

Corris, prepared in 1779, it is clear that only two farmsteads then lay outside the village, namely those called Grange Farm and New House Farm on the map of 1963 (Fig. 7), both located on the long spur within the great canal loop. The home-  
stead of New House Farm had apparently been built between 1734 and 1777, and marks a belated second stage in the spread of tenant farmsteads outside the main village. A wharf had been established at the point where the road from Southam south to Banbury crossed the canal, and an inn soon sprang up on the Fenny Compton side of the road. Fenny Compton parish, with its strong village community, had now acquired a 'new look', not because of the canal, but as a result of the enclosure of no less than 2,200 acres of former open field in 1778/9.<sup>1</sup> In the very south of Wormleighton parish, the shrunken remnant of Crane Mere (Fig. 2) that had been steadily silting up since Anglo-Saxon times was now dug out, embanked, and pressed into service again as a reservoir for the canal (Fig. 7). So man continually reappraises the latent opportunities of the landscape. Similarly, the old fish-ponds in the valley had been drained, and an enterprising tenant farmer had cropped the silty bed of the largest, leaving the ridge-and-furrow patterns still discernible in Plate 6.<sup>2</sup>

When the formal programme of Ordnance Survey mapping at a scale of 2 in. to 1 mile crept northward across the Feldon in the years immediately following 1810, the pattern of fields in Wormleighton parish, surveyed around 1812, was not substantially different from that of 1734.<sup>3</sup> The great change to the present-day landscape of smaller fields, shown on Fig. 7, came about soon after 1812, and was particularly associated with the growth of smaller leaseholds and the granting of permission for farmsteads to be built outside the village in the midst of their own land. Compared with the 12 houses and 15 families recorded in 1730, the population<sup>4</sup> had risen to 149 by 1801 with 28 families occupying 28 houses of which all but two were in the village. Of the total population of 149, no less than 127 were recorded as employed in agriculture. About 1850 the main settlement in Wormleighton had very much the appearance of an estate village, with neat farmsteads and cottages blending well with the remains of the manor-house. In 1848 the orderly row of ten cottages, locally called the 'Ten Commandments', had been built, reputedly on the site of the old wool barn that had handled so much of the Spencer income in the sixteenth century. A school had also been established by the Spencers in 1839 with a house for the mistress, but the village folk were denied the comforts and pleasures of an inn, and this remains so even today! From the Census Enumeration Schedules<sup>5</sup> for 1851 one obtains a very detailed picture of the parish at this time. For example, there were now seven leasehold farmers, of whom four held between 460 and 480 acres, figures which recall those of the four 'charges' of 1634. The three remaining holdings ranged from 150 to 320 acres. All but one of the farmers were engaged in mixed farming, but one still described himself specifically as a grazier and presumably employed the six shepherds mentioned. The other six farmers employed no less than 53 agricultural labourers

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Tate, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> The drained bed of the old pool is shown as being under arable land use on a 'Map of The Wormleighton Estate, 1856' in the muniment room at Althorp.

<sup>3</sup> See Ordnance Survey 2 in. = 1 mile, field sheet No. 227, surveyed some time before 1812.

<sup>4</sup> Census Returns for 1801.

<sup>5</sup> Enumeration Schedules, Public Record Office.