookes, Coope, Vestementes, Chalisis, and Sencers', and had organized regular choral services, whereas even before the depopulation the congregation 'were so poore and lyvd so poorely that they had no bookes to syng servis on in the Churche'. Finally, he emphasized that whereas the community had been served in the past by only a single priest, he now intended to have two or three, though whether he really did so is doubtful.

Away from the newly established settlement on the flat hill-top the former landscape of open field had given place to great enclosures, bounded by hedges and ditches, within which large flocks of sheep, smaller herds of cattle, and occasional groups of horses<sup>7</sup> grazed on the grassy corrugations of ancient ridge and furrow. The presence of new banks and ditches on depopulated sites was frequently mentioned by contemporary writers, and it is clear that not only were abandoned buildings,

<sup>1</sup> I. S. Leadam, ii, 485-6.

<sup>2</sup> A very detailed description of the old moated farmstead in 1522 is given in Early Spencer Papers, Box 8, folder 17, terrier 3.

<sup>3</sup> It is intriguing to find that in 1504 John Spencer I had undertaken in first leasing the manor of Wormleighton from William Cope 'within 12 years to build upon the premises as good a mansion as the said William has of late built in a Quadrant within the lordship of Hampton, co. Oxon.'. See Spencer MSS. 1698 and 1699.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, i. pt. 1, item 1494, sect. 28, p. 684.

<sup>5</sup> This remarkable tapestry map, size 18 ft. 8 in. × 14 ft. 5 in., covering the county of Warwick, makes very early use of actual prospects as the cartographic

symbol for places. Although the map bears the date 1588 and the incorporated topographic data agrees with that period, the tapestry may be a somewhat later copy of an original. For further information see P. D. A. Harvey and H. Thorpe, *The Printed Maps of Warwickshire 1576-1900* (1959), p. 5; also J. Humphreys, 'Elizabethan Sheldon Tapestries', *Archaeologia*, lxxiv (1923-4), 181-202; E. A. B. Barnard and A. J. B. Wace, 'The Sheldon Tapestry Weavers and their Work', *Archaeologia*, lxxviii (1928), 155-314.

<sup>6</sup> The etchings appeared in W. Niven, *Illustrations of Old Warwickshire Houses* (1878), plate 31 facing p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> A manuscript in Early Spencer Papers, Box 11, refers to sheep, bullocks, and colts received by John Spencer in 1515-16.

\* Plate 8, the tapestry illustration referred to above, is reproduced on page 175.

In fn. 3, 'Hampton' is probably a misreading of Hanwell. See note at the end of Part One.