

Certain re-groupings of both buildings and land have also occurred, as well as confusing changes of farmstead names. Thus, of the farms no longer owned by the Spencers, Grange Farm and Wormleighton Hill Farm are now worked together as one holding, the buildings of the latter no longer serving as an independent farmstead. Similarly, New House Farm and Lower Farm (established soon after 1834) are 'paired', the latter's buildings no longer constituting a separate farmstead. Of the three remaining tenant farms, Manor Farm (c. 400 acres) has its farmstead in the village and an outlying cluster of barns that came into being about a century ago; Hall Farm (c. 900 acres) has a similar disposition with two outlying building-clusters of similar age, and part of a former farmstead, Rookery Farm, lying on the outskirts of the village. Finally the buildings of Church Farm (c. 330 acres) within the village include both the remains of the former Tudor manor-house and a separate group¹ near the old gatehouse (Fig. 7). A close rectangular grid of fields, many dating from the period after 1734, is now associated with the farms, but the ghostly outlines of former larger fields can still be clearly traced on the ground today in ancient fieldways and in double ditches and hedges.

Visitors to the village today cannot fail to be impressed by its neat appearance and wise planning. The neat rows of cottages provide very good housing, and the spaciousness of the settlement owes much to the large gardens that surround them. In strong contrast to the estate cottages, all but six of which still belong to the Spencers, are the large rambling farmsteads, well-constructed in brick and stone, with fine outbuildings, yards, and lawns. As one walks along the street, whose green—before the cottage gardens enclosed parts of it—was once much wider, one's attention is focused on the manor gatehouse adorned with a Spencer shield and through its archway to the square-towered church beyond. But an inn is lacking, and one must search diligently among the small cottages beyond the church for the tiny cottage-shop and post office. The prominence of pumps in the gardens of the homesteads is an eloquent reminder that the village only acquired a piped water-supply within the past six years! This was long overdue, for even today the village has no piped sewerage system and is dependent on the services of a 'night-soil man' who calls periodically; in consequence the danger of water-pollution in wells and pumps had been great. Similarly, it was not until as late as 1938 that a supply of electricity reached the village and made possible improvements in lighting, cooking, and heating. The 'old world' character of village life changed dramatically during the Second World War, when evacuee families from Coventry were billeted there, raising the population perhaps to an all-time peak and bringing in a temporary flood of children to a village that had previously shown an ageing population structure. Since the war there has been a tendency for the dormitory element in the village population to increase. This is understandable when one recalls that less than twenty labourers are now employed on the farms, and only a handful on the estate, so that good cottage homes are available for renting to people who live in the village but work elsewhere. In particular men travel to Banbury and Coventry or work in a small factory near Fenny Compton station producing sectional concrete.

¹ The present detached farmhouse known as Church Farm is thought by some to have been part of the bakehouse and kitchens of the manor-house.