Rural Production in Transition: Three Parishes around Coleorton Moor, North-west Leicestershire, c. 1650-1850.

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by

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Abstract of Thesis

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D. in 2004 by Ian D J Hunt.

This thesis is concerned with the progressive commercialisation of rural production between 1650 and 1850. Its context is mainly, but not exclusively, three parishes in north-west Leicestershire. Together they surrounded Coleorton Moor. One of them, Whitwick, also bordered Charnwood Forest. The parishes nurtured a mixed economy based initially on exploitation of the resources of their common wastes, and more formal agriculture in other areas of their countryside. The thesis examines early modern examples of unspecialised production in the area, as well as the development of more specialised activities in the fields of agriculture, manufacturing and various extractive industries.

The thesis notes the different structures of landownership in the various townships around the moor and discusses their influence on their development. It also examines the organisation of rural production, and the influence of new technologies on the area's production cultures. However, the major influence on trends in rural production, as it became more commercial, was a changing relationship between town and country. Low cost rural production for commercial purposes, underpinned by cheap rural living, grew in order to supply the consumption needs of the urban labour force. If a landlocked town like Leicester was to grow it needed to be provisioned with items such as grain and coal carried on lower cost transport. It could then compete more effectively in the mass market to supply its own and more distant workers with cheap goods. The mines around Coleorton Moor equally needed a more economical transport infrastructure to distribute their coal. The achievement of provisioning the landlocked urban centres more cheaply, then adversely affected the competitiveness and living standards of the countryside in several areas.
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Abbreviations

Ag. Hist. Rev.          Agricultural History Review
CRO. Leics.            County Record Office Leicestershire
EcHR                   Economic History Review
ed.                   editor
edn                   edition.
Chapter 1

The Early Modern Landscape of the three Parishes around Coleorton Moor

Introduction

The origin and growth of rural industries has often been associated with common wastelands.\(^1\) Were such wastelands an essential ingredient to the development of rural industries? Or were they but one of several environments in which rural industry might prosper? A further conceptual background suggested for the development of rural industries has been one of weak manorial control - the 'open village', otherwise the 'peasant system'.\(^2\) Two further models for rural-industrial origins – the by-occupational and proletarian models have also been suggested.\(^3\) Yet again, Adam Smith suggested in 1776 that manufactures were confined chiefly to coal countries so that operatives could readily provide heat for their houses.\(^4\)

In this study it is proposed to re-examine the above propositions, and their relevance for the study area described below. Superficially, at least, the three parishes contained manifestations of characteristics that could have fitted all of the above propositions – even that dichotomy of the 'open' and 'closed' village. They all had access to common wastes. One village, Whitwick, is mentioned by Mills as pertinent to the development of his dichotomy of the 'peasant' and 'estate' systems.\(^5\) The whole area is geographically close to that major subject of Levine's study of a rural proletariat,

\(^1\) A number of writings on this subject will be discussed to in the next chapter.
\(^2\) 'Open village' was a term originally coined by the Poor Law Commissioners to describe villages not dominated by a small number of landowners, see D. Hey, The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History (Oxford, 1996), p. 476. For 'peasant system' see D. Mills, Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain (1980); G. Bourne [Sturt], Change in the Village (1912, 1956 edn), pp. 76-84.
\(^5\) Mills, Lord and Peasant, pp. 107-8.
And yet it will be seen below that there were also other influences at work – those of by-occupational farmers and other craftsmen, and also of estate management practices.

In attempting to research an association between common wastelands and the origins of rural industry in northwest Leicestershire, Charnwood Forest, Coleorton Moor and Ashby Woulds all appeared to present possibly fruitful opportunities. In the course of the research, however, it soon became apparent that the wealth of source material available from around those three former wastelands might be too considerable for a detailed local history. This appeared to be particularly the case for one that proposed to examine change over a period of nearly 200 years. Furthermore, the writer considered the extensive timeframe to be important.

The study begins in the latter part of the seventeenth century. It tends to concentrate on the effects of change, in farming, textiles, and mining, in three parishes, which had extensive access to common wastes. It purports to end with the important markers in those three industries outlined below. During the first half of the eighteenth century the textile industry in northwest Leicestershire changed rapidly from one often undertaken by by-occupational craftsmen on rural smallholdings to one based on a rapidly growing, proletarian workforce. However, in spite of the installation nearby of power-driven, worsted spinning mills from around 1790 onwards, hosiery factories were not established to any great extent until the middle of the nineteenth century. The transition from rural

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6 Levine, Family Formation.
household to urban factory therefore took a long time to complete. It was by no means a logical, inevitable or progressive transition.  

Changes in the extractive industries of northwest Leicestershire took an equally long time. Exploitation of resources initially mirrored estate management practices in agriculture - through leases from estates to individual coal pit and quarry masters. Successful operations in coal mining were seldom long lasting until the more capital-intensive, deep mines of the nineteenth century were served by canal and railway. Except in the abrupt termination of open-field agriculture by Parliamentary acts of enclosure, extensive changes in agricultural practice also took a considerable time. The seventeenth century saw considerable technological innovation, which was extended in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the middle of the nineteenth century, around the end of the period, a further major break occurred with what had gone before. Imported fertilisers in the form of guano started to become major inputs on English farms, and purchased animal feeds also increased manure production. Previously farms were dependent more wholly on internal sources for their manure production. In view of the extensive timeframe covered by these major developments, and of the need to write an essentially local history, the focus of the study was therefore centred on three ancient

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9 See R. Houston and K.D.M. Snell, 'Proto-industrialization? Cottage industry, social change, and Industrial Revolution', Historical Journal, 27, 2 (1984), questioning the logic of those parts of proto-industrial theory, which presented the transition from cottage industry to factory production as inevitable.


11 Ibid. pp.159-224.


14 Although marls and lime contained some fertilizer properties, their greatest importance was to improve soil condition. (Water meadows did deposit nutrients from origins outside the farm, but these, while notable, covered very limited areas.)
Figure 1.1. Coleorton moor in the eighteenth century and the three parishes around it - Breedon, Coleorton and Whitwick.
parishes surrounding Coleorton Moor.

The three parishes and their member townships.

Coleorton Moor, and the three parishes surrounding it extended northwards from the watershed that runs in a northwest direction from Bardon Hill in the east to north of Ashby-de-la-Zouch in the west. This continues the watershed across Charnwood Forest from Beacon Hill to Bardon Hill, and as a whole it separates most of northwest Leicestershire from the Soar Valley. The three ancient parishes sloped down into the vale of Trent in an undulating manner. They comprised Coleorton on the west and south sides of the moor, Whitwick on the east and south sides of the moor, and Breedon on the north side (figure 1.1).

Coleorton parish spanned the two manors of Overton Saucey and Overton Quatremars.\(^\text{15}\) Both contained a number of scattered settlements, providing neither manor nor parish with a really focal settlement. Both Farm Town (Overton Saucey) and Church Town (Overton Quatremars) were small.\(^\text{16}\) By the middle of the eighteenth century the coalmining settlement known as Coleorton Moor, and sometimes Coal Town, and which was towards the moor’s southwest limits, was probably larger than either Church Town or Farm Town.\(^\text{17}\) The boundary separating these two townships also ran across the moor.

Whitwick parish embraced the township of Swannington in the west (covering that eastern part of the moor known as Swannington Common), Whitwick township in the east, and Thringstone township in the north (west of Charnwood Forest, and also covering some eastern parts of the moor). In this same parish, the moorland settlement and liberty of

\(^{15}\) Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, pp. 739-40.
\(^{16}\) G.F. Farnham, Charnwood Forest and its Historians and the Charnwood Manors (Leicester, 1930) p.136, locating the church in Overton Quatremars.
\(^{17}\) 'Enumeration Abstract Volume I’ for Census of Great Britain, 1831, noted in a footnote for Coleorton, 41 coalminers, compared to 63 agricultural labourers. However, a further footnote related that empty houses on Coleorton moor for 35 families had been pulled down in 1826; Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, pp.162-4.
Pegg’s Green was located to the far northwest of Thringstone.

Whitwick township was the only part of the parish which neither bordered, nor occupied part of Coleorton Moor. It bordered Charnwood Forest, to the east. Over its section of the forest it exercised supervision of the considerable common rights there. Both its villagers, and the villagers of several other townships benefited from these common rights.\(^{18}\) Waste in the Whitwick-controlled section of the forest was estimated to be nearly 3,420 acres in the seventeenth century.\(^{19}\) A further 328 acres of the forest had already been enclosed for the benefit of Whitwick township landowners.\(^{20}\) The Whitwick area of the forest stretched from Markfield, around the west and north of Charley and then mainly west of Black Brook until it reached the Shepshed section, east of Grace Dieu (Figure 1.2). However, a long, narrow strip of Whitwick’s waste also ran eastwards to Goathouse Hill, where the mine-owning Beaumonts of Coleorton owned some enclosed land. When the common rights in the forest were abolished, under the Charnwood Forest enclosure award of 1829, Whitwick township’s own exclusive land area more than doubled to 3260 acres.\(^{21}\)

Whitwick lordship had historic ties to townships outside of the parish, particularly to its south and southeast, which were considered members of Whitwick’s superior lordship until into the seventeenth century.\(^{22}\) These ties were steadily reduced, starting with Whittington Grange becoming ‘severed from the manor of Whitwick’ in 1592.\(^{23}\) Bardon Park and land around it followed in 1613.\(^{24}\) However, in 1630 ‘All the parish of Markfield’ was still ‘accounted to be parcel of the manor of Whitwick, and all tenants of the said parish’ did ‘their suit and service to the court of the lord of the manor of Whitwick.’\(^{25}\) These latter ties of superior lordship seem to have weakened substantially

\(^{18}\) Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 2, 1, p. 131, ‘the forest was proved to be a free common for 26 neighbouring towns and villages...’
\(^{19}\) Leics. CRO, MF182/39, The Booke of Charnwood Forest.
\(^{20}\) Ibid.
\(^{21}\) ‘Enumeration Abstract Volume I’ for Census of Great Britain, 1831
\(^{22}\) Farnham, Charnwood Forest and its Historians, p.146.
\(^{23}\) Ibid., p. 146.
\(^{24}\) Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p.1117.
\(^{25}\) Farnham, Charnwood Forest and its Historians, p. 147.
Figure 1.2. The Whitwick area of Charnwood Forest taken from S. Wild, *A Plan of Charnwood Forest, 1754*, and *The Booke of Charnwood Forest*, an early seventeenth century survey. Whitwick Waste is shown as already enclosed.
with the abolition of feudalism during the interregnum. However, through operation of the annual Whitwick Swannimote, which supervised the exercise of common rights over the western section of Charnwood Forest, they nevertheless continued partially until the Charnwood Forest enclosure award was promulgated in 1829. The hereditary warden of Whitwick’s jurisdiction in the forest held his land in neighbouring Markfield in recognition of the ongoing performance of his duties.

Breedon parish included the townships of Worthington to its south (containing a large northern area of Coleorton Moor), and Wilson to its north, whose north-west boundary was along the county boundary with Derbyshire. In the east of Breedon parish was the township of Tongue, and in the west the township of Staunton Harold. Breedon township itself was in the centre of the parish, and dominated by Breedon Hill, and the parish church built on it.

Coleorton Moor and the moorland settlements.

The moor was ringed by a number of important smaller settlements – sometimes within the perimeter of the moor, sometimes on its limits. Apart from the mining settlement in the southwest, known as Coleorton Moor, or Coal Town, these were the adjoining settlements of Pegg’s Green (Thringstone) and Griffy Dam (Breedon) in the northeast, Newbold (Worthington) and Lount (Staunton Harold) in the northwest and in the east a somewhat late addition, at least regarding its name, Saint George’s (Swannington). There were also many small, scattered settlements on the moor, identified by the names of the particular commons on which they were found (figure 1.3). In the south of Coleorton itself the moor was specifically named Coleorton Moor, but in the north of the parish moorland a former

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26 For the convenience of the 26 townships whose residents held common rights in the forest, all three Swannimotes – those belonging to Whitwick, Groby, and Shepshed lordships respectively – were held annually at Whitwick from the late sixteenth century. See Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 2,1, p. 130.
27 Ibid., p. 130.
medieval deer park, known as Rough Park, extended to the township boundary at Lount. Elsewhere Swannington Common and Thringstone Common were in the townships whose name they bore. Rotten Row Common was also in Thringstone, while adjoining Gelsmore was in Worthington (see figure 1.3). An outcrop of the moor, known as Breedon Brand, lay to the north, along the eastern boundary of Worthington, and was in fact shared between the townships of Breedon and Worthington respectively.\(^{28}\)

The moor by no means dominated the economic life of the three parishes. But shares in the exploitation of its resources were important to them. This is demonstrated by the way in which the moor was divided among the townships, which surrounded it, and particularly by the allocations to Thringstone township. Two of these comprised long narrow sections cutting into the moor – notably Thringstone and Rotten Row commons (figure 1.4). Elsewhere, away from the moor, the long strip of waste to Goat’s Hill in Charnwood Forest has already been noted as belonging to Whitwick. Yet another similar division of wasteland resources occurred between the township of Tongue, and its neighbour Diseworth. In this latter case, the wasteland resource divided was very specific – an area of gorse – known as Tongue gorse and Diseworth gorse respectively.\(^{29}\) Gorse was a favoured fuel for bakers’ ovens.\(^{30}\) The resources utilised in the case of Coleorton Moor were more general. Suffice it to note here that many were related to the establishment of the area’s industries. The relevance of particular uses will be noted in the chapters attributed to those industries.

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\(^{28}\) Leics. CRO, DE41/1/196, Breedon Enclosure Award, 1762; Leics. CRO, 13D40/6, Worthington Enclosure Award, 1806.


\(^{30}\) Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1725, George Cross, a baker, had a stock of gorse in his yard, to fire his ovens, worth 13s. See also Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 2.1.p. 132, footnote 1, ‘Great quantities of gorse-kids are got occasionally on the forest [Charnwood], for the purpose of heating ovens.’
Figure 1.3. The various commons on Coleorton Moor, divided between the parishes of Breedon, Coleorton, and Whitwick.
Figure 1.4. Thringstone’s long narrow intakes into Coleorton moor. These demonstrated that township’s need to have a share of the moor’s resources.31

31 Leics. CRO, EN/MA/A/354/2, Thringstone Enclosure Award map, 1807.
Physical features and spatial relationships.

In 1790 William Marshall described the view from Bardon Hill in the following terms:

One of these prominencies [in Chamwood Forest], BARDON HILL, rises above the rest; and though far from an elevated situation, comparatively with the more northern mountains, commands, in much probability, a greater extent of surface, than any other point of view in the island...

The Midland District is, almost every acre of it, seen lying at its feet.  

Views from the highest altitudes of Coleorton were also extensive, and Nichols reported that ‘The Forest hills, Bredon, and Castle Donington, in particular, are here seen to great advantage’.  

Unlike Chamwood Forest, which therefore straddled some of the highest points in Leicestershire, Coleorton Moor did not extend to the highest altitudes of Coleorton and Whitwick parishes. By the early modern period these higher altitudes mainly featured enclosed pasture. However, the highest of these areas, towards Bardon, had originally been designated wasteland – notably Whitwick Waste, an area which had become part of the ancient Whitwick enclosures on Charnwood Forest (see map of 1754, figure 1.4). Here altitudes rose to around 205 metres above sea level. Running westwards, along the watershed, altitudes then descended slowly and unevenly to around 165 metres on Coleorton’s southern boundary. Approaching the river Trent, in the far northwest of the area, the county boundary between Wilson (Leicestershire) and Melbourne (Derbyshire) was between 45 and 65 metres above sea level – the lowest point being where Ramsley brook crossed that boundary. The overall fall from southeast to northwest was therefore around 160 metres, over a distance of some seven miles, more or less. Average altitudes and directional dispositions of the main settlements are shown in Table 1. The main settlements tended therefore to face towards the climatically more benevolent south or east, while the moorland settlements were more likely to have a less favourable northerly

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32 Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, p.11.
33 Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 740.
34 Leics. CRO, EN/MA/A/354/1-2, Whitwick Enclosure Award map, 1807.
disposition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Altitude – metres</th>
<th>Disposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whitwick</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>None – in virtual hollow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swannington</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thringstone</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pegg’s Green</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleorton (Farm Town)</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleorton Moor</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthington</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newbold</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staunton Harold</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breedon</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffy Dam</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1. Altitudes and directional dispositions of settlements in the three parishes. The main Coleorton Moor settlements are underlined.

The townships of Breedon, Tongue, Wilson, and Worthington (all Breedon parish) were drained towards the river Trent by a network of tributaries, which eventually became Ramsley brook. Staunton Harold was also drained partly by this system and partly by the Carr Brook system, passing close to Melbourne.

The drainage of Whitwick and Coleorton parishes was separated from that of the Breedon parish townships by Coleorton Moor – itself therefore a minor watershed. The Whitwick parish townships were drained towards the river Soar by systems entering either Grace Dieu brook, or Westmeadow brook, both flowing past the village of Belton to the northeast. The eastern part of Coleorton, from Farm Town, was also drained by the Grace Dieu system. A small area in the west of Coleorton drained westwards.

The soils and sub-soils of the three parishes were very mixed. Granite was found to the east of Whitwick and Thringstone townships. Breedon Hill, on which the parish church was built, was a notable outcrop of limestone, as was Cloud Hill to its southeast.\(^{35}\)

In the eighteenth century with the exception of Staunton Harold, which had been enclosed

\(^{35}\) Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 687
long before, soils more amenable to cultivation were usually to be found in and around the open fields. These tended to be medium clays, strong loams, and some sand and gravel, particularly in the Breedon and Worthington townships.\textsuperscript{36} For the most part Coleorton and Whitwick parishes, plus Coleorton Moor were above part of the coal measures of northwest Leicestershire.\textsuperscript{37} On the whole the coal seams tended to be deeper below the cultivated lands of these parishes.\textsuperscript{38} Outcrops of coal seams, close to the surface, generally soured the cold clays of Coleorton Moor, giving rise to its wasteland status. In 1789 a traveller through the area commented that ‘the land itself is as black as if the coal lay above the ground’.\textsuperscript{39} (Many parts of the former moor are discoloured by black dust today.)

The disposition of cultivated land prior to parliamentary enclosure.

In the early modern period each of the three parishes had a distinctive area of open-field land. These tended to rise slowly from the Ramsley, Westmeadow and Gracedieu brook systems described in the previous section. The open-field area of each parish was separated from that of the other two parishes by Coleorton Moor, as shown in figure 1.1, and sometimes by enclosed land as well. Within each parish the area of open-field land was divided among individual townships, but not necessarily on an equitable basis. As can be seen from figure 1.1 the open fields of the individual townships often had common boundaries. They also tended to be on the land most suited to arable cultivation, in the context of their era – hence their division between adjoining townships.\textsuperscript{40} As plate 1.1 illustrates below, the open-field land of Breedon has mainly reverted to arable land in recent years.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[37] Owen, \textit{The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield}, p. 41.
\item[38] Ibid., p. 195. In the 1830s the new Whitwick colliery bought mineral rights below 327 acres of former open-field land for deep mining below c.780 feet, as well as below 331 acres of other land, mainly Whitwick Waste. (Whitwick Waste was already enclosed by the Parliamentary Enclosure period – see Samuel Wild’s \textit{A Plan of Charnwood Forest, 1754}, part of which comprises figure 1.4.)
\item[39] Owen, \textit{The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield}, p. 145.
\item[40] Nichols, \textit{History and Antiquities of Leicestershire}, 3, 2, p. 740, refers to the open fields of Overton Saucey as ‘excellent corn land’.
\end{footnotes}
Plate 1.1. A view across the modern arable fields of Breedon to Breedon Hill, with its limestone quarry and parish church.

In Breedon parish the Middle field of Wilson joined the Nether fields of both Tongue and Breedon townships. On the other side of Breedon Hill, part of the boundary of the Westwood field of Wilson was also alongside part of Breedon’s Wood field. The Holmesick, or Great field, of Breedon had a common boundary with the Breedon field of Worthington. That the Hall, or Nether field of Breedon was in fact a continuation of the Hall, or Nether field of Tongue is illustrated by the 1759 maps of the two townships. Relevant parts of these maps have been joined together in figure 1.5. The joined map shows that there was no obvious boundary across some sections of open field and meadow.

41 Leics. CRO, DG20/MA/46/1-3 The pre-enclosure maps for Breedon, Tongue and Wilson.
42 Leics. CRO, DG20/MA/46/1; also Leics. CRO, 13D40/6, being the Worthington Enclosure Award and plan, 1806.
43 Leics. CRO, DG20/MA/46/1-2.
Figure 1.5. Sections of the 1759 pre-enclosure maps for Breedon and Tongue townships are shown fitted together, illustrating that there was no obvious township boundary across some sections of open field and meadow.44

44 Leics. CRO, DG20/MA/46/1-2.
The boundary actually appeared to pass across individual furlongs in places. The division of the Nether field between the townships of Breedon and Tongue may well have taken place on the foundation of Breedon Priory from gifts of land made to it. In the Domesday record, Tongue was the major lordship, and Breedon and Wilson merely dependencies.

In Coleorton the open fields of Overton Saucey, extending around the southern area of Farm Town, were reported by Nichols to be excellent com land. Overton Quatermass appears to have been more barren, with similar characteristics to those of the liberties of Newbold and Pegg’s Green – a mixture of old enclosure and common-waste land. However, evidence of some ridge and furrow has been found, indicating some former arable cultivation. In Whitwick parish, Swannington township’s Whitwick field had a common boundary along part of the Farmers’ Sick field of Whitwick township. Although they also rose away from the same brook system Thringstone’s open fields appear to have been separated from those of the other townships by some old enclosed fields on the boundary of Swannington.

By the early modern period neither Staunton Harold in Breedon parish, nor the liberty of Pegg’s Green in Whitwick parish, had open-field land. Pegg’s Green was effectively a moorland settlement – its land not conducive to arable cropping. This was not the case at Staunton Harold, which did have noteworthy arable crops, albeit on enclosed land.

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45 A substantial transfer of land appears to have taken place from Tongue to Breedon, subsequent to the foundation of Breedon Priory in 1144. In 1086 Breedon was a member of Tongue, as was Wilson. After foundation of the priory Breedon rapidly became the ‘more important’ township. See W. White, History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the Counties of Leicester and Rutland (Sheffield, 1862), p.471-2
46 Ibid.
47 Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 740.
49 Leics. CRO, EN/MA/315/2 pre-enclosure map of Swannington, 1755.
51 Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 718.
In the open-field villages of the three parishes, enclosed land tended to be composed of three types, before the Parliamentary enclosure period. The first tended to be a nucleus of small crofts immediately adjoining the settlements. The second type tended to be more distant land, often in pasture, and usually to be found on the far sides of open-field arable. The third type tended to be dedicated commercial woodland, often to be found on township boundaries. This included Cloud wood in Breedon, Spring wood in Staunton Harold, Smoyle wood in Worthington, Asplin wood and Annibel Riding wood (Pasture wood) in Tongue, Gracedieu wood in Thringstone and Holly Hays wood in Whitwick township (figure 1.1).52

Infrastructure and the location of other resources in the eighteenth century.

Apart from exploitation of its agricultural lands, the three parishes fostered the visible development of other resources in the eighteenth century. Many of these are illustrated by the relevant extract from John Prior's map of Leicestershire in 1777, which is presented as figure 1.6.53 Noteworthy among these are a number of turnpike roads, mills, coal pits and lime works. The activities noted by Prior were not exclusive, however. He omitted the important lime works at Breedon, as well as road-stone quarries for maintaining the turnpike roads and at least one gravel pit in Worthington.54 His map did provide a very marked illustration of the great number of scattered settlements on Coleorton Moor. On the other hand, he missed those at Griffy Dam, and on the Brand.55 An interesting group of buildings also missed by Prior, but noted on later maps, was known as the Woolrooms. These buildings were located on Gelsmore just across the border brook, which separated

52 Leics. CRO, DG20/MA/46/1-3 ; 13D40/6 ; EN/MA/A/354/1-2.
54 Leics. CRO, DE41/1/196, Enclosure Award for Breedon, Tongue and Wilson, 1762 ; 13D40/6, the Worthington Enclosure Award, 1806.
55 Welding, Leicestershire in 1777, p. 20.
Figure 1.6. The area of Breedon, Coleorton and Whitwick parishes in 1777 from John Prior's map of Leicestershire.
Coleorton and Thringstone from Worthington.\textsuperscript{56} They may have been used for the temporary storage of the wool from the many common-field sheep that grazed the moor by day, and were folded on the fallow fields of the surrounding townships at night. Alternatively, or additionally, they may have been used for the storage of long staple-wool imported by the woolcomber-hosiers who operated in the area.\textsuperscript{57} Grazing by long wool-sheep was not a feature of the unenclosed commons.\textsuperscript{58}

Roads and Railways.

Four turnpike trust roads were of significance to the area. One was from Leicester to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, past Markfield, and then alongside the southern boundaries of the Whitwick, Swannington, and Coleorton townships.\textsuperscript{59} In the eighteenth century, however, the other three were probably of greater significance to the economies of the three parishes. Two of these started at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, one running to Loughborough via Coleorton, and then across the moor, before passing through Thringstone.\textsuperscript{60} The other ran to Castle Donnington, via Lount and Breedon, and then on to the important mid-eighteenth-century river port at Cavendish Bridge.\textsuperscript{61} There it also joined the Leicester-to-Derby road. The road providing the greatest exposure to the various resources of the three parishes, however, was that maintained by the turnpike trust responsible for the road between Hinckley and Melbourne.\textsuperscript{62} On this road the trust’s highest density of tollgates, was on the section crossing Coleorton Moor and various townships of Breedon parish.\textsuperscript{63} A maintained road from Markfield, through Whitwick village, and joining the Ashby-
Loughborough, and Hinckley-Melbourne roads north of Gelsmore was also important to the local economy.64

By the time the Worthington open fields were enclosed by Act of Parliament, there was also a horse railway running across Worthington fields, from the limestone quarry at Cloud Hill, past a sandstone quarry, and in between the collieries at Newbold and Lount, to join the new canal at Moira, west of Ashby-de-la-Zouch.65 By 1833 the railway from the Swannington collieries to Leicester was operational.66 To Swannington a spur came in from collieries in Coleorton, Newbold and Lount.67 The main railway ran south across Long Lane, Whitwick, and in between the new Snibstone and Whitwick collieries, around which the new town of Coalville was to be built.68

Windmills and Watermills.

It is a feature of brooks that they tend to change their names as they run their course. The writer will therefore minimise the use of their various names. The brook rising at Swannington drove a watermill as it flowed past the northwest of Thringstone village.69 On somewhat higher ground, less than half a mile to its northwest a windmill was to be found.70 On the other brook system, rising in Whitwick and flowing northwards, east of Thringstone, was another watermill at Gracedieu.71 Whitwick parish was therefore well served for mills, even though their location was not particularly convenient for Whitwick village. The writer has been unable to locate powered mills of either kind in Coleorton parish. The two mills west of Thringstone were therefore probably the most convenient for

64 Welding, Leicestershire in 1777, pp.19-20.
65 Leics. CRO, 13D40/6, the Worthington Enclosure Award, 1806.
66 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p.194.
67 Ibid., p. 197.
68 Ibid., p. 193.
69 Welding, Leicestershire in 1777, p.20.
70 Ibid., p.20.
71 Ibid., p. 20.
that parish, being just over two miles from both Church town and Farm town, and just over a mile from the Coleorton Moor settlement.\textsuperscript{72}

In Breedon parish three water mills were powered by Ramsley brook – one north of Worthington, and close to Cloud Hill quarry, one on the south side of Tongue, and one east of Wilson.\textsuperscript{73} All three mills were convenient for Breedon. The nearest mill for Staunton Harold was driven by wind, but was across the county boundary.\textsuperscript{74} The location of wind and water mills was a compromise between the most suitable site for the supply of power, and the location of the product to be milled.

\textbf{Coal pits and quarries.}

Coal extraction was recorded at Swannington as early as the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{75} For Coleorton its earliest found record for either lordship was written in 1498.\textsuperscript{76} It was well established by the sixteenth century, and at the end of that century it was noted that housing for coalminers had been established on the moor.\textsuperscript{77} By the eighteenth century both working, and worked out coal-pits could be found at Coleorton Moor, Swannington, Peggs Green, Newbold and Lount.\textsuperscript{78} The general location of these pits was shown on the extract from John Prior’s 1777 map of Leicestershire in figure 1.6. Evidence of the need to pump water from the deeper workings was shown by the location of ‘Fire Engines’ north of Gelsmore, and between Lount and Newbold. These were presumably coal-fired Newcomen Engines driving water pumps to alleviate mine flooding.\textsuperscript{79} A number of ‘farmhouses’ occupied by by-occupational miners, were shown scattered across the moor.\textsuperscript{80} Today

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{72} West of Coleorton there were mills south of Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Welding, \textit{Leicestershire in 1777}, p.20.
\bibitem{73} Ibid., p.20.
\bibitem{74} Ibid., p.20.
\bibitem{75} Ibid., p.19.
\bibitem{76} G.F. Farnham, \textit{Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes}, 2 vols (Leicester, 1925), 2, p. 77.
\bibitem{77} Nottingham CRO, DD.TS 6/1/16 ‘Manorial Survey of Overton Quatemars and Overton Saucey’.
\bibitem{78} Owen, \textit{The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield 1200-1900}, pp. 113, 137.
\bibitem{79} Ibid., pp. 103, 109.
\bibitem{80} Welding, \textit{Leicestershire in 1777}, p.20.
\end{thebibliography}
evidence of many of the old coal pits can be found across the former moor in the form of distinctive depressions in the ground.\(^8^1\)

In addition to the coal pits a lead mine had once operated in Staunton Harold. By 1777, however, the shaft for this mine was in neighbouring Derbyshire – the Staunton Harold workings being converted to a quarry to extract ironstone.\(^8^2\) In Worthington, sandstone was quarried towards Newbold, gravel at a site near Ramsley brook, and road stone on the edge of Worthington Brand common.\(^8^3\) Granite-road stone was also extracted from quarries on the edge of Charnwood Forest in Thringstone and Whitwick respectively.\(^8^4\) Breedon parish had two sources of lime – from the quarries into Breedon Hill and Cloud Hill respectively.\(^8^5\) There were six and sometimes seven individually operated lime works at the Breedon-Hill quarry, and another four at Cloud Hill.\(^8^6\)

**Preliminary conclusion.**

Between them the three parishes surrounding Coleorton Moor had a variety of resources providing potential for exploitation and employment. Apart from obvious, but limited uses within the settlements of the three parishes themselves, and other nearby townships, the nearest market towns, in which to sell exploited resources, were Ashby-de-la-Zouch (two miles from Coleorton, five miles from Breedon), Melbourne (2½ miles from Breedon, five from the Lount Colliery) and Castle Donnington (3½ miles from Breedon and a further two from the commercial river wharf at Cavendish bridge). The largest potential local market, the county town of Leicester, was around 14 miles southeast from Whitwick, the closest township to it among the three parishes. The successes or failures of attempts to exploit

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\(^8^3\) Leics. CRO, 13D40/6, the Worthington Enclosure Award, 1806.
\(^8^4\) Leics. CRO, DE41/1/112/1-3, Thringstone Enclosure Award, 1758; QS47/1/49, Whitwick Enclosure Award, 1807.
\(^8^5\) Welding, *Leicestershire in 1777*, pp. 19-20, concerning Cloud Hill.
\(^8^6\) Ibid., Cloud Hill; Nichols, *History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, 3, 2, p. 687, regarding Breedon Hill quarry.
those resources commercially, and their social significance, will hopefully be unravelled in
the following chapters. Their relevance to the start-up and evolution of other industries in
the area, particularly textiles, will also be examined.
Some Concepts of Early Modern Change in the Context of the Study Area

Introduction

In the previous chapter it was stated that this study proposed to examine various propositions relating to the origin and growth of rural industries. The first chapter examined the landscape and exploitation-morphology of the three parishes around Coleorton Moor. It also examined some relevant concepts relating to that morphology in the period c.1650-1850. The present chapter will take that process further, but will be more concerned with more general themes of historic economic development relevant to the period, and to the study area in particular. Such relevance may be in terms of specific context, or in the relations of the study area with the wider national background.

In national economic history, change during the period 1650-1850 has been conceptualised by the terms, Agricultural Revolution, and Industrial Revolution. These dramatic concepts might reasonably be expected to have had considerable impact on the topography and social life of an area such as that depicted in the first chapter. The extent to which such impact occurred will obviously be of major interest. Was that impact indeed revolutionary?

Industrialization and the Industrial Revolution.

Four different concepts of work location emerge from examining the process of industrialization – the cottage, the domestic workshop, the centralised workshop, and the factory.

The factory.

The Industrial Revolution is associated with the application of power from running water
and steam to drive production machinery.¹ By augmenting, or even replacing the muscle power of human beings and beasts, such power enabled large-scale production to be attained, particularly in the context of factory organization.² Capital intensive, it was dependent on economies of scale being achieved from supplying large and preferably expanding markets.³ As an important extension to the Industrial Revolution, steam power was gradually applied to railway locomotion and shipping in the nineteenth century.⁴ The steam engine was also used for farm traction and corn threshing.⁵ But in agriculture its success was delayed.⁶ Certainly, this was the case when compared to steam’s successful application to manufacturing industry, mining, and long distance transport.

The relationship between the successful organisation of the factory and the application of power from running water or steam was important in contributing to the revolutionary nature of the Industrial Revolution. This was certainly the case in terms of the profitability of those participating enterprises that achieved success. The genius of Richard Arkwright was as much in his organisation of his factories as in the invention of his water-frame for spinning⁷. One example is that earlier inventions of roller machines for slubbing preparation and spinning often invoked complaints of too frequent yarn breakages by those involved in their operation.⁸ The Arkwright machines may have reduced yarn breakages,

² Hey, ‘Factory’ in Oxford Companion to Local and Family History, p.159.
⁴ Hey, Railways’ and ‘Ships’ in Oxford Companion to Local and Family History, pp. 387,416 respectively.
⁵ Ibid., ‘Threshing’ pp. 437-8; see also a discussion on steam-threshing and steam-traction in the mid-nineteenth century, in C.W. Hoskyns, Talpa: or the Chronicles of a Clay Farm (1847, 1903 edn) pp. 175-233.
⁷ J. Mercer, The Spinner’s Workshop (Dorchester, 1978), pp. 37-40. Between 1769-75 Arkwright patented a carding machine, a drawing frame (which gave the fibres a preliminary thinning and light twist), a horse-driven roller-based machine which spun the ‘slubbing’ on four spindles at once, and finally the water-powered frame, initially using eight spindles at once. The latter was used in his factory at Cromford.
but did not prevent them, and they were still occurring as late as 1849. In addition to
improved machinery, factory organisation made operators more co-operative to overcome
such problems as frequent yarn breakages. The work may have become soul-destroying,
repetitive, and boring but it was effective.

However, although factories may have been organised in a series of simplified
operations, which supported the production of powered machines, they incurred high capital
costs of set-up. Pat Hudson has noted that the high overheads of factory producers, arising
considerably from their high capital cost, made mills susceptible to trade cycles. This both
slowed their introduction and restricted their territorial spread to environments, which were
favourable to such operations. Such environments included low real estate costs, such as
might be provided close to common wastes, easy access to low-cost labour, material
suppliers, and large-scale markets for finished goods, and whatever other ‘external
economies of scale’ might be available locally to support factory operations. The latter
often included proletarian cottage industry, to whose operatives more work could be put out
in boom times. Those same cottage-industry workers could be used to bear the brunt of
recessions, which better enabled the powered machines of the factories to keep turning.

Handloom weavers still operated around Bradford and Leeds for a number of years,

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10 Ibid., 1, pp. 12, 187.
11 A. Smith, The Wealth of Nations, 5 vols (1776, 1886 edn), 5, p. 598, wrote in 1776: ‘The only trades, which it seems possible for a joint stock company to carry on successfully, without an exclusive privilege, are those of which all the operations are capable of being reduced to what is called routine...’ In this context he mentioned banking, insurance, the construction and maintenance of canals and utilities. A few years later he may well have included factories in the list. In this respect see P. Hudson, The Genesis of Industrial Capital: A Study of the West Riding Wool Textile Industry, c.1750-1850 (Cambridge, 1986), pp.31-2 regarding the growth of fulling mills in joint ownership.
13 Hudson, The Genesis of Industrial Capital, p. 73.
14 Ibid., pp. 61-2, 64-5. See also M. Berg, The Age of Manufacturers, 1700-1820 (1985), p. 36, regarding the metal manufacturers interest in saving material cost in that period, rather than labour (through factory organisation).
15 In one report of the correspondent to the Morning Chronicle, c.1849-51, on lace making from Nottingham, it was stated: ‘When the mechanism is not collected in factories, the work is generally received from the manufacturer and given out by middlemen’. See Ginswick (ed.), Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 2, p.149.
following the establishment of power-mill production. Berg found evidence of the British Wire Works, producing pins in a ‘proto-factory’, side by side with dispersed and impoverished nail makers, and exploited in a highly developed putting-out system. However, favourable conditions for such factories were not found among the knitters of the Yorkshire Dales, where Hallas found mill and factory establishments to be short-lived. Again, such factories were not to be found in the parishes around Coleorton Moor. On the other hand, Coleorton Moor was less than 17 miles from the powered mills of Nottingham and Derby. Their influence on the development of its neighbourhood can therefore be expected to have been considerable.

Cottage and workshop industry.

Toynbee originally used the term, Industrial Revolution, in 1884. On occasions, the term has been used to include the workshop phase of industrial development, associated with the invention and use of improved manually operated machines during the eighteenth century, and particularly its last 30-40 years. However, many such workshops were in operation before the Industrial Revolution. As noted previously, they continued to operate alongside the water and steam powered factories.

Even when a single capitalist owned its operations, the centralised workshop was essentially different from the factory. To a greater extent, factories operated without

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17 Berg, The Age of Manufactures, p. 89.
20 Loughborough and Leicester were comparatively slow to install such mills.
21 Hey, The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History, p. 231.
22 Berg, The Age of Manufactures, p. 75, notes that Marx's model seems to have been a large workshop.
23 Page 27, above.
24 Berg, The Age of Manufactures, p. 75.
middlemen in the production process. Factories had high fixed costs to be overcome by
volume production and sales.\(^ {25} \) Somewhat less capital intensive, less geared to large
economies of scale, production processes in workshops were more likely to be aligned in
parallel than in series.\(^ {26} \) Production, although sometimes speculative, was more likely to be
based on firm orders, than on the factory’s anticipated markets.\(^ {27} \)

Much domestic industry also continued to operate alongside both factory and workshop
operations.\(^ {28} \) This was particularly so in the many rural areas, where it usually predated both
the factory and the workshop operations of an industrial village. A domestic worker might
work from a room in the house, or from a dedicated workshop on the premises, depending
on space available.\(^ {29} \) As it became proletarianized, domestic production tended to be
controlled by middlemen.\(^ {30} \)

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century there was considerable evidence of both
domestic and workshop-industry in the parishes surrounding Coleorton Moor.\(^ {31} \) A major
question of interest, to be explored further, is the manner in which these operations were
affected by the Industrial Revolution, and the way in which they continued to operate within
its broader context, and in parallel to factory operations.

Technology before the Industrial Revolution and its transfer across international
boundaries.

In spite of political opposition trying to prevent its transfer, technology did cross

\(^ {25} \) This clearly arises from the high capital cost of set-up. See also Ginswick (ed.), Labour and the Poor in
England and Wales, 2, pp. 150-1.
\(^ {26} \) Ibid., 150, 164.
\(^ {27} \) See also Hudson, The Genesis of Industrial Capital, p. 161.
\(^ {28} \) Ginswick (ed.), Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 1, p. 202; Ibid., 2, pp. 162-8.
\(^ {29} \) Ibid., 2, pp.164, 168.
\(^ {30} \) Ibid., 2, p.163.
\(^ {31} \) It will be seen that there are numerous sources for this. However, W. Felkin, ‘Statistics of the Trade’ in
History of the Machine Wrought Hosiery and Lace Manufacture (1867, 1967 edn), p. 8, described Coleorton
and Griffydam as one knitting-frame district.
international boundaries in the early modern period. Mercer recounted how the flyer, as a means of providing additional spin to tighten threads for reticulated fibres, such as flax, cotton and combed wool (it could also be used for woollen warps) first appeared in Germany to spin flax c.1480. It was followed by the Saxony wheel, which adopted the same principle, and spread slowly across Europe after 1531. Baines has reported how Lombe’s silk throwing mill, built at Derby between 1717 and 1720 was based on Italian technology. Lee took his knitting frame to Rouen, on the invitation of Sully, and from there it spread across Europe. Transfer of knitting frame technology to New England was shown by Candee to be taking place by the first part of the nineteenth century. (Candee also reported steam-powered hosiery manufacture in New England by 1850 ‘surrounded by several firms of English-born stocking weavers who continued the workshop system.’)

Manually operated machines, and other equipment operated with muscle power, were being continually improved in the period 1650 to 1800. L’Encyclopédie of Diderot and D’Alembert provided very detailed descriptions of workshops, and their manual, or horse-powered equipment in the mid-eighteenth century. It also provided detailed descriptions of many of the domestic trades, and their equipment. The extent of potentially available equipment, much of it of an advanced nature, was shown to be extensive in the middle of the eighteenth century. (It will be seen in subsequent chapters below that some of the

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32 R. M. Candee, “British framework knitters in New England: technology transfer and machine knitting in America, 1820-1900” in Textile History (Spring 2000), pp. 31-3, regarding the ‘smuggling of British lace machines and the illegal migration of their workers’. See also Petit Larousse Illustre (Paris, 1990, 1991 edn.), p. 1242, to the effect that publication of Diderot’s Encyclopédie ou Dictionaire Raisonné: des Arts et des Métiers, was opposed by the French clergy and court nobility in the mid-eighteenth century. D’Alembert’s introduction was presumably meant to help allay this opposition.
34 Ibid., p.23.
36 Ginswick (ed.), Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 2, p. 159.
38 Ibid., p. 37.
39 Ginswick (ed.), Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 2, p. 159.
40 D.Diderot, Encyclopédie ou Dictionaire Raisonné: des Arts et des Métiers (1751-72, Paris 2001 edn.) was produced and published in sections over more than 20 years. The work was said to have been inspired by a publication by E.Chambers, in London in 1729, Petit Larousse Illustre (Paris, 1991) p. 1171.
technology illustrated was similar to that used in both the mining and the framework knitting industries in the neighbourhood of Coleorton Moor.)

Machinery technology was therefore fairly easily transferable, geographically, in the period 1650 to 1850. Failure to apply available technology in specific local areas of early modern England, where earlier industry was to be found, therefore, may have had much to do with some local incapacity in cost effectiveness, or through insufficient finance, marketing capacity, or lack of some other essential resource.

Proto-industrialization.

The earlier period of industrial development has been conceptualised as one which saw the development of 'proto-industry'.\(^{41}\) In extreme form the concept was formalized into a theory of 'proto-industrialization,' seen by its authors as an essential forerunner and prerequisite for the Industrial Revolution. Mendels argued that the origins of the Industrial Revolution must be sought in rural industries, which produced goods for external markets.\(^{42}\) The success of these industries provided economic opportunities for earlier marriages and therefore more children, and encouraged the rise of commercial agriculture, two necessary conditions for rapid industrial growth.\(^{43}\) Kriedte, Medick and Schlumbohm added a Marxist conceptualisation to proto-industrial evolution, and stressed its control by urban merchant capital, selling to expanding markets.\(^{44}\) The process was underpinned by an increase in the size of peasant families forgoing part of their wages to the urban capitalists.\(^{45}\) Additionally,


\(^{42}\) In other words, the rural cottage, and the small by-occupational farm.


\(^{44}\) Kriedte, Medick and Schlumbohm, Industrialization before Industrialization, pp.2-3.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., pp. 84, 87.
Kriedte suggested that proto-industry was 'often concentrated in barren mountainous regions'.

However, the synthesis of proto-industrial theory raises several problems. It had implied that the resultant growth in capital accumulation was made available to be invested in factories. Population growth provided factory labour, and the overseas markets, which had been created, absorbed the expanded production from the factories. Houston and Snell contended that 'proto-industry does account for population increase and density in some areas, but cannot be used as a general explanation of the eighteenth century population rise'. They also stressed the continuation of manual production in manufacturing, until long after the establishment of factories. Finally, Houston and Snell suggested that 'The growth of towns was probably a more potent force promoting agricultural improvement, regional market integration and the development of the factory system than was proto-industrialization.'

Kriedte's association of proto-industry often with 'barren mountainous regions' initially suggests some potential affinity with wastes such as Coleorton Moor and Charnwood Forest. This consideration may have been applied to framework knitting in villages such as Whitwick, Shepshed, Markfield, Woodhouse Eaves, and generally around Coleorton Moor. However, it was of little or no relevance to framework knitting in Hathern, Long Whatton, or Wigston – arable villages with few or no significant common wastes. Other considerations therefore need to be sought.

48 Ibid., p. 488
49 Ibid., p. 488.
50 Ibid., p. 492.
51 Both Hathern and Longwhatton had common rights in Charnwood Forest, but this was some distance from both villages. J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, 4 vols (1795-1811, 1804 edn), 2,1, p. 131.
Some other studies of relevance to local industry.

There have been several other important studies of this phase of industrialization, from both an overall, and a local, regional relevance. From an analysis of marriage registers, yielding a changing seasonality of marriage, Ann Kussmaul has promoted evidence for the timing and development of agrarian-industrial change across England.\(^{52}\) Her study attempted to identify changes from arable to pastoral farming (autumn to spring marriage), pastoral to arable (spring to autumn marriage), industrialization (loss of seasonality), de-industrialization (a move to seasonality). Her most local points of reference were Breedon, Coleorton, and nearby Shepshed, whose parish registers had provided some of the figures for the Cambridge Group’s study of demographic change in England.\(^ {53}\) Her analysis, in terms of marriage seasonality, shows both Shepshed and Coleorton industrializing late (after 1741) and Breedon remaining arable, through to 1820.\(^ {54}\)

Earlier Chambers had covered industry and population growth in the Vale of Trent.\(^ {55}\) Chambers associated the origins of framework knitting in Leicestershire with the availability of commons in the west of the county.\(^ {56}\) With particular reference to later specialization in framework knitting, he suggested it had been encouraged by a combination of a check in population growth, a succession of good harvests, low agricultural prices, high labour living standards, and low investment (including a low rate of field enclosure) particularly in the late 1730s.\(^ {57}\) On the subject of labour supply for industry (in the East Midlands) Chambers disputed the idea that labour release from agriculture by Parliamentary enclosure was of major importance.\(^ {58}\) Rather he concluded it to be ‘the outcome of the

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\(^{53}\) Ibid. p. 187 for Breedon, Coleorton and pp. 27, 30, 60, 126, 147, 187 for Shepshed.

\(^{54}\) Ibid. p.187 [The need to modify some aspects of the General View, for these local cases, will be demonstrated in later chapters].


\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 4.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., p. 4.

\(^{58}\) Chambers, 'Enclosure and labour supply in the Industrial Revolution', pp. 94-127.
complex forces represented by an expanding economy which offered inducements as well as compulsions, e.g. to inventors to supplement the labour force and to parents to augment it, while making possible for their offspring a more favourable chance of survival than had ever been known before. 59

David Levine’s study of the proto-industrial village of Shepshed, along with the closed village of Bottesford, is also of relevance to this study of the parishes of Breedon, Coleorton and Whitwick. 60 Shepshed was about three miles from Thringstone. It was conveniently on the way to Loughborough, a market town which developed a strong presence in hosiery. Its Swannimote shared the administration of Charnwood Forest with Whitwick (and the Swannimote of Groby). Its own hosiers had frequent contact with the framework knitters of Whitwick, Thringstone and Coleorton Moor. It provided custom for both Breedon’s limekilns and the Moor’s collieries. To some extent Levine’s conclusions supported proto-industrial theory. He argued for the earnings of manufacturing, achieved at an early age, causing early marriage. 61 This in turn resulted in population growth from a higher birth rate in manufacturing families, which finally brought about industrial involution, or a crippling of the industry’s ability to provide a living to the majority of its participants commensurate with their required inputs.

From Shepshed statistics Levine also postulated a significantly higher degree of occupational co-residence in manufacturing, compared to other occupations. 62 His figures showed Shepshed having 1.96 co-resident wage earners per household for framework knitters, compared with 1.29 for labourers and 1.7 for crafts. This raised the overall average of co-resident wage earners per household in Shepshed to 1.86. Co-resident wage earners per household, in the area, seem to have been generally high among manufacturers. But it could also be high in other occupations. It could also vary considerably from village to

59 Ibid., p. 127.
60 Levine, Family Formation.
61 Ibid., pp.11, 13, 16, 64-6, 148.
62 Ibid., pp.27, 57, 79.
village and from one census to another. For the census of 1841, co-resident farm labourers, including servants, per household around Coleorton Moor were an average of 1.86 in Whitwick township, and 2.00 in Coleorton, but only 1.43 in both Thringstone and the northern areas of Worthington. For framework knitters the townships averaged 1.00 per household in Coleorton, 1.25 in Swannington, and 1.3 in Whitwick township. The northern areas of Worthington, on the other hand, averaged 1.62 co-resident wage earners per household, and Thringstone averaged 2.80 per household - both being figures for framework knitting. There are therefore problems in using the statistical trends derived from one local area to postulate general tendencies.

Some industry specific studies have also been made, which have direct relevance to the study area. The more recent ones have been mainly concerned with framework knitting and coalmining.

Framework knitting.

Generally its origins have received but cursory reference by industrial historians such as Henson, Felkin, the Hammonds, and Gumham. Their accounts have mainly covered the more mature, 'proletarianized' stages of the industry, and/or its comparatively late use of steam power in the mid-nineteenth century. Both Henson and Gumham were focused on the need for organisation of labour-interest in the industry. Because this earlier focus was mainly on its mature stages, the origins of the industry will be given somewhat wider consideration in this current study than might otherwise be applicable to a narrow study of

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63 I.D.J. Hunt, 'A change of direction for the rural economy of north-west Leicestershire, 1791-1841', (unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Leicester, 1996), p.69. (See also p. 73 where figures for the township of Anstey were even more remarkable – 3.6 co-resident framework knitters, 2.27 co-resident agricultural labourers, and 1.76 co-resident workers in craft trades.)
64 Ibid., p. 70.
65 Ibid., p. 70.
the villages around Coleorton Moor. Felkin, however, provided a wealth of information on
the industry’s later technical evolution, and, in addition, useful statistics for the knitting-
frame population of the area around Coleorton Moor.67

Coal mining.

Adam Smith suggested that the need to heat manufacturers’ houses by burning coal was one
reason for manufacturing being mainly located in coal countries in the late eighteenth
century.68 Indeed, before its use to provide fuel for steam engines, coal was mainly used for
heating houses, as timber and other fuels became less readily available.69 However, if
house-heating fuel was an important reason for the early location of manufacturing, its
availability on commons was especially pertinent.

Apart from mentioning deeper mining at Coleorton, possibly from the end of the
fifteenth century, and again around 1700, Hatcher gave but scant coverage to mining around
Coleorton Moor.70 A detailed, factual history of mining in the area was, however, provided
by Owen.71 This provided a picture of a very cyclical nature in the development of the local
industry’s fortunes until the opening of the Swannington-Leicester railway in 1833.72

Around the same time as Owen, another detailed study of the area’s coal-mining industry in
the early nineteenth century, and its distribution problems, was provided by Baker in the
early chapters of his history of Coalville.73

The unspecialised ‘peasant’ system and common wastes.

This concept was linked to the origins of rural industry, and particularly to their context –

69 J. Hatcher, The History of the British Coal Industry (Oxford, 1993), p. 49, mentions coal being used for this
purpose in Leicester in 1572.
70 Ibid., pp. 30, 201.
72 Ibid., p.194.
common wastes, barren, mountainous regions. It was associated with origins of 'proto-industry' by both Mendels and Kriedte. It is clearly of importance for investigation in a study of the parishes surrounding Coleorton Moor. And Mills cites loose manorial control in medieval and early modern Whitwick as one example of how the system came into being.74

Equally important is the continuation of such an unspecialised system into the industrial age, and at least until the middle of the nineteenth century. In many rural areas particularly, it continued to parallel cottage industry, and industrial workshops alongside the industrial revolution. Time wise it also paralleled 'agricultural improvement'. Original interest in the subject owed much to George Sturt writing from the living memories of the villagers of Middle Bourne on the southern heaths of Surrey.75 Sturt related how regular paid employment was not a necessity to people able to exploit and enjoy common-right resources of the heath, before they were enclosed.76 The people took work when it was profitable for them to do so.77 It was this way of life that had been most undermined by Parliamentary enclosure, particularly of the common wastes.78

Mills argued that the 'peasant system' was 'unspecialised', adding,

for included within it are rural entrepreneurs who were entirely, or at least primarily non-agricultural. The inclusion of agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises within the same bracket is justified on the pragmatic grounds that it is very difficult to distinguish clearly between them. Dual occupations were very common in peasant villages and the most frequent combination was that between a smallholding and a non-agricultural pursuit.79

He also argued that 'while the peasant enterprises were part of the prevailing capitalist system, production for home consumption was relatively more important than in the bigger

75 G. Bourne [Sturt], Change in the Village (1912, 1956 edn) and particularly pp.13-24 'Self-Reliance' and 76-84 'The Peasant System'.
76 Ibid., p.77.
77 Ibid., pp. 87-9.
78 Ibid., pp. 84-95.
79 Mills, Lord and Peasant, p. 46.
enterprises.\(^{80}\) Mills also stressed the importance of commons for the operation of the peasant system.\(^{81}\) However, one of his examples of the system, the village of Wigston Magna, had no commons by any meaningful definition.\(^{82}\) The system was therefore promoted by commons, but did exist without them.

In their studies of the effects on commoners generally of the loss of common rights, E.P. Thompson, and J.M. Neeson both stressed the former value of common wastes before their enclosure by Acts of Parliament.\(^ {83}\) Thompson cited the local anger of Charnwood Forest commoners at the expansion of rabbit warrens there, in 1749, when parties of local villagers attacked the warrens.\(^ {84}\) (A matter of additional local interest was that one party was composed of colliers from Coleorton.\(^ {85}\)

Echoing Sturt, and in a tone influenced by the poet John Clare, Neeson stressed the ‘social meaning’ of commons as well as their ‘income value’.\(^ {86}\) While she tended to overvalue the quality of gleaned wool, she rightly stresses its utility to the gleaners.\(^ {87}\) Describing the year-round nature of commoners’ ability to gather from the commons Neeson pointed out that ‘the evidence before enclosure, suggests that many commoners valued the common, not only the poorest … common usage of commons was not a charity for the weakest in the village, it was a resource for almost everyone.’\(^ {88}\) ‘Commoners took foods, fuels and materials … for own use, but also to sell.’ Commons (like common fields) gave employment as well as subsistence, e.g. full-time employment to rush-workers, mat-makers and others.\(^ {89}\) ‘Living off the produce of commons encouraged frugality, economy,
thrift. The habit of living off commons made the habit of regular employment less necessary.\textsuperscript{90} By the end of the nineteenth century even the word gleaning had taken on the sense of theft [in slang].\textsuperscript{91}

However one defines it, understanding the existence of an unspecialised system of life and livelihood, alongside trends in specialization, is important in providing context for such developments as agricultural improvement, domestic industry, industrial workshops, and power-driven factories. To some extent developments reacted with each other. They were not necessarily consequent upon each other.

\textbf{Rural by-occupations (agriculture and industry).}

Rural by-occupations took many forms, even in the more limited sense, usually to be used in this study, of combining farming with some form of manufacturing or mining activity. At one end of the spectrum they merged with the unspecialised ‘peasant system’ where a family might have kept a cow or other livestock, to provide for their own consumption, on a smallholding or on common waste. The family also engaged in some form of textile manufacture, mining or other activity. This form was obviously of interest to the proto-industrialization theorists. At the other end of the scale an owner-manager of a notable industrial, mining or commercial enterprise was also a substantial farmer.\textsuperscript{92} There were various manifestations between these two extremes, many of which one can expect to find in the parishes around Coleorton Moor in the period 1650 to 1850.\textsuperscript{93} Some such activities could even be said to be integrated agricultural-commercial-industrial enterprises. One such example occurred where the agricultural activity was mainly used to supply feed for horses – e.g. for use in coal mines, in coal carriage, stage coach and wagon carriage services, or

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., p. 177. This echoes Bourne [Sturt], Change in the Village, p. 77.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., p. 184.

\textsuperscript{92} A classical model of this was the woollen mill owner-operators in the West Riding of Yorkshire. See Hudson, The Genesis of Industrial Capital, pp. 31-2, 62, and 73.

\textsuperscript{93} See also Nichols, The History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p.740, coal miners with one to two acres were a common feature around Coleorton Moor, but there were other combinations.
often those horses used by the clients of inns. However, even such operations usually included some production for their owners’ kitchens.

Joan Thirsk associated by-occupational textile manufacture in rural areas with livestock rearing, adding:

That the common factors seem to be these: a populous community of small farmers, often mainly freeholders (as in Suffolk) or customary tenants with a tenure almost as good as freehold (as in the Yorkshire dales), pursuing a pastoral economy. This may rest upon dairying in which case the farms are usually early enclosed, and manorial organisation and cooperative farming in consequence is weak or nonexistent. Or it may rest upon breeding and rearing on generous pasture commons, where there is no practical incentive to enclose, where the arable land is meagre, and where again there is no strong framework of open fields and cooperative husbandry. In the rearing districts the resources of the land (particularly the generous commons) are sufficient to support, and do support, a custom of gavelkind.\(^94\)

Pat Hudson has shown that in the West Riding of Yorkshire, while wool manufacturers were often by-occupational farmers, such a role-combination was considerably less common in the worsted area of the county.\(^95\) In the 1790s, however, William Marshall had commended the combination of worsted weaving with dairying in the valleys of East Devon (which had hill-top wastes), as a model to be copied throughout the island.\(^96\)

By-occupational manufacturing has often been associated with farm operations too small to provide the family with a living.\(^97\) On the other hand, Kussmaul has sensibly pointed out that the capital costs of setting up a viable smallholding, combining farming with manufacturing, were not negligible, and not for everyone entering manufacturing.\(^98\)

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The role of developments in agriculture.

Were changes in agriculture linked to the process of industrialization? Generally, as will be seen below, the emphasis of historical discussion has been on feeding the growing, landless, industrial population. However, there were other factors. By-occupational farming, as an alternative to owners leaving increasingly uneconomic, small units, was one such (see above). Providing fodder for horses, essential for the distribution of bulk merchandise, as well as for the operation of some machinery, in the age before water and steam-power was clearly another. In the early years of the eighteenth century, William Pitt estimated that there were 24 horses per square mile over the whole of England, consuming a quarter of all land produce.99 Other factors will emerge in the course of this study.

Setting the scene locally.

In northwest Leicestershire generally, in addition to Parliamentary enclosure, 'agricultural improvement' in land-use management tended to focus on the spread of convertible husbandry.100 Allen has doubted the value of convertible husbandry, suggesting it (along with clover, turnips, and New Leicester sheep) made only a scant contribution to productivity growth in the second half of the eighteenth century.101 Marshall, on the other hand, appears to have approved the system, which comprised six years of forage, followed by oats, wheat, and then barley, the latter planting being under-sown with clover and grass-seed, to repeat the cycle.102 Obviously, the application and impact of convertible husbandry on the agriculture of the three parishes surrounding Coleorton Moor will require appropriate scrutiny in the later sections devoted to the agriculture of the area. The impact of convertible husbandry on the region will also be of interest for testing the applicability of

99 W. Pitt, A Topographical History of Staffordshire, 2 vols (1817), 2, p.75.
various concepts which have been raised in national terms concerning the agricultural revolution.

The context of wider debates on the Agricultural Revolution.

Following Lord Ernie, from 1912 use of the term, Agricultural Revolution, was justified by what was conceived to have been a period of huge increase in the agricultural productivity and production of England.\(^{103}\) Such increase was to enable the nation’s growing, industrially specialised, urban populations to be fed from the country’s own land base.\(^{104}\) In this context it has been suggested that ‘in 1760 the output of each agricultural worker could feed around one other person: but by 1841 it could feed another 2.7. In short, the agricultural revolution allowed the industrial revolution to happen’.\(^{105}\) In addition to the question of feeding the country’s population, debate on the subject has attempted to provide answers to the following:

- Was enclosure, particularly Parliamentary enclosure, really necessary to bring about a growth in production and productivity?
- How did changes in agricultural practice during the period affect the size of farm holdings, and particularly the small farmer?
- Did the main thrust of the agricultural revolution take place in the century before 1750, or the century after that date?
- Is the evidence for production and productivity increases sufficiently strong to support the various claims made for them?
- To what extent did the changes in agriculture affect and accelerate the process of regional specialisation?

\(^{103}\) Lord Ernie (R.E. Prothero), English Farming Past and Present (1912).


Did the changes in agriculture during the period really justify the description 'revolutionary'?  

The role of enclosure in production and productivity growth.

Following Ernle, traditional writers saw more efficient farming practices as having been furthered by enclosure, which was taken to its logical conclusion by Parliamentary enclosure. Contemporary writers, at the end of the eighteenth century, such as Marshall and Young, had little doubt that enclosure improved farm practices, production and productivity.106 In the 1960s Chambers and Mingay reiterated the role of enclosure, a view that was later endorsed by Overton.107

Contrary views were strongly supported by the findings of Havinden's work on open-field Oxfordshire – an important region for the supply of food to the London market.108 Such improvements included a measure of convertible husbandry by the practice of sowing leys in the open fields.109 Sometimes they also included a re-division of the three open fields into a four-field system.110 The fourth field was reserved for forage crops, which included ryegrasses, clover, trefoil, lucerne, and sainfoin for feeding larger numbers of livestock, which in turn resulted in a larger supply of manure for crop husbandry.111

In a recent study Williamson gave some qualified support to the importance of enclosure, but also implied that its importance was patchy.112 He added,

It is important to emphasize, once again, that enclosure did not simply or directly lead to a massive expansion of tillage at the expense of 'waste'. Across very large areas of England it actually led to the laying down of arable to grass, while a high proportion of the common grazing enclosed either remained in its virgin state or else was reclaimed for only a very short period of time. But enclosure did pave the

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109 Ibid., p. 68.
110 Ibid., pp. 68-9, 72-3.
111 Ibid., pp. 69, 72-3, 75.
way for the more efficient draining of the Fens, and allowed the ploughing up of
great tracts of sheep walk on the light lands of the south and east, and in general
assisted the emergence of England’s new agricultural geography.  

Agricultural improvement, farm size, and the decline of the small farmer.

Arthur Young had no doubt that taking advantage of improved techniques in enclosed fields
required more capital than was the case for open-field farming.  

While expressing
concern that the small farmer suffered as a result, he considered that most farmers gained.

Early on in the debate on the decline of the small farmer, Young quoted,

The above state of the small farmer is founded on the strictest proofs. I have seen
some small farmers in enclosed places, starving with their families, till necessity
has forced them to quit their farms, and betake to labour, when they have
afterwards earned a very comfortable living, and rejoiced in the necessity, which
compelled them to it.

Among modern historians Mingay set out to trace the change in small farmer
numbers into the nineteenth century. Looking at both tenant farmers and owner-occupiers
he asked, and answered, the following questions.

(1) To what extent did the small farmer decline? He concluded that small farmers had
already declined to possession of a very low proportion of the cultivated acreage in the later
eighteenth century (probably some 11-14 per cent); and they had only a slightly lower
proportion in the late nineteenth century. But they did not disappear, although for technical
and commercial reasons the long-term trend was in favour of larger units.

(2) When did the small farmer decline? He concluded that his evidence suggested that the
major decline had been probably between 1660 and 1750, rather than the period 1760-1830,
suggested previously.

(3) Why did he decline? He concluded that low agricultural prices and a heavy burden of
taxation between 1688 and 1715, and the growth of alternative occupations in trade and

113 Ibid., p. 168
114 Young, General Report on Enclosures, pp. 31-2.
115 Ibid., pp. 32-3.
116 Ibid., p. 33.
industry, was a more important cause for the decline of the small farmer than enclosure and other changes in farming methods in the latter part of the eighteenth century.\(^{118}\)

Allen, on the other hand, argued for the declining fortunes of the smaller farmer during the latter part of the eighteenth century.\(^{119}\) This was during what he had described as the second or landlords’ agricultural revolution through enclosure, which redistributed income from farmers and labourers to landlords.

In examining leases and farm sizes in East Anglia in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century Wade Martins and Williamson noted the survival of many small farmers, particularly on better soils.\(^{120}\) Smaller farmers as well as large carried out improvement and innovation. Large estates and large farms tended to be on poorer soils and on reclaimed land.\(^{121}\) Furthermore, over 80 per cent of the farms in England and Wales still comprised 100 acres or less as late as 1870.\(^{122}\) In comparative terms this still relatively small size, as seen by the standards of today, was considerably larger than the small farm of 15 to 20 acres often found in the 1650s. This suggests that one should be very careful to question if one’s definition of small farmer was indeed a comparable concept between 1650 and 1870.

**Dating the Agricultural Revolution.**

The traditional view, expressed by Ernle, Chambers and Mingay, and more recently by Overton, placed the major production and productivity increases in the 100 to 120 years after 1750.\(^{123}\) Recently Turner, Beckett and Afton suggested: ‘If we take the view that the agricultural revolution cannot satisfactorily be divorced from the great rise in the population, on the basis of wheat output figures we would place it firmly in the first half of

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\(^{118}\) Ibid., pp. 31-2.
\(^{121}\) Ibid., p. 191.
the nineteenth century. They concluded: ‘the location of the agricultural revolution is firmly in the period from about 1800 to 1850.’

In the 1960s, following Havinden’s revelation of extensive use of improved practices in open-field Oxfordshire, Kerridge endorsed a revisionist view for the start of rapid agricultural change. He argued that the artificial flooding of new water meadows, convertible husbandry, new forage crops, fen drainage, and new stock breeding practices could all be dated back to the seventeenth and sometimes the sixteenth century. At much the same time, Jones suggested that ‘Between the middle of the seventeenth century and the middle of the eighteenth century, English agriculture underwent a transformation in its techniques out of all proportion to the rather limited widening of its market’. Allen subsequently argued for very significant production and productivity increases in the South Midlands, particularly in the case of wheat, to have taken place before 1750. However, he conceded that a significant productivity increase for barley continued into the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Allen also used the ‘demand-equation method’ to track significant production trends. By so doing he identified two periods of rising production (1520-1739, and c.1800-50), and 1740-1800 as a period of stagnation in output. Using changes in farm rents, both real and deflated, to track farm productivity, he identified two periods of productivity increases, almost identical to those for production, and one of levelling out, for the most part during the eighteenth-century period of production stagnation.

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125 Ibid., p.230.
129 Ibid., p. 224.
130 Ibid., pp.212-6.
131 Ibid., pp. 215-6.
In 1989, Thirsk had attempted to diffuse the arguments on timing by putting forward the idea of a continuum to be divided between periods of more or less rapid change. By 1989 Mingay had revised his earlier views on timing and suggested that the period 1750-1850 should be seen as a limited but essential preparation for the greater changes yet to come. But in an even more recent study Williamson suggested that England had not one agricultural revolution, but many. As will be repeated in a later section of this chapter, the writer has considerable doubts about the revolutionary nature, and time scale of agricultural change before the latter half of the twentieth century.

The evidence for production and productivity increases.

Qualitative evidence: feeding the population of England?

Beckett has argued that the primary task of the farming community was to feed the population, and if this was taken as the essential criterion for defining an agricultural revolution, the concept was clearly justified for the period. Later he concluded, along with Turner and Afton that ‘the critical test is whether it [farm production] fed that population. It did...’

However, the underlying assumption that increases in production and productivity, arising from agricultural change, enabled England’s growing population to be fed during the period of industrialization after 1750, has been subject to some qualification. In the eighteenth century food was a very substantial part of real wages for a large majority of manual workers. Cobbett complained bitterly about agricultural labourers’ falling

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subsistence levels in the 1820s. In support Dyck indicated that the real wages of an agricultural labourer in 1743 were equivalent to two bushels of wheat, falling to 1 ½ bushels in 1760, rising to 1 2/3 bushels in 1800 and falling to ¾ bushel in 1824. Snell considered that while, for the south of England, real agricultural wages rose in the middle third of the eighteenth century, and were stable in the 1770s to 1780s, they were falling during the French wars. Hudson has pointed out that the relative share of national income accruing to labour fell during 1750-1850, and working-class consumption remained static at best. Citing Perkin she noted that between 1770 and 1850, between 6 per cent and 14 per cent of national income was transferred from labour to capital. Allen suggested that many domestic workers' wages fell from the end of the eighteenth century, especially those of framework knitters during and after French wars, and that framework-knitter wages were only half those of farm labourers in the 1830s and 1840s. Several writers cited above, therefore, seem to suggest that the quantity of food supplied to several categories of working-class family in the early nineteenth century was significantly lower than it had been in 1760. That those families were being supplied by a proportionately lower number of agricultural workers was unlikely to have been beneficial to them.

Quantitative evidence.

Attempts to measure production and productivity changes during the period, for the most part, have lacked direct supporting evidence. Acknowledging this fact, and to complement earlier research, Turner, Beckett and Afton have recently produced a study which draws substantially on farm records. Subject to the variability in the number of available farm

141 Ibid., p. 7.
143 Allen, Enclosure and the Yeoman, p. 296-7.
144 Turner, Beckett and Afton, Farm Production in England.
records from one decade to another, the study provides reasonable support for a rise in
cereal yields, and particularly for wheat yields after 1800. On the other hand, their
attempt to measure changes in livestock production and productivity from a useful data
collection of slaughter weights has provided only one part of the picture. Slaughter
weights were, and are, very much subject to fashion, as well as being dependent on whether
animals were early or late maturing types. However, it is unlikely that determination of
condition and ages of livestock at slaughter will ever be possible for this period, except by
implication through indirect evidence.

Some ingenious indirect evidence has been derived to monitor production and
productivity changes. In the case of production determination Overton has quoted three
methods based on population, volume and the demand equation respectively. All three
methods have used population figures to some extent. And as Allen has pointed out in his
rebuttal of Overton’s conclusions, the latter’s population method was a special case of the
demand equation. The population method assumed the unlikely scenario that
consumption of agricultural produce per head was a constant during the period under
review. Although by incorporating factors for the elasticities of ‘price’, ‘cross-price’, and
‘income’ the demand-equation method attempts to rectify this deficiency, it is not itself
faultless. The elasticities were themselves likely to have differed between years of plenty,
and higher real incomes, such as the early 1740s, and years of crisis such as 1795. But for a
long-term view, the demand-equation method has its merits in illustrating direction of

145 Ibid., pp. 146-9. However, elite farms with records were not necessarily representative of farms generally.
146 Ibid., pp. 173-209.
147 Overton, ‘Re-establishing the English Agricultural Revolution’ pp. 5-6, citing P. Desne and W.A. Cole,
of England and Wales, V. II, 1640-1750 (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 406-502; B.A. Holderness, ‘Prices,
(1989), pp. 84-189, regarding the output method; N.F.R. Crafts, ‘British economic growth 1700-1831: a
review of the evidence,’ in EcHR, 34, 2 (1983), pp. 177-99; R.V. Jackson, ‘Growth and deceleration in
change, as opposed to precise measurement of it.

Some difficulties relating to farm productivity change, particularly in the case of livestock, have already been mentioned above. However, general, long-term changes in farm productivity have been derived from trends in farm rents, based on Ricardo’s theory of rent. Allen justified this approach, with some qualification for its validity, as follows:

The basic idea underlying the real rent approach is that higher productivity was manifest as either greater output per acre or lower cost per acre. The difference between the two is surplus per acre, and as productivity increased so the surplus rose... The real rent approach appeals to Ricardo’s theory of rent, which implies that rent equaled surplus (less any taxes on land). This is an extreme assumption since estates varied greatly in their leasing policies and since the comparison of rents with calculations of Ricardian surplus often shows big gaps between the two. The real rent approach cannot be used without assuming that these discrepancies cancel each other out... According to this approach, movements in the rent of land would reveal the pattern of productivity change in agriculture, if the prices of farm products and inputs were constant. Since they did change and since they also influenced the rent a farmer could pay, their effects must be removed from the rent series by deflating it with an index of farm product and input prices.

Using the real rent approach Allen drew support for a pre-1740 agricultural revolution and a post-1800 surge in productivity. Turner, Beckett, and Afton’s national rent series broadly correlated with their subsequent findings for changes in production and productivity from farm records. However, significant problems arise in using chargeable or real rents for tracking economic rents, or surplus, during the eighteenth century. These include the annualised capital costs relating to enclosure, and land improvement such as drainage, as well as the higher values pertaining to small farm rentals, compared to those for large acreages.

Allen saw the new methods (studies of demand, real rent and probate inventories) as ‘powerful tools’. But he added ‘to be scalpels rather than sledge hammers... they needed
to be used in conjunction with each other and with the approaches of more traditional historians'. In the absence of direct supporting evidence, reliance on indirect evidence will remain a necessary feature of research. It will also continue to give rise to much debate. However, the more various sources of indirect evidence support each other, the more soundly based quantitatively derived judgements will become. The demand equation is unlikely to be of much interest in a local study, apart from its relevance in the context of the national background. Studies of probate inventories and rent are likely to prove more useful, if sufficient local evidence is available.

Regional specialization.

Kussmaul’s study of marriage seasonality provided a significant way to track growing regional specialization in the early modern period. It also provided evidence of some changes in regional specialization, such as de-industrialization. Of local interest, both Breedon and Coleorton provided figures for her study. In a more recent study Wade Martins and Williamson highlighted a significant feature of the period labelled the ‘agricultural revolution’ by suggesting that it saw the emergence of England’s modern [twentieth-century] agrarian geography. They also noted changing regional specializations, and some significant evening out of regional yield variations in eighteenth-century East Anglia as yields from areas of poor, acid soil caught up with those from more fertile and heavier land. Developing the theme of evolving regional specializations, Williamson then demonstrated a national tendency for such developments. He added:

This transformation of agricultural geography was not, of course, alone responsible for increases in production. The overall area under arable cultivation expanded between 1750 and 1830 and the productivity of both existing grassland and existing arable increased. These improvements were, as I hope I have shown, achieved in

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156 Ibid., pp. 103-25, 156, 165-6, 170.
157 Ibid., p.187.
158 Wade Martins and Williamson, Roots of Change: Farming and Landscape in East Anglia, p. 203.
159 Ibid., p.179.
diverse ways in different areas, but more assiduous drainage, and increased levels of liming and marling were perhaps the most significant developments.161

To what extent were the changes in agricultural practice revolutionary?

By 1989 Mingay had reconsidered his earlier views on the agricultural revolution.162 He suggested that the changes, which occurred during the period 1750-1850, although remarkable, should be considered 'a limited but essential preparation for the greater changes yet to come' – i.e. in the twentieth century.163 Hey commented that 'the concept of an Agricultural Revolution has been diluted so much as to have become unsustainable'.164

In questioning the validity of an agricultural revolution much depends on definition. Should it be based on production, productivity, organisation, technology, rapidity of change, or a number of these factors underpinning each other? Do the changes in agriculture, which occurred in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (a very long period of time) justify the term 'revolution'? If they do, is there not equal justification to apply the term to the changes in manufacturing industry for its advances in technology and production before it harnessed water and steam power? In this writer's view, the organisation and technology of agriculture in the period 1650-1850 had more in common with early manufacturing industry, and with the later workshop, than it did with the steam-powered factory. Changes of similar impact in agriculture had to wait for technological change well into the twentieth century. Then the diesel-traction engine, accompanied by power take-off and hydraulic pump, the vacuum pump, and manufactured fertilizers did produce changes over a much shorter period of time, which might be called revolutionary. If a revolution did occur in the eighteenth-century countryside, it was more of a social one in relevant regions. It concerned such matters as the social consequences arising from enclosure of the open fields, and more particularly, the common wastes. In some areas it may have also

161 Ibid., p. 167.
163 Ibid., pp. 1, p. 971.
164 Hey, The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History, p. 7, 'Agricultural history'. 
encompassed rapid change in terms of regional specialization. But generally across the country regional specialization took place over too long a time-span to be called revolutionary.

Monitoring change around Coleorton Moor.

Locally related sources and their treatment.
The Leicestershire County Record Office was the main source for the location of primary sources. Estate records provided source material for the study right through the period, in respect of land occupancy, together with mine, woodland and quarry occupation. Unfortunately their availability varied from estate to estate, as well as from one period to another. Another problem, which arose from using estate records was that many land measurements taken in the mid-seventeenth century often differed significantly from those taken on the eve of Parliamentary Enclosure. This was particularly found to have been the case at Breedon. It may have been caused by some local customary measurements having continued in use there for lands, which had never been surveyed using the statute acreage based measure. It will also be appreciated that until landlords became interested in the concept of improvement, estate records tended to stress land occupation rather than land use. Governed in the open fields, at least, by tradition, land use and changes to it could be gleaned from manor court records only occasionally. Some conditions as to land use were also to be found in some lease agreements.

Information regarding that area of seventeenth-century Charnwood Forest in the lordship of Whitwick was taken from a document dated 17 January 1739. From the names of the identifiable landowners in the survey this was judged to be a copy of survey

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that was originally undertaken in the early part of the seventeenth century, prior to the transfer of the lordship of Whitwick from the Crown to the Hastings family.\textsuperscript{166}

As appropriate to industrial enterprises, which held occupation rights from estates, such as farming, forestry, mining and quarries, estate records were supported by the following:

a) Probate inventories to derive some idea of individual operations and valuations for farms until c.1750,

b) Marriage registers,

c) The \textit{Leicester and Northampton Journal}, particularly for advertisements, in the latter part of the eighteenth century,

d) Parliamentary enclosure awards for the relevant townships, supported by land-tax returns, where appropriate, for a year as close as possible to the award–year,

e) \textit{Census Enumeration Abstract for the County of Leicester}, 1801-41, and census enumerators’ books, 1841, for the relevant parishes.

In the case of crafts, and manufacturing (mainly framework knitting after c.1750) probate inventories and newspaper advertisements in the \textit{Leicester and Nottingham Journal} provided much of the eighteenth-century source material. Essential sources for the first part of the nineteenth century were the \textit{Census Enumeration Abstract for the County of Leicester}, 1801-41, and the census enumerators’ returns, 1841, for the relevant parishes.

Parliamentary papers were also invaluable for describing contemporary conditions, particularly the \textit{Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters} (1845).\textsuperscript{167} Statistics relating to framework knitting in the early 1840s were also drawn from Felkin’s work.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{166} In addition to references to the King’s soil in the Whitwick-Markfield area, the survey refers elsewhere to \textit{Come Rutland}, or the Earl of Rutland, Sir William Herrick, Thomas Babington, and particularly to Lord Graye, or Greye (alternative early seventeenth century spellings, see J. Richards, \textit{Aristocrat and Regicide: The Life and Times of Thomas, Lord Grey of Groby, The Ermine Unicorn} , 1622–1657 (2000).

\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters} (1845, Shannon 1993 edn).

For local communications in the eighteenth century, both internally and to market towns, the minute books of the Leicester/Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and the Hinckley/Melbourne turnpike trusts provided some very pertinent information. Advertisements and articles in the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* supplemented this information.

Probate inventories.

Overall, inventories provided useful information in respect of commercial farming, by-occupational farming, mining, transport, and crafts (including framework knitting and wool combing) until 1760. All probate inventories in the county of Leicester for each of fifteen years were selected for examination and extraction of relevant data. The years were selected at random and comprised (in date order), 1694, 1700, 1711, 1712, 1723, 1724, 1725, 1734, 1744, 1745, 1746, 1749, 1755, 1757, and 1759. Extracted data relating to inventory items was tabulated on spreadsheets according to occupation or by-occupation. This was done both for the three parishes around Coleorton Moor, and for the county generally. Tabulated data was subjected to various calculations to provide total, average, median, range etc. for appropriate items. (The first half of the eighteenth century was not a period of any significant inflation). For the most part it was possible to discern going-concerns at time of death from retirement operations. Some operations contracted on retirement and may sometimes be confused with the smallholdings of more active operators. However, it is suggested that there was little difference in many cases between the practices of these two types of small operation. Unfortunately, information on the number of larger operations, in full cry at time of death, was not as considerable as one would have wished – it being an unfortunate feature of probate inventories that they often accounted for the stocks of older people. On the other hand, it will be appreciated that in farming, at least, a larger operation occupied a proportionately greater part of a township’s land-surface. To that extent it was more typical of its agriculture.
Marriage registers.

Useful occupational evidence was gleaned from the registers for the 1760s. However, from the end of that decade, in the study area, the occupation of a participant was rarely specified. The registers were also used to monitor exogamous marriages, and through it to provide some evidence as to social contact, and its frequency, between neighbouring communities, and with places farther away. Unfortunately, the registers of Whitwick parish were mainly unreadable until the middle of the eighteenth century.169

Leicester and Nottingham Journal (from January 1759).

Information gleaned from advertisements tended to have had corroborative, rather than definitive value. However, this was not always the case – the Bradgate Estate advertised its spring wood sales regularly. Reports, letters, and articles in the newspaper were mainly of national significance. There were occasionally reports and/or letters of local significance – such as the cheese riots of the autumn of 1766 – and usually reports relevant to markets for farm produce.

Parliamentary enclosure awards and acts.

These documents, particularly when accompanied by maps, were excellent sources of information regarding changes in land use and ownership. However, it is noted that in the case of the three parishes of this study, they did not provide anything like complete coverage of the relevant township areas. In addition, they rarely provided evidence of occupation of the land areas affected by enclosure. The latter deficiency was sometimes made good by being able to use appropriate land-tax returns, where these were available.

169 In this respect it is noted that unfortunately the registers of Whitwick parish did not provide data for Kussmaul, A General View of the Rural Economy of England, while those of Breedon and Coleorton did.
The enumerators' returns for 1841 were particularly useful for providing information on the population and occupational structure of the three parishes for that year. However, they did not provide evidence of by-employments.170 Unfortunately, the enumerators' returns for the years 1801-31 were not retained in public records.171 The earlier Census Reports for these earlier years provided a more general and limited view of occupational structure, particularly so for non-agricultural activity. The information for 1831 was a great improvement on that for earlier years, in that it provided more detailed information on the occupations of adult males, and also some revealing footnotes. The 1841 enumerators' returns did not record information on persons temporarily away from home on the day the census was taken, but in the case of the three parishes surrounding Coleorton Moor, this was not particularly detrimental for determining the overall occupational structures.172 Neither did the 1841 returns provide the relationships of household heads to other household occupants.173 However, in many cases these were fairly clear.

Themes to be pursued.

In the preceding pages a number of themes have been revealed which were pertinent to the study of the three parishes surrounding Coleorton Moor. In the following pages these will be discussed in terms of the following concepts or topics.174

- The unspecialised domestic phase of rural industry and agriculture.
- Some influences and inducements, which promoted greater participation in trade.
- Changes in local farming practice and their links to rural industry.
- The proletarianization of domestic industry.

170 Hey, 'Census returns' in The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History, p. 72.
171 Ibid., pp. 72-4.
172 Ibid., p. 72, regarding persons temporarily away from home.
173 Ibid., p. 72.
174 In some cases more than one topic will be covered in a single chapter.
- Extractive industries in the three parishes.
- Transport development and distribution.
- Rural craftsmen in the three parishes.
- The workshop phase of manufacturing.
- Commercial farming in the three parishes.
- Interaction of the cottage, workshop, farm, and factory.

It should be noted from the outset, and from various accounts above, that many of these phases will be seen to have overlapped each other historically. The order in which they are examined, therefore, will arise from the timing of the main thrust of each phase, as far as is possible. As a result the early subject matter discussed in some sections may inevitably predate some of the later events discussed in a previous chapter. A further discussion of sources will also take place in some later chapters as appropriate to the context.
Chapter 3
Ownership, Estate Management, and Occupation of the Land

Introduction

Patterns of land ownership have been seen as important determinants of the structure of rural society in early modern England. Highlighting dichotomies arising from the more extreme differences in a township’s land-ownership arrangements has provided the interesting material for deriving such themes as ‘open and closed villages’ and ‘the peasant and estate systems’. While the first concept concerned township access for settlement, the second one was as much concerned with the socio-economic characteristics of township communities.

In villages operating under a ‘peasant system’, land-ownership fragmentation had reduced the control of lords of the manor, and had also had a delaying effect on enclosure. The ruling class, associated with the ‘estate system’, ‘were thoroughly accustomed to rely upon specialists to provide their various wants’. An important role was also attributed to Parliamentary enclosure for subsequent changes to socio-economic relationships in rural villages. This was through its concentrating the variety of interests in the land, which existed before Parliamentary enclosure, into the hands of limited, and specifically private ownerships. In this chapter it is proposed to examine the ownership, estate-management, and occupation structures of the various townships surrounding Coleorton Moor as possible determinants of their socio-economic development before and after Parliamentary enclosure. Unfortunately, pertinent

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2 Ibid., p. 43. Mills stressed ‘the distinction between the large entrepreneurs, who were part of the estate system, and the small ones who stood outside it within an independent socio-economic system’.
3 Ibid., p. 100, citing studies by Hunt in Leicestershire and Turner in Buckinghamshire.
4 Ibid., p. 102.
5 Ibid., p. 46.
estate records were more readily available for some townships than for others. However, it is considered that sufficient information was available from a variety of sources to build up an informative picture overall.

Occupation origins of the moor itself were also of particular interest. Were the original occupants squatters in the totally unauthorized sense? Alternatively were they miners enticed from elsewhere - encouraged to build cottages and enclose small plots to underpin their subsistence when coal stacks were temporarily too large? A third possibility was that they were acknowledged squatters, allowed to settle and build cottages in return for the fines that lords of the manor received. All three alternatives were possible. Perhaps all three were correct.

Staunton Harold.

Of all the townships of the three parishes, this was the one to which the application of the term 'estate system' could most readily be applied during the period of this study. The township had a totally dominant landowner, the Earl Ferrers' estate. Its cultivated land appeared to have been enclosed long before the early modern period started. The timing of such enclosure is uncertain but traces of ridge and furrow have been found in the township, suggestive of some ancient open-field cultivation, albeit possibly small scale. It was said that a former agricultural village settlement was also depopulated a long time previously. A deer park of 150 acres and enclosed farmland surrounded the Hall for as far as the eye could see. In the early nineteenth century the woods and sand hills of the township were reported to abound with every species of game usually found in the county of Leicester.

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13 Ibid., p. 718.
The township comprised 1840 acres and contained 52 houses in 1801, which rose to 59 in 1831 and 65 in 1841. One or two agricultural labourers' cottages were conveniently close to the scattered farmhouses but most of the worker housing was concentrated at the coal-mining hamlet of Lount, on the edge of Coleorton Moor and at a distance from the Hall. A smaller area of worker housing also existed at Heathend, some of whose residents worked the estate-lead mine and lime works on the Derbyshire border. The population of Lount comprised almost entirely coal miners and agricultural workers in 1831 and 1841. That of Heathend was also mainly dependent on work provided by the estate's lessees or contractors. A few people worked in associated trades. There were no framework knitters. A single potter represented the occupation that was closest to manufacturing in 1841. Farming, mining, forestry and limestone quarrying were all activities in which the owning estate had a considerable interest. The estate leased mines and quarries in much the same way that it leased farms. Six farms dominated the agricultural activity of the township in the first half of the nineteenth century. Nichols reported them as using teams of draft animals in 1801—teams presumably being a reference to scale of operations. Six farms also reported that they employed servants of both sexes, as well as agricultural labourers, in the 1841 census. Residency in the township appears to have been strictly controlled to meet the lordship's needs, but no more than those needs. Even settlement on

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14 Census of Great Britain: Enumeration Abstract, 1801, and 1831, 1, pp. 316-7; also NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/15 Census of Great Britain 1841, in the enumerators' returns relating to Staunton Harold.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.; Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 718.
17 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/15 Census of Great Britain 1841, 'enumerators' returns'.
19 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/15 Census of Great Britain 1841, 'enumerators' returns'.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, pp. 63, 141.
23 Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 718; Census of Great Britain: Enumeration Abstract, 1801, and 1831, 1, pp. 316-7; also NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/15 Census of Great Britain 1841 'enumerators' returns'.
the fringes of Coleorton Moor bore the stamp of strict landlord control.

**Breedon, Tongue and Wilson.**

Throughout the early modern period the manorial seigneur, and largest landowner, the Earl of Stamford and Warrington through his Bradgate Estate, administered the townships of Tongue and Wilson as dependencies of Breedon Lordship. The social and occupational character of these three townships underwent significant change over the period of the study. The parish of Breedon, which also included Staunton Harold, Worthington and the latter's dependent liberty of Newbold, was described by Kussmaul as demonstrating arable marriage seasonality throughout the period of her study. But Breedon township did contain industrial elements throughout the period with its lime quarries at Breedon Hill and Cloud Hill respectively. (Industrial elements in Worthington were even stronger - see below.) In the 1760s a number of framework knitters also appeared in the Breedon marriage registers. Since by this time Worthington chapelry was keeping its own marriage register it is reasonable to assume that the framework knitters married in Breedon were from either that township, or from the hamlets of Tongue or Wilson. Furthermore in the 1770s and 1780s the vicar of Breedon was occasionally noting the description 'pauper' and/or 'framework knitter' against some entries in the register of deaths. However, by the early nineteenth century Breedon, Tongue and Wilson reverted significantly to agricultural communities. At the 1841 Census three framework knitters only were enumerated. One was an octogenarian on the former Brand common, another a 61 year old, and the last a thirty year

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25 Leics. CRO, (DG20)DE1982/181, 'The Court Baron & Court of Survey of the Manor of Breedon with the Members, the Thirteenth Day of October, 1756, before Ralph Dison, Gent., Steward there' in Bradgate Estate Rentals: Breedon, Tongue and Wilson.
28 Leics. CRO, DE2478/9 Breedon Parish Registers, 1700-1837, 'marriages'.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 'deaths and burials'.

old lodging with an agricultural labourer on Nottingham and Birmingham Road. Even lime-quarry labourers were absent from the 1841 enumeration. (A strange omission, as the lime quarries were still being worked).

Land ownership at Breedon, Tongue and Wilson.

Although the lord of the manor was not resident by the 1650s, he was the dominant landowner, and he continued to be so throughout the period of this study. On his behalf the Bradgate Estate owned nearly 90 percent of the freehold land in 1656. The other 10 percent (other than six cottage freeholds) was divided among 14 freeholders – four in Breedon, five in Tongue, and five in Wilson. One of the largest of these was Wyggeston Hospital, who with seven others, including several farmers, owned from 20 to 70 acres each. The holdings of the other freeholders were all below ten acres, and mostly plus or minus an acre. However, the smaller freeholders usually had appurtenances (common rights) attached to their property, as did all six-cottage freeholders. Including the six cottages, there were therefore a total of 21 freeholders in 1656.

By 1762 the number of freeholders in the townships of Breedon, Tongue and Wilson had actually risen to 28. By 1783 it seems to have been as high as 31. This number included the freeholds of the six cottagers, all of who appeared to have acquired somewhat less than an acre in a hardly attractive exchange for their common rights under the enclosure award. However, a number of these freeholders also rented land – see below.

One additional freeholder came about from the award of 121a 3r 5p for the former Breedon

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32 Ibid.
33 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 199.
35 Ibid.
36 Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE/41/1/196, ‘The enclosure award for Breedon, Tongue and Wilson, 1762’.
38 Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE/41/1/196.
tithes. (The impropriators of Tongue and Wilson had already been landowners before the award, but increased their acres by 96a 2r 0p in the case of Tongue, and 55a 3r 31p in the case of Wilson). Otherwise the increase in numbers appears to have taken place either by division on inheritance, or by purchase. Certainly, three members of the Curzon family owned freehold land in the townships by 1762. A substantial part of one of these latter freeholds was known as 'Lodge' land, and had been acquired previously by the Bradgate Estate during the Civil War.

By the end of the eighteenth century the Bradgate Estate’s proportion of the land in these three townships appears to have fallen to a little more than two-thirds of the total. There had been three causes for this: the resale of a major part of the former lodge land, the enclosure awards in exchange for tithe obligations (12.5%), and the enclosure awards to commoners of land on the former wastes. (The lord of the manor was legally the freeholder of the commons before their enclosure.) However, the Bradgate Estate remained by far the largest landowner, and a proactive one. Although other freeholders were significant, the majority of landowners seem to have been prepared to retain, and even promote the agricultural character of their communities. This will be confirmed by the transformation of the character of the occupation of the Brand common after its enclosure.

Occupiers at Breedon, Tongue and Wilson.

The Bradgate Estate itself occupied and managed its 256 acres of woodland, stretching across the townships of Breedon and Tongue. The hall at Breedon, which had succeeded the priory, had fallen into decay by the 1650s, and a farmer was leasing its immediate

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39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.; Leics. CRO, DE.311/50/6, The Enclosure Act for Breedon, Tongue and Wilson, for pre-enclosure landowners.
41 Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE/41/1/196, '1762 enclosure award'.
43 Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE/41/1/196, '1762 enclosure award'.
44 Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE/41/1/196, '1762 enclosure award'.
45 Leics. CRO, QS62.53; QS62/315, '1783 land tax returns'.

grounds, known as the Plashets. The estate leased its lime quarries in much the same way as it leased its agricultural holdings.

The land-occupation pattern of the three townships in 1656 was much more complex than the freehold structure. Four of the freeholders whose land was more than 20 acres were in occupation and therefore likely to have been farming their own land. Three of these four larger freeholders were also tenants of the Bradgate Estate – Edward Bodewell, Edward Mugleston, and Robert Hall. So were six of the smaller freeholders owning between one quarter of an acre and 4 acres. Edward Bodewell tenanted 50 acres in addition to his own substantial freehold, and Edward Mugleston added 168 acres of tenanted land to his 22-acre freehold. Robert Hall was owner-occupier of one and a half yardlands and rented additional land from the Bradgate Estate in both Wilson and Tongue. Of the smaller owners mentioned above John Brooke, a four-acre freeholder, was a Bradgate-Estate tenant in Wilson as well as leasing around 52 acres in Breedon. Timothy Clarson, a half-acre freeholder, was a Bradgate tenant of around 47 acres. Another small owner-occupier, Robert Brooke, rented around 20 acres by a very complex set of leases in order to build up his holding. Under one lease he tenanted one third of two yardlands (the other two thirds being leased by Robert Clarson). In addition he was a joint tenant in three other leases. Robert Clarson also participated in other joint tenancies to bring his total holdings to around 36 acres. Altogether in Breedon there were eight joint tenancy agreements with the Bradgate Estate for comparatively small parcels of land of between eight and a half and 18 acres each. Joint tenants in each lease agreement numbered between two and five individuals, usually four. Each joint tenancy agreement therefore added little more than 2 acres to the areas of land that the individual participants farmed. Their participation in the arrangements, however, did demonstrate their eagerness to each farm a larger acreage in 1656 than their original lease agreement had

48 Ibid., ‘1656 rental’.
entitled them to do. It also provided the longest surviving tenant in each lease with the possibility of further increasing his holding as the other joint-tenants died.

Altogether the Bradgate Estate had 70 tenants in the townships of Breedon, Tongue, and Wilson in 1656. Of these 31 resided on the various common wastes, occupying an estimated total of eight acres of land overall. However, 22 of these were conveniently placed to common on Coleorton Moor, 12 residing on the Brand common and 10 at Griffydam. Of the remaining 39 tenants, eight occupied less than an acre, seven from one to five acres, and five between five and ten acres, and three from 10 to 20 acres. Sixteen tenants were farming more than 20 acres of the estate’s land. Of these, two were tenants of more than 100 acres. When owned freeholds were added, the number of farmers occupying more than 100 acres in 1656 was three.

For comparison purposes in the latter part of the eighteenth century, with the period after Parliamentary enclosure, the tenant figures above should be reduced by the ten tenants residing at Griffydam in 1656. This is because Griffydam was excluded from the Act for the enclosure of Breedon, Tongue, and Wilson, as was just over 100 acres of the Brand. Both areas were included in the Act for the enclosure of Worthington, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For purposes of comparison with later figures therefore the Bradgate Estate tenants for Breedon, Tongue and Wilson in 1656 should be seen as 60 overall, 21 of who lived on those townships’ wastes.

Unfortunately the enclosure award of 1762 revealed only incomplete information in respect of occupation – its main concern being the reallocation of ownership. It is also unfortunate that the first surviving land tax returns are for 1783. However, a comparison of these two documents suggests a total of around 34 farmers during those years and eight

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49 Ibid
50 Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE/41/1/196, ‘1762 enclosure award’.
51 Leics. CRO, 13D40/6, ‘Worthington and Newbold enclosure award, 1806’.
52 Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE/41/1/196, ‘1762 enclosure award’.
smallholders for the three townships. Included in the figure for the 34 farmers were six
owner-occupiers of at least a significant acreage of their total holdings. Some of the
smallholders also owned part of their holdings, but this was usually less than an acre.\(^{54}\) A
further 12 owner-occupiers owned taxable property of some kind.\(^{55}\) Altogether there were
76 tenancies, of which 40 pertained to the Bradgate Estate, including 17 agricultural
holdings.\(^{56}\)

The enumerators’ returns for the 1841 Census revealed 31 heads of household
responding as farmers compared with 29 occupiers at the 1831 Census.\(^ {57}\) Of the 1841
responses from farmers, 21 employed male and female servants. Among the farmers
enumerated 17 of them were tenanting Bradgate Estate farms the same year, and their
acreage was therefore ascertainable from the estate rentals of that time.\(^ {58}\) Of these tenants,
nine were occupying between 50 and 100 acres each, three between 100 and 250 acres, and
one 350 acres, dispersed across the three townships. Three others were occupying between
20 and 31 acres, and one no more than 10.5 acres. In addition a freeholder owning 192 acres
was farming a substantial part of her land, and possibly all of it.\(^ {59}\) Approximately half of this
latter 192 acres had been acquired from the tithe allotment for Tongue.\(^ {60}\) From their age and
small household size three of the responses to the enumerators in 1841 may have been from
former farmers (or from farmers running very small operations).\(^ {61}\) The remaining ten
‘farmers’ had significant personnel of appropriate age living in their households to provide
assistance on their farms.\(^ {62}\) Servants were to be found in five of these households.

In summary, therefore, small occupiers of from one to ten acres declined from 12 in

\(^{54}\) Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE/41/1/196, ‘1762 enclosure award’.
\(^{57}\) NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594, Census of Great Britain, 1841, ‘enumerators’ returns’.
\(^{58}\) Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE.311/50/8, Bradgate Estate tenant farms’.
\(^{59}\) Ibid.; Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE/41/1/196, ‘1762 enclosure award’.
\(^{60}\) Ibid.
\(^{61}\) NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/14,16,17, Census of Great Britain 1841,‘enumerators’ returns’; see also D.
\(^{62}\) NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/14,16,17, Census of Great Britain 1841,‘enumerators’ returns’.
1656 to eight in 1759-83 and rose to ten by 1841. Occupiers of between 10 and 20 acres fell in the period 1656 to 1759-83 from three to one, and the number was still one by 1841. A land re-allocation from the smaller farms was already implicit in the number of joint-tenancy arrangements prevailing in 1656, as was the rise in occupiers of between 20 and 100 acres, from 14 to 21 between 1656 and 1759-83. However, this latter group had fallen to around 13 by 1841. Larger occupiers of over 100 acres rose from three to four in the earlier period, and had risen again to five by 1841. Overall it appears that the farms became larger during the period, albeit smallholders of less than 10 acres appear to have been largely holding their ground. It was the smaller holdings over 10 acres that were decreasing in number. On the other hand, the larger farms had not only been created from the decline in numbers of these smaller holdings. Some farms had been made larger through the allotments in lieu of tithes, and from the enclosure of the waste, particularly that of the Brand common.

**Summary of township characteristics.**

By 1841 the townships of Breedon, Tongue and Wilson wore the stamp of agricultural communities, supported by a few service trades. Unlike on many other parts of Coleorton Moor, even cottages on the former Brand Common were populated overwhelmingly by agricultural labourers, and a few farmers. This was more marked even than in the village of Breedon itself. What was strange was that the population of agricultural labourers in the three townships rose from 88 in 1831 to 153 in 1841. Over the same period the 59 lime-quarry labourers, noted in 1831, disappeared from view. However, it is possible that working the lime quarries was a seasonal or part-time operation. Spreading agricultural lime would certainly have been seasonal. (Shipments for building purposes would have been

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63 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/14 Census of Great Britain 1841, 'enumerators' returns'.
64 Ibid. (But note also the situation in Worthington as stated below).
65 Ibid.
66 By-occupational farmers had operated the lime quarries during the last part of the seventeenth century, Leics. CRO, (DG20)DE1982/181, ‘1683 rental’.
less so.) Perhaps the lime-quarry workers sought work on farms most of the year. They therefore stated 'agricultural labourer' to be their main occupation.

Although Breedon, Tongue and Wilson presented a strong agricultural image by the early nineteenth century, it was by no means an estate village. The total number of freeholders increased by over 50 per cent during the period. The Bradgate Estate remained the largest freeholder but its share of the freehold land had fallen to around 67 per cent by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Even though several of the other freeholders were tenants of the estate, the freeholders as a whole were in a position to attenuate its dominant influence and pursue their own objectives to some extent. The agricultural character of the communities in 1841 was presumably therefore the collective policy of the majority of freeholders and the majority of tenant farmers, as well as the policy of the lord of the three manors, owning over two-thirds of the land.

Worthington and Newbold.

It has already been noted that Kussmaul found that the parish of Breedon displayed strong arable seasonality in the timing of its marriage ceremonies during the period of her study. The townships of Worthington and Newbold were parts of that parish. However, from 1759 the chapel at Worthington kept its own separate marriage register. Growing industrial influences in Worthington and Newbold were therefore excluded from the Breedon register after that date.

Worthington and Newbold townships included the northern sectors of Coleorton Moor, together with a little less than one-third of the Brand common. Newbold was effectively a moor township. However, some Newbold farmers did also farm in the open

67 Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE.311/50/8, 'Bradgate Estate tenant farms'.
69 Leics. CRO, DE2499, 6, Worthington Marriage Registers, 1759-1837.
70 Leics. CRO, DE2478/9 Breedon Parish Registers, 1700-1837, 'marriages'.
71 Leics. CRO, 13D40/6.
fields of Worthington. In the eighteenth century Worthington village itself was substantially an agricultural settlement, situated between open-field land of approximately 750 acres and Brand Common. Worthington's share of this common was approximately 103 acres. To its south lay the other parts of Coleorton Moor, which it shared with Newbold and Breedon townships. Coleorton Moor within the parish amounted to more than 400 acres, of which over 260 acres was open moor. A few manufacturing workers seem to have lived in the village of Worthington - mainly lace workers. A considerably greater number of manufacturing workers and other tradesmen lived in Newbold, and its surrounding area, and on the various commons of the moor to the south of Worthington. In addition to the availability of the moor there was another influence on the social and occupational character of Newbold and Worthington. Land ownership was substantially fragmented.

Land ownership in Newbold and Worthington.

In the eighteenth century Earl Ferrers, Worthington's lord of the manor, who owned virtually all the land in Staunton Harold, owned little more than 17 per cent of Worthington. Some substantial landowners from surrounding townships - the Beaumonts, the Bulstrodes, the Curzons, Joseph Boulbee, and Edward Dawson - also held significant freeholds of smaller size. Several lesser freeholders, many of who were resident, joined them. Together they made up a total of 30 freeholders before the enclosure of the two townships. Many of these latter freeholders were small, with more than half of them owning less than 10 acres.

After the enclosure award of 1806, the number of freeholders in the two townships rose to 50. All but one of this increase in numbers arose from enclosure of the common

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72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Leics. CRO, 13D40/6, '1806 enclosure award'.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
wastes – 11 additional freeholds arising from the Worthington section of the Brand, and eight from its section of Griffydam. (Like the Brand, Griffydam had long been divided between the lordships of Breedon and Worthington). Of the additional freeholds, seven were for less than one acre each, two between one and two acres, six between two and five acres, four between five and ten acres, and one of 15 acres. The remaining new freeholder was the impropriator of the Breedon tithes relating to the Brand, for just over nine acres. Five of the new small freeholds were taken into joint ownership – four being with John Curzon, a member of a local land owning family. The purpose of these joint awards is subject to conjecture, as three of them were from an acre and a half to just over one rood. However, one of 15 acres was to an occupying small farmer who had been awarded a little less than 10 acres elsewhere in the award. Two of the new freeholders were granted land on the Brand of around seven acres each. Another was awarded the same amount at Griffydam. These amounts were significantly larger than others received in exchange for common rights. It poses the question as to whether they had acquired additional common rights to increase the viability of their rented smallholdings. Sale and purchase of common right, separated from the original property to which it had pertained, was not unknown in Leicestershire.

The impropriators of Worthington and Newbold substantially increased their freeholds under the award to around 208 acres and 123 acres respectively – enough to create farms of a commercial size at that time. Generally an attempt was made under the award to realign many of the holdings, including about half of the old enclosed land. This was only partly successful. The Earl Ferrers estate arranged for its allotments, amounting to 249 acres, to be on the western side of the village, with significant acreage having a common boundary

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80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.; the Curzons also owned property in Breedon. See above.
82 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 8 August, 1761, advertised the sale by auction of 40 sheep commons in four lots, five cow commons in five lots, and half a horse common, to be held on 17 August at Syston.
with Staunton Harold.\textsuperscript{83} This success probably had the effect of preventing consolidation of some of the other allotments. After the award seven freeholders shared 1041 acres, or just over two-thirds of the total area. Three of these were over 200 acres, and two of 128 and 122 acres each. The other two were between 50 and 60 acres. Of the remaining awards, 36 were for less than 10 acres, with nine being less than one acre. Small freeholders therefore remained significant, or became so on the former commons. No single landowner became dominant in the townships, although Sir George Beaumont, who had substantial coalmine interests on several parts of the moor, became the owner of most of the land on the former Newbold Hurst and Gelsmore commons.\textsuperscript{84}

\textbf{Occupiers at Newbold and Worthington.}

In the eighteenth century a number of small owner-occupiers appear to have rented more land to make viable holdings, particularly around the village of Worthington, and on the northern side of Newbold. In the first quarter of the century Richard Wilkins, a yeoman of Newbold, appears to have been farming over a hundred acres, from the size of his inventory in 1725.\textsuperscript{85} (His 37 acres of crops, plus appropriate fallow, and land for 60 sheep, 12 horses, and ten beasts, would have taken his land-use requirements to over 100 acres at that time, even with common-right grazing on the moor.) Additionally, all the inventory evidence suggests that the designation ‘yeomen’ was only used in this part of Leicestershire for those farmers who owned at least some land in that period.\textsuperscript{86} In addition, some of the small freeholds awarded in 1806 were also to names which appeared as farmers in the 1841

\textsuperscript{83} Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p.732, citing the preamble to the Act of Enclosure, 1802, ‘the allotment to be made to earl Ferrers...to be set out and allotted in Smoyle-field and Breedon-field, or one of them, in such situation as the said earl Ferrers shall direct, so that the same be not laid out nearer to the township of Breedon on the Hill aforesaid, than the range of the estate of the said earl Ferrers in Staunton Harold.’

\textsuperscript{84} See the sections on Coleorton and Whitwick below for the other interests of Sir G.H. Beaumont; Leics. CRO, 13D40/6 for his awards in Newbold and Worthington.

\textsuperscript{85} Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1725, ‘Richard Wilkins’.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., for the first half of the eighteenth century, in this area, there were many designations of yeomen for small freeholders.
enumerators' returns - Haywood, Sharpe, Husbands, Farmer. William Haywood had been awarded seven acres at Griffydam in exchange for his common rights. John Husbands’ award in 1806 had been 27.5 acres around Worthington. In 1841 Jane Husbands was farming there with her son and two live-in servants – one male and one female. In 1806 John Farmer had been awarded three and a half acres on the Brand. In 1841 John Farmer was farming on part of the old Worthington fields with his wife, plus a male and female servant. Altogether, 22 farmers were enumerated in 1841 (down two from 1831). Of these farmers, 16 employed live-in servants, as opposed to the 14 who had employed agricultural labour in 1831. From the size and composition of their households, two of those enumerated as farmers on Gelsmore in 1841 had either ceased farming, or were still operating, but in a very small way. Of the five farmers enumerated in the Newbold area, all were employing live-in servants. Nine farmers out of the 11 enumerated in the area of Worthington village were also employing live-in servants. Agricultural labourers resident in the same area numbered 23 in 1841. Elsewhere in these townships, 14 lived on Griffydam, six on Gelsmore, and three at Newbold. Overall the 46 agricultural labourers enumerated in 1841 for the Newbold and Worthington townships showed a considerable decrease from the 101 count for 1831. However, one will recall that Breedon numbers rose between those two dates by a similarly large amount. Census numbers have their problems. And yet historical statistics usually provide better evidence than a total absence of them, in spite of an occasional error. Possibly part of the discrepancy arose from the Brand being enumerated in different townships in those two census-years. (The whole of it was often referred to as Breedon Brand, although one-third of it had been for the use of Worthington residents). If this was the case the farmer numbers were probably also affected. Therefore an increase of two in Breedon and a

87 Leics. CRO, 13D40/6, ‘1806 enclosure award’; also NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/18 Census of Great Britain 1841, ‘enumerators’ returns’.
88 Ibid.
89 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/14,16,17, ‘enumerators’ returns for Breedon, Tongue, and Wilson’.
90 Mills ‘Trouble with farms at the Census Office’, pp. 59-77
decrease of two in Worthington may in fact suggest a stable number of farmers overall for
those townships between the two census years.

Occupation of non-farm related housing on the settlements of Coleorton Moor
showed strong industrial representation in 1841. Newbold it will be recalled, had only
housed three agricultural labourers. On the other hand, it returned 41 coal miners, 13 other
labourers (probably quarry workers), 25 tradesmen and 41 manufacturing operatives.
Newbold was also a centre for pottery making with a group of seven potters. A few pot
sellers were to be found in several settlements over the moor. Altogether, the three
settlements of Newbold, Gelsmore and Griffydam returned 48 resident coal miners, 17 other
labourers, 82 manufacturing operatives, eight pottery makers, four pot sellers, and 51 other
trades-people. Among the 82 manufacturing operatives (90 if eight lace runners in
Worthington village are included) were four woolcombers and 31 framework knitters. The
remaining number comprised mostly lace workers, who were probably employed from
Castle Donington, only six miles from Worthington, and a centre for lace manufacture at that
time. A significant number of the residents, particularly the miners, lived on smallholdings
of one to two acres. A number of these lots contained more than one dwelling, often built
by the primary residents, and probably sub-let to other industrial workers.

Summarised characteristics of Newbold and Worthington.

During the eighteenth century these two townships nurtured a mixture of agricultural and

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91 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/18 Census of Great Britain 1841, 'enumerators' returns'.
92 Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 740. See also figures 1.4 and 1.6 in chapter 1
above. Relics of the evidence, particularly relating to Griffydam, Gelsmore, Outwoods and the Woolrooms can
be seen on Ordnance Survey: Pathfinder 874 (1994) in a 1.5 mile radius around reference 4410/3190.
93 There was evidence in Leics. CRO, (DG20)DE1982/181, Bradgate Estate Rentals: Breendon, Tongue and
Wilson, 1656, for early subletting on the Brand by Richard Fletcher and John Martin. Evidence for additional
houses being built in the first half of the eighteenth century on existing plots, appeared in Leics. CRO, Probate
Records, Wills and Inventories, 1723, 'Thomas Platts, Coleorton, labourer' also 'Richard Lawrence, Griffy
Dam, Breendon'; Ibid. 1724, 'William Pemberton' of Rotten Row Common, Thringstone – the will refers to his
own house, and another leased to a third party, the inventory to two little tenements on Coleorton Moor.
industrial occupations. While the area around the village of Worthington became primarily agricultural in character in the early part of the nineteenth century, its southern areas continued to nurture industrial activity. This was in spite of the enclosure of the townships’ commons on Coleorton Moor after 1806.

Although most of the land was owned by several gentry-families, the land-owning structure was fragmented. A policy to discourage settlement by manufacturers, or other ‘undesirables’ (such as appeared to be the situation in Staunton Harold) was therefore either not made, or not implemented. Indeed, the growth in trades and manufacturing occupations seems to have accelerated after enclosure. Reasons for this are not difficult to find. There were a number of small freeholds in the two townships. Leased smallholdings were considerably more numerous. Use of the commons had helped to keep many of those smallholdings viable before the final enclosure of the moor. After enclosure many smallholders had to obtain some of their subsistence from other sources. Greater participation in service trades and manufacturing was one alternative for them. Letting, or sub-letting part of their plots to others in service trades and manufacturing was yet another.

Coleorton.

This parish has long been synonymous with coal mining. In reality a generalised categorisation of the parish between 1650 and 1850 was far from easy to make. In many respects, Farm Town and Church Town, and even the management of the resources of the moor, often displayed many of the characteristics of tight estate management. In spite of these tendencies neither of the lordships of the parish could have been described as an ‘estate’ township. It has been suggested that settlement on the moor was meant to be for

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94 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 42, produced early evidence for 1593.
miners and supporting service trades. But on the moor especially, control of settlement was not always effective.

**Land ownership in Coleorton.**

In the seventeenth century the Beaumonts and the Sheldons respectively held the two manors. Both owners were also considerable freeholders in the parish. In 1739 the Sheldon estate sold Overton Saucey, and the estate’s freeholds to the Burslem family. By the end of the eighteenth century Butler-Danvers of Swithland appears to have acquired both manors. However, the Beaumonts and the Burslems continued to own most of the freeholds, including the right to exploit minerals on and under most of the moor. There were around seven other freeholders, most of whose holdings were very small, apart from two sisters resident in London. At some time the latter appear to have acquired the freehold to around half of the Overton Saucey section of the moor. Two at least of the small freeholders were also tenant farmers, one of them substantial.

**Occupiers in Coleorton.**

Although ownership was split between major free-holders, there were unlikely to be major differences in estate exploitation policy. The major freeholders were interested in exploiting the parish’s mineral potential as an estate management activity. Both the Beaumonts and the Burslems sometimes did this by lease and sometimes undertook the management of

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96 For example the additional dwelling of Thomas Platts reported in Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1723.
98 Ibid., p. 62.
99 Ibid., p. 117.
101 Ibid., p.740.
operations themselves. ¹⁰⁶ (The Beaumonts had mainly undertaken their own management in the seventeenth century – Burslem between 1739 and 1768.) Various members of the Wilkins family had leased the Overton Saucey mines (as well as farmland) between 1638 and 1725.¹⁰⁷ During the second half of the eighteenth century Joseph Boultrie (a former Beaumont Steward) obtained leases from all three major freeholders at various times.¹⁰⁸ When sales from the Coleorton mines suffered from Derbyshire competition, late in the eighteenth century, some of the Beaumont mines were leased to two by-occupational farmers.¹⁰⁹

Farming was also important in Coleorton, although concentrated in the western half of the parish before enclosure after 1799.¹¹⁰ The farms tended to be small to medium size – two medium size farmers leaving inventories in the mid-eighteenth century suggesting a minimum of eighty acres and probably a maximum of 150 acres.¹¹¹ In both 1831 and 1841 there were nine farmers in a parish of 1750 acres.¹¹² Of these farmers eight had employed labour in 1831.¹¹³ Eight employed live-in servants in 1841.¹¹⁴ In terms of location in 1841, six were based on Farm Town, employing 16 live-in servants between them, and surrounded by 21 agricultural labourers. The one farmer in the old park, who was based on the border with Lount and Newbold, employed three live-in servants and was surrounded by seven agricultural labourers. The two farmers located on the moor employed five servants between them – one only one. Agricultural labourers living on the moor numbered 17. Some of these may have worked for farms in Farm Town for at least part of the year.

Farm Town was almost exclusively agricultural. It did, however, house one coal

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, pp. 63, 117.
¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 740; Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 139.
¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p.163.
¹¹⁰ Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 740.
¹¹⁴ NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/21 Census of Great Britain 1841, ‘enumerators’ returns’.
carrier, and one coalminer in addition to the otherwise agricultural population. The largest number of residents in Church Town was concerned with the charity school and hospital, either as inmates or as staff.\textsuperscript{115} There was also one miner there. Most miners resided on the moor – nine in and around ‘Coleorton Moor’/Coaltown (several houses had been pulled down there in 1829). The other nine lived on the disparked part of the moor. Most tradespeople (41 in number) lived in ‘Coleorton Moor’, as did 16 manufacturing workers. Although there were only three framework knitters in this number, there were four woolcombers and one hosier. (The latter could put out work to the other townships’ sections of the moor). The remaining eight in manufacturing were lace workers, possibly working for ‘putters-out’ in Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

**Summarised characteristics of Coleorton.**

The coal mining industry of the parish went through many up and down periods during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{116} The industry was in a prolonged decline during the first half of the nineteenth century, albeit not a terminal one.\textsuperscript{117} The major landowners tried to exploit the resources of the parish to their greatest advantage, as part of their estate-management operations. They were not always successful. Setbacks were probably the result of financial pressures from time to time. These setbacks also weakened landowner capacity to exercise social control within the community. Miners from Coleorton played an active part in the Charnwood Forest ‘rabbit-warren’ riots of 1749.\textsuperscript{118}

The cottages and small lots on the moor, which had originally been allowed for coal miners, and probably encouraged, seem to have been occupied, in part, by various crafts and trades people during periods of setbacks for mining. Three woolcomber-hosiers and three master hatters had a sufficiently high profile at the beginning of the nineteenth century to be

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, pp. 42-200, includes many examples of this.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., pp. 198-200.
\textsuperscript{118} Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 2,1, p. 131.
remarked on by Nichols. However, there seems to have been a tightening up of estate management following enclosure. This was particularly marked during the latter stages of the early nineteenth-century decline of mining in the parish. It was subsequently evidenced by the deliberate destruction of a number of houses on the moor in 1829. This appears to have resulted from a survey for the Beaumont Estate in 1827, noting a chaotic pattern of cottages, smallholdings and rights of way. Investment of £1,000 was recommended for construction of a compact block of houses for the miners, and demolition of many of the scattered cottages. Farm Town, on the other hand, appears generally to have been maintained as a small but strictly agricultural settlement – hence its name.

Swannington.

Recorded coal extraction at Swannington stretched back to at least 1293. In that year a freeholder successfully won a suit against the lord of the manor that confirmed freeholders’ rights to extract coal from the waste proportionately to their holding size. Along with Coleorton, Newbold, and Staunton Harold, the township was an active producer of coal during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. After its foundation in the sixteenth century Wyggeston Hospital owned the manor, and also around 50 per cent of the freehold land. However, Swannington freeholders seem always to have been adept in preserving their rights, as can be seen from a survey of minerals in 1838. Swannington Common was extensive. In addition, the 1450-acre township had a significant farming sector – the farms tending to be small to medium size until towards the end of the eighteenth century. Unlike Farm Town, in Coleorton, Swannington village tended to house a mixture of occupations –

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119 Ibid., 3, 2, p. 740.
120 Census of Great Britain: Enumeration Abstract, 1831, 1, p. 317, footnote w.
121 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p.163.
122 Ibid., p. 163.
124 Ibid., p. 79.
125 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 22.
farming, mining, manufacturing, crafts and trades. In spite of one fairly large landowner, it did not become an estate village during the early modern period.

Land ownership in Swannington.

There were 22 freeholders in the township in 1755 before its enclosure by Act of Parliament.127 This number included Wyggeston Hospital – by far the largest. There were still 22 freeholders in 1838.128 William Fenton was shown to be the second largest freeholder in that year, and a substantial one with over 300 acres. All the other freeholders were comparatively small - the next largest being around 31 acres. Of the remainder, four owned between five and ten acres, six between three and five acres, seven between one and three acres, and four under one acre each. Numbers of freeholders and their acreage could vary. Freehold land was bought and sold from time to time.129 This could be particularly the case just after parliamentary enclosure. For example, in March 1762 a seven-acre close at Cross Lane was advertised for sale in the Leicester and Nottingham Journal.130 But overall, during the years 1755-1838, the number of freeholders in Swannington appears to have been remarkably stable.

Occupiers at Swannington.

It appears to have been the policy of Wyggeston Hospital to lease the whole manor, its freehold land included, whenever it could find a head-tenant able to take on the exploitation of the coal. In 1699 the manor was leased to John Wilkins who retained it until he died.131 Gabriel Holland leased it in the middle of the eighteenth century.132 He invested in an up-to-date operation without an economic means of distributing his production, and went bankrupt

127 Leics. CRO, EN/MA/315/2, being a pre-Parliamentary enclosure map of Swannington, 1755.
128 Leics. CRO, 3D42/M28/4/2, ‘1838 survey of owners and minerals’.
129 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 6 March, 1762, in respect of the Cross Lane Close, and also Ibid., 3 July 1762 for another piece of land in Swannington, to be sold with land in Whitwick.
130 Ibid., 6 March, 1762.
132 Ibid., pp. 136-8.
in the early 1760s. The next lessee was a partnership led by Raper and Fenton from Yorkshire. They took a lease of the manor in 1777 for 60 years. They closed their mining operations towards the end of the 1790s. They continued to own land in the area, and seem to have retained their head lease of the manor for its full term. Swannington coal mining remained low-key from around 1800 until the opening of the Swannington-Leicester railway in 1833.

A number of freeholders also appear to have been tenant farmers in the township. Of the freeholders listed in 1755, Nichols cited four names appearing as tenants in 1726.

Four 1755 freeholder-surnames also appear in the Poll Book Extract, 1830 as Swannington farmers. The names of four of the farmers enumerated in 1841 appeared as freeholders in earlier records – either in the 1838 survey, or the 1831 poll book extract. The largest of these farmers’ freeholds was that of Thomas Grundy – 12 acres. He employed one male servant over 20 years old and two female servants in 1841. Smaller freeholds belonging to these otherwise-tenant farmers, were often three acres or less. Two were less than an acre.

In 1831, the enumeration abstract reported nine farmers, all employing labour. In 1841, 20 heads of household reported their occupation to be ‘farmer’. Of these, nine seem to have employed live-in servants. How many of the others were on-going small farmers, and how many were no longer farming is difficult to determine. Two had appeared in the

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133 Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 1125; also Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 3 January 1761, advertising the bankruptcy sale, which was postponed.
135 Ibid., p. 162.
136 Leics. CRO, 3D42/M28/4/2, ‘1838 survey of owners and minerals’.
137 Baker, Coalville: the First Seventy-five Years, pp. 11-18, 31-6.
138 Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 1125.
139 Leics. CRO, Leicestershire Poll Book Extract, 1830.
141 Ibid.
142 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, ‘enumerators’ returns’.
143 Leics. CRO, 3D42/M28/4/2.
145 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596-7, Census of Great Britain 1841, ‘enumerators’ returns’.
1830 poll book extract as farmers, and therefore may have retired by 1841. Of the farmers employing servants, four lived in the village and five on various parts of the former common. In the village itself 34 agricultural labourers were enumerated. Another 17 lived mostly on the north side of the former common.

Unlike the situation in Farm Town, Coleorton, 44 coal miners, out of a township total of 51, lived in the village. So also did 28 crafts and trades people, and 12 manufacturing workers – two framework knitters and nine lace runners, plus a lace agent. Some of the trades represented were, however, relevant to mining operations – e.g. brick makers and bricklayers. Generally, the Swannington-common section of the township was not densely populated. Most of the other households lived close to its northern borders – six labourers, seven coal miners, eight framework knitters, three lace runners, and 22 crafts and trades people of various descriptions.

Summarised characteristics of Swannington.

Although it had one proportionately large landowner, Swannington by no means displayed the characteristics of an estate village. Although the lessees of the manor may sometimes have been resident, and often working in the township, the smaller freeholders had had a longstanding tradition of upholding their rights. Other factors were probably the long-term existence of its common until the 1760s, the nature and remoteness of its largest freeholder – a charitable organisation in Leicester – and the latter’s tendency to lease the manor to larger mine operators. As with Coleorton, eighteenth century setbacks in the mining industry, also probably lightened manorial control.

Several tenant-farm holdings had almost certainly become larger after enclosure of the common. But from the arithmetic of the township area and the distribution of employees

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146 Leics. CRO, Leicestershire Poll Book Extract, 1830.
147 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, ‘enumerators’ returns’.
148 Ibid.
around the farms, it is unlikely that any of them had become really large by the first part of
the nineteenth century. The Burton, Wainwright and Weston farms were probably the largest
by 1841. They certainly were in terms of servants in husbandry in their households. But
then really large farmers tended not to have live-in servants in husbandry.\(^{149}\) Nor probably,
would they have been tolerant of the mix of occupations to be found in this township.

**Thringstone and Pegg’s Green.**

These were the last of the villages surrounding Coleorton Moor, which are the subject of this
examination. Pegg’s Green was situated on part of the moor. Thringstone village was close
to the moor and its township included part of it. Thringstone also bordered Charnwood
Forest to which it had easy access for exercising common rights there.\(^{150}\)

Together Thringstone and Pegg’s Green occupied an area of 1510 acres.\(^{151}\) Common
wastes on their section of Coleorton Moor covered nearly 182 acres – Pegg’s Green 39 1/4
acres, Rotten Row common 46 1/2 acres, Thringstone Common 62 acres, and Thringstone
Green 34 acres.\(^{152}\) Overall, occupational manifestations at Thringstone and Pegg’s Green
reflected those of Worthington and Newbold – a mix of mining, manufacturing, and various
crafts and trades.\(^{153}\) In both cases there were more crafts and trades people on the moor
itself. But there was a significant difference. Manufacturing in Worthington village was
represented by only eight lace workers – framework knitters were to be found on the
moor.\(^{154}\) In Thringstone there was a concentration of framework knitters in the village itself,
as well as those to be found on the moor.\(^{155}\) In addition, land ownership in the townships was

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\(^{150}\) Nichols, *History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, 2, 1, p. 131.
\(^{152}\) Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, Whitwick enclosure award, 1807, which included Pegg’s Green and the wastes of
Thringstone.
\(^{153}\) NRO/PRO.830.HO.107/596, *Census of Great Britain 1841*, ‘enumerators’ returns for Thringstone’;
NRO/PRO.830.HO.107/594, *Census of Great Britain 1841*, ‘enumerators’ returns for Newbold and
Worthington’.
\(^{154}\) Ibid.
\(^{155}\) NRO/PRO.830.HO.107/596 *Census of Great Britain 1841*, ‘enumerators’ returns for Thringstone’.
very fragmented.\footnote{Leics. CRO, QS62/332, land tax assessments for Thringstone.} This situation was therefore suggestive initially of a substantially ‘peasant system’ operating in these townships. Initially this appeared to have been more marked than in Worthington.

**Land ownership in Thringstone and Pegg’s Green.**

Records were not found to provide a complete breakdown of land ownership in these townships. Land-tax records do not provide enough comprehensive evidence for the purpose, except as support for other evidence. Only 322 acres of open field existed to be covered by the enclosure Act of 1758.\footnote{Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, ‘1807 enclosure award for Worthington open fields and Thringstone commons’.} The Award for the 182 acres of the moor was subsequently made in 1807, as an adjunct to the Act for Whitwick township’s open fields and nearby commons.\footnote{Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, ‘1807 enclosure award’.} Consequently, by deduction, there were probably around 1,000 acres of ancient enclosure in Thringstone, only reflected in land-tax records.\footnote{Leics. CRO, QS62/332, ‘1807 land tax’.}

However, there were 17 participants in the 1758 award of the open fields.\footnote{Leics. CRO, DE41/1/112/1-3, Thringstone Enclosure Act, 1758, and award the same year.} The largest was John Piddocks, awarded 91a 3r 10p (28 per cent of the total). Of the remainder one award was for nearly 57 acres, three between 20 and 50 acres, four from 10 to 20 acres, four from one to ten acres, and five of less than one acre. The lord of the manor received 33 acres – just over 10 per cent of the award total. When the moor commons were enclosed in 1806 there were 40 participants.\footnote{Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, ‘1807 enclosure award’.} Only two of these received more than six acres – 90½ to Joseph Boulthbee who owned the liberty of Pegg’s Green, and the main coalmines there, and 42 acres to the Beaumont estate, partly in lieu of tithes.\footnote{Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 162, regarding the Boulthbee purchase of Pegg’s Green Liberty; Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, ‘1807 enclosure award’.} There were seven individuals awarded between two and six acres, 11 between one and two acres, and 20 below an acre.\footnote{Ibid.}
The 1807 land-tax return recorded 59 owners in total.\textsuperscript{164} The highest assessment was for the land of John Piddocks (see above) let in three holdings. Only six of the 40 participants in the 1807 award were not mentioned in the land-tax return. Of these six, four had been awarded less than one rood each, and were probably exempt from the land-tax assessment.

\textbf{Occupiers in Thringstone and Pegg's Green.}

Unfortunately the best evidence for overall occupation of land at Thringstone and Pegg's Green was provided by the land-tax returns, and the enumerator's returns for the 1841 Census.\textsuperscript{165} These were comparatively late on in the period. Limited evidence is perhaps sometimes inevitable in townships with highly fragmented land ownership.

The land-tax return of 1807 suggests around eight occupying farmers of commercial size, nine smaller ones, and up to 17 smallholders. One suggested farmer of an indicated commercial size was at Pegg's Green. The 1831 census enumeration abstract reported seven occupiers employing labour and five not doing so.\textsuperscript{166} The 1841 enumerator's returns reported six farmers employing servants, and seven not doing so.\textsuperscript{167} The latter included a grazier based on the former Rotten Row common. The 1841 returns confirmed the one farmer of commercial size at Pegg's Green, who was employing one male and one female servant. Of the other five farmers employing servants, two farmed near Stordon Grange, and three were based in Thringstone village. Two of the other farmers not employing labour were based on the former Rotten Row common and in Pegg's Green respectively. The others were located in Thringstone village. Overall the farmers had available to work for them, in addition to their servants, a total of 44 agricultural labourers – 29 in Thringstone village, eight at Pegg's Green, five on Thringstone Common, and two on Rotten Row. Of the farmers not

\textsuperscript{164} Leics. CRO, QS62/332, '1807 land tax'.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.; NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, 'enumerators' returns'.
\textsuperscript{166} Census of Great Britain: Enumeration Abstract, 1831, 1, pp. 316-7.
\textsuperscript{167} NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, 'enumerators' returns'.
employing servants in 1841, three were listed as farmers in the 1830 poll book extract.\textsuperscript{168} So also was the farmer employing one female servant.

The existence of multiple cottages, with sub-tenants, on some of the smallholdings of Coleorton Moor has been noted previously for other townships. In 1807 the Thringstone land-tax assessment provided 17 instances of this – nine on Thringstone Common, four at Pegg’s Green, and two each on Rotten Row and Thringstone Green respectively.\textsuperscript{169}

In 1841 framework knitter was the largest occupation in Thringstone village, with 152 people so employed, out of 167 in the whole township.\textsuperscript{170} Otherwise manufacturing in Thringstone employed only two lace workers and two woolcombers. On the former commons there were 11 framework knitters at Pegg’s Green, and four plus a hosier on Rotten Row. A major difference between the framework knitting households in Thringstone village, and on the commons, was that overall co-resident wage earners among framework knitter households enumerated on the commons averaged 1.5 per household. In Thringstone village most members of many framework-knitter households were enumerated as having that occupation, including children. This situation gave rise to a figure of 3.2 co-resident wage earners for framework-knitter households in Thringstone village itself. This caused the overall framework-knitter figure for the township to rise to 2.8 per household. These high numbers may have been a personal bias on the part of the enumerator in the village. On the other hand, they may have been an indication of a difference in occupational culture between moor and village residents. This possibly suggested that the households on the former wastes were somewhat more inclined to be non-specialised in their approach to making a living than their counterparts in the centre of the larger industrial village. Although probably helping the head of the household as the situation required, different members of the households on

\textsuperscript{168} Leics. CRO, Leicestershire Poll Book Extract, 1830.
\textsuperscript{169} Leics. CRO, QS62/332, ‘1807 land tax’.
\textsuperscript{170} NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, ‘enumerators’ returns’.
the commons also performed different work. The framework-knitter households of Thringstone village were perhaps more set in the mould of a single occupational culture.\textsuperscript{171}

Lace workers were in fact the most numerous category of manufacturing worker on this township's moor – ten at Pegg's Green, eight on Rotten Row, and five on Thringstone Green.\textsuperscript{172} There were also eight hatters in Pegg's Green and one on Rotten Row. However, the 48 manufacturing workers on these former commons were surpassed in number by 68 divers crafts and trades people. (There were 40 other crafts and trades people in Thringstone village.) On the moor Pegg's Green had the most crafts and trades people at 38, followed by Rotten Row with 22. Some of these occupations serviced mine operations – brick maker, bricklayer, engine man. But most of them probably serviced the communities at large in the surrounding villages. Some such as the travellers, hawkers, peddlers and pot sellers probably covered a wider area. Given the mining operations on the moor, miners were significant in number at 53 – 29 at Pegg's Green, 14 on Rotten Row and four on Thringstone Common. Only six miners lived in Thringstone village.

**Summarised characteristics of Thringstone and Pegg's Green.**

Land ownership in Thringstone and Pegg's Green appears to have been fragmented. The moor commons displayed very similar characteristics to those previously found above for Worthington and Newbold. But the villages of Worthington and Thringstone were very different in character. While Worthington village itself was strongly agricultural in character, Thringstone was more mixed, with a significant number of framework-knitter households. To this extent it seems to have been a more 'open' village. But these framework-knitter households in Thringstone were not necessarily representative of a 'peasant system'. Such a system was probably a more appropriate description for the commons communities of the

\textsuperscript{171} Co-resident wage-earner numbers were also high in Shepshed and Anstey. See D. Levine, *Family Formation in an Age of Nascent Capitalism* (New York, 1977), pp. 27, 57, 79; NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, 'enumerators' returns'.

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
moor. Thringstone itself was probably becoming more proletarian in character, with a marked occupational culture developing in framework knitter households.\(^{173}\) So also probably was Pegg’s Green as its mining operations developed. Pegg’s Green nevertheless continued to be the home for a variety of crafts and trades people, as did the other various parts of Coleorton Moor.

**Whitwick township.**

As noted above, this township did not border Coleorton Moor. Instead it bordered Charnwood Forest where its residents enjoyed right of common. There its Swannimote supervised the rights of common in the forest of several other townships, including all those of the three parishes around Coleorton Moor.\(^{174}\) One difference between the manner in which Whitwick residents exploited the forest, and the way in which those of other townships exploited Coleorton Moor was in the spread of settlement on those different wastes. In Whitwick settlement on the wastes tended to remain close to the village.

As mentioned previously, Dennis Mills used developments at Whitwick as one example when illustrating the origins of village differentiation between the estate and peasant systems.\(^{175}\) However, by 1841 Whitwick had become considerably industrialised. There were also limits to the ‘liberty of mind', which Mills attributed to villagers living in ‘peasant-system’ villagers.\(^{176}\) In 1745 the framework knitter, John Hucknall, recounted how he had lost his allotment ‘for voting against the church-rate’.\(^{177}\)

In spite of his notional authority for administering the Swannimote governing a large part of Charnwood Forest, Whitwick’s lord of the manor had only an insubstantial interest

\(^{172}\) Since the term ‘peasant system’ implied significant production for domestic consumption, it also implied some productive assets, even if these only arose from rights of commoning. The term ‘proletarian’, on the other hand, implied people whose only productive asset was their labour. For the manifestation of co-resident wage earners as a symptom of proletarianization see Levine, *Family Formation*, especially pp. 27, 57-9.

\(^{173}\) Nichols, *History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, 2, 1, pp. 130-1.


and authority in the township. Also in practice, a hereditary warden in adjoining Markfield administered the Swannimote. And from the Whitwick enclosure award of 1807 the lord of the manor received no allotment from the open fields, and only a few cottages and 3s 0r 21p for a 'coney-warren' and his rights in the wastes enclosed, which were close to the village. Land ownership in Whitwick appears to have been fragmented. But in the enclosure award of 1807 two landowners saw their lands increased in exchange for the tithes.

Land ownership in Whitwick.

Whitwick had a mixture of freeholders and copyholders. In Breedon during the seventeenth century, the Bradgate Estate had steadily converted copyholds into leaseholds. In Whitwick by contrast, the demesne was reported to have been split up among the villagers by 1609, and the rights of copyholders steadily became stronger.

Before Parliamentary enclosure in 1806, acreages owned in Whitwick appear to have been of small to medium size. One of the larger farms, Bleay’s Farm of 85 acres (60 in the open fields) was offered for sale in 1763. Just before enclosure the largest two open-field acreages owned were around sixty acres and fifty acres respectively. After the enclosure award the size of these two holdings became 53 and 45 acres respectively, as a result of the tithe commutation. At the same time the awards in exchange for tithes, in the township as a whole, created one owner with 158 acres and another with 67 acres. These two increases arose partly from enclosure of waste, where there were 20 participants, and partly from tithe

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178 Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 2, 1, p. 130.
179 Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, ‘Whitwick enclosure award, 1807’.
180 Ibid.
181 Mills, Lord and Peasant, pp. 107-8, citing an Inquisition post mortem of 1349. See also ‘Exchequer dispositions by commission, Leicester, no. 4’ of 1604, taking evidence from a former Whitwick copyholder, in G.F. Farnham, Charnwood Forest and its Historians and the Charnwood Manors (Leicester, 1930), p. 140.
183 Mills, Lord and Peasant, pp. 107-8.
184 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 26th March 1763.
185 Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, ‘1807 enclosure award’.
186 Ibid.
commutation. Eighteen of the latter had not participated in the award for the open fields. Apart from the four allotments mentioned above, all of the open-field awards were small – four between 10 and 20 acres, five between five and ten acres, 11 from one to five acres, and two of less than an acre. Apart from the beneficiaries of the former tithes, the awards on the wastes also tended to be very small. The land tax assessment for 1807 reported 91 owners altogether – 41 of these having been included in the enclosure award for open-field or waste allotments.  

By the 1832 assessment the number of owners had increased to 124. Seven of these assessments were in respect of a number of houses in each of these ownerships, without accompanying land. Of the others, 108 assessments were either for land alone (39), or for land with a house. But by then, Charnwood Forest had been enclosed, and the size of Whitwick township had increased to 3260 acres.

**Occupiers in Whitwick Township.**

By the early seventeenth century at least 328 acres of Charnwood Forest had been enclosed and incorporated as ‘intakes’ into Whitwick township. These enclosures were on the south eastern and eastern sides of the township. They can be seen as the ‘Whitwick Enclosures’ on the Samuel Wild map of Charnwood Forest in 1754 (see figure 1.2 in Chapter I above). In outline these early enclosures, as depicted on the 1754 map, had the same morphology as those of the ancient enclosures, on the enclosure award map of 1806, in the south-east, and eastern parts of the township (see below). In the early seventeenth century they were in the occupation of 12 copyholders, mostly with between 15 and 34 acres each.

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188 Leics. CRO, QS62/333, land tax assessments for Whitwick, 1832.
Much of the probate inventory evidence from Whitwick-land occupiers in the first half of the eighteenth century was in respect of small farmers, or smallholders. Some of these were freeholders (yeomen). Others had by-occupations. Their inventories usually comprised a crop, one or two cows, up to 10 sheep, and perhaps a pig.

The open-field-enclosure award of 1806 featured 11 owner-occupiers. Most of the remaining 15 awards, mostly small, were let to 14 occupiers. Two of these were also among the owner-occupiers. Even the vicar's land, which had been increased by the award, was let to two tenants. Only the Beaumont land was let mainly to a single tenant on a farm of over 150 acres. (This was still smaller than the largest farms in the Breedon, Tongue and Wilson townships.) The land tax assessment of 1807 listed 42 owner-occupiers (the difference with the previous figures mainly reflecting awards on the wastes). Following the Charnwood Forest enclosure award the 1830 poll book extract listed 45 freeholders who had applied and qualified to register. Of this number 15 were farmers. The 1832 land-tax assessment listed 49 owner-occupiers. Occupiers employing labour numbered 19 in the 1831 census. Those not employing labour numbered 25. At least another 10 farm tenancies were implied by the amounts on bare land assessed in the 1832 land-tax assessment. A number of owner-occupiers, therefore, presumably did not consider farming to be their main occupation.

It also seems that farms in Whitwick became larger after the Charnwood Forest-enclosure award in 1829. Until then they seem to have remained on the small size. But by 1841 the number of farmers had been reduced to 30. Of this number 18 employed

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194 Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, ‘1807 enclosure award’.
196 Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, ‘1807 enclosure award’.
197 Leics. CRO, QS62/333, ‘1832 land tax’.
198 Leics. CRO, QS62/333, ‘1832 land tax’.
200 Leics. CRO, QS62/333, ‘1832 land tax’.
201 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, ‘enumerators’ returns, Whitwick township’.
servants, and 12, including two graziers, did not do so. The reduction in the number of farmers most probably caused a further increase in farm size. By this time also 11 of these farmers (seven employing servants) had become resident in the old forest area, and Glebe Farm had been re-sited onto old open-field land, where it can still be found.\textsuperscript{202} Only eight farmers remained in the old village centre.\textsuperscript{203} Agricultural labourers’ cottages were scattered around the township for their occupants to be available as required. Only 16, out of a total of 83 agricultural labourers, remained in the old village centre. It is therefore probable that former agricultural labourer’s cottages had been made available for other workers.

The reduction in the number of farmers after the enclosure of Charnwood Forest probably had several causes. The first of these probabilities was that easy access to the forest for Whitwick’s small farms and smallholdings had helped to keep them viable until the commons were enclosed. When easy access to the former commons of the forest was denied by enclosure, the viability of these smallholdings was likely to have been reduced in a number of cases. Some of the land close to the village was used to build housing for the expanding workforce. Additional housing on Whitwick Moor, and then on Tuney Lane Moor certainly seems to have been built after the enclosure of those moors.\textsuperscript{204} In cases where building was not to be in demand for the foreseeable future, land was probably also added to existing farms. In any case, some building on land close to the village would probably have occurred even if the smaller agricultural farm holdings had not lost their viability. In addition, the new coal mine required housing for its workers after 1828.\textsuperscript{205} Much of the land for this was from Whitwick Waste, which had been enclosed long before.

Before the enclosure of Charnwood Forest, its wastes close to the village were the ones mainly occupied.\textsuperscript{206} There were very few residents on the wider expanses of the

\textsuperscript{203} NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841,’enumerators’ returns’.
\textsuperscript{204} Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, as read with NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841,’enumerators’ returns’.
\textsuperscript{205} Baker, Coalville: the First Seventy-five Years, pp. 41-52.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid., pp. 41-52.
Housing did not spread much to the forest until after its enclosure, and then only for farm workers, and a few tradesmen. On Coleorton Moor, as will have been noted above, settlement had been scattered widely across the various commons. In this respect Whitwick’s settlement of its wastes had been different to that of the villages around Coleorton Moor. The higher altitudes of Charnwood Forest, compared to those of Coleorton Moor, had probably provided too hostile an environment for widespread occupation there before enclosure. In addition, there had been some control arising from the management of the Swannimotes.

By 1841 the embryo town of Coalville, towards the western end of Long Lane, housed 46 miners, and 26 tradesmen. There were no framework knitters there at that time. Another 56 miners lived in the centre of Whitwick village. The remaining nine miners were widely scattered. Of the 131 framework knitters in the township, 117 were to be found in the main part of the village. Co-resident wage earners in their households averaged 1.3, similar to the rate for the miners. There were 11 other manufacturing workers, mainly in lacework, and 170 crafts and trades people, covering a range of such occupations. Overall, households had a co-resident wage-earner average of 1.5.

**Summarised characteristics of Whitwick township.**

Until 1830 there were several conditions in Whitwick, which supported Mills depiction of it as a ‘peasant-system’ township. Land ownership was fragmented. Farms were of small to medium size in the overall context of the three parishes around Coleorton Moor. Smallholder and by-occupational activities were underpinned by easy access to over 2,000 acres of Charnwood Forest wastes, although not to Coleorton Moor. It supported a

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207 Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 2, 1, pp. 130-2.
208 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, 'enumerators' returns'.
209 Ibid.
210 Ibid.
211 Mills, Lord and Peasant, pp. 99-113; see also G. Bourne [Sturt], Change in the Village (1912, 1956 edn) pp. 13-24, 76-84.
substantial mix of crafts and trades, and of agricultural and manufacturing workers. If co-resident wage earners in households were a feature of growing proletarianization in the workforce, this was still not a particularly marked feature in this township by 1841. The average for co-resident wage earners per household in Whitwick was less than that on several parts of Coleorton Moor, and significantly less than that to be found among framework knitters in Thringstone or Shepshed. But after 1830 conditions had begun to change fairly rapidly. Many villagers lost easy access to the former wastes of Charnwood Forest after it was enclosed. Farmers had become significantly fewer by 1841. A number of the former owners of land had become landlords owning worker housing. In addition modern deep coal mining became a substantial employer around the southwest border of the township, supported by the steam railway connection from Swannington to Leicester. By 1831 Whitwick had become the largest of the townships in the three parishes in both acres and inhabitants. By 1841 in terms of total population it was almost double that of the next most populated township in those parishes.

Conclusion.

Until their enclosure, the commons of Coleorton Moor interacted economically with the townships surrounding them. Residents of those townships were only partially dependent on the moor, and to a very variable extent. At the same time it did provide the villages with some important resources, together with several trades and services, and a self-reliant flexible labour reserve. It also supplied smallholders with grazing. (After enclosure of the

212 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, "enumerators' returns".
213 Ibid.; Levine, Family Formation, pp. 27, 57, 79.
214 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, "enumerators' returns".
215 Leics. CRO, QS62/333, '1832 land tax'.
216 Baker, Coalville: the First Seventy-five Years, pp. 31-8.
218 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, "enumerators' returns".
219 A very full description of commons' resources was presented in Neeson, Commoners, pp. 158-84.
open fields, this was probably not of great attraction to farmers with larger commercial herds, except as emergency grazing in times of crop stress.)

Some farms did become larger over the period. But the trend was both long term and uneven. In Breedon, Wilson and Tongue the trend appears to have started early, but its progress was slow. Farms of more than 100 acres had increased there by no more than one by the second half of the eighteenth century. An additional one had come into being by 1841. Farms between 10 and 20 acres mostly disappeared. At Whitwick small farms and smallholdings appear to have survived effectively until 1830. The number of farmers then reduced rapidly between 1830 and 1841 accompanied by an increase in the size of some of those farms remaining. But the absorption of smaller holdings was not the only factor in increasing farm size. Land exchange for tithes was one more factor. So also was the additional land made available from enclosure of the former common wastes. On the other hand, enclosure of the commons undermined the self-reliance and viability of many smaller holdings and cottagers. This sometimes resulted in their occupants leaving the land. Where demand existed near existing settlements, it sometimes resulted in sub-division of holdings for further cottages. This latter strategy had its antecedents on the commons back into the seventeenth century.

In the opening paragraphs of this chapter questions were asked concerning the original settlers of the moor itself. From the evidence that followed it seems likely that the original cottages were permitted to enable miners to house themselves. The small crofts attached to those cottages helped to provide the miners with subsistence during times of low mining activity. Together the cottages and crofts provided mining operations with a low-cost and flexible labour supply. 'Squatter' settlement was also allowed occasionally on payment

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220 See Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 2, 1, p. 132, quoting Bakewell, the livestock improver of Dishley Grange.
221 Ibid., 3, 2, p. 740.
of fines. This was to some extent evident at Griffydam and on the Brand in the seventeenth century. Some of the crofts, especially if subject to leases, had additional cottages built on them, which were sublet.

The dichotomy of the 'estate' and 'peasant' systems could be found among the townships of the parishes surrounding Coleorton Moor in the eighteenth century. However, not every township could be easily categorised as following either one or the other system. Most of them in fact were somewhere in between those two extremes, and for them the term had only a comparative value. Differences between Staunton Harold and Whitwick were the most marked. Estate policies at Breedon, Coleorton, Tongue and Wilson seem to have had varying degrees of similarity with Staunton Harold. Thringstone had its similarities with Whitwick. Swannington and Worthington were somewhere in between, but also different from each other. To a great extent the variety of trades, manufacturing and other occupations found in the areas of Coleorton Moor and Charnwood Forest demonstrated that 'independence', which Mills associated with the commons. So did evidence of dissent there. Land-ownership fragmentation appears to have delayed enclosure at Whitwick and Worthington, but not at Thringstone.

In the majority of the townships the influence of landlords, and that of 'independent' freeholders, self-reliant smallholders and commoners interacted, and co-existed for a time. Superimposed also on the scene were the objectives of medium and larger commercial farmers and a number of commercial mine operators. Interaction between these groups probably modified the realisable objectives of any particular interest. Where it had been strongest, characteristics of the 'peasant system' were still perceivable in the 1840s. But

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222 Broad, 'Housing the rural poor in southern England', p. 155; also Leics. CRO, (DG20)DE1982/181, '1656 rental'.
223 Ibid., regarding the holdings of Messrs. Fletcher and Martin respectively.
224 Ibid; also Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1724, 'William Pemberton' of Rotten Row Common, Thringstone.
226 Ibid., p. 103; Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 740, 'In the middle of the Moor, and adjoining the turnpike-road, is a place of worship, inscribed, 'Sion chapel, 1795'.'
conditions were changing rapidly by that time. The underpinnings of a considerable degree of self-reliance had been undermined by the enclosure of Coleorton Moor and Charnwood Forest. The workforce of these parishes had become more wage-dependent.
Chapter 4

Unspecialised Production: Agriculture, and Alternative Rural Occupations

Introduction

This chapter will be mainly concerned with unspecialised production as a possible basis for rural industrial development. The title of this chapter is deliberately bland. More evocative titles such as ‘the peasant system’ or ‘the cottage economy’ might result in a too restrictive description of the variety of applications and circumstances to which unspecialised rural industry was relevant. Mills applied the concept of ‘the peasant system’ to the evolution of industrial villages.1 However, Sturt, the originator of the concept, had been mainly concerned to describe the cultural background of a predominately labouring population on a heath in Surrey, before and after its enclosure.2 Cobbett’s Cottage Economy may have been inspired by the self-reliant activities of Horton-Heath cottage commoners, but its purpose was to provide a guide to improve the lot of wage-dependant farm labourers.3 This was to be achieved by a degree of self-reliance on what would often be no more than a ¼ acre cottage garden.

This chapter is intended to seek evidence of unspecialised production in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor, in a wide variety of circumstances. Such production was envisaged as being mainly for domestic consumption, but with occasional cash sales. The evidence was to include open-field data, relating to small husbandmen, as well as that applicable to cottagers on the moor, and the Whitwick section of Charnwood Forest. An attempt was also to be made to determine the degrees of self-sufficiency, for subsistence at least, that the system could be relied upon to achieve. The main criterion for the evidence sought was that production was substantially for domestic consumption. In Sturt’s words,

2G. Bourne [Sturt], Change in the Village (1911, 1956 edn), pp. 76-84.
It was of the essence of the old system that those living under it subsisted in the main upon what their own industry could produce out of the soil and materials of their own countryside. A few things, certainly, they might get from other neighbourhoods, such as iron for making their tools, and salt for curing their bacon; and some interchange of commodities there was, accordingly, say between the various districts that yielded cheese, and wool, and hops, and charcoal; but as a general thing the parish where the people lived was the source of the materials they used, and their well-being depended on their knowledge of its resources. Amongst themselves they would number a few special craftsmen ... yet the trades of these specialists were only ancillary to the general handiness of the people, who with their own hands raised and harvested their crops, made their clothes, did much of the building of their homes, attended to their cattle, thatched their ricks, cut their firing, made their bread and wine or cider, pruned their fruit-trees and vines, looked after their bees, all for themselves... Under the old regime, although probably a small regular expenditure of money had been usual, yet in the main the peasant's expenditure was not regular, but intermittent. Getting so much food and firing by his own labour, he might go for weeks without needing more than a few shillings to make up occasional deficiencies. 

One concern to be noted from the outset, was that domestic consumption of production was not necessarily evidence of a self-reliant household to which commercial participation in the wider market place was only secondary. Most modern livestock farms and farmers still consume a proportion of their production – by beasts as well as by members of farm households. On commercial farms in the eighteenth century, with their more organic technology, and larger households, and particularly if they employed live-in servants, an even higher proportion of their own production was likely to be consumed on the farm. In examining probate-inventory and other evidence, therefore, to identify unspecialised domestic production, reliable criteria needed to be established.

Inventory evidence during the eighteenth century.

How representative were probate inventories of a person's lifetime activities in a rural area? Was the extent of the inventory affected by the proximity of the recording to its owner’s death? Obviously a person’s activities and stock could both change over his lifetime. However, concerns of this nature can be exaggerated. Of the 123 farmers enumerated in the

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4 Bourne [Sturt] Change in the Village, pp. 77-8.
5 Ibid., p.90.
parishes of Breedon, Coleorton and Whitwick at the 1841 Census, 39 were over 60 years of age. Of these, 20 were operating in Breedon parish, and several were on the larger farms. At a lesser commercial level, smallholders, who appear to have been mainly providing for their own subsistence on the basis of their inventories, may have acquired and stocked their smallholdings only in older age. But to do this they would have needed to transfer capital from an earlier enterprise, savings, or an inheritance. The original enterprise may still have been a by-occupational one, and also unspecialised in character.

Livestock indicators of unspecialised production.

The identification of small agricultural producers, smallholdings and wasteland cottages was obviously a reasonable place to begin a search for households where subsistence-production was predominant. Some general morphological evidence of such households in the area has been provided in the previous chapters. For the first half of the eighteenth century, inventory evidence can be revealing – particularly that from livestock inventories. On small farms and smallholdings, households keeping one or two cows were mostly likely to do so for purposes of domestic consumption. One or two fattening pigs would also usually have been kept for the same purpose. On the other hand breeding sows would have been the basis of a small commercial unit, as would a small herd of five or six cows, to which a pig unit might sometimes be complementary.

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6 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594,596, Census of Great Britain, 1841.
7 Assuming that a single cow would be dry for a minimum of two months between lactations and perhaps as much as five months, a second cow provided a safety factor for better off households. Early eighteenth century net yield expectations were probably not as high as late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century ones, which were around 340 gallons per cow, on good feed, or 336 LB of hard cheese per cow for commercial producers. W. Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties. 2 vols (1790, 1796 edn), 1, p. 326, Cobbett, Cottage Economy, p. 81. See also H.R. French, 'Urban agriculture, commons and commoners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the case of Sudbury, Suffolk,' in Ag.Hist.Rev., 48, 2 (2000), pp. 171-99, particularly p. 192, recounting that weavers and lower-level cloth trades used their commons for cows, while the higher burgesses depastured horses and mares in 90per cent of cases.
In eighteenth-century Leicestershire breeding sows were ancillary to commercial-butter production, fattening pigs to hard-cheese production - the latter for distant markets. In the early nineteenth century Cobbett advised cottagers to fatten pigs, and to avoid the temptation and expense to keep breeding sows. The skim-milk residue from butter making could be drunk, used in cooking, or turned into cottage cheese.

Horses on smallholdings, inevitably kept in place of cows, were likely to be one sign of commercial activity. On small farms, one or two horses might be an operational necessity, unless substituted by oxen. For the more commercial farmers, the keeping of more young horses than adult ones suggested an intermittent income from the eventual sale of some of them. Cash income tends to be intermittent on many farms. In the eighteenth century it was even more so. Only locally sold butter, cheese and eggs produced a regular but small cash flow. Cash income from more substantial sales also tended to be more intermittent. The sale of grain, hard cheese to factors, culled cattle at markets or fairs, weaned or fattened pigs, young cattle and horses all tended to be intermittent, or seasonal. Production for home consumption was therefore usually inevitable on many farms. In the case of small operations home consumption made up a substantial proportion of production. The sample of probate inventories outlined in chapter 2, above, provided the figures described below.

Dairy cows, pigs and horses on farms 1700-59.

In the general area of north-west Leicestershire, evidence was taken from the inventories of 53 farmers of various descriptions (15 husbandmen, 18 farmers, 11 yeomen and nine graziers). They kept 410 cows and 379 followers. This was an average of just under eight

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8 The skim-milk residue from butter production was an invaluable protein source for suckling sows. The whey from whole-milk cheese production was more useful as a food for fattening pigs. See also R. Malcolmson and S. Mastoris, The English Pie: A History (1998), pp. 37, 39.
9 Cobbett, Cottage Economy, pp. 104-6.
10 Cheese making for factors tended to be seasonal – May to early August. ‘Family cheese’ was made at other times, Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, p. 322. Young cattle and horses tended to be sold through fairs, the nearest being Belton, Ibid., 1, p. 261; Ibid., 2, pp. 1-2; W. Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, 2 vols (1809, Newton Abbot, 1969), 1, p. 317.
11 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1700-1759.
milking cows per farmer. However, they averaged only five each for husbandmen, and six each for farmers, but around ten each for yeomen and 14 each in the case of graziers. On the criteria proposed in the previous section therefore, 33-40 per cent of the milk production for households headed by husbandmen and farmers was mainly for domestic consumption.\(^\text{12}\) This declined to 14 per cent or less in the case of graziers. Approximately 57 per cent of all these farmers kept pigs. Farmers, yeomen and graziers kept an average of around six pigs per farm. However, the average for husbandmen was just under two pigs per farm, demonstrating a less commercial participation, and a greater emphasis on production for domestic consumption. Between them these farmers, of all categories, kept 315 horses and followers. Those describing themselves as farmers, or yeomen, were more likely to rear young stock – nearly four per farm as opposed to around two per farm for graziers and husbandmen. But graziers kept seven horses per farm, as opposed to six for farmers and yeomen, and only two per farm for husbandmen. Between them these farmers kept a total of 4170 sheep. The average grazier flock comprised 312 sheep, while those for yeomen and farmers were 127 and 52 respectively. The average husbandman’s flock comprised only 33 sheep. Flocks of graziers and yeomen tended to contain pasture sheep (suggesting also their occupation of enclosed fields). The flocks of farmers and husbandmen tended to comprise common field sheep (suggesting a greater dependence on open-field farming).

In the three parishes around Coleorton moor farmers tended to be designated as either yeomen or husbandmen. Ten inventories for all the farmer categories there showed an average of six cows and seven followers per farm. This was not out of line with the figures for the wider area, as described above, excluding graziers. For the Coleorton Moor parishes, four farmers had only two cows each, suggesting that they were kept mainly to produce dairy produce for the household. The two largest herds were in Coleorton and comprised 14

\(^{12}\) This excludes consumption by calves – probably around 36 per cent of the cow’s total production capacity over the peak months of her lactation, at that time. This would have left around 1 gallon per day or just over for other uses. It would have been 3 ½ times more than Pitt thought was necessary for a poor labouring family in 1808, Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, 1, p. 327.
and 10 cows each (both owners being described as husbandmen).\textsuperscript{13} The greater commercial involvement of these latter two farms was supported by significant stocks of cheeses on both of them, together with 14 and ten horses respectively, and pigs. Nevertheless, the husbandman with ten cows still had both a ‘woollen wheel’ and a ‘linen wheel’ in his inventory, and also four looms – signs of by-occupational activity. All but one of the farmers kept at least as many horses as he kept cows, and six of them reared pigs. Generally, the farmers kept significantly more horses than they did cows. (They all kept sheep – mostly common field sheep). As might be expected, commercial emphasis appears to have varied from farm to farm, and in accordance with both means and need. For example, one small farmer with only two cows, and 12 common field ewes, had three mares with four followers, and two breeding sows with eight ‘little pigs’\textsuperscript{14}. A significant part of his relatively small cash-income, therefore, presumably arose from breeding pigs, and horse rearing. Both areas of commercial focus would have been appropriate for a mainly self-sufficient, small farmer.

In the nearby townships of Belton, Osgathorpe and Shepshed the pattern of livestock ownership was not of a greater scale than that described above for the parishes of Breedon, Coleorton and Whitwick.\textsuperscript{15} Seven farmers (two were by-occupational) kept 30 cows and 32 followers between them – the largest herd comprising ten cows and six followers.

Livestock owned by non-farm and by-occupational rural households, 1700-59.

In the case of by-occupational tradesmen, cottagers and labourers, in the general area of north-west Leicestershire, 33 (out of 52) households kept 79 cows and 107 followers between them.\textsuperscript{16} This was an average of 2.4 cows per household. Excluding the by-occupational tradesman, the cottager and labourer households kept an average of 1.5 cows

\textsuperscript{13} Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1745, ‘John Ayre’ and ‘John Whitmore’.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, 1746, ‘Ralph Mould’.
\textsuperscript{16} Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1700-59.
each. Only three members of this group kept a horse - one each. Members of the group keeping pigs were 12, with one pig each. On the other hand, 19 members of the group kept 468 sheep between them, mostly of the mountain, or common-field type.

It was established from the Bradgate Estate surveys that in the formal stinting of commons in the vicinity of Breedon village, before Parliamentary enclosure, cottagers there invariably had commons for two cows and a follower.\(^{17}\) A few of them also had commons for a further two beasts and 10 sheep each. On the more informal commons of Coleorton Moor the Breedon Estate also had 12 direct cottage tenants on Brand Common and a further 10 at Griffydam.\(^{18}\) (The number at Griffydam had grown to 27 by 1806.)\(^{19}\) The writer has been unable to establish a formal stint for these latter cottagers. However, they all had some land attached to their cottages, and in four cases this was as much as two acres each. The fact that some of these cottagers received small parcels of land under the Parliamentary enclosure award also supports the contention that they had depastured livestock on these commons for a significant period of time.\(^{20}\) For the period 1700-59, in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor, surviving probate records for smallholders and cottagers were few in number. However, there were surviving records for five by-occupational smallholders in the probate-inventory sample.\(^{21}\) They kept two cows each, and a total of five followers between them. Their by-occupations were varied - a victualer, an innkeeper, a lime burner, a coal carrier and a brick maker.\(^{22}\) Two of them also kept pigs. Only the coal carrier had a horse, in addition to his cow. To emphasise the non-specialised activity of his household, the brick

\(^{17}\) Leics. CRO, (DG20) DE1982/181, ‘The Court Baron & Court of Survey of the Manor of Breedon with the Members, the Thirteenth Day of October, 1756, before Ralph Dison, Gent., Steward there’ in Bradgate Estate Rentals: Breedon, Tongue, Wilson.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Leics. CRO, 13D40/6, ‘Worthington and Newbold enclosure award, 1806’. There were 69 households there by 1841, according to NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594 Census of Great Britain 1841 in the enumerators’ returns relating to Breedon Parish.

\(^{20}\) Leics. CRO, 13D40/6.


\(^{22}\) The lime burner appears to have been the descendent of one of the cottagers in the Breedon rental, Bradgate Estate Rentals: Breedon, Tongue and Wilson, ‘1656 and 1683 rentals’. However, in place of the two cows and one follower, plus 10 sheep of his ancestor’s stint, his inventory comprised two cows and two followers, plus three mares and three followers, Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1723, ‘George Kinsey’.
maker's inventory contained a 'woollen wheel', as well as brick making materials and livestock. Another by-occupational smallholder, a flax heckler and 'putter-out' at Whitwick kept two horses as well as a bullock, but no cows. This suggests that his flax and linen business left his household little time to milk cows. He therefore used his pasture for the less work-intensive activity of rearing a bullock for the kitchen. At a level of lesser means, four cottagers and a coal miner kept one cow each. Only one of them kept a pig.

Later evidence of by-occupational smallholdings, and small farms.

Inventory evidence was very rare after 1759. The Thringstone enclosure award of 1758 named five by-occupational allotments of between 1½ and 26 acres. They included a shopkeeper on Coleorton Moor (1½ acres), a labourer (2 ¼ acres), a coal carrier (9 ½ acres), a blacksmith (10¼ acres), and a carpenter (26 acres). An advertisement in 1762 announced a deceased estate sale for a Whitwick apothecary of a new messuage with stabling, barns and 22 acres of enclosed land. The Whitwick award of 1807 allotted Joseph Stinson, a chandler, 12 ½ acres and Joseph Stinson, a hatter, 2 ½ acres. In these cases the by-occupations were clearly given for identification purposes. It is probable that several of the other small allotments went to by-occupational tradesmen who did not need to be identified by trade for purposes of the award. Rental valuations of neighbouring Markfield in 1815 and 1828 identified around 44 commercial or workshop premises there. Many of these premises had land attached. Of seven victuallers only two occupied less that three acres each, and one possessed nearly 17 acres. The miller and the baker both occupied more than three acres each. Ironically, the cow-keeper only occupied 3r 12p with a shop, suggesting a housed-cow retail operation, whose open access to Charnwood Forest was to disappear after 1829, through enclosure there.

23 Leics. CRO, DE/41/112/1-3, Thringstone enclosure award, 1758.
24 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 3 July 1762.
26 Leics. CRO, DE1469/21, rental valuations of Markfield, 1815 and 1828.
Some preliminary findings on commons and cottage livestock.

In the period up to 1759 the inventories of smallholders and cottagers in north-west Leicestershire indicate a comparative dearth of pigs. The evidence above seems to suggest that these animals were most likely to have been found on cheese making dairy farms during this period. Smallholders and cottagers in fact seemed more likely to have had cows than pigs. It was the inability of the poor to continue keeping cows after enclosure of the commons that was lamented most (along with loss of fuel) by Arthur Young, and others, in the early nineteenth century. And yet pigs have been described as the cornerstone of the cottage economy. In Cobbett's time Horton Heath's cottage households kept 60 pigs, 15 cows, 500 poultry, and 100 beehives on the 150 acre common, and in its cottage gardens. Dyck has suggested that 40 per cent of cottage gardens seem to have had a pig, while perhaps as few as 6 per cent had cows. When enlightened employers, like Robert Stephenson on the borders of Snibston and Whitwick in the 1830s, built cottages for their employees they might also equip them with a garden and a pigsty, to help the employees to partly provide for themselves. Pig keeping was also noted among framework knitters who still had a little land in 1845. Malcolmson and Mastoris suggested that from the late eighteenth century pig keeping was very widespread. The above inventory evidence for north-west Leicestershire suggests that in the early eighteenth century somewhat fewer than 25 per cent of cottagers kept pigs. Yet a considerable literature exists for cottage-style pig keeping in the nineteenth century. Perhaps this was one example of a change of fashion brought about by enclosure of the commons.

27 Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, p. 327, calculated a ratio of one pig to four or five cows on a typical dairy farm in the 1780s.
29 Dyck, William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture, p. 115.
30 Ibid., pp. 30-1.
31 Ibid., p. 115.
34 Malcolmson and Mastoris, The English Pig, p. 46.
It is quite feasible indeed that in the period before enclosure of the wastes, wasteland cottagers ate mutton, geese, and other poultry, as much as pig meat, and that the latter item was seen as relatively more important after cottagers' sheep and geese had disappeared with the commons. Pig keeping was still feasible in more restricted surroundings. Indeed, a more crowded environment, and the concurrent increase in waste food availability, may even have boosted pig keeping. (Pigs also seemed to thrive in towns.)

The goose had been a bird closely associated with the commons. Geese did not usually appear in the inventories as individual items of livestock. One inventory only in the sample from around Coleorton Moor listed poultry as a general item. However, Marshall mentions geese being kept by farmers in the 1780s on cow grounds for the aeration of ponds. In addition the Nottingham goose fair was not so far away. Geese might therefore have comprised an important component of cottage livestock on the commons of Coleorton Moor and Charnwood Forest.

There was not a great deal of evidence to suggest that cottage-cow numbers kept pace with the increase in the number of cottagers generally during the eighteenth century. In north-west Leicestershire, at least, the cottage cow in the eighteenth century was probably more of an aspiration than the general reality. After enclosure of the commons even the aspiration faded. But there is evidence that poorer cottagers had easier access to milk before enclosure of the wastes than afterwards. The cottager on the commons could probably exchange some other item with his cow-keeping neighbour for milk, butter, and cheese if he did not keep a cow himself.

35 J.M. Neeson, Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England 1700-1820 (1993), p. 292, citing the rhyme, 'The fault is great in man or woman...who steals a common from a goose'.
36 J. Ginswick (ed.), Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 1849-1851. Letters to the Morning Chronicle from the Correspondents in the Manufacturing and Mining Districts, the Towns of Liverpool and Birmingham, and the Rural Districts, 8 vols (1983), 1, pp. 175; Ibid., 2, pp. 143.
37 CRO Leics., Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1723, 'Paul Bodewell'.
40 Young, General Report on Enclosures, pp. 144-70.
41 As suggested by Bourne [Sturt], Change in the Village, pp. 77-8.
The link between commons and milk products for commoners was not altogether a direct one. Cobbett recognised that few commons would in fact be productive enough to induce a cow to produce much milk without supplementary feed (specific cow pasture perhaps excepted). Commons were no doubt suitable for dry cows (itself of considerable value). But it was young cattle, young horses, sheep, and geese that mainly grazed the wastes. When the commons disappeared, rearing dairy followers was less attractive to many farmers (and less possible for smallholders and cottagers) resulting in fewer and more costly milking cows. To quote Marshall,

An intelligent man, and one of the largest graziers in the Midland Counties, thinks the present scarcity of stock is principally owing to dairymen turning graziers. Cows, he says, might, some years ago, have been picked up, plentifully, in the neighbourhood: now, there is not one to be bought. Inclosing common pastures, he thinks, has been another cause of the present scarcity of young and lean cattle. While there were common pastures to rear young stock in, the farmers found it profitable to dairy: not so much for the cheese, as for the young stock which rose from it: but, since the common pastures have been converted into feeding pieces, they have found grazing answer better than cheese making; more especially if they happen not to have a 'dairily' wife or housekeeper.

Nevertheless, milk and milk products were extremely important components in the diets of the poor. The concerns of Arthur Young and other contemporaries concerning the reduction in cow numbers after enclosure awards were enacted, have already been noted. When a general shortage of cheese occurred in October 1766, riots broke out in the area to the north and west of Charnwood Forest, and in the vicinity of Leicester. The rioters seized both wagon- and barge-loads of cheese to prevent its export from the area. Pitt suggested that the cost of milk, cheese, and meat in 1808 could be nearly 47 per cent of a labouring family's

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42 Cobbett, *Cottage Economy*, pp. 77-89, particularly p. 81.
44 Ibid., (Minute 110, 1785), p. 235. It should be noted also that the term 'grazier' appears to have undergone a change of meaning by 1785. It will be seen above that in the earlier probate inventories, quoted above, graziers tended to be the largest dairy farmers. The term probably meant no more than 'grassland farmer'. By 1785 it had become associated with the production of market cattle on grass, rather than commercial dairying.
45 CRO Leics., *The Leicester and Nottingham Journal*, 4, and 11 October, 1766.
expenditure on necessities (and that enabling the family to keep a pig would reduce that amount significantly). Arthur Young had also suggested that the production of a cow was worth £5 per annum, or approximately half of a labourer’s annual wage. In 1849 milk and porridge for breakfast and ‘butter-cake’, or porridge and milk again for supper, were often normal diets at those two meals among manufacturing families in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

The degree of self-reliance from unspecialised production.

A totally satisfactory assessment of rural subsistence needs in north-west Leicestershire in the eighteenth century is difficult to establish. Evidence is patchy. In 1808 Pitt estimated that 43.75 per cent of a poor labourer-family’s subsistence was for bread and potatoes, a similar proportion for cheese and meat, just over 3 per cent for liquid milk, and just over 9 per cent for rent. He omitted a calculation for fuel, candles and other miscellaneous items, because employers sometimes provided transport for fuel. However, he suggested an additional 5s to cover these items in manufacturing households. Citing Davies, Neeson suggested that the value of fuel from the commons was around 10 per cent of an agricultural labourer’s income in Northamptonshire. This was based on the price of furze, after enclosure of the commons. However, the price of furze fell by one third following the arrival of coal by canal to the area. Sturt recorded in Surrey, for the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, that one household of eight people on Bourne Heath used a gallon of potatoes, and a gallon of bread a day, plus a further gallon of flour each week ‘for puddings’. Depending on household size, eighteenth-century usage may not have been much different. Combining

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46 Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester. 1, p. 327.
47 Neeson, Commoners, p. 311.
48 Ginswick (ed.), Labour and the Poor. 1, pp. 149, 151.
49 Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester. 1, p. 327.
50 Ibid., p. 327.
51 Neeson, Commoners, p. 165.
52 Ibid., p. 165.
53 Bourne [Sturt], Change in the Village, p. 63.
items from these various sources might reasonably suggest the following approximations for the subsistence diets of the poor:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bread and potatoes etc.</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing and miscellaneous</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The extent to which unspecialised producers could have met, or exceeded this balance in their diets would obviously have varied from one situation to another. However, several of the small farmers and by-occupational smallholders described above and living close to Coleorton Moor and Charnwood Forest, could probably have met most of their needs from their own resources, together with the resources of the commons. The obvious exceptions would have been rent and those tithes, where cash was required, and some miscellaneous items. The purchase of furniture and other perceived luxuries, as depicted in inventories, would have provided an additional incentive to raise cash from time to time. But cash needs would still have been intermittent rather than regular.

How would those cottagers have fared who were unable to acquire and graze one or two of the larger livestock? Sturt observed that the gardens in isolation were unlikely to produce enough basic items, even potatoes, for half of one year’s consumption. He considered that the Bourne villagers were unable to fill more than 10 per cent (2s) of their needs from their cottage gardens, partly stemming from the expense of decent seed and fertilizer after enclosure of the common. Greater self-sufficiency had been attainable beforehand. Before enclosure common and cottage garden had been complementary.

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54 Neeson, Commoners, p. 317, cites T. Davies, General View of Agriculture ... Wiltshire, to note that the loss of the commons devastated the ability of small farmers to grow corn, as they could no longer keep enough sheep to manure their arable plots.
55 Bourne [Sturt], Change in the Village, p. 63.
56 Ibid., p. 60.
57 For example, in addition to items gathered, the common could provide a maintenance ration for grazing animals, whose manure could be used in the garden for their production ration, as well as garden crops for the household.
Deficiencies could be met by the gathering economy of the commons, on the one hand, and the local exchange economy on the other. The two were not mutually exclusive. Small surpluses from gardens, smallholdings, and farms were exchangeable (as was labour). So were items gathered from the commons.

**The gathering economy.**

Gleaning the fields for grain after harvest was a classical way for the poor to supplement food supplies. However, the custom of gleaning the fields for grain was increasingly under attack towards the end of the eighteenth century.\(^5\)\(^8\) Loose wool shed particularly from ewes, which had become attached to various shrubs and bushes was another opportunity for gleaning.\(^5\)\(^9\) The wool was not of high quality, but could be spun domestically and used for stockings and some other items of clothing for household members. The random nature of commons vegetation often provided the best opportunities for gleaning wool.\(^6\)\(^0\) (The location of the Wool Rooms hamlet in the centre of Coleorton Moor suggests the former importance of sheep on the moor).\(^6\)\(^1\)

Fuel was probably the most important regular item gathered, or cut and dug from the commons.\(^6\)\(^2\) Some commons, such as Tongue Gorse, appear to have been specifically for fuel, and the long narrow intakes into Coleorton Moor from Thringstone Township, and across Charnwood Forest from Whitwick, may also have been fuel related.\(^6\)\(^3\) Although Owen has suggested that most of the easily worked coal had already been extracted in north-west

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\(^5\)\(^8\) The often-quoted example is the action for trespass, Steel v Houghton, in 1788, see E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1991, Harmondsworth, 1993 edn), p. 139.

\(^5\)\(^9\) Neeson, *Commoners*, p. 169.


\(^6\)\(^2\) Neeson, *Commoners*, pp. 159-65.

Leicestershire by the second half of the seventeenth century, coal was probably also picked up from Coleorton Moor.\textsuperscript{64} It could probably also be picked up alongside carrier tracks.

**Unspecialised production and participation in the exchange economy.**

Although Dyck estimated that 'perhaps as little as six per cent [of cottagers] had cows', this may have been on the low side for north-west Leicestershire in the early eighteenth century. By the latter part of that century it was likely to have been more accurate. But even as the cow-to-cottager ratio decreased some milk, or milk products, was probably still available to be exchanged or sold locally.

It should be emphasised that it was unlikely that a high standard of living was attainable from unspecialised cottage production. At best the standard of living was probably no more than comfortable in terms of the relatively independent lifestyle and aspirations of a smallholder or a cottager.

Much of the produce gathered from the commons was seasonal.\textsuperscript{65} From Charnwood Forest, Nichols noted wild strawberries and raspberries, bilberries, crab apples for verjuice, and acorns gathered by the poor.\textsuperscript{66} Ferns, harvested after the corn was in, were burned and the ashes rolled into round goose-egg size balls. These were later converted into lye. Non-edible and seasonal surpluses were exchanged with neighbours or sold further away. The acorns sold for 1s per strike.\textsuperscript{67} In the early nineteenth century the ash-balls sold for between 4s 6d and 6s per hundredweight.\textsuperscript{68} A substantial part of the lye was used in the combing and spinning processes for wool.

In the final reckoning, therefore, unspecialised production and self-reliance was by no means entirely a subsistence system of production. An element of exchange was involved

\textsuperscript{64} Owen, *The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield*, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{65} Nichols, *History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, 2, 1, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., p. 132.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p. 132.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 132.
to make good varying deficiencies in the production of individual households. Seasonal work, or even intermittent work, for a neighbouring business could also be involved when necessary. But a substantial, although varying amount of independent production by individuals, was for domestic consumption. Where conditions permitted, the system continued alongside an increasing dependence on wage remuneration for a growing section of the population, both in proportional and absolute terms. And yet the number of cow-keeping cottagers in the eighteenth century did not increase pro-rata to the growth in the numbers of cottagers. It has also been noted in earlier chapters that even before the Parliamentary Acts for their final enclosure, large parts of both Charnwood Forest and Coleorton Moor had already been enclosed. The cultural influence of the unspecialised system of production in practice became increasingly attenuated under the twin pressures of increasing population and declining open spaces.

The degree of self-reliance provided by unspecialised production had often been very variable. The miners on Coleorton Moor were rarely self-employed by the eighteenth century. Their conditions of employment may often have had some of the characteristics of modern sub-contractors. They may sometimes have been paid in kind in the seventeenth century. Yet they expected to be paid for their labour, and they were usually paid in cash. Likewise, agricultural labourers were mostly paid in cash. Employment was not particularly continuous in either case, and in the case of mining it was often irregular. Between periods

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69 Bourne [Sturt] Change in the Village, p. 78; Neeson, Commoners, p. 181.
70 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 63. Until the middle of the seventeenth century, tenant farmers extracted coal on the Sheldon estate in Coleorton. By the end of that century this was less usual, but John Bonsall of Breedon parish, who claimed persecution by Wilkins, a major operator, was an exception, Ibid., p. 99.
71 Ibid., p. 86, 'Allowed the colliers 340 loads of coal', p. 93, lists coal allowances, some individual, some by yardlands
72 Leics. CRO, DG32/91-94, Payments for a Swannington Colliery, 1724 [Wilkins?].
73 Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 2, but beer allowances were common into the late eighteenth century, p. 44; labourers often grew potatoes in field corners, p. 84; and potatoes in partnership with farmers was not unknown, p. 126.
74 Leics. CRO, DG32/91-94, some of the payments were for short term contracts or work of an intermittent nature, i.e. 'taking up a sough', 'trenching', 'filling up a pit and taking down a gin roof', others were wage related - '5 weeks' wages'.
of paid work, however, both groups had to be more self-reliant. Then their cottage gardens, small crofts, and open access to the commons were of considerable value to them.

Unspecialised production was a cultural environment in which local service trades could also flourish. Self-reliant households could take in work to utilise any spare capacity among the household’s members, or its equipment (e.g. spinning, knitting, or even weaving). However, the ability to establish a local by-occupational enterprise, and use the system effectively, did entail acquiring some stock and equipment. For the young, the means to purchase the initial stock might be acquired by saving the lump sum payments made at the end of a year’s service. But service meant a period of deference to an employer, usually as part of the latter’s household, postponement of marriage, and a determination to save. For those unwilling to postpone marriage, or unwilling, or unable to acquire stock in this way, seeking day labour, or taking in work was an alternative way of earning some cash to make good deficiencies from subsistence production. While for many, unspecialised producer-participation in the exchange economy may often have been voluntary, for the very poor taking in work was often essential. On the other hand, the basic tools to be used, by cottage women particularly, for domestic yarn production – distaff and drop-spindle, or knitting needles - were neither difficult, nor expensive to acquire. Furthermore, hand knitting, or spinning with a drop spindle, could often be undertaken while performing other tasks – walking, driving or guarding livestock, watching pots cooking. Even the local village weaver, as depicted in Silas Marner, would almost certainly have used some yarn spun by

75 Bourne [Sturt] Change in the Village, p. 78.
76 A. Kussmaul, A General View of the Rural Economy of England, 1538-1840 (1990, Cambridge, 1993 edn.), pp. 141-2, suggesting the cost of acquiring such assets for independent by-occupation trade, or manufacturing, was not for everyone.
78 Ibid., pp. 211-12 regarding savings; A. Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England (Cambridge, 1981), p. 83, marriage and exit from service were tied in together... p. 133, service had been nurtured in an agrarian environment of small farms, labour shortage, and relatively high age at marriage.
79 These items were of such small monetary value that they were seldom, if ever mentioned in Leicestershire probate inventories.
80 M. Hartley and J. Ingilby, The Old Hand-Knitters of the Dales (1951, Nelson, 1958 edn.), p. 53, mentions knitters from Gale and Hawes knitting while driving sheep and cattle, and/or going to market.
contract spinsters (as well as yarn spun in farmhouses as described by George Eliot). Of necessity, this would have been the case long before the establishment of any organised putting-out trade in an area. A number of spinsters were necessary to keep one handloom weaver busy.

Over the centuries there have always been a range of factors that have contributed to the industrialization or de-industrialization of an area. However, the availability of willing spinsters, within a convenient range of a prospective local textile industry, must have been one important consideration. A foundation environment to provide for early manufacturing in a rural setting was therefore established. For many years it was one which required little change to the system and culture of unspecialised production. Even after enclosure the culture lingered to an extent. With regards to the nineteenth-century allotments movement Burchardt found that participants with larger plots grew some grain as well as vegetables to provide a measure of self-reliance. For the same purpose some grain was also grown on small lots in Whitwick in the 1840s, and probably on other small lots elsewhere in the parishes around Coleorton Moor.

82 According to J. Haynes, Great Britain's Glory or an Account of the Great Numbers of Poor Employ'd in the Woollen and Silk Manufactures to the Increase of the Trade, Enlargement of the Revenues of the Crown, and Augmenting of our Navigation (1715), pp. 6-13, in Goldsmiths' Library of Economic Literature, English Wool Trade: Selected Tracts, 1613-1715 (Farnborough, 1968 edn), the ratio of spinsters to weavers was 35:8 for woollen cloth, 10:1 for worsted cloth (with drop spindles), and 10:6 for (woollen) stocking weavers. P. Baines, Spinning Wheels, Spinners and Spinning (1977, 1982 edn), p. 183, suggested that one spinster (with a wheel) could produce woollen yarn for five hand knitters.
83 Neeson, Commoners, pp. 60-2, for example, suggested that the decline of the woollen industry in Northamptonshire accompanied the enclosure of the common fields.
84 J. James, History of the Worsted Manufacture in England from the Earliest Times (1857), pp. 254-5, noted that when the demands of spinning competed with the demands of harvest work for women's waged-labour, they invariably gave priority to the latter.
85 As in Mills, Lord and Peasant, and Bourne [Sturt], Change in the Village.
87 Report from the Commissioner Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 335, for Whitwick.
By-occupational crafts with greater commercial emphasis.

An individual's craft status would often indicate a degree of occupational emphasis rather than specialization. In describing this characteristic, as late as the nineteenth century, Dennis Mills has noted:

Dual occupations were very common in peasant villages and the most frequent combination was that between a smallholding and a non-agricultural pursuit... To look at these peasants through urban spectacles, classifying them as bricklayers, publicans, 'farmers', cowkeepers, shopkeepers and so forth, would be to miss the point of the peasant system.88

Until 1723 William Vicars was a wheelwright in Whitwick.89 Like George Sturt in the nineteenth century, he appears to have cut his own axle and plough beams after the felling of selected standing timber.90 These were held in his shop inventory, along with spokes, shafts, wagon sides, boards, slats and rough wood, together with tools. Unlike Sturt in the nineteenth century, Vicars grew wheat, and peas in the open field, and made hay for his cattle and sheep. As a Whitwick villager he, and his livestock, had easy unstinted access to Charnwood Forest. So also did Charles Burgess who operated a flax-heckling shop in Whitwick until 1734.91 He kept two horses and a bullock for his own use. He also kept bees. His stock included raw and dressed flax, hemp and shoemaker's hemp. Although he did not appear to have had 'linen' wheels of his own, there were a number in the area (see below).

An example of broader occupational variety was provided by the inventory of William Sharpe, of Newbold Hurst, Breedon, on 9 April 1747.92 The inventory was valued at a comparatively modest £34 4s 4d. It showed him to have carried on concurrent occupations as a small farmer, a maltster, a brick maker, and probably a carpenter and builder as well. Female members of his family made cheese and also spun both wool and flax yarns. His livestock included two cows, a heifer and a calf, 18 common-field sheep and six lambs, 'two

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88 Mills, Lord and Peasant, p. 46.
89 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1723, 'William Vicars'.
91 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1734, 'Charles Burgess'.
92 Ibid, 1747, 'William Sharpe'.
piggs for pork' and 'an old pony'. Equipment included 'a woollen wheel' and 'a linnen wheel', lathes, moulds and ladders, a cheese press, a malt mill and a 'grit' mill. Dead stock varied from rough timber 'in the common', 'a brick hovell' and 'bricks and quarries' to 28 small cheeses, two flitches of bacon, and hay. His purse and apparel amounted to £1 10s and he was owed a further £1 10s in book debts, demonstrating production for sale as well as for subsistence. John Whitmore, a Coleorton farmer and cheese producer with ten cows, also owned four looms, a woollen wheel and a linen wheel at the time of his death in 1745. He may have employed family members and servants to produce woollen cloth, or even worsted for sale. Equally probably, from the evidence of his use of a linen wheel and a woollen wheel, he may have been producing some 'linsey-woolsey' — a hard wearing cloth with a linen warp and a woollen weft. His two spinning wheels would not have kept his looms busy. Although his linen wheel could have been adapted to woollen warp- and worsted-yarns, these were often spun by drop spindle until the arrival of factory spinning. The drop-spindle spinsters only spun around two pounds of wool each week.

Elsewhere in the county and a year earlier, John Bond, a woolcomber of Thorpe Langton, had left a smallholding of a quarter of a yardland with his house and homestead. His inventory included crops, 11 common-field sheep, four lambs, three cows, a heifer, and a pig, together with his combs, comb-pot and charcoal. While his smallholding operation had been modest, his woolcombing appears to have been reasonably prosperous, as his inventory of £145 5s 6d included £100 for purse and apparel. Even more prosperous appeared to have been John Assenor of Tur Langton who left lands to his son, plus inventory worth £342 12s 2d. His will described him as a farmer and woolcomber, but in addition to 105 sheep of a size and value mid-way between 'common [field]' sheep and 'great [pasture]' sheep, crops,
farm implements, sixteen cattle and six horses, his inventory also included three worsted
looms. One would therefore assume that he also employed members of his family, or others
as weavers. Earlier, between 1711 and 1724, seven out of ten weavers in Leicestershire
farmed smallholdings, and appear to have kept a few sheep, one or two cows and sometimes
a pig. They included one operating three looms and a twisting mill in the market town of
Hinckley. This weaver also owned two cows and produced a small crop. At another level
of by-occupational activity, the main assets of Thomas Chester, a mason of Shepshed, were
farm produce and livestock including 80 sheep and nine breeding cows and heifers. The
family of George Cross, a baker of Loughborough, operated two spinning wheels and cut
gorse to fire his bread oven. Joshua Bracebridge of All Saints parish, Leicester, who died
in 1748, raised sheep, steers and horses worth £65, in addition to his stated trades of malster
and woolman. Quarter yard-lands could be found in the possession of early eighteenth-
century framework knitters in Wigston Magna. Thomas Hurst, who died in 1747, left a
whole land in Wigston's 'East Field', plus 'one perch in Broad Meadow' and 'one Lamas
pasture'. He also left 'two houses with outhouses and a backside' in the village - a suitable
base for accommodating more wage-dependent framework knitters in future. For tradesmen
in the countryside generally, absence of a by-occupation appears to have been the exception,
particularly if they owned assets, which merited taking an inventory.

Where village craftsmen were not fortunate enough to own or occupy land they
would usually pursue the various practices of cottagers in addition to their craft, or crafts.
For example, on his death in 1724 William Pemberton, shoemaker of Twycross, owned 'two
little wheels' for his family to spin linen or worsted, in addition to his working tools, leather,

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99 Ibid., 1711-24.
100 Ibid., 1712, 'Ezekiel Barnet'.
101 Ibid., 1724, 'Thomas Chester'.
102 Ibid., 1725, 'George Cross'.
103 Ibid., 1748, 'Joshua Bracebridge'.
104 Ibid., 1747, 'Thomas Hurst'.
105 See also M. Spufford, Poverty Portrayed: Gregory King and the Parish of Eccleshall (Keele, 1995), pp. 46-63, and J. Went, 'Index to the adult population of Eccleshall in the late seventeenth century', in Ibid., pp. 71-145.
a single cow, one ewe and one lamb. In the countryside the specialists could perhaps be said to be the farmers, but even their operations tended to be mixed. The supposedly more specialist graziers often ran operations as diverse as wool and cheese in addition to livestock for meat and they often bred horses as well. In the towns of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Loughborough, and also Leicester, the really specialist craft operations tended to cater for a much larger market hinterland than did those within the range of the average rural craftsman. Specialists were often mercers or merchants dealing wholesale. Otherwise, when working the land was not involved, urban by-occupations could be closely related to the primary trade - hosier and woolcomber, framework knitter and woolcomber, surgeon and apothecary, druggist and colour-man. Maltster and woolman was more unusual.

One important reason why rural craftsmen had a second or even a third occupation was that the volume of business they could expect from neighbouring clientele was restricted owing to a comparatively low population density. This was the price to be paid for the comparative security of knowing one's customers, their credit worthiness and their probable requirements. More specialization was possible in an urban setting, with its wider market horizons. On the other hand, in the case of John Assenor of Turlangton, it is unlikely that his neighbourhood alone would have kept his three worsted looms busy. It is therefore highly probable that both his wool-combing and weaving production was for a wider market than just the local one. It may have been sold through a local market town, for comparatively local distribution, or for the more speculative, long distance market, or for both. This illustrates the difficulty at a local level of drawing a clear line between craft-trade and manufacture-trade. Like the situation with an individual's craft status, it was more often than

106 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1724, 'William Pemberton'.
108 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1711, 'John Burbridge' mercer of Mountsorrell; Ibid., 1711, 'Joseph Clarke', ironmonger, Ashby-de-la-Zouch.
109 Ibid., 1694, 'John Davie', woolcomber and hosier of Leicester; Ibid., 1745, 'James Kirby', woolcomber and framework knitter of Ashby-de-la-Zouche; Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 19 February 1763, regarding Mr. William Pycroft, 'surgeon and apothecary', deceased; Ibid. 9 July 1763, regarding sale of John Hopkinson, 'druggist and colourman'.
110 Smith, Wealth of Nations, p. 29.
not a matter of emphasis. Even within the manufacturing trades, those proto-industrial extremes of independent artisans and dependent domestic workers were more easily identifiable in extreme cases.\textsuperscript{111} At the local level, similar problems also occur for investigators attempting to clearly demarcate differences in occupational characteristics between small market towns and larger villages.

**Town and country differences.**

In a county like Leicestershire, the differences between the occupational characteristics of market town and country village were not always immediately definable except through the frequency of occupations found. Of 37 different adult occupations gleaned from a 150-item Leicestershire probate sample between 1700 and 1759, 25 could be found in both market town and country village.\textsuperscript{112} Craft-trades tended to be more thinly scattered in the rural villages than they were in the towns. But, more so than today, they still tended to occur. While barbers, butchers, chandlers, cutlers, cordwainers, hatters, ironmongers, and woolcombers tended to be more numerous in the market towns, bakers, blacksmiths, brick makers, carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, and weavers were as likely to be found somewhere in the countryside.\textsuperscript{113} Wheelwrights and carriers seemed to have been equally likely in both locations.\textsuperscript{114} Joan Thirsk has suggested that prior to the fourteenth century weaving manufacturers were only found in towns.\textsuperscript{115} Urban craftsmen claimed more skill and better quality work than their rural counterparts and historians have generally been sympathetic to


\textsuperscript{112} Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1700-59.

\textsuperscript{113} J. Goodacre, *The Transformation of a Peasant Economy: Townspeople and Villagers in the Lutterworth Area, 1500-1700* (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 203-7, smiths tended to be in villages, more specialised metal workers were more likely to be found in towns; ibid., p. 197, carpentry was the second most common non-agricultural employment after weaving in the villages.

\textsuperscript{114} Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1700-59.

\textsuperscript{115} J. Thirsk, "Industries in the Countryside" in F.J. Fisher (ed.), *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England: in honour of R.H. Tawney* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 74. The first signs of a cloth-making industry in the countryside, supplying a national market, date from the second half of the fourteenth century. Before that it was found in towns only.
their claims. Adam Smith was more inclined to be sceptical and attributed the greater prosperity of urban craftsmen to monopoly promoting regulation at corporation level.\textsuperscript{116} Where urban tradesmen were not formally organised, Smith described their outlook as in keeping with the 'corporation spirit' of towns. By-occupational rural craftsmen in the country villages would often have to use second-hand, or inferior materials for their own use locally, such as gleaned, or other inferior wool. Producers preferred to send their better produce to market. The open view of a market, then as now, was no place to expose one's inferior produce to the critical gaze of the world at large. But there was a limit as to how much of it could be used at home. The growth of specialization in the eighteenth century increased the need for products, which had gone wrong, to be sold on. It therefore often promoted more private business arrangements with dealers trusted for being discrete. To maintain such a relationship, dealers had to be offered the good products as well as the inferior ones.\textsuperscript{117}

Perhaps a major difference between town and country was manifest in the manner in which craftsmen owned and occupied land. In the countryside, the smallholding was often relied on to provide an important part of family subsistence. In the market towns, trade tended to be a more regularly reliable source for earning a living. An occupied landholding near a major market town therefore more often tended to support the craft business activity.\textsuperscript{118} It could act both as a convenience for when trade was thriving, or as insurance to provide subsistence when trade was poor. For example, John Colson of St. Mary's Parish, Leicester, was a farmer, a brick maker and a builder who owned an 11-acre smallholding in Desford and leased a yardland in the open fields of Leicester.\textsuperscript{119} He also owned cottages and messuages plus inventory assets worth £286 16s. These included book-debt to him,

\textsuperscript{117} See also Goodacre, The Transformation of a Peasant Economy, p. 238, to the effect that the importance of Lutterworth market lasted while commercial production was subsidiary.
\textsuperscript{118} Hudson, The Genesis of Industrial Capital, pp. 61-2, citing Rennie, Brown and Shirreff, General View of Agriculture... West Riding of Yorkshire (1794), p. 14, around the towns 'the greatest part of the towns is occupied by persons who do not consider farming as a business but regard it as a matter of convenience. The manufacturer has his enclosure where he keeps milch cows for supporting his family, and horses for carrying his goods to market and bringing back raw materials'.
\textsuperscript{119} Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1712, ‘John Colson’.
amounting to £92 16s, farm produce, livestock and implements, as well as over 40,000 bricks and over 900 tiles. His eight horses, two wagons and two carts could also be used to move building materials. George Cliff was a mason in the nearby market town of Castle Donington. He left two horses, a wagon and a cart (plus some growing corn and two 'beasts') - excessive transport for his smallholding of a two-acre meadow and 6 1/2 roods 'of Arable Land lying dispersed in several fields', but not for a self-employed mason. In the service trade the farming operations of innkeepers, in particular, supported the services provided to travellers and later stagecoach operators. The feeding, resting and provision for the change of horses were essential features of inn keeping. This was one reason why the main eighteenth-century coaching inns of Leicester were located just outside the old city, as opposed to inside. When inn keeping lost its former stagecoach clients, and went into decline following the growth of railways in the nineteenth century, the small farming operations attached to the more rural inns reverted to providing their owners with an important part of their subsistence.

Commercial opportunity and rural domestic manufacturing.

There were several ingredients to the origin and location of rural manufacturing trades. It is the intention to explore some of them in this section. However, more extensive discussion of those which brought about the establishment of the region's hosiery trade will be discussed in appropriate sections of a later chapter more specifically devoted to that industry.

As an explanation for the origin of domestic manufacture, Joan Thirsk has suggested that fragmentation of many landholdings into ever-smaller units prevented occupiers obtaining subsistence without an alternative source of income. Small landholders therefore were very ready to participate in home-based manufacturing-industries when opportunities

120 Ibid., 1742, 'George Cliff'.
121 Leics. CRO, DE1469/21, a rental valuation of Markfield, 1828, noting seven victuallers with land.
123 Ibid., p. 33.
for them to do so occurred.\textsuperscript{124} On the other hand, Adam Smith suggested that rural craft-trades often had to be by-occupational owing to the effective limitations of their market horizons.\textsuperscript{125} According to differing circumstances, both propositions were probably valid to some extent. However, there is also the possibility that participants found by-occupations both agreeable and rewarding in an environment, which did not as yet impose the pressures of extreme specialization. A popular assumption about the craft-trades has often been that not inconsiderable satisfaction occurred through accomplishment in them.\textsuperscript{126} In other words, not all production was for future consumption after sale - some satisfaction could occur while production was taking place. Perhaps this was to become substantially less so in the later pursuits of the manufacturing trades.

Some surplus production from both household subsistence and the craft trades probably provided the earliest supplies to the trade in manufactures. Among poorer families, goods initially produced for family consumption must often also have been subject to the temptation for them to be sold from time to time. For the poorer unspecialised operatives, the cost of carriage to and from the market town probably made it more a place at which to dispose of surpluses than to purchase supplies. Supply to their cottages by putting-out undertakers was probably an attractive alternative to the poor for obtaining raw materials. It would usually have meant a smaller outlay of cash. In addition, even in earlier times, the larger commercial producers were said to be often reluctant to sell wool in local markets.\textsuperscript{127}

Dennis Mills has commented that 'while the peasant enterprises were part of the prevailing capitalist system, production for home consumption was relatively more

\textsuperscript{124} Thirsk, 'Industries in the Countryside', p.70, citing NRO/PRO E 134, 10-11 'Charles I, Hilary 22'. In Dent, west Yorkshire Dales, 1634, Edward Lande reported that the division of tenements to all heirs meant that tenants on many holdings farmed not more than three or four acres apiece, and others not more than eight or nine acres each. They would not have been able to maintain families were it not for their industry in knitting coarse stockings.

\textsuperscript{125} Smith, Wealth of Nations, p.29.

\textsuperscript{126} Eliot, Silas Marner, p. 5, ‘In the days when the spinning wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses – and even great ladies... had their toy spinning wheels...’

\textsuperscript{127} P. Bowden, The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England (1971), p. 94, citing NRO/PRO SP 12/90/38 and SP 12/261/63. They refused to sell wool 'in such small parcels as ye poor are able to by it.' They transacted the bulk of their business with wealthy clothiers and middlemen.
important than in the bigger enterprises." As an additional insight, Maxine Berg has suggested that

A model based on family and subsistence... is clearly not adequate to the task of analysing the domestic system. It involved the individual and the household, wage labour and family labour, market and custom.

While live-in apprentices and sometimes journeymen had long been a feature of household based craft-trades, the 'putting out' of work would also appear to have had long established origins. 'Putting out' was probably a means of providing a balance and flexibility of manufactured supplies. This would have been particularly so in the case of spinning. Possibly because of its near universal applicability, the important place of spinning in the evolution of putting-out enterprise has often been given insufficient emphasis. A steady supply of yarn to weavers, either as craftsmen or as manufacturers, was to a great extent dependent on the availability of up to ten spinsters to supply them. Framework knitters were equally dependent on a reliable supply of yarn. Only hand knitters could manage their craft independently of a number of spinsters and, indeed, often spun their own yarn. As women's work, spinning provided an additional prop to the livelihoods of the poorer households of cottagers, labourers and other textile craftsmen. It was especially important as a means of livelihood for poor widows. When knitted goods became fashionable 'putting out' was easily adapted to the employment of poor women to knit. Knitting had long been a peasant handicraft. In 1845 it was reported that

A very considerable portion of the population, despite the cheapness at which the manufactured article is sold, endeavour to supply themselves by home made hand-knit stockings...because it is often followed almost as a recreation in many of the farm-houses and cottages, when other duties do not intervene to prevent it...

It was also to remain a household subsistence activity until well into the twentieth century.

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128 Mills, Lord and Peasant, p.46.
130 Baines, Spinning Wheels, Spinners and Spinning, p. 183.
132 Report from the Commissioner Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 87.
Manufactures may well have arisen from both craft and household sources. In what were originally craft-trades, speculative manufacturing for distant markets may well have originated as production additional to that for local orders when the latter trade was slow. With an irregular flow of orders, craft weavers would produce the occasional roll of cloth speculatively ahead of the next rush. It would not always have been consumed locally in the village. It would not always have been bought at market for use within the local region. Once merchants bought a large amount of production for distant markets, a system of manufacturing soon became established. Initially at least, it would have paid merchants to combine purchases from independent, often by-occupational producers with putting out work to poorer cottagers.

Conclusion.

A system of unspecialised production did provide an environment in which the 'putting out' system of manufactures could be established and developed. On the other hand, as will be demonstrated in subsequent sections, the unspecialized lifestyle would rarely remain the most attractive model for the putting-out undertaker to operate within. Like many a tradesman, to a great extent the unspecialized producer was able to ask his price for his product or service. For the undertaker putting-out work to 'price takers' produced them more volume and profit. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries 'putting-out' was easily extended from spinning and hand knitting to other manufacturing processes. By so doing it was able to take advantage of surplus male labour, which arose from population growth, land consolidation and enclosure, and technological improvement. It was particularly applicable to the development of such manufacturing trades as weaving and framework knitting. From

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133 Smith, Wealth of Nations, pp. 163, particularly 482, and 504, describes manufactures as items made for distant sale. The trade was more speculative than the firm orders received by craftsmen from end users. Manufactures therefore became prone to be traded by middlemen.

134 M.B. Rowlands, The West Midlands from A.D. 1000 (1987), p. 148. There was a kersey trade based on Burton-on-Trent in the seventeenth century. This was close enough to provide a market for larger local weavers. Framework knitting was not to become the dominant textile industry of the area until much later.
temporarily utilizing the skills and labour of by-occupational tradesmen, putting-out soon
came to create and exploit a domestic, rural, semi-skilled workforce, beholden to a putting-
out employer rather than to a clientele. 'Putting out' served many of the practical purposes
for which 'flexible', part-time labour is used today. It developed its own vices such as truck,
and frame rents. It provided the same incentive to maximize and under-employ personnel in
normal conditions in order to be able to boost output rapidly on a rise in demand without
greatly increasing costs. It was therefore able to avoid many of the supply-side constraints
implicit in the urban-guild system, although this effect was most probably appreciated in
hindsight rather than foreseen. On the other hand, while its operatives continued to have
access to land, particularly on such commons as Coleorton Moor and Charnwood Forest,
they could maintain their unspecialized culture to a great extent. In addition an unspecialized
by-occupational system allowed producers to cope when only low prices were available for
their products.135

135 Report from the Commissioner Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 89,
citing Felkin's evidence on successful Saxon competition from by-occupational stocking makers, who still had
access to land; also Ibid., p.87, evidence of 'Walker', and p. 88, 'Biggs'.
Chapter 5

Eighteenth-Century Developments and Setbacks in Commercial Specialization

Introduction

It was demonstrated in the previous chapter that although it was primarily for domestic consumption, unspecialised production did not necessarily exclude a degree of specialised production for sale. The latter purpose was complimentary to the former need. This was necessarily the case when it provided a means of making good deficiencies, and also when it provided a means for discretionary expenditure. However, in a countryside enjoying comparatively low living costs, accompanied by cheap labour, some kinds of work provided attractive opportunities for commercial exploitation by putting-out undertakers. This was especially the case in those parts of textile manufacture, where the skills were easily replicated, learnt by continuous practice, and usually formed part of a chain of production. In such an environment putting-out undertakers also provided additional employment opportunities for households with few productive assets other than their labour. For the poor it could even be comparatively attractive to work for low wages. These provided additions to their other means of livelihood, albeit spasmodically so. Consequently, a source of discretionary expenditure for the more self-reliant, and an ability to make good subsistence deficiencies for the less fortunate, were both inducements to participate in putting-out trades selling to more distant markets.

While hand knitters might have found sufficient demand within their own community, a significant number of machine knitters could not have done so. This was particularly the case for such basic low-cost items as worsted stockings. They produced too many stockings. They therefore needed more extensive markets. On the other hand, the village carpenter, the tailor, the blacksmith and the wheelwright often found sufficient demand for their trade skills within the needs of the local community. This was particularly
the case if they had a smallholding to fall back on during hard times. In the case of the
extractive industries, tenant farmers might operate shallow coal workings largely with their
existing capital resources. But deeper mines required more varied capital equipment,
including steam-driven pumps, and co-ordinated gangs under specialist coal masters to work
them. Such operations necessitated more production to cover costs and more extensive
market outlets for it. For the larger landed estates, larger commercial farms, selling a higher
proportion of farm production, were an attractive proposition for augmenting rent rolls. But
increased sales of farm produce also necessitated distribution to wider markets. More
extensive and distant markets required improved infrastructure for distribution. Many
landlords were aware of this and preferred to invest in transport-infrastructure projects,
rather than in industry, when not investing directly in their own estates. The right transport
projects indirectly helped to improve their rent rolls.

In this chapter it is proposed to examine some eighteenth-century trends towards
greater commercialisation, supported by developments in distribution, and greater
specialisation, which were to impact on the occupational cultures of the three parishes
around Coleorton Moor.

**Developments in the differentiation of bargaining power.**

Within limits the more self-sufficient unspecialised producers had some control over the
price of the goods they made for sale. If they could not find buyers at a price they considered
reasonable they were able to restrict their production without unduly harming their
households. The same principle applied to selling their labour for seasonal work. A
dichotomy of price setters and price takers differentiated the unspecialised, by-occupational
producer from the growing specialist, proletarian rural workforce of the eighteenth century.

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2 Ibid., pp. 97-120.
3 E. L. Jones, 'Introduction', in E. L. Jones (ed.), *Agriculture and Economic Growth in England, 1650-1815*
   (1967), pp. 26, 32.
As has been noted in the previous chapter, the more self-sufficient unspecialised producers usually had control of their production assets. For those without such underpinnings to their bargaining power, price taking was a necessity. The distinction was not always absolute. If unspecialised producer households had some spare capacity, they might still take in some ‘put-out work’ as price takers. They might sometimes need to do so. Again the difference in realised price between price setting and price taking was usually limited in the practice of normal everyday life. However, although the difference was often no more than marginal, it could at times have had some real bearing on the realised standard of living. In times of poor trade, or high food prices, the impact could be considerable.

In the seventeenth century the Crown had endorsed the establishment of monopolies, monopolistic trade societies, and monopolistic corporations by charter. Such endorsement of a trade franchise implied at least a limited acceptance of price setting. But an unfettered ability to raise prices was never acceptable, and was limited by a number of factors. These included custom, the ‘moral economy of the crowd’, and official intervention against some aspects of price setting, including increasingly harsh sanctions against labour combinations at the end of the eighteenth century.

For the tailors and shoemakers of Coleorton Moor a major restraint was probably the inability of their clientele to pay very much. In the wheelwright’s shops of the nineteenth century George Sturt pointed out that prices of items produced by many shops were often determined by custom for new work rather than by the costing of individual items. It was implied that up-to-date costs were more likely to be reflected in ‘jobbing’ prices. Both official intervention and the ‘moral economy of the crowd’ were demonstrated on several occasions.

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4 In the absence of collusion with his fellows a price taker is an individual supplier who cannot affect the market price of his product. He will receive the same price per unit of production whatever quantity of it he places on the market.
6 E. P. Thompson, Customs in Common (1991, Harmondsworth, 1993 edn), pp. 185-351, suggested the eighteenth century ‘moral economy’ gave the crowd rights of remedial action when, for example, high prices threatened food availability.
occasions in the eighteenth century. During the Seven Year’s War demand moved from sea carriage to favour over-land carriage, and officialdom acted to stem transport-price increases. In April 1759 the Leicestershire justices of the peace noted that ‘diverse Waggoners and other Carriers by combination among themselves, have raised the price of the carriage of Goods from the City of London to this County to excessive Rates’. In both 1759 and 1761 the justices decreed a maximum London to Leicester or Loughborough tariff of 5s per hundredweight. They allowed an additional 6d per hundredweight to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and an additional 6d over the whole route in winter. The cheese riots of October 1766 in north-west Leicestershire demonstrated the ‘moral economy of the crowd’, and especially an eighteenth-century crowd’s reaction to high food prices. They also demonstrated some manifestations of official authority. On ‘Coal-hill’ cheese wagons from Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Derby were stopped and the cheese distributed to ‘the poor’. Similar occurrences involved wagons from Derby and Burton-on-Trent. At these cheese was sold for 2d per pound ‘with the consent of the owner’. ‘On Wednesday at Wigston’ two wagons of cheese, purchased by a factor, were put up for sale at a public house. The crowd ‘insisted upon its being sold to the poor at 2d per lb which on Thursday morning were comply’d with’. At Cavendish Bridge cheese to the value of £900 was reported ‘given away’ after a warehouse and some barges were attacked. To calm the rioters the justices of the peace, the City of Leicester, and private gentry acted. The justices determined that all persons applying for ‘Badger, Lader, Kidder, Drover or Carriers Licences’ should enter into ‘such Recognizances against Forestalling, Engrossing, and Regrating, as the Act of Parliament in that Case prescribes’. The City of Leicester authorities decreed that ‘No Huckster, of any kind whatever, will be allow’d to buy any sort of Provisions [at Leicester

8 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 14 April 1759; Ibid., 4 April 1761.
9 Ibid., 4 October, 11 October, 18 October 1766.
10 Ibid., 4 October 1766.
11 Ibid., 11 October 1766.
12 Ibid., 11 October 1766.
market] till after the Hour of One O’Clock’. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal later reported that ‘we are assur’d that 20 gentlemen of this borough have subscrib’d together a fund of £440, and at a fair directed the money to be laid out in cheese to be sold all winter at a low price for the benefit of the poor.’ In examples of ‘the moral economy’ more specific to Coleorton Moor’s three parishes, miners there demonstrated vigorously against high food prices in 1793. Two years later another demonstration against high food prices by Coleorton miners turned into a full-scale riot, and a pumping machine was damaged. The ringleaders were sent to prison or deported. In this decade the authorities had seen similar demonstrations of the crowd in France lead to the overthrow of the regime there. Manifestations of ‘the moral economy of the crowd’ were no longer tolerable.

As the eighteenth century progressed officialdom had become increasingly unsympathetic to restrictions on production, which were designed to maintain prices, and wages. An early decision to put an end to restrictions on apprentice numbers was taken against the Framework Knitters’ Company in the Fellowes and Cartwright case of 1740. An attempt to resurrect the Company’s authority through new byelaws in 1745 failed to take effect after a House of Commons’ Select Committee condemned it in 1753. The woolcombers, on the other hand, were able to keep their restrictions on new membership intact until the next century.

A degree of franchise often arose from favourable locations, and/or the need for complex skills. This continued to be implicit in a number of trades in the eighteenth century.

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13 Ibid. 11 October 1766.
14 Ibid. 18 October 1766.
15 Leics. CRO, The Leicester Journal, 15 November 1793.
16 Ibid., 31 July and 13 August 1795.
17 R. Bienvenu (ed.), The Ninth of Thermidor: The Fall of Robespierre (New York, 1968), p. 14, ‘Predominantly small shopkeepers, tradesmen and artisans... the sans-culottes approved and demanded price controls and they expected the government to assure an adequate supply of food...’
19 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
It provided a degree of price-setting bargaining power. Around Coleorton Moor such tradesmen included the innkeepers, and shopkeepers, the carriers, the wheelwrights and the frame-smiths, and even the less remunerated potters, shoemakers and tailors. They also included the woolcombers whose ability to be price setters in the eighteenth century depended as much on their close-knit guild membership as on the skill required for their trade. A good reputation and successful innovation also provided a price-setting franchise for a period of time. Thomas Bakewell's reputation as an innovative breeder of cattle and sheep is well known. He was reputed to hire rams and bulls successfully at high prices. He also hired his stallions with grass keep on his own farm. In March 1762 he advertised 'To Cover this Season...a Black Colt of the Cart Kind, rising two Year's Old...Grass for Mares and proper care taken...at Five Guineas each Mare'. Also near Loughborough another farmer-breeder advertised 'At Half a Guinea a Mare with Foal, and Half-a-Crown Barren: A very good black Horse, Seven Year's Old of the Cart sort...a sure getter of Foals...out of a fine Flanders Mare of George Salisbury's'. The latter advertisement was repeated subsequently, adding 'the Horse was got by the famous old Horse of Mr. Boultee's'. Although the two cases were not exactly identical there was clearly a considerable element of franchise-price-setting differentiating them.

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21 A considerable element of price-setting ability was also implicit in successful innovation, with items which varied from the Boulton and Watt steam engine to Bakewell's Dishley rams and stallions.
22 E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (1963, Harmondsworth, 1968 edn), pp. 260-81, includes several of these trades in his 'privileged trades' for the period to 1814.
23 A. Smith, Wealth of Nations (1776, Harmondsworth 1974 edn) p. 230, 'Half a dozen woolcombers, perhaps, are necessary to keep a thousand spinners and weavers at work. By combining not to take apprentices they can not only engross the employment, but reduce the whole manufacture into a sort of slavery to themselves, and raise the price of their labour much above what is due to the nature of their work.'
26 Ibid., 20 March 1762.
27 Ibid., 27 March 1762.
28 By the 1780s Bakewell was so confident in the superior value of his sires that he no longer set the price of hire for them. Instead he encouraged potential hirers to bid against each other. See W. Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 2 volumes (1789, 1796 edn), 1, pp. 379-80.
Price taking.

As markets became more extensive the more speculative nature of price taking became applicable to many specialist trade activities in the eighteenth century. Such activities included hosiery, weaving, and nail manufactures, coal mining and considerable sections of farm production. In such businesses price taking was usually applicable to both employees and employers. In the larger, but more distant, and more speculative markets, it was impractical to move goods around continually until the desired price was found for them.

Compared with previous centuries when the Crown had endorsed the establishment of monopolies, and particularly monopolistic corporations by charter, eighteenth-century officialdom came to frown on price setting. Patent enforcement limits for new inventions were left at 14 years but various attempts were made to restrict collective price setting, including mostly ineffective ones against the system of truck. In 1799 and 1800 the Combination Acts were passed. Towards the end of the century some of the supporters of enclosure of the commons argued that the comparative wage independence of commoners from the constraints of wage-labour would be ended by commons enclosure.

In this disapproval of price-setting, which hardened intermittently as the century progressed, officialdom was both influenced and supported by the new economic thinking, particularly that of Adam Smith. In the ideal market place all participants were effectively to be price takers. For the eighteenth century Smith had complained that while consumption was the sole object of production, consumers' interests were sacrificed to those of producers. In the ideal market the efficient specialist, with the support of adequate capital, would thrive for the benefit of himself and his clientele. The ability to carry stock-in-trade was the best

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29 Wilson, England’s Apprenticeship, pp. 102, 148, 173–4, 189, regarding monopolies and patents.
30 Ibid., pp. 102, 187 regarding patents; Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, pp. 73–82, 129, regarding truck.
31 Ibid., p. 104.
defence against uneconomically low prices. Governments should intervene only against the
concerted efforts of special interest groups to influence prices. Otherwise prices and wages
should be determined by bargains made between the individual parties concerned. It was in
this spirit that Edmund Burke wrote to Arthur Young that

My constant opinion was and is that all matters relevant to labour ought to be left
to the conversations of the parties... that the great danger is in government
meddling too much...  

and

I am extremely sorry that anyone in the house of Commons should be found so
ignorant and unadvised as to wish to revise the senseless, barbarous, and in fact
wicked regulations made against free trade in matters of provisions, which the
good sense of the late Parliaments had removed. I am more concerned at the
measure, as I was the person who moved the repeal of the absurd code of statutes
against the most useful of all trades, under the invidious names of forestalling and
regrating.  

However, there were all too many situations where the bargaining power of the two parties
concerned was unequal. Around the mines of Coleorton Moor coal in the stack rapidly
deteriorated in value. Furthermore, in framework knitting it was the hosier who owned and
carried the trade stock, not the proletarian framework knitter. The proletarian worker was
vulnerable to market contractions. His counterpart, occupying a plot on Coleorton Moor,
and using moor resources was less vulnerable.

Deflecting the risks.

It was of great advantage to the undertakers of the putting-out trade that their investment was
mainly in working capital – work-in-progress, stock, and debtors. This tended to minimise
fixed costs.  

If demand for goods was poor they could stint the work given to their out-
workers, or alternatively lower prices.  

But fixed outlays could be incurred at all levels of

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37 Ibid., p. 303.
39 In the Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, pp.
332, 337, two Whitwick framework-knitter witnesses mentioned stinting of frames. However, most Whitwick
witnesses complained about prices received and the practice of truck, pp. 332-46.
business – from the manufacturing and mining entrepreneur investing in working capital and equipment to the framework knitter having to pay frame rents irrespective of business conditions, and/or running up debt in the truck shops. Such fixed outlays increased their propensity to be price takers. Out-workers therefore bore the brunt of trade recessions. When they lost the use of the common wastes proletarian out-workers also increasingly lost the ability to deflect the risks of such recessions. If some kind of stock holding was the best defence against recession, financial alternatives to real resources in the form of gathered or self-grown produce, and self-owned livestock, were only rarely understood.40 In addition low wage earners were rarely in a position to save.

For the increasingly proletarian operatives speculative trade for distant markets would have seemed very worthwhile on occasions, when they were fully employed, and the means of subsistence readily available.41 The ability to marry at an earlier age than before that waged labour provided was also attractive. But by 1761 proletarian framework knitters were clearly having problems when they advertised in an open-letter to the hosiers ‘of the counties of NOTTINGHAM, DERBY, and LEICESTER, and the adjacent Country,’ that

For all this calling is of the greatest importance, by the numerous hands it employs, and the many branches dependent upon it, yet, the price of labour is greatly lower, than in any of the dependent branches. We therefore beg leave to lay before you the necessity we are under for your mutual consent to enhance our prices...and by the enhancing of the price of labour in all other trades and callings, and the lowness of ours, it becomes almost unsupportable...and consequently all necessaries of life, as food, raiment, and all implements is become dearer...42

In the eighteenth century business failure was a common enough feature in Coleornton Moor’s mines.43 The most prominent eighteenth century bankruptcy affecting

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40 G. Bourne [Sturt], Change in the Village (1911, 1956 edn), p. 87, ‘The peasant thrift – which the people understood thoroughly had to be abandoned in favour of a modern thrift – commercial thrift- which they understood but vaguely’.
41 J. D. Chambers, The Vale of Trent, 1670-1800: A Regional Study of Economic Change (1957, Cambridge 1978 edn), pp. 3-4. Chambers suggested that the good harvests, and consequently low food prices of the late 1730s and early 1740s promoted a move into framework knitting of prospective operatives seeking to establish households at an early age, without the support of an agricultural by-occupation for subsistence.
42 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 12 January 1761.
43 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, pp. 135-8.
Coleorton Moor was that of Gabriel Holland in the early 1760s. Holland had taken over the lease of Swannington manor and mines 10 years earlier. By 1760 Holland was considerably in debt, and there were inadequate distribution facilities for his production. He had undertaken considerable investment in deeper shafts and equipment.

Price takers sometimes devised strategies to be less dependent on the whims of the market. Farmers, for example, often sold grain and wool by sample. By so doing they avoided hauling the whole quantity for sale to market, and then back to their own farms again if they did not like the price of the day. Samples could be proffered to would-be buyers over a period until either a satisfactory offer was found, or desperation eventually enforced a bulk sale.

Market integration.

For ‘the long eighteenth century’ Chartres has suggested ‘that the market for wheat was advanced in the extent of its price integration, but that this diminished significantly as one descended the bread scale’. He finally concluded that ‘the close analysis of such data as are available indicates a highly-integrated market up to about the middle of the century, generated perhaps by the primacy of London in England’s urban system, which subsequently deteriorated, and only reasserted itself in the less inflated circumstances of the 1820s’. However, it is more likely that apart from in the regions of regular supply to London by water, any apparent semblance of market integration depended more upon the transfer of market intelligence than on any real propensity to transport grain over long distances. In times of normal harvests people in the parishes of Coleorton Moor, the town of Leicester, or

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44 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 7 June 1760, 8 November 1760, 3 January 1761, 10 January 1761, 17 January 1761, 28 March 1761, and 4 April 1761.
45 Ibid., 24 May 1760, suggested, for example, that the proposed turnpike road to Hinckley was still in its planning stages.
46 Ibid., 3 January 1761 described several of the assets to be sold.
47 See Thompson, Customs in Common, pp. 196-8.
49 Ibid., p. 136.
say the county of Northampton would not have expected prices to be too disparate. In the 1760s prices in Leicester often varied by more than ten per cent in a single day and prices at Northampton usually overlapped that range.\(^{50}\) Just before the cheese riots of October 1766, the price of wheat had virtually doubled in Leicester compared with six years previously. In this crisis the price of wheat at ‘Mark-Lane’ varied 32s-44s per quarter while the Leicester price was up to 44s to 53s per quarter.\(^{51}\) As noted above, in the 1760s ‘the moral economy of the crowd’ brought pressure to bear if prices rose above what the crowd considered to be fair. At a perceived threat to cheese availability, on top of the high wheat prices, the crowd had taken action. Again the crisis of 1795 brought large price discrepancies when grain really might have had to be moved long distances, and partly at least overland. The price of wheat rose to 160s a quarter in Leicester, and 108s a quarter in London.\(^{52}\) And by 1795 overland transport facilities had indeed improved considerably.

**Transport and trade.**

Before the railway age good access to water transport facilities was a precondition for commercial success in trading substantial quantities of inert goods to distant markets. Such goods included grain, coal, timber and animal products such as wool, and hard cheeses. The market area for products with poor keeping qualities tended to be more local. Salting could extend the keeping qualities of meat and butter, and thereby lengthen the distance to their market destination.\(^{53}\) On the other hand, at the end of the eighteenth century, even a semi-hard cheese, such as Leicestershire’s famous Stilton, had an effective marketing area limited to 15 or 20 miles of its place of production.\(^{54}\) Outside that area it tended to be carried further by the prospective consumer or by some private arrangement. Much commercial prosperity

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50 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 24 July 1762, 6 July 1765.
51 Ibid., 3 August 1766.
52 Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, p. 156.
derived from inland trade routes tended to depend on the trade in driven live animals. However, higher-value finished articles usually bore the high cost of overland carriage better than raw materials. When there was considerable waste in the raw material, as was the case with long wool, the advantage in favour of transporting the finished article was obviously greater. The more finished were the products made, the more easily could such items bear the cost of overland transport. As far as the coal industry was concerned, the problems of the Coleorton and Swannington mines in the second half of the eighteenth century were largely caused by the high landed cost of their coal in Leicester – their nearest potential market of any size.

In 1675 a paper to the Royal Society calculated that transport costs for 15 miles overland were the same as for 300 miles on water, a ratio of 1:20. On this reasoning, the overland-cost equivalent of transport from Leicester to the Trent was the same as for 360 water miles. From Loughborough to the Trent it was the same as for 160 water miles. From Breedon church it was the cost equivalent of 120 water miles to the Trent by road through Castle Donington to Cavendish Bridge. The wharf at Cavendish Bridge was close to the Leicester-Derby road. It was six-land miles from Breedon Church and nine-land miles to the northern sectors of Coleorton Moor.

The primacy of water transport was a matter of scale economics. While a packhorse could carry a load of 240 pounds, an eight-horse wagon could haul up to ten tons. But along a canalised river such as the Trent a single horse could pull a barge loaded with 30 tons. Until the arrival of the railways in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the bias in favour of water transport was therefore very strong. From the early eighteenth

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56 J. Mercer, *The Spinner’s Workshop* (Dorchester, 1978), p. 73, estimates a cleaning loss of between 35-50% for most British breeds.
57 D. W. Baker, *Coalville, the First Seventy-five Years, 1833-1908* (Leicester, 1983), pp. 21-28, particularly p.23.
60 Ibid., p. 103.
century horse-drawn barges were using the Trent Navigation to the local wharf at Cavendish Bridge, and then to Burton-on-Trent, by the shallow extension of the canalised river carried out in 1719-21. In June 1761 'two boats lying at Nottingham Bridge, for plying the Trent and beyond, with sails, rigging and all utensils belonging to them,' were advertised for sale. One was of 25 ton and the other 'upwards of 30 ton' capacity.

In the second half of the eighteenth century enthusiasm for canal development was also particularly strong. In 1765 an entrepreneur, and enthusiast of canal development, was proposing to operate 'gangs of three 20 ton vessels, each navigated by a man and a boy, but to be drawn by one horse, on a proposed new canal from Wilden to Derby, and then on to Frodsham in Cheshire.

Easy and cheap river transport favoured the West Riding of Yorkshire (using the river Trent, and then the Aire-Calder Navigation) as a destination for Leicestershire and Lincolnshire long wool, more than it did Norwich, or most other worsted locations, except local ones. It has been noted that this trade received a boost from the opening of the Aire and Calder Navigation in 1699. The considerable savings from water transport depended on full loads being put together for navigable destinations. Carts and wagons were still economical for smaller loads as were packhorses for routes over difficult terrain. Land transport was also preferred in time of war.

Comparative transport costs.

An examination of transport costs throws light on the comparative merits of land and water routes respectively (table 5.1). This may well have been one element in determining the location of a manufacturing region. The rates used were derived from a variety of sources,

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63 Ibid., 4 May 1765.
65 Wilson, *England's Apprenticeship*, p. 80, on threats to the coastal trade in wartime.
particularly Arthur Young, William Marshall, some later inventory evidence and newspaper
advertisements.66 One problem with ascertaining transport costs, then as now, was the wide
variety of possible rates depending on particular circumstances – cheap rates for return loads
being a notable example. In spite of wide price fluctuations within a range, possible charges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of transport</th>
<th>Variable Cost</th>
<th>Fixed Cost</th>
<th>Total Cost /ton mile</th>
<th>Fixed: Total Cost %</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pack horses</td>
<td>1s.5d</td>
<td>½ d</td>
<td>1s.5d ½</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Paying tolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pack horses</td>
<td>1s.0d ¼</td>
<td>1/2d</td>
<td>1s.1d ¼</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Not paying tolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse and cart</td>
<td>11d</td>
<td>3/4d</td>
<td>11d ¾</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Paying tolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse and cart</td>
<td>10d ¼</td>
<td>3/4d</td>
<td>11d</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Not paying tolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3 horse wagon</td>
<td>3d ½</td>
<td>1d ½</td>
<td>5d</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Long distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3 horse wagon</td>
<td>3d</td>
<td>1d ½</td>
<td>4d ½</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Local traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5 horse wagon</td>
<td>2d ¼</td>
<td>2d</td>
<td>4d ¼</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>Long distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5 horse wagon</td>
<td>1d ¼</td>
<td>2d</td>
<td>3d ¾</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>Local traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse-drawn river barge</td>
<td>¼</td>
<td>1d</td>
<td>&gt; 1d ¼</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Navigable river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse-drawn canal barge</td>
<td>2d</td>
<td>See remarks</td>
<td>1d ½ to 2d</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Actual charges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1. Break-even price per-ton-mile based on 120 miles per week, c. 1770s.67

appear to have been comparatively stable between 1750 and 1808. In view of the inflation
of general prices, which took place during that period, this implies a lowering of real
transport rates, a reduction of transport risks, or both. To some great extent, therefore, the
investment that took place in turnpike roads, improved wagon technology and inland water
navigation, during that period, must be judged to have been successful.

The carriage rates in the period 1759-61 were substantially higher than most of those
for the 1770s in table 5.1 above. The rates allowed by the justices of the peace in 1759 and
1761 from London into Leicestershire were noted previously above. These rates would seem
to have worked out at around 1s per ton-mile, and based on the figures for the 1770s in table
5.1, might not have been unreasonable. The carriers may well have been trying to boost their

66 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 22 April 1761; G. Sturt, The Wheelwright's Shop (1923,
1963 edn), p. 211, citing A. Young, Six Weeks' Tour through the Southern Counties (1768, 1772 edn);
Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, pp. 256-62; Ibid., 2, pp. 370, 374-5; W. Pitt,
General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, 2 vols (1809, Newton Abbot, 1969 edn), 1, pp. 306,
314-21; Duncliff, Three Staffordshire Canals, pp. 13, 16, lower concessionary rates were sometimes available
on canals for specified merchandise.

67 For calculation purposes variable costs comprised: 10 lb. oats for each working horse, a wagoner and a boy
for each transport unit, equipment maintenance, and road tolls as appropriate (or actual local canal rates for
general goods). Fixed costs comprised: between 15 and 18 lb. of hay per day for each horse for maintenance at
work or at rest, depreciation charges for equipment and horses, stabling, and interest on investment.
incomes during the Seven Years War, when more traffic may well have been diverted to overland routes.  

From table 5.1 one should note the substantial rise in fixed costs, as a proportion of overall charges, as between packhorses (3%-4%), various forms of wheeled transport, and water-borne traffic (c.80%). But as investment in transport units of larger capacity rose, charges came down. However, not all investment in turnpike trusts and canals could entice sufficient traffic to enable them to become economic at such rates, or even at packhorse rates. The canal-barge rate was that charged for general goods on the canals and canalized rivers around the Leicestershire area in the 1790s. At this rate a canal company might have to ‘sell’ from between 150,000 ton-miles and 300,000 ton-miles per annum to cover its fixed costs. The Loughborough Navigation surpassed its break-even rate of turnover very quickly. It took the Ashby Canal Company much longer to do so. River transport was usually cheaper than artificial canals (1d ¼ in table 5.1), and coastal transport cheaper still. In 1808 Gott & Co., of Leeds, received a quotation, which broke down as to 7½d per ton-mile from Leeds to Selby in Yorkshire and then little more than ¾d per ton-mile from Selby to London. Higher capacity coastal barges could therefore be even cheaper than river transport. From the 1760s, on the other hand, the high variable costs per ton-mile of using packhorses made them rarely viable as a means of transport on major turnpike roads. But they were still useful on tracks across difficult terrain.

The high cost of inland commodity movement was mainly the result of having to provide feed for the animals during the journeys, or the need to maintain several teams of horses at their various staging points. A feed cost was obviously involved whether animals

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68 See also Wilson, England’s Apprenticeship, p. 80, regarding the threat to the coastal trade during the seventeenth-century Dutch wars.
69 Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, 1, p. 315.
70 Ibid., p.315-6. It was built for 60-ton capacity barges, the original plan being that it should be extended to join the Trent. Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 208, suggests that the Ashby Canal was at its most prosperous from 1828 to 1845.
were moving goods, or merely being driven to a distant market. However, while the market animals could be moved at a leisurely pace, involving little more than a maintenance ration provided by comparatively cheap forage, working draught animals required the additional energy from a 'production' ration. In terms of feed requirements the one-horse, 30-ton barge clearly had an advantage in its ability to haul a substantial part of its denser feeds. For overland carriage especially, hay was too bulky to be carried any distance. For the packhorse, the stagecoach horse, and also the drovers' cattle, forage had to be purchased on the way. The grazing of road verges was never more than a short-term supplement for the working animal. To some extent the drovers were able to attenuate their costs by following the less densely inhabited watershed routes. There they could find grazing more easily, and probably cheaper hay. The carriage-trade operators, along with horse-borne travelers, were more dependent on the facilities provided by inns and staging points. The will of John Mansfield, an innkeeper of Coleorton, shows him to have had several closes, as well as barns and stables. On the Derby-Leicester-London road, two miles south of Loughborough, John Timmes's inn provided stabling for 50 horses in 1759. He also had extensive barns for the storage of produce. When Richard Nedham's stagecoach business and other assets were sold in 1763, it was revealed that it had been supported by a farming operation close to Leicester, which included the lease of 38 acres in Knighton.

Land routes.

For a long time overland transport had been mainly dependent on gangs of packhorses. This mode of transport was particularly useful over difficult terrain. An old established

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73 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 14 March 1746, 'John Mansfield'.
74 Leics. CRO, Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 8 September 1759.
75 Ibid., 28 May 1763.
76 D. Hey, Packmen, Carriers and Packhorse Roads, p. 98.
packhorse route from Manchester and the north west, passed through Derby, and crossed the
Trent at Cavendish Bridge before proceeding to Leicester. In the 1830s packhorses were
still used on occasions to carry coal from Coleorton. They had been noted carrying coal to
Leicester in 1603 along a packhorse route to the south of, but parallel to the later Ashby-
Leicester turnpike road. At that time the coal which had cost 1s 7d per ton at the pit head
was sold for 10s per ton in Leicester. The inventory of Thomas Platts of Coleorton in 1723
showed him having two horses with packsaddles. Platts seems to have worked from the
Wilkins' mines in Coleorton and Swannington. Wilkins had leased him his small plot.
Another interesting use of packhorse gangs seems to have been in the transportation of dried
fish from the east coast (a low weight, high protein source).

In 1724 the Swannington mines were the most prominent in the area around
Coleorton Moor. Their production appears to have averaged up to 27 tons per day. Other
Wilkins' mines in the area produced another nine tons per day on average. But owing to
the high cost of distribution, supply at the pithead frequently exceeded demand at that time.
Surplus production was stored in stacks where it rapidly lost value. However, in the
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were regular attempts to make inland traffic by
wagon more economic. By the end of the sixteenth century wagon capacities had reached a
mere three tons at best — itself a vast improvement on the one-ton carts at the beginning of
that century. Meaningful increases in all weather wagon capacity were not possible until
road-maintenance was upgraded by the turnpike trusts. When this occurred, several
packhorse gangs were put up for sale.

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77 Ibid., p. 98.
78 Baker, Coalville, the First Seventy-five Years, p. 21.
79 Ibid., p. 21.
80 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1723, 'Thomas Platts'.
81 Leics. CRO, Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 20 November 1762, advertisement of John Fenton.
82 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 125.
83 Baker, Coalville, the First Seventy-five Years, p. 16-17.
85 Leics. CRO, Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 10 May 1760, 'Mary Pratt, salter'; Ibid., 20 November 1762.
Improving the economics and increasing the capacities of wagon transport had necessitated upgrading the maintenance of the roads. The number of turnpike trusts, established by private Act of Parliament, on local initiatives to upgrade road maintenance, grew steadily in the eighteenth century. By 1759 Mr Fletcher, of Smalley, Derbyshire, could advertise 'best Coaks in the County at Eight-Pence per Quarter, with the assurance that to his 'Coal-Work...The Road is made good, that Carriages may pass all the Year'. However, the improvement in the economics of transport from the turnpike roads was limited. By the 1760s John Farrow of Loughborough was operating 'two well accustom'd Common-Stage Waggons' from Derby, across Cavendish Bridge, to Leicester and London, 'with ten able horses each'. But by 1766 he had also put the business up for sale. Several of the newer local road transport enterprises appear to have been short-lived in that decade of the eighteenth century.

Trade routes and infrastructure development around Coleorton Moor.

From the beginning of the eighteenth century until the construction of the Soar Navigation, to Loughborough, in 1778, the wharf at Cavendish Bridge was the main import and export location for sources and destinations outside the region. In July 1764, J. Bakewell advertised grocery imports through his wholesale warehouse at that wharf. He added that he also took a room at the Queen’s Head, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, on the first Saturday of every month, to meet prospective customers for those imports. He was therefore certainly crossing the region around Coleorton Moor. In the 1760s some cheese was exported from the county by stage-
wagon, but substantially larger quantities were loaded onto barges at Cavendish Bridge.\textsuperscript{91} Malting barley was also sent to the Bass Brewery at Burton-on-Trent from Breedon in the early nineteenth century, as well as to the local brewery at Cavendish Bridge.\textsuperscript{92} It is also probable that some of the long wool exported from the county to the West Riding of Yorkshire, was shipped from this wharf. However, it is also likely that large quantities of wool were also transhipped at wharves further east, such as Sawley Ferry, since much of it originated in eastern Leicestershire\textsuperscript{93}.

**Local turnpike trusts.**

The first meeting of the trustees for the turnpike road from Tamworth to Sawley Ferry was arranged for 8 May 1760.\textsuperscript{94} ‘At which time and place all Persons desirous of undertaking the repair of the said Road, or being employ’d therein, or in undertaking the building, or setting up any of the Toll-gates, or Bars on the said Road, are desired to attend, and to bring with them proper Estimates, in order to lay the same before the Trustees for their Inspection and Approbation’. From Tamworth the road ran through the local market towns of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Castle Donington. In between it passed through Lount and Breedon. On 13 June, the same year, the trustees of the Hinckley-Melbourne Turnpike met to appeal for funds of between £50 and £1000 per subscription.\textsuperscript{95} This road by-passed Market Bosworth and crossed Coleorton Moor through Swannington, Peggy’s Green and Lount, from where it passed Staunton Harold to reach Melbourne and then the River Trent at ‘Woeful Bridge’. A third turnpike road connected Ashby-de-la-Zouch with Loughborough running through Coleorton, and across the moor past the future chapel site on the outskirts of Swannington.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 4, 11, 18 October 1766, in articles covering the cheese riots in Leicester and Northwest Leicestershire.
\textsuperscript{93} See the section on agriculture, below.
\textsuperscript{94} Leics. CRO, Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 3 May 1760.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 24 May 1760; see also CRO Leics., 13/D/40/11(43/95), being Hinckley-Melbourne Turnpike Trust Minute Book, from 21 November 1782.
Common. A fourth turnpike road of relevance to the three parishes around Coleorton Moor ran from Leicester, through Markfield and just south of Whitwick, Swannington and Coleorton, to Ashby-de-la-Zouch. By the beginning of the nineteenth century a spur from the latter turnpike road had also been built from Markfield, through Whitwick to Pegg's Green.

By the 1780s the three parishes around Coleorton Moor were therefore well served by improved turnpike trust roads running across some part of them to the closest market towns. Two of them also connected with wharves on the river Trent. The sites of tollgates on the Hinckley road were particularly interesting in demonstrating traffic across Coleorton Moor. There were only two tollgates on the 13-mile stretch of road between Hinckley, and the approaches to Swannington. There were then another four tollgates as this road ran through Swannington and across the moor to Staunton Harold. From Swannington these were sited at Pegg's Green, Lount, and Newbold, with a further one at Staunton Harold – the final gate before Melbourne. In the early nineteenth century Nichols thought it significant to mention that six of Coleorton's small number of farmers owned wagons. It is likely that at least some of these were operating as by-occupational coal carriers. Quite clearly the revenue for these various turnpikes arose from mine- and quarry-traffic, which originated around the moor. (The 1837 Ordnance Survey map shows the moor ringed by tollgates.) On the open common wagons sometimes tried to cut corners and avoid the tollgates. In 1784 the trustees decided to build a fence alongside the gate into Froggett's Lane, north west of Pegg's Green, to deter this practice.

Although the turnpike-trust roads enabled year-round traffic for wagons, thereby
bringing overall costs down, road haulage was still more costly than carriage by water. The turnpike roads were mainly useful for stagecoaches over long distances, for shorter haulage traffic of heavy goods, or for haulage to towns like Hinckley, which did not have access to canals.102 They were also useful to farmers hauling grain, lime and coal. When the river Soar was canalised from Loughborough to Leicester the coal production from Coleorton Moor to Leicester was placed at a considerable disadvantage from the competition of the Derbyshire mines.

Canals.

Until the 1790s major landowners in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor had opposed the extension of the Soar navigation from Loughborough to Leicester. Among their reasons for doing so had been their concern of the potential threat to their Leicester market for coal from the Derbyshire coalfields.103 Their agreement to the project was finally obtained in the early 1790s with the promise that a branch canal would be built to Nanpanton from Thringstone. The wharf at Thringstone was to be supplied by horse-railway carriage from the various collieries, and quarries.104 A similar horse railway was to connect Nanpanton with the River Soar at Loughborough.

The Forest Canal appears to have been badly engineered. This was particularly so in the case of the reservoir dam in the Charnwood hills, which burst its banks in 1799 after heavy rain.105 Again, the economic problems of the canal branch had been compounded by a premature dispatch of coal along it to Leicester in October 1794. This was before a reliable supply of water to the canal had been assured.106 The premature dispatch of coal from

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102 The 15 miles carriage from Coleorton to Hinckley (and previously to Leicester) seems to have been near the limit for regular sales. See Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 106. But farmers may have sent their wagons further for their own requirements. See Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 2, p. 5, 'the cost of fetching [lime], sixteen or seventeen miles.'
103 Baker, Coalville, the First Seventy-five Years, p. 23.
104 Ibid., p. 23.
105 Ibid., p. 25.
106 Ibid., p. 24.
Thringstone allowed a flood of coal supplies from Derbyshire to Leicester. These had previously been held back by a clause in the enabling-act of Parliament restricting competition until the Leicester Navigation Company was able to transport Coleorton Moor coal along the canal. The reservoir dam for supplying the canal had been repaired by 1801, but by that time the mines relying on it had encountered severe cash flow problems.\textsuperscript{107} Supply to the Leicester market was taken over by the Derbyshire mines. Lacking adequate revenues from the mines the canal slowly fell into disrepair after 1804.

Another canal, which had significance for Breedon parish, and especially the northern sectors of Coleorton Moor, was the Ashby canal, which was constructed during the ten years following 1794.\textsuperscript{108} Although built primarily to serve the area around Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and particularly the new mines at Moira, a horse railway connected it with the collieries at Lount and Newbold, and also the Cloudhill lime works.\textsuperscript{109} The Swannington mines were prevented from using this connection by the Act of Parliament enabling construction of the Leicester Navigation and Forest canals. Less ambitious in their mining technology, and consequent cost structure, and served by a more economical haulage system, the Breedon parish mines therefore appear to have remained viable into the early years of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{110}

\textbf{Farm specialisation: cropping regimes.}

The turnip fallow of the Norfolk system appears to have been comparatively rare in northwest Leicestershire.\textsuperscript{111} During the eighteenth century farming specialisation in this part of the county appears mostly to have followed two, not entirely unrelated paths. One was the

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p. 25. The enabling act prevented the Ashby canal from carrying Swannington coal. Frustrated by obstinate transport problems the Raper and Fenton mines in Swannington had been closed in 1798, Owen, \textit{The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield}, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p. 162.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 162.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., pp. 139-42, 162.
\textsuperscript{111} Marshall, \textit{The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties}, 1, pp. 136, 203-6.
development of all-grass, 'grazier' farms, following a long established example in eastern Leicestershire. The second was the application of convertible husbandry — a nine- or ten-year rotation between grass and arable, which in principle effectively substituted the last three years of a long ley for the one-third fallow of the old three-field system. During those last three years of the grass ley the relevant fields were only grazed. The rotation then moved to three years of arable cropping, followed by another six-year grass ley. Hay was only taken for the first one or two years, followed by grazing of aftermaths. While convertible husbandry supported a mixed farming system, the 'grazier' farms specialised in ruminant-livestock production. In the first half of the eighteenth century inventory evidence suggests the all-grass farms mainly concentrated on sheep rearing and dairy products. In the second half of the century there was an increasing emphasis on market cattle for a number of reasons. These systems will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The three parishes around Coleorton Moor appear to have been comparatively slow both in the development of all-grass 'grazier' farming, and in abandoning the three-field system for the adoption of formal convertible husbandry. In Coleorton, Worthington and Whitwick townships the three-field system was still being operated at the end of the eighteenth century. Breedon township appears to have been experimenting with a four-field system by 1656, when one field was probably dedicated to long leys. This may well have involved, therefore, a partial use of the convertible husbandry rotation. By 1759 there appears to have been five open fields in the township — The Dam field, the Great field, the Thunderhedge field, the Nether field and the Wood field. Perhaps this was another step

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112 Ibid., 1, pp. 136, 216.
113 Ibid., 1, p. 136.
114 Ibid., 2, p. 235; Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, 1, p. 325.
116 Leics. CRO, DG20/MA/46/1-3, Pre-enclosure maps for Bredeon, Tongue and Wilson.
towards full convertible husbandry. But in the arable fields two years of crops, followed by a
one-year fallow was still the general rule.

**Farm specialisation: sheep-breed distribution.**

In the first half of the eighteenth century inventories in the three parishes around the moor
were notable for an absence of pasture sheep of the ‘Old Leicester’ breed. This heavier meat
and long wool sheep seems to have been represented by only a few cross-bred animals in
Breedon parish, whose dams had probably been crossed with that breed. Most of the
sheep in the three parishes were of the mountain, or alternatively Charnwood Forest breeds,
which were often known as common-field sheep. They grazed the wastes, or poorer pastures
by day, and were folded to destroy the weeds, and manure the fallow field by night.

Fleaks used for night folding on the fallow field occurred in a number of inventories.

Pasture sheep were unsuitable for night folding. Approximately double the weight of the
common-field sheep, they were much more valuable as butcher’s animals. In inventories
they were often valued at 14s or 15s each while common-field sheep were each only valued
at from 3s to 4s 6d. But the bodies of pasture sheep were too heavy, and their legs too
short to make the twice-daily journey from common waste to fallow field, and back again.

In addition Marshall suggested that the grazing, alternately on the fallow fields and common
wastes, could not even provide them with a maintenance ration, as it did the common-field

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117 Leics. CRO Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1723, compare the 36 sheep @ 9s each of ‘George
Kinsey’ of Breedon with the 20 sheep @ 4s each of ‘Paul Bodewell’ of Tongue; also Ibid., 1724, compare
‘Richard Wilkins’ of Newbold with ‘Henry Donnichthorp’ of Tongue. These sheep had similar value
differences. The nearest flock of pasture sheep to Coleorton Moor, in the inventory sample, was at Packington,
Ibid., 1700. However, it only comprised four sheep, very different from the large flocks in the east and south
east of the county.


119 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories. 1725 ‘John Harrison’ of Wilson recorded ‘Thirty
fleaks at Is each’.

120 Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, p. 333.

121 For example, Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1723, the inventory of ‘Thomas Snow’
of Burton Lazars referred to 168 ‘Great Sheep’, that of ‘Joseph Noble’ of Waltham in the Wolds to ‘twenty-
six sheep’, £19.10s and ‘ninety-two sheep’, £73 12s; Ibid., 1722 the inventory of ‘William Brookes’ of
Blackfordby, ‘20 Common Sheep’ £4, again 1724, ‘Eling Bently’ of Shepshed recorded ‘for five forest sheep’
£1.

sheep. Pasture sheep needed improved, enclosed pasture both for worthwhile production, and to minimise foot rot. It would seem, therefore, that only after Parliamentary enclosure in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor did they become significant there, together with the New Leicester breed, which was derived from them.

A number of factors probably combined to delay general application of the more specialised farming systems into the three parishes around Coleorton Moor. One such factor, as some farmers became more commercial in outlook, would certainly have been ease of access to the marketplace. The districts of the Leicestershire Wolds had tended to specialise in pasture farming partly as a function of their comparative isolation. The farms of the Wolds tended to be at higher altitudes and in areas where village desertion had been common in earlier times (see figure 5.1). Such desertion had provided a means to establish larger farms with enclosed pastures at an early date. By specialising in animal rearing they had been more easily able to make use of the more distant markets necessary for their participation in commercial production. Cattle and sheep could be driven to distant markets, at a leisurely pace, at a much lower cost, in terms of value, than corn could be carried. The enclosed pastures were ideal for breeding and raising the higher carcass-value pasture sheep. This breed appears to have originated in the salt marshes of Lincolnshire and then spread onto the enclosed parts of the Lincolnshire and Leicestershire Wolds in the first wave of its expansion and evolution. In figure 5.2 it is noted that there were comparatively few flocks of pasture sheep compared with flocks of open-field and ‘forest’ sheep. However, when one takes into consideration the different carcass weights of the two breeds, together with comparative flock sizes and wool production, pasture sheep are seen to have been significantly more important commercially. Among the inventories analysed from 1700-1759, acknowledged

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121 Ibid., 1, p. 333.  
122 Ibid., 1, pp. 332-3.  
123 Ibid., 1, pp. 337-40.  
124 Long wool was associated with various sheep breeds of marshland origin. The Kent, or Romney Marsh, was another notable example. See J. Mercer, The Spinner’s Workshop (Dorchester, 1978) p. 65; also P. J. Bowden, The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England (1962, 1971 edn) pp. 31-2.
Figure 5.1. Geographic distribution deserted village sites in Leicestershire.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{127} Adapted from W. G. Hoskins, \textit{Leicestershire: An Illustrated Essay on the History of Landscape} (1957), p. 28.
Figure 5.2. Geographic distribution of long-wool 'pasture' sheep, and short-wool common-field and 'forest' sheep, together with presumed crossbreeds, in early eighteenth-century Leicestershire.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{128} Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1700-59, from 71 inventories in the sample taken, which reported sheep.
pasture sheep numbered 2743 in 15 flocks, with a mean flock size of 183, but varying from one flock of four, at Packington, to one of 779 sheep. Overall production of this kind, was augmented by 2111 probable cross-bred sheep in 19 flocks, with a mean flock size of 111, varying from one ewe to a flock of 337 sheep. These contrasted to 1965 common-field and forest sheep in 37 flocks, with a mean flock size of 53 – a minimum of one, and a maximum of 260 sheep. Although, therefore, common-field flocks outnumbered pasture- and cross-bred-sheep flocks, in total pasture and cross-bred sheep were three and a half times more numerous. In terms of carcass weights and wool production, the significance of pasture sheep was even greater. Table 5.2 projects comparative wool-clip production by flock types.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of flocks</th>
<th>Sheep type</th>
<th>Total sheep</th>
<th>Average flock</th>
<th>Fleece weight</th>
<th>Wool total lb.</th>
<th>Average lb per flock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pasture</td>
<td>2,743</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>6-7 lb.</td>
<td>17,830 (63%)</td>
<td>1190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Cross-bred</td>
<td>2,111</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3-5 lb.</td>
<td>7,403 (26%)</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Common-field</td>
<td>1,965</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1-2 lb.</td>
<td>2,948 (11%)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>6,819</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4 lb. aver.</td>
<td>28,181 (100%)</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2. Comparative annual estimated wool production in pounds from 71 Leicester flocks, between 1700-1759.129

Farm specialisation: Dairy Farming.

Hard-cheese production on the grazier farms of the first half of the eighteenth century was another way of minimising the problem of long-distance transport cost. Hard cheese production optimised the weight for value relationship of dairy produce. In addition it had the long keeping qualities necessary for the sale to distant markets. By the end of the century graziers appear to have been more inclined to rear market cattle.130 Before Parliamentary enclosure around Coleorton Moor, commercial dairying appears to have been part of mixed farming systems found there. Dairy farming will be discussed at greater length

130 Ibid., 2, p. 235.
in the following chapter.

**Factors slowing agricultural change around Coleorton Moor.**

In the parishes around Coleorton Moor one factor resulting in the slow adoption of the more specialised systems was the existence of a local market for farm produce. This was in addition to the outlets at the market towns of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Cavendish Bridge, Melbourne, Castle Donnington, and the fair at Belton. In chapter 4 it was noted that unspecialised production did not preclude some cash sales. This would have been particularly so within the local community. The miners settling on the moor, followed by the trades and manufacturing workers, provided a local market for general farm produce, as did the growing number of non-agricultural households in the villages of Thringstone and Whitwick. Such a local market enabled small and often by-occupational farmers to sell to individual households, or alternatively to local retailers. Consequently there was probably not a great deal of advantage in small local farmers ‘engrossing’ sales. By contrast the graziers on the comparatively isolated Leicestershire Wolds, and other farmers in more remote areas, were suspected of finding small-lot sales an inconvenience.¹³¹ A second factor delaying adoption of the more specialised farming systems was probably the availability of the expansive commons of Coleorton Moor and Charnwood Forest for grazing their sheep, and young livestock. In order to make full use of these commons, they retained their common-field sheep, and were slow to change to the heavier pasture sheep of the Old Leicester and New Leicester breeds. In the case of Coleorton, Worthington and Whitwick townships farmers retained the system of arable that the commons supported until the end of

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¹³¹ Bowden, *The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 94, citing NRO/PRO, SP 12/90/38 and SP 12/261/63. Graziers refused to sell wool ‘in such small parcels as ye poor are able to by it.’ They transacted the bulk of their business with wealthy clothiers and middlemen.
the eighteenth century. When the enclosure of Charnwood Forest by act of Parliament eventually took place the forest breed of sheep rapidly became extinct.\(^{132}\)

A third factor slowing the introduction of the all-grass farm in the area, but also one factor eventually supporting the establishment of convertible husbandry, was the comparative proximity of the river Trent to the Breedon parish townships. With a growing market for their barley at Burton-on-Trent and Cavendish Bridge, these townships had an incentive to grow grain commercially. Although Staunton Harold had been enclosed long before the opening of the eighteenth century it was nevertheless reported by Nichols to grow noteworthy grain crops.\(^{133}\) Furthermore, barley grown to the east of Burton-on-Trent was reputed to have better malting qualities than that grown west of that town.\(^{134}\)

After enclosure was completed, convertible husbandry and even all-grass farms were established fairly rapidly in the area. The larger of the Ayr farms at Coleorton, which had been a mixed farm with 14 dairy cows in 1745, had become a grazier farm by 1841.\(^{135}\) Altogether there were five graziers in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor at the time of the 1841 census. They were all located in southern townships – Coleorton, Thringstone and Whitwick. Commercial grain production for more distant markets was therefore more likely to be found in the northern townships with easier access to the Trent.

**Local specialisation in domestic manufacturing.**

The cost of transport appears to have had a considerable influence on the start-up of the framework knitting industry in the region and on its geographic specialization within it. Neither Leicester nor Hinckley (the traditional start-up centre for framework knitting in Leicestershire) had easy access to the river Trent. It seems to be more than a coincidence,

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\(^{133}\) Nichols, *History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, 3, 2, p. 718.


\(^{135}\) NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594/21 *Census of Great Britain 1841*, ‘enumerators’ returns’.
therefore, that those two towns became associated initially with the processing of long-wool, 'grown' inland near-by, into finished-worsted hosiery products.\textsuperscript{136} Towns along the navigable rivers, such as Nottingham, Derby and Castle Donington (only 4 miles from Breedon church), based their production on imported material such as cotton and silk.\textsuperscript{137} After the Loughborough Navigation opened, the manufacture of lace, also using cotton and silk became prominent in that town.\textsuperscript{138} But by that time worsted-hosiery manufacture had been established in Leicestershire for many years.\textsuperscript{139}

Leicestershire's participation in the woollen-cloth manufacture appears never to have been of national significance. However, there is evidence that weavers operated as independent craftsmen in several villages. A few were still to be found in north-west Leicestershire as late as the 1841 census.\textsuperscript{140} Earlier, elsewhere in the county, the by-occupational farmer, woolcomber and worsted weaver, John Assenor, of Tur Langton, probably manufactured some cloth for more distant markets in order to keep all three of his looms occupied.\textsuperscript{141} There are also indications that some weaving for the manufacturing trade also took place in north-west Leicestershire during the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This was probably part of the kersey trade based in Burton-on-Trent.\textsuperscript{142} In the seventeenth century, probate inventory records show several farmer-weavers to have been operating in the Swadlincote, Oakthorpe and Church Gresley areas just over the border into south Derbyshire.\textsuperscript{143} Their numbers were greater than would have been the case if they had

\textsuperscript{136} This was also at a time early in the second half of the seventeenth century when enemy raiders threatened English coastal shipping. Wilson, England's Apprenticeship, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{137} P. Baines, Spinning Wheels, Spinners and Spinning, (1970, 1982 edn), p. 69, Lombe built a silk throwing mill at Derby between 1717-1720, using Italian technology; Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 775; Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, 1, p. 323.
\textsuperscript{139} White, History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the Counties of Leicester and Rutland, pp. 483-7.
\textsuperscript{140} NRO/PRO. HO. 107/594, 596.
\textsuperscript{141} Leics. PRO Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 10 February 1749, John Assenor, Tur Langton, woolcomber and weaver.
\textsuperscript{142} M.B. Rowlands, The West Midlands from A.D. 1000 (1987) p. 148, regarding the kersey trade based at Burton-on-Trent in the seventeenth century.
\textsuperscript{143} CRO, Derbyshire, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1638-98.
been village-craft weavers. In 1745 John Whitmore, a husbandman of Coleorton, left ‘4 looms, a woollen wheel and a linen wheel’, as well as a substantial mixed farming inventory, altogether worth £224.7s. It seems likely that Whitmore was employing family members, or others, to spin and weave for a more substantial market than the scattered settlements of Coleorton. However, circumstances were conspiring to make Leicestershire develop as a wool and worsted knitting region, not a woven cloth one.

By the middle of the seventeenth century hand knitting had been established in Leicestershire, along with many other counties, for many years as a peasant handicraft. It was almost certainly as common as spinning, as an occupation for many women. The county's poor may well have knitted items for resale as early as the sixteenth century. As late as 1762 the stock for sale in the Leicester shop of John Oram, furrier and grocer, included both hand-knitted and framework-knitted hose. However, although there were still hand knitters producing for sale in Anstey in 1810 and at Ashby-de-la-Zouch as late as 1841, the county appears not to have developed the same national reputation for hand-knitted goods as the Yorkshire dales or western Scotland. By the middle of the eighteenth century framework knitting had become the major industry of the navigable Trent valley while Leicestershire and Lincolnshire still had enough long-fibre wool to spare for export to the Yorkshire West Riding worsted industry.

In manufacturing, the more numerous and diverse were the processes and work rates of production, and the greater the numbers of different operatives involved, the earlier the putting-out undertakers became involved in a trade. Of processes and work rates it was said that

The master manufacturer by dividing the wool to be executed into different processes, each requiring different degrees of skill, or of force, can produce exactly that precise quantity of both, which is necessary for each process, whereas if the whole work were executed by one workman, that person must possess sufficient skill to perform the most difficult, and sufficient strength to execute the most laborious of operations into which the work is divided.  

144 Leics. CRO, Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 1 May 1762.
In the early eighteenth century John Haynes provided figures by end product for the number of persons needed to be employed for one week in processing one pack of wool:

Processing short wool into cloth employed 63 persons...
- 3 men to sort, dry, mix and make it fit for the Stock-carder,
- 5 to Scribel or Stock-card it,
- 35 Women and Girls to card and spin it,
- 8 Men to Weave it,
- 4 Men and Boys to spool and wind Quills,
- 8 Men and Boys [8] to scour or full it, row, sheare, rack and press it.\(^{146}\)

Wool for stuffs...from Lancashire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Kent...employed 302 persons:
- 7 Combers
- 250 Spinners
- 20 Throwers and Doublers
- 25 Weavers and Attendance...
- Such a Pack, if wrought into the finest Stuffs, would employ double the Number of Hands, in the Spinning, and Weaving especially.\(^{147}\)

A pack of wool knitted for stockings employed 202 persons [including]:
- 10 Combers...
- 102 Spinners
- 12 Doublers and Throwers
- 60 Stocking Weavers.\(^{148}\)

Silk cloth manufacture employed 297 people per hundredweight of silk, ribbon manufacture 110 persons, and silk stockings 275 persons.\(^{149}\) Of the above trade branches, the woollen trade, employing only 63 persons per pack of wool, appears to have remained in the hands of independent, and often by-occupational master craftsmen for the longest period of time.\(^{150}\)

The putting-out trade for manufacturing employed specialist workers performing quickly learnt, but limited processes. Putting-out also involved extensive travel and transportation of materials and finished products. This was both to co-ordinate the various processes and locations of production, and for the distribution of the end product. Because

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\(^{147}\) _Ibid._, p. 8.

\(^{148}\) _Ibid._, p. 9.

\(^{149}\) _Ibid._, pp. 11-12.

\(^{150}\) Hudson, _The Genesis of Industrial Capital_, p. 13.
worsted production involved more workers and processes per pack of raw material than that of woollen or linen goods, the putting-out undertaker became associated with long-wool processing at an early stage in the evolution of its manufacture. But had the undertakers not been able to find large numbers of the rural population willing to accept the low wages they offered for work, putting-out could not have become established in rural areas like Coleorton Moor and the three parishes of which it was part. In the first half of the eighteenth century low rural wages were mitigated by low rural food costs.\textsuperscript{151}

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries 'putting-out' was easily extended from spinning and hand knitting to other textile-manufacturing processes. It was particularly applicable to the development of such manufacturing trades as weaving and framework knitting. The same undertaker could combine distribution for spinning operations quite easily with putting-out-for-knitting on the same route. From temporarily utilizing the skills and labour of by-occupational tradesmen, putting-out soon came to create and exploit a domestic, rural, semi-skilled workforce, beholden to a putting-out employer rather than to a clientele. The putting out trade for domestic manufacture in rural areas entailed expensive transportation of materials. The horse and cart was the favoured means of distributing combed tops for spinning worsted yarn.\textsuperscript{152} This combination provided greater flexibility and ease of handling than either packhorse or wagon. Normally transport by horse and cart was expensive at around 11d per ton-mile for full loads, and considerably more so if carts were to travel half empty. However, the putting-out undertaker would normally have carried trade goods in both directions, thereby reducing transport costs overall. Again, the flexible nature of part-time or by-occupational rural labour made using the horse and cart worthwhile at a time of irregular commercial demand. 'Putting out' served many of the practical purposes for which 'flexible', part-time labour is used today and probably embraced similar vices. It provided the same incentive to maximize and under-employ personnel in normal conditions.

\textsuperscript{151} Chambers, The Vale of Trent. pp. 3-4, on low food costs in the 1740s.
\textsuperscript{152} James, History of the Worsted Manufacture, p.272
Output could be stinted to lower levels of demand. Equally output could be boosted rapidly on a rise in demand without greatly increasing costs. As James reported rural workers continued to be given some work during recessions when urban workers would have been totally laid off. The putting-out trade was therefore able to avoid much of the labour-supply inflexibility implicit in the urban-guild system.

In 1700 there was no certainty that either manufacturing or framework knitting would become a major occupation of north-west Leicestershire. This was more especially so in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor where a variety of operations were providing employment in addition to farming, and the more usual village trades. These operations included flax processing, weaving and iron smelting as well as mining, quarrying and forestry. There seem to have been as many ‘little wheels’ in inventories for flax spinning, as there were ‘long wheels’ for woollen yarn.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century framework-knitters had become established around Hinckley and in Leicester. They had spread to Shepshed, north of Charnwood forest, by the 1720s. These were still fairly limited locations. A framework knitter appears to be first mentioned in a Whitwick settlement certificate in 1711. By the middle of the eighteenth century numbers of framework knitters could be found in the marriage registers of both Breedon and Whitwick parishes, as well as in the registers of many other parishes of Leicestershire. By the beginning of the nineteenth century Nichols

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153 Ibid. p. 254.
154 Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 2, 1, p. 130 for iron smelting in Whitwick in the 1670s; Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1734, ‘Charles Burgess’, for flax processing.
156 Chambers, The Vale of Trent, p. 4.
158 Leics. CRO, DE40/39/1-106, being ‘settlement certificates, removal etc, Whitwick 1699-1821’.
reported that there were 100 framework knitters in Whitwick.\textsuperscript{160} From Coleorton he reported that there were three hosiers, who combed their wool, and converted it into stockings.\textsuperscript{161}

Nichols report of three woolcomber-hosiers in Coleorton as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century suggests that an older, less intensive manufacturing system was associated with the moor than was the case elsewhere in the county. It also recalls the situation of up to a century earlier when woolcombers across north-west Leicestershire often participated in the putting-out of framework knitting – a time before the industry became heavily proletarianized. By the early eighteenth century the master woolcomber had long been a putter-out of wool for spinning.\textsuperscript{162} There is evidence that such craftsmen were operating in Leicestershire during the latter part of the seventeenth century. Presumably they were combing the large quantities of long wool sheared from the pasture sheep of the Old Leicester breed. At that time, the West Riding of Yorkshire did not yet provide a market for Leicestershire spun worsted yarn. It was still sending much of its own to Norwich.\textsuperscript{163} Extending his enterprise from putting-out combed wool for spinning to putting-out worsted yarn for framework knitting was a logical activity for the better-off woolcomber. Inventory evidence suggests that many early eighteenth century hosiers were originally woolcombers by trade, putting-out for both spinning and knitting. A number of them owned more advanced spinning wheels, and ‘twist mills’ for the secondary processing of yarn were also listed in their inventories. They also owned knitting frames standing in the homes of out-workers.

Initially woolcomber diversification into hosiery activities may have been no more than a normal by-occupational tendency of those times. The putting-out of wool for spinning

\textsuperscript{160} Nichols, \textit{History and Antiquities of Leicestershire}, 3, 2, p. 1118.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., p. 740.
\textsuperscript{162} James, \textit{History of the Worsted Manufacture}, p. 254, refers to Essex where ‘The master weaver either put out the wool themselves to a sort of middlemen... or else made their purchases from the master woolcomber who...was an extensive “putter-out” of wool to spin’. Ibid. p. 325 citing Mr. William Jennings, of Windhill, near Bradford, ‘I went to York to buy wool... I then came home, sorted and combed it myself...Then I took it to hand spinners...’
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid. p. 253.
had probably started as an attractive alternative to the seasonal migration for work elsewhere, which might otherwise be necessary for year round employment. Woolcombing activity in Leicestershire tended to be slow between Christmas and late spring. (As late as 1849-51 large numbers of Leicestershire woolcombers still took part in the annual 'tramp' to work the winter months in Bradford in the West Riding of Yorkshire). Through participating in the 'putting-out' trade, a number of these woolcombers ended up as successful hosiers, or frame-masters, or both. This extension of woolcomber activities was almost certainly a major factor in the concentration of worsted-yarn supplies into hosier hands, which later accelerated proletarianization of the trade. Woolcombers, who belonged to a very close knit association, were an essential element in the synthesis of the raw material into yarn. Their strategic position in this stage of worsted production made long wool increasingly less available to independent knitters except in a greater bulk than the latter could afford to buy. Consequently woolcombers controlled the supply of wool to the knitting frames which enabled some of their members to become hosiers rather than framework knitters becoming so themselves.

Long wool for worsted yarn had to be combed before it was spun. The strategic position of the woolcomber in the production chain was re-inforced by a steadily growing concentration of clipped long-wool supplies, both from flock-masters and fell-mongers. The changes in the comparative availability of short wool and long wool as pasture sheep became more numerous, worked dramatically to the advantage of merchants, woolcombers, and putting-out undertakers. The necessity to comb long wool lengthened the production chain for its conversion compared to that short wool. This factor, together with the steady growth of long-wool supplies, increasingly sold in bulk, favoured the middleman and the putting-out

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164 J. Ginswick (ed.), Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 1849-51, 8 volumes (1983), 2, p.197; see also Mercer, The Spinner's Workshop, p. 36, regarding the early tramp trade.

165 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 3 December 1723, 'William Holyland', a Desford hosier and jersey-comber, was another example not mentioned in the text. An example of a woolcomber who seems to have been engaged in the putting-out trade for spinning only was Ibid., 4 February 1724, 'Benjamin Hammond' of Leicester.
Independent craftsmen had to obtain either dwindling supplies of mostly short wool from small producers, or supplies of long wool from independent woolcombers, to obtain a competitive price. The larger flock-masters increasingly dealt in larger lots, and some directly with Yorkshire manufacturers. Fragmentation of these lots into small parcels by further middlemen would have made such raw material increasingly uneconomic for small craftsmen. As woolcombers extended their activities into putting-out for spinning, and then knitting, worsted yarn became steadily less available for direct purchase by independent weaver and framework knitting craftsmen who otherwise might have bought their own supplies.

In March 1688, the inventory of Francis Smith of Leicester contained 'wooll', 'woosted hose and Jearsey Yarne' and described him as a 'Woollcomber and hosier'. A year later the will of Christopher Martin, also of Leicester, described him as a hosier while his probate inventory described him as a 'Jersey-comber'. The latter document listed a tod of wool, yarn, 6 dozen 'pattees', and 40 dozen of another [unreadable] item in addition to his 'combe pott' and other tools. In 1693 Edward Waddington, a 'jersi-comber', left gifts of gloves to various beneficiaries of his will.

Most interesting, however, was the detailed will and probate inventory of John Davie, a very prosperous woolcomber and hosier of Leicester, leaving £1,260 2s 0d in moveable goods and book-debt owing to him, and also his house with its appurtenances. In addition to his extensive quantities of yarn in stock, his combs and comb-pots in his comb-shop, and '9 bobin wheels' and mills in the chambers above, he was also shown to be a 'putting-out' undertaker. He had '614 pounds of woll at Spining' and '246 Skeans of yarne at knighting'.

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166 Ibid., 7 June 1748, 'Joshua Bracebridge', 'Malster and Woolman' of All Saints, Leicester. His inventory showed that even the by-product short fibre 'noyles' tended to be sold through merchants.
168 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 11 March 1689, 'ffiancis Smith'.
169 Ibid., 26 May 1693, 'Edward Waddington'.
170 Ibid., 18 May 1694, 'John Davie'.
Many woolcombers were content to stay with their main trade or merely to diversify to a by-occupation such as weaving or small-scale farming. Others became involved in framework knitting as small-scale frame-masters such as Edmund Guy, a woolcomber of Leicester.\textsuperscript{171} In 1745 he left the profits of one knitting-frame, in the possession of Robert Barber, to his wife during her lifetime, and then to his son, in addition to his house and lands. James Kirby of Ashby-de-la-Zouch employed eight stocking frames, in addition to combing his own wool until 1745.\textsuperscript{172} On 23 August 1759 the will of Thomas Dornotrope the Elder, of Loughborough, a woolcomber, showed he employed two stocking frames with framework knitters in Long Whatton.\textsuperscript{173} The three woolcomber-hosiers of Coleorton who combed their wool and wove it into stockings were therefore a continuation of an earlier tradition.

At the end of the eighteenth century the woolcomber-hosiers of Coleorton, and their framework knitters on the moor, may have been producing for a different and more local market than many of the framework knitters in Whitwick and Thringstone who were employed from Loughborough and Shepshed.\textsuperscript{174} (It was noted in 1845 that Whitwick had been too remote from the major trade routes taken by the hosiery trade for major merchant hosiers to have become established there).\textsuperscript{175} Nichols also reported three master hatters in Coleorton at the end of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{176} Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the nearest market town to Coleorton was also a centre for hat manufacture at that time.\textsuperscript{177} The woolcomber-hosiers of the moor may well have been marketing their wares in the area around that town, as well as in the area around Coleorton Moor.

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., January, 1745, ‘Edmund Guy’.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., June 1745, ‘James Kirby’.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 23 August 1759, ‘Thomas Dornotrope’.
\textsuperscript{174} Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 740.
\textsuperscript{175} Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 343, in the evidence of John Burgess, a bag hosier employing over 100 frames. He traded on his own account in the local market, but mainly as a middleman selling to other hosiers elsewhere.
\textsuperscript{176} Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 740.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., p. 740.
There may have been a close-knit community of interest on the moor and in the parishes surrounding it. An example of this identity was expressed by the Coleorton-Moor community at the time of the rabbit-warren riots in Charnwood Forest in the middle of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless it would seem that manufacturing in the three parishes for more distant markets tended to be influenced by the specialization tendencies of the closest prominent centre to them. It was suggested in chapter 3 that the lace workers who tended to be prominent on the northern sections of the moor were employed from Castle Donington, which was the closest centre of the lace trade. In the preceding paragraph it was reported that many of the framework knitters in Thringstone and Whitwick worked for hosiers in Shepshed or Loughborough. Coleorton-based manufacturing appears to have been more orientated towards Ashby-de-la Zouch. In addition, it would seem that a few framework knitters worked for independent bag hosiers in Whitwick, who used family members to act as travelling salesmen and sell to retailers, or directly to individuals, within the wider county.

Local specialisation in the extractive industries.

Specialisation in these industries differed from those in the systems for agriculture and manufacturing mentioned above. Unlike farming, or manufacturing, a resource extraction enterprise was very limited in its ability to change the products it offered for sale. But being specifically land-based made resource extraction a natural extension of estate-management activities in the eighteenth century. Nowhere in the area was this more marked than at Staunton Harold where the estate often played an active part in the supervision of resource exploitation.

178 Ibid., 2, 1, p. 131. In 1749 Coleorton miners were said to have joined in riots protesting against encroachment of rabbit warrens on Charnwood Forest.
180 Ibid., p. 335, 337, 344.
181 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 119.
Coal mining probably had the highest profile among the extractive industries of the area. But there were others – lime quarrying and burning, stone quarrying and crushing, extraction of woodland timber, bark and branch wood, sand and gravel, and also clay.\footnote{Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 687, for lime, Leics. CRO, 13D40/6, ‘Worthington and Newbold enclosure award, 1806’ regarding clay, gravel, sand and stone; Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 7 February 1761 for ‘the Earl of Stamford’s annual sale of wood’, 10 acres at Breedon, \textit{Ibid.}, 8 January 1763, ‘Breedon sale of 10 acres...in Cloud Hollow Spring...Wood and Bark...’; \textit{Ibid.}, 7 January 1764.}

Most of these other materials were used in the construction industry locally – within a radius of 18 to 20 miles. Bark was used in tanning skins and hides.\footnote{Hey, The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History, p. 432, ‘Tanning’.} The mines especially provided a local market for bricks – used to line shafts and soughs.\footnote{Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 115.} While lime was used by farms to improve the pH levels of their soils, and stone used for road maintenance by the turnpike trusts, pottery was made from the better clays, for sale both in the area and to nearby villages.\footnote{Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, 1, p. 308, ‘roadstone’; NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594, 596, Census of Great Britain 1841, enumerators returned numbers of brick makers, potters and pot sellers on and around the moor; Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 2, pp. 2-5, on Breedon lime.}

Most of the above extractive industries rarely found themselves in situations of crises, arising from oversupply and inadequate distribution facilities. The resources were usually exploited as demand occurred. Both the limestone and the road stone tended to be quarried from hillsides by simple technologies, although explosives were used.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 2, p.3.} The Bradgate Estate may have been governed by cash flow requirements in the commercial exploitation of its woodlands, but a poor auction sale did not end its woodland management activities. In the eighteenth century coal mining was to follow a different course.

When coal mining was carried on mainly by tenant farmers, working with a simple bell-pit extraction technology, an oversupply crisis appears to have been rare on Coleorton Moor.\footnote{Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 63, regarding seventeenth-century tenant farmers.} Such appears to have been the case in the seventeenth century. However, the situation changed in the eighteenth century. Three factors probably stimulated the raising of
ambitions to introduce deeper mining. One was the awareness of fortunes being made elsewhere from coal. The second was the knowledge that deep coal was of better quality and should fetch a higher price. The third was that coal near the surface was not available in pockets of a quality sufficiently large to satisfy entrepreneurial ambitions for income.

Most prominent of the early deep miners in the area, and particularly at Swannington, was John Wilkins. He also had mining interests at Coleorton and Newbold, as well as in the west of the county. Like his father he had begun mining as a by-occupational farmer at Coleorton, but had a number of mine operations going by the time of his death in 1726. At Swannington he had installed an atmospheric pumping engine to rid the deeper workings of water. He also employed five gangs of miners there, each headed by a gang master. In spite of his expansionist leanings, his operations at Swannington were only moderately successful. He did little better than break even on cash flow most years. He had cash deficits of £135 10s 10d in 1724, and £154 in 1725. In reality he may have made small paper profits, as some of his payments were for capital items, but certainly not large ones. A secondary problem arising from the expense of deeper mining, and caused by the cost of distribution restricting sales, was the amount of production having to be stored for a period of time in stacks. While the Swannington revenue on sales of fresh nether coal could be as much as 13s per load (c. 8s 11d per ton), sales from the old stacks only fetched 6s 6d per load. This was below production cost of nearly 8s 9d per load for the deep coal. With his sales from the stacks Wilkins was competing, not only with other mines in the area, but also with those small freeholders at Swannington and Pegg's Green who had mineral rights.

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188 Wilson, England's Apprenticeship, pp. 80, 84, regarding the Newcastle-London trade.
190 Ibid., p. 80.
192 Ibid., pp. 103, 107.
193 Leics. CRO, DG32/91-94, being records of Ravenstone Hospital.
194 Ibid.
attached to their properties. They presumably continued mining operations in old style bell pits, at a much lower cost. However, Wilkins was not the only instigator of deeper mines in the area. Although somewhat less ambitious depths were mined at Lount and Newbold, water-pumping engines were also installed there in the 1720s.

The lure of the high value Swannington nether coal also attracted Gabriel Holland and his associates in 1751, and then again Fenton and Raper in 1777. Each partnership also acquired the lease of Swannington manor as part of the package. Holland went even deeper than Wilkins, installed a second atmospheric pumping engine, and introduced horses underground to haul coal to the lifting shaft. Holland's even higher-cost mining operations commenced two years before work began to upgrade the Ashby-Leicester-turnpike road. He had run out of funds to continue operating by the 1760s, and various schemes to re-finance his operations came to nothing. Fenton and Raper began their mining operations at Swannington just before the Soar Navigation started, which carried Derbyshire coal to Loughborough. In their different ways both of these operations were therefore premature.

The market hinterland for the mines of Coleorton Moor, and to the Breedon lime works as well, had always been effectively limited to an area of 15-20 miles radius. Excluding the Trent navigation in the north, this was the effective limit of deliveries by packhorse, cart and wagon. With the opening of the Soar Navigation to Loughborough, that town became withdrawn from the market of the Coleorton Moor mines. Derbyshire coal was sold there for little more than 3 ½d per hundredweight (6s 1d per ton) by 1780. Derbyshire coal was also enabled to compete fiercely with Coleorton Moor coal in the

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196 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 119.

197 Ibid., pp. 135-8, Gabriel Holland; Leics. CRO, 3D67/IX/17192, for lease in 1777 to H. Burton, T. Fenton, T. Pares, J. Raper, H. Walker, and W. Walker.

198 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 7 June 1760, in Holland's open letter, and 3 January 176, for an advertisement of assets to be sold in bankruptcy.


200 Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 142.
Leicester market from that date.\textsuperscript{201} For a few years the two sources each had approximately 50 percent each of the Leicester market. But by 1796, following the extension of the canalized River Soar to the county town, Derbyshire coal was selling in Leicester at 6d to 7d per hundredweight.\textsuperscript{202} Coleorton Moor mines therefore lost the Leicester market also. They were not to regain it until the opening of the Swannington to Leicester railway in 1833.

However, the coal of the three parishes continued to be sold in the more local markets. Destinations varied in distance according to direction to be taken. Coal sold in Swithland at 8d to 10 ½d per hundredweight in the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{203} It was probably from Derbyshire. In Shepshed it sold for 6 ½d per hundredweight – a price that would have been attainable from Pegg’s Green and Swannington, particularly by small low-cost freeholders.\textsuperscript{204} Further a field to the south, villages within an effective 18-mile limit probably still bought coal from the moor. As noted above, six of the farmers in Coleorton owned wagons, which could have been used for carriage of coal to purchasers other than themselves. Because the capital cost of their wagons was spread over their farming operations, they could afford to make deliveries at little more than marginal cost. For farmers in the wider area it would also have been economic to deliver such items as cheese or wool to Cavendish Bridge and return with loads of lime from Breedon, or coal from the moor.\textsuperscript{205} Again, higglers continued to use packhorses to sell coal to the villages to the south of the moor.\textsuperscript{206} They were still doing so in the 1830s when they paid 1s per loaded packhorse for the coal.\textsuperscript{207} They tended to pile on weights of more than 240 pounds as a consequence.\textsuperscript{208} There were still five coal higglers living around the moor in 1841.\textsuperscript{209} In addition, there was a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{201} Ibid., p. 142.
\item \textsuperscript{202} Baker, Coalville, the First Seventy-five Years, p. 25.
\item \textsuperscript{203} Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 3, 2, p. 1049.
\item \textsuperscript{204} Ibid., p. 1019.
\item \textsuperscript{205} Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 2, p. 170, cited a pit-head price of 5s per ton (3d per cwt).
\item \textsuperscript{206} Baker, Coalville, the First Seventy-five Years, p. 21.
\item \textsuperscript{207} Ibid., p. 21.
\item \textsuperscript{208} Ibid., p. 21.
\item \textsuperscript{209} NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594, 596, Census of Great Britain 1841, enumerators’ returns.
\end{itemize}
growing market for coal among manufacturing, trades, and agricultural workers on the moor, and in the villages of the three parishes, especially in Thringstone and Whitwick. This local market was small compared with the lost markets of Loughborough and Leicester, but sufficient to keep unambitious operations going until the railway-led revival of the local coal industry on a larger scale in the 1830s.

Conclusion.
Commercial specialization made substantial progress during the eighteenth century. However, its progress was by no means one of uninterrupted success for the parishes around Coleorton Moor. Specialization required an expansion of marketing possibilities, and improved communications for success to be realised. Such realisation failed to occur for the larger coal mining enterprises seeking to exploit more valuable, deeper coal. Furthermore, the implementation of commercial specialization was very uneven for all three of the sectors examined above. In framework knitting specialization accelerated proletarianization. Deeper mining was hazardous – to its financial promoters as well as to the personal safety of its workers. In agriculture some aspects of commercial specialization probably supported petitions for Parliamentary enclosure. Loss of the commons was to undermine the system of self-reliance based on unspecialised production. While large parts of Coleorton Moor and Charnwood Forest remained open, their commoners were able to maintain some stock for their unspecialised systems of production. This was particularly helpful when their manufacturing or mining activity faced low market demand. It also slowed the rate of proletarianization in the labour force. Furthermore, while adjoining country areas continued to grow grain for the local market, workers could subsist on comparatively low wages in the countryside. New systems of agricultural production were comparatively late in their introduction to the three parishes around Coleorton Moor.
On the moor itself, manufacturers, and especially framework knitters appeared to linger in an older style of carrying on their business. At least into the early years of the nineteenth century, framework knitting there seems to have been employed more by older style woolcomber-hosiers, rather than by merchant- and bag-hosiers. In 1841 there were two bag-hosiers living on the moor itself.\textsuperscript{210} Four were also known to be operating in Whitwick in 1845.\textsuperscript{211}

It was probably significant that as late as 1841 there were ten woolcombers to be found on and around Coleorton Moor. This was double the number to be found in Shepshed, which village was heavily populated by 756 framework knitters.\textsuperscript{212} There must have been a reason for these combers to have still been operating on the moor. By the 1840s employed woolcombers usually congregated in towns with worsted-spinning mills.\textsuperscript{213} There were only 55 framework knitters on Coleorton Moor itself at that time.\textsuperscript{214} This was somewhat less than the number required to keep the moor’s woolcombers employed.\textsuperscript{215} One or two of the woolcombers may also have been supplying combed wool, or even yarn, to local independent bag hosiers. If this was the case, however, there is no suggestion as to how their spinning was undertaken. There were no spinners enumerated for the area, or nearby, in the 1841 census. Perhaps the spinning was undertaken in the woolcombers’ households, using the more advanced ‘Saxony’ type spinning wheel, or worsted ‘hand mills’?\textsuperscript{216} They may also have been using hand versions of Crompton’s mule.\textsuperscript{217} Earlier, although his language might have been appropriate to cover putting-out the spinning process as well, Nichols had

\textsuperscript{210} NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594, 596, Census of Great Britain 1841, enumerators’ returns regarding ‘the moor’, Coleorton, and ‘Rotten Row’, Thringstone.
\textsuperscript{211} Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 335, refers to William Stinson, a bag hosier, grocer, and tallow chandler, p. 344, refers to James Henson, employing seven frames and selling retail.
\textsuperscript{212} The Shepshed Local History Society, The Shepshed Census of 1841 (Shepshed, 1991).
\textsuperscript{213} Ginswick, Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 1, pp. 176-80; Ibid., 2, pp. 196-8.
\textsuperscript{214} NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594, 596, Census of Great Britain 1841, enumerators’ returns.
\textsuperscript{215} Haynes calculations quoted above suggest a ratio of one woolcomber to six framework knitters.
\textsuperscript{216} Mercer, The Spinner’s Workshop, p. 118, regarding applications and outputs intermediate spinning machines.
\textsuperscript{217} James, History of the Worsted Manufacture, pp. 346-7, the first mules were driven by hand.
implied that the Coleorton Moor woolcombers had spun their own wool.

Overall specialization appears to have progressed much more slowly in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor than in some other areas of Leicestershire. In the Lutterworth area, for example, it appears to have been taking place up to 150 years earlier.\textsuperscript{218} Lutterworth was former wolds country, where the specialization of grazier farms was noted above.\textsuperscript{219} To a certain extent the diversity of the communities of the three parishes around the moor provided a local market for the area’s products in the eighteenth century. This was particularly so for the products of the smaller independent producers. The local market also appears to have extended to nearby parishes to the south and west of the moor. To some extent the diversity of this local market reduced the impulse to specialize. This slow progress towards specialization was also underpinned by the continued survival of the unspecialized production culture, discussed in Chapter 4. The location of production for a more distant trade, however, appears locally to have been aligned towards the important market centres for those trades – lace work in Worthington township towards Castle Donington, hats in Coleorton towards Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and framework-knitting in Thringstone and Whitwick towards Shepshed and Loughborough. In addition, malting barley from the northern townships was often destined for the brewing trade at either Cavendish Bridge or Burton-on-Trent. Leicester was the target market for the deeper coalmines. But in the latter part of the eighteenth century that market increasingly obtained its supplies from elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{218} J Goodacre, \textit{The Transformation of a Peasant Economy: Townspeople and Villagers in the Lutterworth Area, 1500-1700} (Aldershot, 1994).
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., p.236.
Introduction

The previous two chapters examined unspecialised production and some trends towards greater specialization during the eighteenth century. The process of specialization, for the supply of both local and more distant markets, intensified towards the end of the eighteenth century. It was accompanied by an increasing proletarianization of an expanding population and workforce, which in turn helped to provide a mass market in low-price products for both urban and rural production. The growth of the mass market presented increasing opportunities for the investment of petty capital – both for merchant-manufacturer businesses and rental income. Often the two were closely aligned. In such an environment capital concentration made considerable progress. Ultimately new technologies using power-driven machinery in manufacturing and transport could take advantage of the economies of scale that the mass market promised. On the other hand, power-driven machinery was slow to be introduced in Leicestershire's hosiery industry owing in great part to the incomes hosiers were able to derive from renting knitting frames to operatives. These provided little incentive for innovation.

The development of production for the mass market of lower income households was to make a considerable impact on the socio-economic character of the three parishes around Coleorton Moor, as well as elsewhere in the county. To understand these trends and their impact locally will necessitate an examination of a somewhat wider area than that specific to the three parishes around Coleorton Moor. It will include conditions in the wider market place as well as relevant changes in the financial and investment environment. It will also include developments in those technologies relevant to the main production processes in the townships around the moor.
Rural production and the mass market.

Specialized rural production for sale, both around Coleorton Moor, and in rural Leicestershire generally, was increasingly for the mass market as the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries progressed. This mass market included demand from the households of rapidly growing service and craft occupations as well as those of manufacturing and extractive industry workers. The application of power to production machinery re-enforced the trend to direct large-scale production for the mass market.¹ For the population around Coleorton Moor this market was directly relevant to production in agriculture, framework knitting, and eventually coal mining. On a smaller scale it was also applicable to hat making and pottery. Quarrying and forestry were concerned with more industrial applications, as was an important part of coal production. Other trades such as brick making, and bricklaying, tended to supply a clientele, both industrial and household, which was also initially more locally based.

In the case of agriculture, Leicestershire products listed by Pitt in 1808 as destined for the metropolis and distant markets were cheese, sheep, cattle and barley.² In all four cases these were mainly mass-market products. The importance of hard cheese for poorer households was stressed earlier during reports of the 1766 cheese riots. In respect of mutton, a commentator said that ‘the majority of the eaters of mutton are of the poorer class, and that the grand object of the improvement is their supply’.³ The mutton of the New Leicester sheep tended to be well endowed with fat – a result of the sheep’s early maturity. In connection with this fatty tendency it was said in 1789 that ‘fat mutton is the poor man’s mutton. It goes further than lean with a smaller proportion of bone... A poor man gives 8d a

¹ Report of the Select Committee on Manufactures, Commerce and Shipping (1833), p. 73, noted that power goods needed to be disposed of in a large quantity at the same time.
² W. Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, 2 vols (1809, Newton Abbot, 1969 edn), 1, p. 325.
³ W. Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 2 volumes (1789, 1796 edn), 1, p. 347.
pound for bacon, but only 5d a pound for fat mutton'.

The cattle kept by the graziers for near fattening in Leicestershire during the same period comprised a high proportion of barren cows, accompanied by just a few empty heifers and a few bought-in Welsh or Irish steers. Barren cow meat was unlikely to be destined for the quality trade, and in fact a substantial part of it ended up with the manufacturing workers of Birmingham. For a more luxurious beef trade, few locally produced steers were raised, but some bull calves were kept and fattened at a young age. As noted previously, substantial quantities of barley was sold for malting. Much of the framework knitting production consisted of worsted stockings — mainly worn by the poorer classes. In 1845 in Thringstone and Whitwick, as well as in many other rural villages, most of the production was 'down-market' wrought hose.

In wartime demand for both hard cheese and worsted stockings received a substantial boost arising from the needs of the army and navy. On 7 January 1759, during the Seven Years' War, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal reported that 'a great quantity of clothing of all kinds is preparing to be embarked for Germany... for the use of the Hanoverians and the Hessians, as well as the British troops...'. Pitt reported in 1808 that a considerable portion of the 1500 tons per annum of cheese, shipped down the Trent from Leicestershire, was destined for the navy. An ensuing reduction of government purchases in peacetime often produced a depression in trade. Wars therefore had a disruptive influence on possibilities for smooth development in the growth of production and trade.

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4 Ibid., p.357.
5 Ibid., pp. 301-2.
6 Ibid., p. 309.
7 Ibid., p. 297 'steers'; Ibid., p. 315 'calf fattening'. For the luxury trade the New Leicester lamb, like all fast-maturing animals, needed to be slaughtered as soon as it reached the right condition, in order to avoid surplus fat. In the timing of its slaughter there was no leeway for more refined consumer tastes.
10 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 9 January 1759.
11 Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, p. 325.
Export-market demand was uncertain and often irregular. In the years after 1815, worsted-stockings exports to the Americas often formed just one part of speculative consignments to be sold by public auction. The economics of these combined shipments were reasonably good when items could be bought and brought to their port for shipping at low cost. In addition merchants reduced their own risk by sending consignments of a variety of goods, including those of other countries. However, regular demand for individual export items to North America was rare. It tended to rise and fall in line with the waves of immigrants into the countries of that continent. Once immigrants dispersed from their port of entry, their requirements tended to be met from domestic sources in America. Sales achieved in overseas markets in 1818-19 appear to have been at prices sufficiently low to try to clear a glut in the United Kingdom of domestic hosiery - a situation made worse by the flood of 'cut-ups'. In 1819 exports were reported to be taking more than one half of hosiery production. By 1845 exports were said to be no more than one thirteenth of total production. Generally demand from overseas markets tended to fluctuate more than domestic demand. The average annual value of hosiery exports for the years 1814-16 inclusive was £1,156,022 compared with an annual average of £410,418 in the years 1834-43. Physical volumes of exports were sporadically high in the years 1815, 1833, and 1835.

14 Report from the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Means of Maintaining and Improving the Foreign Trade of the Country (1820), p. 100, in respect of a cargo for a Spanish-American port, G. T. Standish stated that 'the above assorted cargo would leave a handsome profit... but restricted to the English manufacture alone I should not risk the undertaking'. The cargo comprised French, Dutch, German and English goods, a part of which was silk and worsted hosiery.
16 Ibid., pp. 3-33; R. M. Candee, 'British framework knitters in New England: technology transfer and machine knitting in America, 1820-1900' in Textile History (Spring 2000), pp. 31-3, 'Hand knitting was only reluctantly given up... in favour of the factory-knit goods'.
17 'Cut-ups', for the mass-market product, were mainly produced in Leicester and the larger manufacturing centres, see W. Felkin, History of the Machine Wrought Hosiery and Lace Manufacture (1867, 1967 edn), 'Statistics of the Trade', p. 10; Report from the Select Committee on the Framework Knitters' Petition, p. 23.
18 Ibid., p. 20.
19 Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 82.
In the 1840s English exports of hosiery products, particularly to Germany, Holland, and North America, were adversely affected by competition from Saxony.\(^{21}\) The Saxon framework knitters were by-occupational, using work on irregular orders for hosiery products to supplement their agricultural incomes. Their knitting frames were often worked in the evening, and at those times of year when there was no employment in the fields.\(^{22}\) In contrast to England where the hosiers employed ‘frames making to stock’... in Saxony they worked ‘chiefly to order’.\(^{23}\)

Generally, therefore, rural production for distant sale depended on the growing mass market in the United Kingdom. However, in the case of stockings, penetration of the mass market was limited by the continued ‘unspecialised production for home use’ of hand knitters. While unspecialised producers of cheese became insignificant in number after Parliamentary enclosure, particularly that of the commons, hand knitters of stockings for domestic use grew in number, probably in line with the population. In the report of the Parliamentary commissioner investigating the condition of the framework knitters in 1845 it was stated that

Upon the high estimate made by Mr. Felkin, the total produce of the whole number of frames employed in the United Kingdom, in a year, would be inadequate to furnish every one of the British population with more than a single pair of stockings and gloves... It is clear enough that the British people are not so deficient in those articles as such a result would infer them to be. It is equally obvious, from the limited amount of imports of foreign hosiery, that they do not derive any supply of consequence from abroad. It will probably be found that a very considerable portion of the population, despite the cheapness at which the manufactured article is sold, endeavour to supply themselves by home made hand-knit stockings. In the northern counties of England, and in the other portions of the Empire – Ireland, Scotland, and Wales – the peasantry, and very many of the farmers and their families, are almost exclusively supplied by household manufacture... because doubtless it is often followed almost as a recreation in many of the farm-houses and cottages, when other duties do not intervene to prevent it...\(^{24}\)

\(^{21}\) Ibid., pp. 87-90.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 88.
\(^{23}\) Ibid., p. 89.
\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 87.
Unspecialised domestic production was still to be reckoned with. In 1810 it sometimes could be found in framework-knitter households. In the unspecialised system of production of the Coleorton Moor area a similar situation was most likely found. In the 1841 census a number of women in Ashby-de-la-Zouch still described themselves as hand knitters. The hand-knitted stocking, often using woollen yarn rather than worsted, was usually of better quality than the machine-knitted article.

By the 1840s, apart from the possible continued survival of woolcomber-hosier operations, spinning their own yarn on Coleorton Moor, the marketing of framework-knitted products had become dominated by hosiers of one kind or another. These might be merchants, large manufacturers, or bag hosiers. By the 1840s most of the framework knitters of Thringstone and Whitwick worked for large merchant hosiers, or large manufacturer hosiers in either Shepshed or Loughborough. A lesser number worked for the four bag hosiers in Whitwick. The largest of the bag hosiers was both a middleman selling to larger hosiers and a frame master owning 120 knitting frames. (Most of these frames he had taken over from Cotton and Hammond who were larger hosiers in Shepshed.) He also sold through the more local retail trade. The other three bagmen sold into the lower-price retail market of the surrounding villages, and towns. One of these bagmen owned and put out seven frames, another 10 frames. Yet another bagman was also a chandler, and grocer, whose family had a smallholding of around 12½ acres. His wife ran his shop and his son sold the hosiery in the villages of the wider surrounding area. Selling to the local market by bagmen was also mirrored by the sale of other items produced around Coleorton Moor. Sales people concerned included the higglers of coal and other products, hucksters, peddlers and

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25 Ibid., p. 183, John Geary stated that 'in 1810, there were very few women worked the frame at Anstey... at that time they got their bread by spinning and knitting; and then what we call the jennies came up, and took the spinning wheel away, and since then they have taken to the frame'.

26 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107.594/3-5, Census of Great Britain, 1841, ' enumerators' returns'.


28 Ibid., p. 343.

29 Ibid., p. 342.

30 Ibid., pp. 335, 344.
pot sellers. However, it is most unlikely that these sales professions dominated their producers in the same way as even the local bag hosiers controlled their framework knitters.

The overwhelming control of framework knitting by hosiers catering for the mass market had arisen from a number of factors. These included the increasing control of yarn supplies to the industry by the putting-out undertakers. Initially this was through their ability to obtain yarn in bulk, facilitated by the key role of woolcombing. Later after the power-spinning mills had taken over most yarn production the tendency for the bulking of supplies became the normal state of affairs. Another important factor in hosier control of the industry was the breakdown of different processes and their resultant allocation to different workers, as discussed in the previous chapter. Finally the hosiers increasingly owned, or managed, the majority of the knitting frames and came to look upon the rentals to be earned from putting them out to the operatives as an important part of hosier revenue.\(^{32}\)

Hosier domination of marketing had taken place in several stages. In the eighteenth century hosier franchises had not been as all embracing as they were later to become. There is evidence that the earlier hosiers still needed to persuade and seduce the small independent manufacturers to supply them. In the 1760s bag hosiers were offering their services as agents to master framework knitters as well as to merchants. In 1759 John Taylor, 'at the Laced Hat Coffee House in Leicester' advertised to tradesmen that he was willing 'to serve as a Bag-man', that he understood the businesses of woolcombing and stocking making, and that clients were 'able to depend on his secrecy and fidelity'.\(^{33}\) In 1763 William Coleman of Southgate advertised that 'he carries on the business of Bagging, that is to say, Sells all sorts of Worsted Hose, or any other Articles in the Woollen Manufactory. Anyone who please to employ him...'\(^{34}\) By the 1830s and 1840s the hosiers dominated both the marketing and the supply of yarn. They owned most of the working knitting frames as well.

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\(^{31}\) Ibid., p. 335; Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, 'Whitwick enclosure award, 1807'.
\(^{32}\) Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, pp. 91-2.
\(^{33}\) Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 7 July 1759.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., 28 January, 1763.
The growing domination of framework knitting by hosiers of various kinds was mirrored by the cheese factors and wool-staplers in respect of their applicable agricultural products. These were also ultimately destined to supply distant mass markets. In the late eighteenth century hard cheese was known as 'factor cheese', itself an indication of the manner of its being sold. Wool from commercial sheep flocks was nearly always sold in bulk. Such sales were usually to the wool-staplers who lived in strategically placed villages and towns across the county. However, West Riding of Yorkshire manufacturers also journeyed to the county to purchase long wool in bulk. Bulk sales of this nature increasingly had the effect of depriving the smaller independent framework knitters of long wool over much of the county. It contributed to the domination of framework knitting by the hosiers. The small independent woolcomber-hosiers of Coleorton Moor had probably been helped to survive for as long as they did by the number of comparatively small sheep flocks around them. Some of the smaller farmers were probably glad to be able to sell their wool directly to a smaller manufacturer, rather than a middleman.

The investment of petty capital.

Examination of Leicestershire wills in the first half of the eighteenth century suggested substantial cash out-flows from part or full dispersal of many of the smaller-, and medium-size, land-based, deceased estates. For example, the farmer and framework knitter, William Wright of Seagrave, in 1724, stipulated the sale of his eight and a half-acre meadow for the settlement of his debts and the payment of £40 to his daughter. Many more specialist farmers also specified cash inheritances to relatives, which were likely to result in their agricultural operations being dispersed. In spite of time being stipulated during which pay outs could be made, distributions from small deceased estates often resulted in significant

36 Ibid., p.405.
37 Ibid., p.405.
38 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1724, 'William Wright'.


asset sales which were detrimental to the potential continuity of operations. Sometimes sale of smallholdings had been neither intended nor foreseen. However, particularly during the period of low agricultural prices during the 1730s and 1740s, a sale was often the only way of raising cash to meet the obligations. Most of the examples went to pay family beneficiaries. Many of the sums of money, which passed to beneficiaries, were often too small to be re-invested in meaningful parcels of land. On the other hand they were sufficient for the alternative forms of investment becoming available. For some the alternative investment opportunity was increasingly in poorer class houses for rent. This became more significant in the second half of the century. For others the investment opportunity was in knitting frames, which could also be rented out, often through frame masters, if not directly to operatives. This had been made possible by the Framework Knitters Company admitting persons, unconnected with the trade, to membership for one guinea after 1742. Not infrequently investment in housing and knitting frames, both to proletarian framework knitters, went together. The end result was a variety of forms of ownership and enterprise within the hosiery industry. As the second half of the eighteenth century progressed, the spread of country banking began to facilitate a recycling of funds from depositors preferring liquidity to investors and businessmen. However, these facilities were comparatively slow to develop in north-west Leicestershire.

The pressure on land investment from larger yeoman, landlords, and successful businessmen considerably reduced the ability of cash beneficiaries from deceased estates to re-invest their inheritance in other small agricultural operations of their own. In his study

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40 Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 10.

41 Ibid, p. 336.


of the eighteenth-century building process Chalkin has suggested that local notables invested in rural land for social prestige, and that people with smaller capital mainly undertook the supply of new houses. (On the other hand the landed estates did build houses from time to time for workers connected to estate activities.) Around Coleorton Moor, and in Whitwick, the development of poorer class housing, particularly on small enclosure-award allotments, was noted in Chapter 3 above. At the ‘notable’ end of the scale Messrs Raper and Fenton appear to have bought farmland in Whitwick after their purchase of the lease of Swannington manor.44 Again in the nineteenth century members of the Pares family of Leicester bankers made substantial investments in the newly enclosed farmland of Charnwood Forest.45 One of the partners in the 1777 lease of Swannington manor had been Thomas Pares.

Knitting-frame investment.

The renting of knitting frames has long been associated with the proletarianization and impoverishment of the framework-knitting industry. Although associated in the later stages of the industry's development with capital concentration in the hands of merchant hosiers, the practice was a widespread form of investment by the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1745 one of the new bye laws of the Framework Knitters' Company stipulated 'No member shall hire frames but of such as are members, on pain of paying 1s. per week for every frame'.46 However, the admission of outsiders to membership after 1742 effectively made this rule ineffective. Renting knitting frames from such members was therefore within the Company's rules.47 The framework-knitters address to hosiers of 1761, quoted above, refers also to frames owned by people unconnected with the trade. In 1745 Edmund Guy, a woolcomber of Leicester, left the 'profits, use and benefit' of his stocking frame to his wife

44 Leics. CRO, QS47/1/49, 'Whitwick enclosure award, 1807'.
47 Ibid., p. 10.
and then to his son. The frame was in the possession of, and operated by, the framework knitter, Robert Barber.

In inventories recorded from 1723 to 1745 knitting frames were usually valued between £5 and £10 each. During the 1760s large numbers of knitting frames were advertised for sale in the Leicester and Nottingham Journal. Many of these frames were sold, already installed on the site of operations. On 21 March 1759, 50 frames were offered for sale in Peck Lane, Nottingham. Prior to the sale catalogues being available, information was published 'directing where the said Frames may be seen.' The same advertisement offered other stocking frames to be sold at the Horse and Trumpet in Leicester on March the 8th and 9th, at places as dispersed as 'Hinckley, Sileby, Shilton, Great Wigston and Countesthorpe'. In May 1759 another six frames were offered for sale in Hinckley. Such sales were frequent during the 1760s with knitting frames sometimes sold in situ and sometimes new, ready for setting-up. In February and March 1761, a society was formed to enable poor operatives to buy knitting frames for their own operation 'at the easy rate of 1s. a week'. Most advertisements, however, were generally aimed for purchases to be made by 'frame-masters', within the trade, or by other investors. The advantage of frame renting for frame masters and investors was that the rent was a continuing obligation on the part of the framework knitter, whether trade was good or bad. Frame renting, along with the putting-out of work, enabled the operative to work, without capital of his own, but it did not guarantee him work, or reasonable remuneration. Frame rents varied from 9d to 3s.6d. a week, depending on type and condition. Investors were able to obtain returns on them of 14 per cent per annum (before depreciation, normally four per cent per annum). Frames were

48 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1745, 'Edmund Guy'.
49 Ibid., 1724, 'John Atkins' three frames...£18, 'William Frost' one frame...£10, 'John Court' three frames...£25, 'Elizabeth Satchel' one frame...£6, 1745 'James Kirby' eight frames...£40.
50 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 3 March 1759.
51 Ibid., 5 May 1769.
52 Ibid., 22 April 1761, 4 June 1763.
53 Ibid., 28 February 1761.
54 Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, pp. 91-2.
therefore expected to provide investment income for 25 years. Many lasted longer, continuing in operation even when obsolescent and thereby further contributing to the impoverishment of those operatives who worked such frames.

Investment in housing and the growing proletarian workforce.

In his study of the building process in Georgian provincial towns, Chalkin found that from 1750-1770 the cheapest houses for rent in Birmingham sold from £35 to £60. By the 1780s and 1790s the cost was from £80 to £140. In a housing development at Panier Close, Nottingham, investors included six joiners, a lace maker, two framework knitters, two tailors, a cordwainer and a small building society. In another partnership in the early nineteenth century, participants in a building project included a joiner, a grocer, a trimmer, an engineer, and three framework knitters. It was therefore reasonable to expect that some of the capital released by land sold during the process of farmland consolidation found its way into investment in urban housing in north-west Leicestershire, as individually smaller amounts did into knitting frames. In December 1762, the Leicester and Nottingham Journal advertised ‘Eight New erected Messuages or Tenements, well Tenanted, situate standing and being in Loughbro1 aforesaid, in a certain place there call'd Savage's-Row’. In March 1764, the journal advertised the sale of a conversion to small tenements also in Loughborough. The Savage's Row tenements were built and sold by Edward Savage, carpenter, and he may reasonably be expected to have been developing part of the croft or backside attached to his dwelling. Such pieces of land adjacent to the housing of small towns, or industrializing villages, were ideal for providing housing for the growing manufacturing labour force. Open townships with numbers of smallholdings such as Wigston, Shepshed, Thringstone, or

56 Ibid., p. 163.
57 Ibid., p. 176.
58 Ibid., p. 171.
59 Ibid., p. 178.
60 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 11 December 1762.
61 Ibid., 31 March 1764.
Whitwick were all to participate in this development, thereby encouraging the expansion, and proletarianization, of the framework knitting labour force through the provision of housing. By this means also, former by-occupational farmer-framework knitters might become petty landlords or frame-masters with a labour force beholden to them in rented housing. The wills of Thomas Hurst, on 7 May 1747, and Francis Coltman, on 4 April 1749, both framework knitters of Wigston Magna, show them to have built more than one house as well as outhouses on their backsides adjacent to the village. Moreover, in his will Coltman thought it sufficiently important to specify future rights of access, by cart as well as by foot, to the sub-divided premises. At Shepshed in 1777 over 100 landowners (most of them smallholders) participated in the enclosure award. The enclosed smallholdings awarded were invariably relocated next to the crofts and backsides already adjacent to the village. This may indeed have been the incentive offered to the smallholders to accept enclosure. In any case it must have facilitated Shepshed's continuing growth as a manufacturing village and enabled several smallholders to become the landlords to proletarianized framework knitters. One smallholding so re-allocated was to Smith Churchill, returning from Nottingham to re-establish his hosier business in Shepshed. He was subsequently a major employer of Whitwick's framework knitters.

In keeping with the unspecialised culture of Coleorton Moor before its enclosure extensive speculative investment in poorer class rental housing as described above was mostly a late occurrence. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Nichols said of the inhabitants that 'most of them have a decent house, built either by their parents or themselves; with a garden to each, from an acre to an acre and a half, taken out of the common; paying 20s an acre for the land, and a small acknowledgement for the house, to the

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62 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1747-8 'Thomas Hurst', 1749 'Francis Coltman'.
63 Leics. CRO, DE2187/1 and EN/MA/289, 1-2, Shepshed enclosure award, and plans for enclosure.
lords of the soil'. However, it has already been noted that a second house for sub-letting was not infrequently built on some of these moorland lots. At Swannington Gabriel Holland reported that he had built several new houses in the 1750s, presumably for essential workers. In 1829 the Beaumont Estate knocked down most of a scattered mining settlement at Coal Town (Coleorton Moor) and replaced it with a neat row of terraced housing. Speculative housing for investment purposes was also built in the new settlement of Coalville from 1834. One development was known as Marshall's Row. The mining companies in Coalville were also to invest in housing to be let to their workers in the 1830s. But in 1845 only two of the framework knitter witnesses to the Parliamentary commission from Whitwick village reported that they lived in rented houses.

The evolution of materials used in yarn production.

In the early eighteenth century inventory evidence suggests that at that time, weaving cloth in north-west Leicestershire was as common as framework knitting. A variety of yarns were available from both local and imported materials for several groups of textiles. Fibres for spinning fell into three groups - short fibres such as short wool, long fibres such as the main vegetable fibres of flax, cotton and hemp, plus long-wool, and finally continuous thread such as silk, and precious metals for decorative purposes. (Today continuous thread would include chemical fibres). The processes for each group were different, but processes within each group were similar and, to great extent, could adapt similar technology. Short fibres were spun after carding. Long fibres were subjected to some form of being combed in

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67 Ibid., p. 1125.
73 Ibid., pp. 79-82.
alignment to each other before being spun from the resultant rovings. The problem of texture presented by the coarseness of wool from the long-wool sheep was overcome by the adaptation of the heckling of flax and designing combs, which when suitably heated in a comb-pot, could be used to comb the wool fibres into alignment. Continuous thread was 'thrown' or plied to strengthen it or combine it with other yarns. After collection and sorting by putting-out employers, yarns spun too weak or uneven were plied to strengthen them. Yarns were also plied for decorative purposes, and sometimes to improve the appearance of cheaply spun warps. Spun gold or silver might be plied with silk particularly. Combinations of different yarns, or worsted alone, made up the new draperies, which became popular from the sixteenth century.

Woollen cloth was woven from tightly spun warp and loosely spun weft yarn. The new draperies were both more onerous and more variable. Worsted and vegetable fibre yarns required more twist than the loosely spun weft yarns, even when used for knitting. However, wool could be knitted with a woollen weft yarn. Serges were woven with a worsted warp and a woollen weft. Fustians with cotton weft on a linen-yarn warp were made from 1641. The particularly hard-wearing 'linsey-woolsey' cloth for outer garments,
found in eighteenth-century trade inventories in north-west Leicestershire was made of a woollen weft on a linen-yarn warp.\textsuperscript{85}

Although knitting was often done with woollen yarn, cotton, or silk, worsted yarn, spun from combed long wool, became the main raw material for framework knitters in Leicestershire from the latter part of the seventeenth century. The growing availability of long wool, noted in chapter 5, underpinned this change. However, during the early nineteenth century and following the growing popularity of the New Leicester breed of sheep, much Leicestershire wool became shorter, and too coarse for worsted-yarn production. As early as the 1780s Marshall had said with reference to the New Leicester sheep that 'the coat appears to have been set at nought; the carcass alone having engrossed the attention of the improvers'.\textsuperscript{86} By the second decade of nineteenth century New Leicester wool was mainly sold to the carpet trade.\textsuperscript{87} Long-wool yarn for the hosiery trade began to be imported from Kent, Lincolnshire and elsewhere. By then transport costs had been brought down considerably following construction of the canal network across England. Some finer Southdown wool was incorporated into worsted yarn from the mid 1820s.\textsuperscript{88} More importantly from the 1830s Saxon and Australian Merino-sheep wools started to be incorporated into worsted-yarn production.\textsuperscript{89} These were described as 'better for combing purposes than any other description, from the length of the staple'.\textsuperscript{90} By that time the cost of transporting Merino wool from Australia was about the same as bringing it from 'the wool-growing countries in Germany' (about 1½d per lb.).\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{85} Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1723, 'William Holyland'.
\textsuperscript{86} Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, p. 358.
\textsuperscript{87} James, History of the Worsted Manufacture, pp. 415-6
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., pp. 415-6.
\textsuperscript{89} Report of the Select Committee on Manufactures, Commerce and Shipping, pp. 78-83.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., p. 78.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., p. 78.
Spinning by spinsters.

The old method of spinning with a distaff and drop-spindle continued through much of the eighteenth century. For a long time their continued employment was alongside the newer hand-driven equipment being developed. The distaff and drop-spindle were very basic and cheap. But in the hands of a competent spinster this equipment was very flexible as to the kinds of yarn spun, producing both wefts and warps. Ideally a heavier drop-spindle was used for plying, but this was not absolutely necessary. Putting-out wool to drop-spindle spinsters was therefore very common even after more advanced techniques became available. Such putting-out was practised by craft-weavers, and even private individuals prior to employing a craft-weaver, in addition to undertakers in manufacturing. Even though output of yarn might be trebled by use of the hand wheel, also known in Leicestershire as the long wheel, big wheel or woollen wheel, this machine was better used for producing woollen weft-type yarn. James reported that the long wheel could be used for spinning worsted if the thread was spun from the middle portion of the slither. However, this was inevitably slower than using this wheel for weft spinning. Its usefulness was therefore limited even though its output could be used in hand knitting, and some frame knitting also. For worsted spinning, the next stage in mechanization from the drop spindle was the 'little wheel' — an adaptation of the linen wheel. It applied a pre-determined amount of twist to the yarn being spun by means of a flyer. In its most advanced form, the Saxony wheel, developed circa 1531, it could spin worsted, cotton or flax yarns, and it was often driven with a treadle.

Where Leicestershire probate inventories listed two or more wheels, one was often a long wheel and the other a 'little' wheel. The woollen wheel could keep up to five hand-knitters busy. In 1715 less than two spinning wheels were needed to keep a framework knitter

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93 James, History of the Worsted Manufacture, p. 335.
94 Baines, Spinning Wheels, Spinners and Spinning, p. 69.
96 Baines, Spinning Wheels, Spinners and Spinning, p.183.
occupied. However, four spinsters using wheels of both types were required to keep a weaver's loom busy, compared to a requirement of up to ten spinsters with drop-spindles.

James did not find evidence of the Saxony-type wheel being used for worsted spinning. While agreeing that it could be adapted for worsted-yarn production, he suggested that it had only been used to spin yarn from flax. Baines suggested otherwise.

Furthermore, Diderot illustrated a hand-driven spinning wheel, equipped with a flyer, as part of the equipment used by woolcombers in France in the middle of the eighteenth century. This was described as le petit rouet pour la laine peignée. And James acknowledged French influence on the worsted trade in England following immigration of French worsted workers after revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In view of the extensive woolcombing activity in Leicestershire, and the number of 'little wheels' found in eighteenth-century Leicestershire inventories, it seems to the writer highly probable that these wheels were adapted to worsted-yarn production in the county.

Woolcombers and the consolidation of yarn production.

In 1776 Adam Smith noted the market power implicit in the woolcombers' strategic position in worsted production when he wrote

Half a dozen woolcombers, perhaps, are necessary to keep a thousand spinners and weavers at work. By combining not to take apprentices they can not only engross the employment, but reduce the whole manufacture into a kind of slavery to themselves, and raise the price of their labour much above what is due to the nature of their work.

Where woolcombers were also involved in the production and sale of yarn, they usually owned at least one twist-mill or a jersey-mill by the late seventeenth century. Jersey was a

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97 Mercer, _The Spinner's Workshop_, p. 119.
98 M. Spufford, _Poverty Portrayed: Gregory King and the Parish of Eccleshall_ (Keele, 1995), p.59, reported that in the 1690s the ratio of spinners to weavers was 10:1.
99 James, _History of the Worsted Manufacture_, p. 335.
100 Baines, _Spinning Wheels, Spinners and Spinning_, pp. 69, 90.
102 James, _History of the Worsted Manufacture_, p. 165.
finer variety of worsted-yarn. These mills tended to be valued in woolcombers’ inventories at about the same as weavers' looms, while both types of spinning wheel were worth considerably less. The actual capabilities of these manually driven twist and jersey mills is a little difficult to determine although their function certainly seems to have involved flyers and a number of bobbins. They were almost certainly two different machines. The name 'jersey mill' suggests that it was perhaps able to perform the drawing function to some extent, as well as the twisting function of spinning. James noted that Dereham and Haines had made a machine in the latter part of the seventeenth century, which he estimated to have shortened labour by a half. He also suggested that it must have contained the embryo principle of either the Hargreaves or the Arkwright machine. The ‘jersey mills’ listed in inventories may well have been derived from the Dereham and Haines invention. At the end of the seventeenth century Christopher Martin and Francis Smith, woolcomber-hosiers of Leicester, both owned ‘jersey mills’. Twist mills, on the other hand, appear to have been used for plying, tightening or strengthening yarn, rather than for spinning. Diderot also illustrated such a device, which took loosely spun, or plied yarn and tightened the twist on a number of bobbins. It was not unusual for yarn put out for spinning to require secondary processing by the woolcombers. Although the Dereham and Haines invention, and derivatives of it, appear to have doubled productivity, a second faster machine, which could also tighten, or strengthen put-out yarn was clearly an advantage. Plying was poorly performed by woollen wheels and although Saxony wheels performed the process satisfactorily, the operation was still slow. Twist-mills, operating with a number of bobbins on woolcomber-undertaker premises, were more likely to have carried out the process at

104 James, History of the Worsted Manufacture, p. 336.
106 Diderot, Art des Textiles: Fil et Laine, Planche II’, fig. 1. This mill operated eight bobbins at a time.
speed. Secondary processing of yarn was confirmed by John Haynes. For the production of worsted cloth from 'long combing wool' in 1715, he described a requirement of 20 'throwers and doublers' for every 250 spinners. For stocking production he suggested that 12 'doublers and throwers' for every 102 spinners were necessary.

The need for some additional supervisory technical intervention, of the kinds described in the previous paragraph, between spinner and framework knitter or weaver, in the worsted trade, would also have tended to concentrate yarn supplies into the hands of putting-out undertakers. Once a woolcomber became successfully involved with putting-out combed-wool for spinning, it was a comparatively small step to extend the principle to knitting and weaving. The independent framework knitter might initially have been able to purchase spun-worsted yarn from small independent woolcombers. However, if the latter became successful businessmen they would diversify into putting-out operations for framework knitting at the expense of sales to third parties. If they did not achieve that kind of success financially, woolcombers might become contract manufacturers themselves, similar in status to the master framework knitters, content with perhaps owning one or two knitting frames, or merely staying with the well-paid trade of wool-combing. Independent framework knitters may have been more easily able to put out short wool for spinning, but to put out long wool for both combing and spinning appears to have been beyond their means.

The same constraints applied to cotton and silk, but to an even greater degree, owing to the raw materials being imported in bulk.

The evolution of workshop and factory production of yarn.

By the 1750s woolcombers' trade stocks had begun to include 'worsted mills'. These may well have been developed from Wyatt's hand-mill for spinning, or similar developments,

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109 *The Leicester and Nottingham Journal*, 7 April 1759, in the stock-in-trade of woolcombers, Gammer, Titterton & Co., a worsted mill was listed.
which were later improved by Highs and patented by Arkwright. Wyatt’s hand-mill, patented in 1738, aimed at further mechanising the spinning process at both the drawing and twisting stages. Its main innovation was the use of variable speed, spiked rollers for the drawing process. It appears to have involved fairly frequent yarn breakages. James noted that in the 1760s ‘a considerable manufactory’ had been operating in Yorkshire using Wyatt’s machines.111

The process of concentrating market power through supplies was finally completed, albeit not immediately, after Arkwright developed his water-frame spinning factories. He had incorporated the flyer principle of earlier machines. But more importantly Arkwright had finally incorporated rollers which reduced breakages caused by the drawing operation. The process, which was first applied to cotton, was quickly adapted to worsted spinning. However, the adaptation to worsted spinning was not without problems. There were still complaints of yarn breakage and knotty yarn. One of the first worsted-spinning factories using Arkwright technology only survived from 1784-91. However, the quality of power-frame spun yarn improved after 1800.114

Arkwright's spinning mills were important for the considerable increase in productivity, which they brought about in the spinning of long-fibre yarns. They had even greater significance in the strategic influence, which they bestowed on the merchant-manufacturers who invested in them, and those merchants who became the major distributors of yarn to the trade at large. The earlier trend towards channelling yarn supplies through bulk suppliers was completed. By 1794 there were four worsted mills in

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110 James, History of the Worsted Manufacture, p. 337.  
111 Ibid., p. 345.  
112 Ibid., p. 341.  
113 Ibid., p. 327-9, 355.  
114 Ibid., p. 355.
Nottinghamshire (as well as 31 cotton mills) supplying yarn through hosiers in the East Midlands.115

In an age of innovation, inventions affecting the industry were many. In 1763 two Leicester woolcomber-equipment smiths, Martin Austin and Samuel Bates, invented a comb-pot, which burned pit-coal instead of charcoal, thereby enabling considerable cost savings.116 (However, inventions such as this did not prevent the slow erosion of the woolcombers' strategic position in the worsted industry, which was to come.) Frost had modified the stocking frame for the manufacture of lace net in 1777.117 A total of 81 improvements to the knitting-frame were listed between 1780 and 1820.118 Some of these were highly significant for the fashion branches and particularly for lace making. None of them achieved quite the same overpowering strategic influence in the worsted industry that the spinning frame did.

However, the power-driven spinning frame was not total in its influence on yarn supply consolidation. Organisation of the factory environment, in which it was operated, was equally important. In one respect, and probably only one, the factory system inherited from the putting-out trade the idea of breaking down the various processes into simple, easily learnt operations, and moving the work-in-progress from one operative to another. Under the factory system, however, most of the different processes were in nearby, or preferably adjoining rooms. Production was powered by water, or steam where applicable, and the operation mostly manned by cheap female or child labour of both sexes.119 The power-driven spinning frame, operating within the factory system, produced a yarn for the mass market so cheaply, that the system was able to survive and thrive in spite of frequent yarn

116 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 10 March 1763.
119 James, History of the Worsted Manufacture, pp. 349, 487, after the Watt patent expired the Boulton and Watt steam engine was increasingly used to power the spinning frame. By 1838 both spinning mills in Loughborough were driven by steam, as were 21 out of 23 mills in Leicester.
breakages, and runs of knotted yarn, in its early years especially.\textsuperscript{120} Even as late as 1845 a framework knitter in Whitwick complained about the inferior quality of yarn made by power machinery.\textsuperscript{121}

It appears that Arkwright had never allowed his original hand-operated spinning machine (patented 1769) and drawing frame (patented 1775) to be operated in a workshop environment other than his own.\textsuperscript{122} Once he had established his horse-powered and subsequent water-powered factories there was obviously little reason for him to have done so. Crompton’s mule, on the other hand, was designed for a workshop environment, even though much later it was found a place in some power-driven factories for finer yarn production.\textsuperscript{123} Crompton invented the spinning mule (sometimes known by contemporaries as the mule-jenny) in 1780 to produce yarn in quantity to supply his domestic weaving workshop.\textsuperscript{124} The mule spun a finer and more even yarn than either the spinning frame or Hargreaves’ jenny, and had adapted some principles from both. In describing it James stated that its rollers elongated the rovings, and the moveable carriage receding from the rollers continued to draw it out, adding... a slight twist. When a sufficient quantity had been given out, the rollers... stopped... whilst the carriage still receded... the velocity of the spindles was increased to nearly double, thus drawing out and twisting the thread in the most gentle and equal manner.\textsuperscript{125}

The mule was never patented and its design became generally available.\textsuperscript{126} A version of such a machine may well have been used in the woolcombers’ workshops on Coleorton moor to ‘spin their wool’ in 1808, which they were reported doing by Nichols. Otherwise one wonders how their production of worsted yarn would have been sufficient for their stocking manufacturing activities. By this time a few hand-wheel and spindle spinners

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., pp. 327-9, 355.
\textsuperscript{121} Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 333.
\textsuperscript{122} Mercer, The Spinner’s Workshop, pp. 38, 98; James, History of the Worsted Manufacture, pp. 341-4.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., pp. 346-7.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., pp. 329, 346-7.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 347.
\textsuperscript{126} Although the spinning frame tended to become the dominant factor in English yarn production (another illustration of production for the mass market?), the mule was extensively adopted by French workshops whose worsted-yarn production was described by James as having ‘excelling qualities’. Ibid., p. 347.
remained to supply yarn for their own commercial hand knitting, but rarely for the putting-out trade. In 1845 a framework knitter of Anstey describing how his wife had originally earned her living by hand spinning and knitting, added that ‘then what we call the jennies came up, and took the spinning wheel away, and since then they [women] have taken to the frame’. The mule combined principles from both the jenny and the spinning frame. There was often a confusion of descriptions by the nineteenth century. The mule was often called a mule-jenny, or even just a jenny. At Saddleworth in 1849 the correspondent to The Morning Chronicle investigated a survival of the ‘hand-spinning’ jenny there. He concluded that

They are worked on the general principle of the power-mule; the muscle of the operative, however, supplying the place of the steam-engine. In fact the whole machine looks somewhat like a toy power-mule... The operator with his machine performs the whole work, acting as piecer as well as spinner. The labour however cannot be called severe, for the traveling frame is exceedingly light, and a very weak arm is sufficient to propel it.

In the above example the correspondent noted that spinning and weaving were undertaken in the same domestic workshop. However, elsewhere in the worsted area of Yorkshire Hudson noted combing and spinning being undertaken on the same premises and weaving sent to outworkers. In view of the availability of framework knitters living and working on the moor, and in keeping with the custom of the trade, the woolcomber hosiers of Coleorton Moor were likely to have put out a considerable part of their stocking manufacture to them. Elsewhere the 100 framework knitters in Whitwick in 1800, and their fellows in Thringstone, were working for specialist hosiers, mostly in Shepshed and Loughborough.

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127 Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 183.
130 Nichols, The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester, 3, 2, p. 1118, regarding 100 framework knitters in Whitwick.
Proletarianization and impoverishment of rural framework knitters.

The final concentration of yarn supplies took time, but yarn quality from spinning frames improved after 1800, and this helped to accelerate the process. On the other hand, it was not only the concentration of yarn supplies, which proletarianized framework knitting. Concentration of knitting frames in hosier ownership was another major factor. This consolidation of ownership accelerated as time progressed. In 1819 it was reported that new frames cost £17 to £18. However, good second hand ones could be bought for as little as £3 or £4 at that time when so many operatives were out of work. This enabled frame masters to extend their ownership very cheaply. In 1845 none of the framework-knitter witnesses to the Parliamentary commission from Whitwick village reported that they still worked their own frames. By that year it seems probable that all of the 131 framework knitters in Whitwick, and the 152 in Thringstone, were working frames owned by specialist hosiers of one kind or another. Operatives in Thringstone and Whitwick complained that frame rents, and other deductions, were generally still collectable even when work was stinted. In depressed times it paid hosiers to stint work to the operatives and provide them with a sparse living. This enabled the hosiers to continue to receive the frame rents as an income, even if they made no profit from the underlying trade. Frequent stinting would have been a major cause of long-term poverty, and even less justifiable when its main objective was to underpin the ability to collect frame rents. In 1845 the commissioner investigating the condition of the framework knitters reported that

Much of the evidence received tends to establish that the amount of the customary charges, or deductions, from the workmen, is considered to be so important an element of profit, as in many cases to supersede the necessity of looking for it in the prices obtained for the goods manufacture... If this be so, it may account for much of the torpor and inactivity, and lack of invention, which have apparently paralysed the trade... The adoption of this [steam] power, or even that of the rotatory principle, would, besides the probable advantage and improvement of the trade, be a boon of inestimable value to the workman by the substitution of either, for the slavery of his

131 James, History of the Worsted Manufacture, p. 355.
132 Report from the Select Committee on the Framework Knitters' Petition, p. 22.
133 Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, pp. 332-44.
own physical energies. It would, however, be wholly impracticable to carry into operation either the one or the other, without congregating the frames into large shops or factories, and thereby destroying, if not altogether, certainly to a great degree, the present domestic nature of the manufacture. 134

Truck shops were an additional source of income for bag hosiers. All four bag hosiers in Whitwick operated truck shops in 1845. 135 Although the truck shops often charged slightly more for goods than independent grocers, an even greater social problem occurred when the framework knitters became regularly indebted to them, and could not escape from the debt load. The 1831 truck Act failed to stop the process as the truck shops, along with frame rents, often provided the bag hosiers themselves with their only alternative to bankruptcy during hard times. 136 Partly through awareness of this workmen were mostly unwilling to lay specific complaints against truck. 137

On the other hand, until the enclosure of Coleorton Moor, after 1806-7, and Charnwood Forest, after 1829, the framework knitters had been partially able to alleviate their poverty by access to the resources of those commons. In chapter three it was noted, if proletarianization can be measured by numbers of co-resident workers per household, that the ratio of co-resident workers per household at Whitwick was somewhat less than the ratio on Coleorton Moor. However, it is also of note that Coleorton Moor was enclosed about twenty years earlier than Charnwood Forest. This may explain the more advanced tendency of co-residence (as an indication of proletarianization) among workers in the Coleorton Moor area in 1841. After enclosure, by the 1840s, allotments were often made available to villagers of the area, including numbers of framework knitters. 138 For both Thringstone and Whitwick allotments were often on recently ‘enclosed’ areas of Charnwood forest. Tenants had initially to improve the land from its former ‘open’ state themselves. This usually meant

134 Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 92.
135 Ibid., p.335, ‘Stinson’, pp. 343-4 ‘Burgess, Hatton, and Henson’.
137 Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p. 81.
clearing away many stones. However, at the same time the monks of the recently founded Mount Saint Bernard Abbey were undertaking similar work. On Coleorton Moor itself, land attached to cottages had already had a long history. Specific allotment provision, as found in Whitwick and Thringstone, was probably thought unnecessary there. Lack of allotments on the former moor may have helped accelerate symptoms of proletarianization among newcomers there, by raising the ratio of co-resident workers per household in 1841 compared with that of Whitwick.

Labour force considerations in regional specialisation.

Previously it was suggested that the availability of women for spinning, uninterrupted in the main by the demands of agricultural work, was important in regional specialisation for textiles. Different branches of the textile trades required different ratios of male to female labour in addition to the total labour requirement for fabric production. The two extremes were the woollen branch, where Haynes specified 35 women to 28 men, and worsteds, where he calculated a requirement of 250 spinsters to 52 male operatives to convert each pack of wool in 1715. To a considerable extent, therefore, the character of a local textile industry depended upon what alternative opportunities existed for the employment of labour, and particularly male labour. In the early eighteenth century, the worsted branch was much more labour-intensive than the (by-occupational) woollen branch. The worsted branch was also heavily dependent on female labour. For stocking production, the labour requirement as between men and women was much closer to a balance than that for worsted cloth in 1715. To process a pack of wool into stockings Haynes calculated a female-worker requirement of 102 spinsters and 12 doublers and throwers (62% of the labour required). In 1782 Nichols reported that the working population of Hinckley included 55 woolcombers, 30 frame-smiths and 1,000 framework knitters plus 300 seamers and 1000 spinners, twisters and doublers.

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139 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, 'enumerators' returns'.
Between 1715 and 1782, therefore, the proportion of women's occupations in the hosiery-labour force had dropped significantly from around 62 to 55 per cent, but not yet dramatically.\textsuperscript{141} The overall labour requirement for framework knitting was less than that for worsted cloth production but more than five times that for woollen cloth production. During the eighteenth century Leicestershire supplied the labour requirements of its framework knitting industry partly from a cumulative roller-coaster release of its labour force from agriculture, but mainly from population increase.\textsuperscript{142} Piecemeal and Parliamentary enclosure resulted in more livestock farming at the expense of more labour-intensive arable. But overall earlier marriage among proletarian members of the labour force had a greater influence in increasing their number.

The checks and balances in the supply of labour, and particularly its sexual division, were very complex. For a time the increase in dairy production increased the demand for female servants, thereby providing both an alternative employment to spinning and a postponement of marriage and child bearing. The dairymaid, earning between £3 and £5 per annum by the end of the century, may well have spun as part of her service employment, but she could not have done so at the same time as she milked the cows and made cheese.\textsuperscript{143} In Leicestershire, therefore, male labour was probably released from agriculture at a faster rate than female labour. At times female labour for dairying might well have been exchanged for male labour in arable. This appears to have provided the more balanced sexual division of the labour force required by framework knitting compared with worsted cloth production as well as the cheaper male labour of Leicestershire.\textsuperscript{144} At the same time, while the alliance between loom and smallholding was thriving in the West Riding, and was probably one factor helping to keep male wages there at comparatively high levels, that between knitting

\textsuperscript{141} Nichols, History and Antiquities of Leicestershire, 2, 1, p. 679.
\textsuperscript{143} Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, p. 302, for wages of dairy maids.
\textsuperscript{144} Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, p. 98, on labour costs compared with Yorkshire.
frame and smallholding in Leicestershire ceased to be of major significance on the structure of manufacturing in the county from around the middle of the eighteenth century. Its continued significance around Coleorton Moor may have been an exception. By the beginning of the nineteenth century Leicestershire provided more employment in trade and manufacturing than in agriculture - 42,000 compared with 24,000 persons in agriculture, according to William Pitt.145

Parliamentary enclosure.

Certain aspects of Parliamentary enclosure in the area, particularly relating to land occupation, have been reported in chapter 3. In this, and the next few sections it is proposed to examine some technological aspects of agricultural practice relating to enclosure, production and land productivity. The part played by Parliamentary enclosure as a tool of agricultural improvement remains a controversial subject. On the one hand it has been seen as underpinning increases in the production of food supplies, without which urbanization and the industrial revolution would not have occurred when it did.146 On the other hand it has been judged as either unnecessary for agricultural improvement, or an often unmitigated land grab, which adversely affected the livelihoods of many small producers, as well as those of the rural poor.147 Although the land-grab argument has tended to focus substantially on the losses of the poor after enclosure of the common wastes, it has also included a disadvantage for small producers to continue viable farm operations when they lost their access to the commons.148 In his later years Arthur Young looked upon enclosure as having both merit

145 Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, p. 323.
148 Ibid., p. 15.
for the country as a whole and disastrous effects on the well being of small farmers and the rural poor.\(^{149}\) In many respects the controversy continues to be unresolved, except in the strongly held opinions of protagonists on either side of the argument. Cobbett held that small producers often produced more per acre than larger farmers.\(^{150}\) In his work on the allotment movement Burchardt has recently produced evidence to support that view.\(^{151}\) On the other hand, Turner, Beckett, and Afton have put forward evidence suggestive of substantial production and productivity increases on farms, particularly in the first 50 years of the nineteenth century.\(^{152}\) However, their evidence in respect of Breedon appears not to have been particularly helpful in formulating that overall proposition.\(^{153}\)

It is intended that the next few sections will focus mostly on matters relevant to enclosed- and open-field agriculture in the area around Coleorton Moor, and north-west Leicestershire, rather than participate further in a national discussion on the benefits and disadvantages of Parliamentary enclosure. Agricultural improvement in this area mainly meant a move to convertible husbandry, intermingled by some all-grass farms. Adoption of the Norfolk four-course rotation appears to have been a rarity.\(^{154}\) However, it was tried on the occasional farm with light or more sandy soils.\(^{155}\) A move to a preponderance of grazier farms was more representative of other parts of Leicestershire – particularly in the east and the south.

'Turf' in the soil: open-field versus convertible husbandry soil structures.

The use of marls, mainly for soil conditioning, has long been reported and commented on by

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\(^{150}\) I. Dyck, *William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture* (1992), pp.30-1 and particularly Cobbett’s comment that the cottagers of Horton Heath produced more than any neighbouring farm of 200 acres.

\(^{151}\) Burchardt, *The Allotment Movement in England*, particularly p. 157, in respect of wheat production on allotments compared to that on neighbouring farms.


\(^{153}\) Ibid., pp. 105-6.


\(^{155}\) Ibid., 2, pp. 69-71, Minute 34, and p. 195, Minute 92, and also the footnote
agricultural historians. The use of Breedon lime for this purpose has also been noted on previous occasions above. However, another element of soil structure and its bearing on the introduction of convertible husbandry in north-west Leicestershire has possibly been given insufficient emphasis in recent historiography. This is possibly because in many eighteenth-century circles locally its importance was accepted as understood. Indeed William Marshall had been listening to market conversations for six to eight months ‘without having, until today, picked up one idea, worth bringing home’.156 This worthwhile idea was the importance which Midland farmers attached to having ‘turf’ and fibre in the Midland-clay soil to produce good crops.

By the eighteenth century three-field rotations in the area mainly consisted of a year of fallow, followed by wheat or barley in the second year, and pulse or oats in the third year.157 The main changes within the three-course system during the eighteenth century was an increase in oats, and some sown clover acreages, both being substituted for beans. Where clover was sown for the non-cereal year, it was mown twice, and then ploughed in late spring for the fallow. Since the clover would have provided additional nitrogen for the ensuing cereal crop, this was probably wheat, or barley for straight milling rather than malting.158 Where it was tried, the one-year clover ley in the non-cereal year appears to have been successful for a time. But Marshall reported that after about 12 years (four clover crops) yields began to dwindle.159

In addition to open-field land having received the benefit of night folding by common-field sheep before it was ploughed, carted manure ‘in a long strawy state’ was often applied on the first or second ploughing of the fallow field.160 Marshall modified his first impressions on the application of manure containing raw long straw, from ‘to appearance, a

156 Ibid., 2, p. 36.
157 Ibid., 2, pp. 205-8, Minute 98.
158 Malting barley requires low nitrogen inputs. Also Ibid., p.207, Marshall observed that ‘in the produce of the common fields, wheat far exceeds every other crop’.
159 Ibid., 1, p. 214.
160 Ibid., 1, p. 367, common-field sheep; Ibid., 2, p. 206, manure ‘in a long strawy state’. ..
Nevertheless it may have been, originally, founded in experience. The strawiness may serve to keep the fallowy soil, in an open, porous state; preventing it being run together by heavy rains; a principal danger, perhaps, incident to fallowfield lands. See Min. 21.161

Minute 21 in fact referred to the open-field practice of forming steep ridges with the plough for planting wheat.162 Passing through Shuttington field Marshall asked a septuagenarian ploughman why he ploughed the ridges so steeply because 'when you inclose common fields, you bring down the lands?' The old man's reply was that

Yea, Sur, we mun lie 'em up, a-thissen, or we canno get onny wheat. An us lie 'em flat o' th' top, th' first pash o' rain runs 'em into lakes, and sets th' crop. It hen been tried a many time; but it wunno do...
Yea, yea, Sur, when they [enclosed fields when ploughed] ha' gotten some turf in 'em, they wunno run, ahaten: but here we fallow, fallow, fallow, every three year, every three year, till they runnen like lime welly: and if they dunno lien up sharp, we canno get onny wheat, skant.

Marshall noted further that

The barley lands, I see, are likewise gathered up, sharp, to lie over winter, and to be slit down and regathered with the seed plowing, in the spring: yet, even in this rooflike state, I find, all the farmer dreads is a 'pash o' rain!' [which 'runs 'em into lakes, and sets th' crop' – i.e. hard-pans the soil and hinders germination and growth].

Indeed the poor structure of the clay soils often found in the open fields would probably have inhibited barley growth more than that of wheat. Marshall noted that 'in the produce of the common fields, wheat far exceeds every other crop'.163 Meanwhile, George Barwell's field sense, in Shuttington field, so impressed Marshall that he subsequently hired him, in spite of his advanced years.

The wide acceptance that many local eighteenth century farmers attached to having 'turf' in the soil was given further emphasis in Marshall’s market-place discussion referred to earlier in the first paragraph of this sub-section. He was told that 'during the first six or
seven years after inclosing...he [the tenant] cannot...bring his land to a good turf – a full
sward". The heavy soil of Appleby field had still not reached its most profitable state ten
or 12 years after enclosure. However, it was suggested that

Newton fields...being of a more loamy, less clayey nature...would come some
years sooner to turf, and consequently to profit: it being a rooted idea, that nothing
can be done without turf, or natural grasses.

His informants also ‘observed that their old inclosures at Newton, bear heavier wheat, than
their common fields... and it was the general opinion that land which has got some turf in it,
grows the heaviest wheat’. Marshall later observed that under the convertible husbandry of
the district he had

frequently been struck, with the rapidity, with which the lands of this district
acquire a natural sward: three or four years after they have been laid down, they
begin to wear the face of old grass lands: yet it never struck me, till now, that this
new turf is raised out of the ruins of the old. For although a Midland farmer turns
over his old turf, and takes a crop of oats; re-turns it, and crops it with wheat; and
this being harvested, repeats the operation of turning over the old turf...disengaging
it from some of its foulness; yet it is still the old turf in ruins...for although the
farmer has had two crops of corn, he has, at the same time, had two crops of grass;
the roots of which a winter fallow [as opposed to a full fallow], of two or three
plowings, is wholly inadequate to destroy; though it may give them a considerable
check: and this accounts for the received opinion, here, that the ‘second year’s
seeds’ are the worst grass: because, the clover is then gone off, and the natural
grasses, having been checked by the pinfallow, and kept under by the barley and the
clover, have not yet recovered themselves: but, the third year, having nothing to
struggle with, they rise again; resuming the appearance, and, in considerable degree,
the profitableness of old grass lands.

What a new system of husbandry is this! At first sight, slovenly in the extreme; yet
it is possible, that before I have been twelve month longer in this district, I may
conceive it to be, for lands which are equally productive of grass and corn, an
eligible system of management...

The labour and expense attending this plan of management is small. Five plowings
in ten years, and a crop every year.

However, elsewhere he noted that the land needed to be brought into good condition for the
system to operate successfully.  

164 Ibid., 2, pp. 37-8.
165 Ibid., 1, p. 145.
In the preceding paragraphs I have quoted the passages on Midland open-field and convertible husbandry in some detail in order to better stress its implications for crop production. Possibly it also tended to induce farmers to support Parliamentary enclosure. One implication expressed above is that convertible husbandry was tried in some of the enclosed fields of the area for some time before Parliamentary enclosure. However, one can also suggest that the attractions of adopting it were not necessarily the cause of Parliamentary enclosure. In theory it could have been fitted into the three-field open structure on the basis of seeding clover and grass for six years of ley, followed by one year each of oats, wheat and barley, quite easily. Indeed, there have been a number of examples found of grass leys in open fields. Locally there is evidence that such leys occurred in the open fields of both Thringstone and Whitwick before Parliamentary enclosure, and probably in the other townships of the three parishes as well. In 1745 the will of Thomas Griffin suggested that part of Farmers’ Sickfield in Whitwick had been grassed. In March 1763, 40 acres of grassed lands in the open fields of Markfield were offered for sale. Some of these ley lands were indeed rotated in a manner very reminiscent of convertible husbandry, except that they were usually subject to common grazing after Lamas day, and in the year of fallowing adjoining croplands.

Convertible husbandry would probably have worked best in an open-field layout if the whole field had been subjected to that regime, as was the original three-field system. On the other hand this may not have been seen by small producers to be in their best interests. They were heavily dependent on their wheat crops for self-sufficiency, and probably their pulses as well. They would probably have been reluctant to drop from three wheat crops in nine years to only one. The small-acreage producers were able to provide the same

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166 Leics. CRO, DE41/1/112/1-3, Thringstone Enclosure Act 1758 and award the same year.
167 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1745, 'Thomas Griffin'.
168 Leics. CRO, The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 26 March 1763.
170 Burchardt, The Allotment Movement in England, pp. 156-9, 168, noted the importance of wheat to allotment holders, 1793-1873. Cereals were presumably of equal importance to small open-field cultivators.
individual attention, and heavy manure applications, which were noted elsewhere by Cobbett, and later by Burchardt. They might well, therefore, have been able to prevent or reverse any soil-structure deterioration, which could have made their lands 'runnen like lime welly'. However, had they continued with the old rotation in the years when their larger neighbours were grazing cattle and sheep around them, they would have potentially been faced with having their crops overrun from time to time. If their lands had to be fenced to overcome this problem, the argument against full enclosure would have been also attenuated considerably. On the other hand it would have then been enclosure in a less rigidly regulated form, which might possibly have avoided some of the more onerous social consequences.171

Furthermore, it seems that the very small occupiers to whom the advantage of the open field still applied, occupied a very small part of the overall acreage of many enclosing townships. Determining precise numbers of small open-field occupiers around the time of Parliamentary enclosure is difficult as enclosure awards were usually only concerned with owners. As was noted in chapter 3, several small freeholders also tenanted larger acreages to make up medium and even largish farms.172 These small freeholders therefore had the outlook of at least the medium sized farmers. They therefore would probably have regarded convertible husbandry on enclosed farms to be an attractive alternative to continuing with open-field operations. For the few figures, which were available for Breedon, Tongue and Wilson, before and after Parliamentary enclosure some indication of small-occupier numbers was given in chapter 3. This suggests that in 1656, 20 tenants of up to ten acres each (excluding the moor settlements) occupied no more than 70 acres in total. By the 1840s ten small occupiers farmed around 100 acres in total – the townships' farmed acreage was nearly 2,800 acres. Interpolating numbers for the time around the date of Parliamentary enclosure for Breedon, Tongue and Wilson, suggests that the interests of the small occupiers were

considered to have an importance, which was only secondary, and probably tertiary, in an age when political influence depended on landed property. And when echoes of the rumblings of the French Revolution were heard in England, it was tenant farmers, particularly the larger ones, who joined the gentry in the yeomanry cavalry.

It was probably the grassland management regime of convertible husbandry, which convinced larger farmers that it was best undertaken in an enclosed-field environment. As a general rule, during the six or seven years of clover and grass-land cultivation in the area, hay was only cut from the first growth in the first and second years of the ley period. For the rest of the long-ley period the fodder was grazed at a mean stocking rate of around 1.4 livestock units per acre (usually one cow and two sheep). Although red and white clover were sown for the hay crops, the first year's aftermath grazing (and to a certain extent the second year's) was also particularly rich in high-protein red clover. This would have stimulated prolonged production for the livestock grazing it. Grazing in the final four years of the ley stimulated wild white clover - fixing nitrogen for the benefit of the subsequent cereal crop. Being aware of this, it appears that many farmers on the outskirts of Charnwood Forest, such as in Thringstone, Whitwick, and Markfield townships, did not mix white clover with their initial seeds for under-sowing the barley crop. They expected the white clover to appear anyway - stimulated by grazing.

Clearly fodder-crop production for livestock was a major objective of convertible husbandry as well as the need reported above to have 'turf' in the soil both for the cereal rotation, and the re-establishment of the long-ley sward afterwards. There were various other expressions of this need in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including grass leys in the open fields. In this respect the results of Havinden's research findings in Oxfordshire, Hoskin's report of open-field grass at Wigston, grass leys in the open fields of

174 Ibid., 1, pp. 289, 401.
175 Ibid., 1, pp. 216-7.
176 Ibid., 1, p. 205.
Markfield and Whitwick, and the four- and five-field systems created before enclosure in Breedon have already been reported in chapter 5. In addition to the open-field leys there were of course the ancient enclosures, also reported previously. Marshall had a poor opinion of the state of most of their swards when they had been left permanently in grass. He described them as being

'Old Turf:' Lands that have lain, some centuries perhaps, in a state of grass; many of them being now overrun, as such lands too often are in other districts, with anthills and other encumbrances; some of them are as full of anthills as a forest, and almost as rough.

He added that they were 'constantly, in the state of pasturage; as grazing or dairy grounds'. For some reason it appears, therefore, that hay was not cropped from them. Cutting the grass for hay every two or three years might have improved their general state of maintenance. However, past overgrazing by stock may have made this option no longer worthwhile in some cases. Their close proximity to the farmstead may also have been a factor, particularly if such fields were stocked with dairy cows. Not all of the old-enclosed fields would have been suitable for incorporation into a convertible husbandry rotation. However, an additional number of them would probably have been brought into convertible husbandry rotations when former open fields were converted after enclosure.

**Crop production: open-field and convertible-husbandry comparisons.**

Marshall did not provide specific 'par' yields for open-field crop production in the Midland counties. He merely noted that the open fields were very similar to those found elsewhere in the country. The following discussion, therefore, mainly uses his figures from open-field

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178 *Ibid.*, 1, pp. 222-41. Apart from cutting the first growth of the first year's ley (and sometimes the first growth of the second year) a major part of hay production was still from dedicated meadows, which were sometimes flooded in the early spring; *Ibid.*, pp. 222-3, 'Meadow lands, of this district, consist of the banks of rivers, and the bottoms, or dips of valleys, scattered over almost every part of it'.
Gloucestershire. For that county, during the 1780s, he reported average yields of 18 local bushels per acre for wheat, and 28.5 local bushels per acre for both barley and beans.\textsuperscript{180}

The customary Gloucestershire volume measurements, as reported to Marshall for grain, were large. Furthermore, even for the Midland counties Marshall reported both a nine-gallon bushel for Tamworth, and an eight-gallon bushel for Ashby-de-la-Zouch. In order to improve clarity, and also to make comparisons between yields of crops with different bushel weights, volumes will be converted into lbs in the tables to be used below. From the measurement of quantities given by Marshall one can derive Imperial (and Ashby) bushel weights of 60-64 lb for wheat, 45-48 lb for barley, and 40-42 lb for oats.\textsuperscript{181} The lower bushel-weight figures will be used below.

Table 6.1 provides three sets of figures for comparison purposes for the 1780s. These

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Local bushels per acre</th>
<th>'Eight gallon' bushels per acre</th>
<th>bu wt lb</th>
<th>Lb per acre</th>
<th>Short tons per acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turner, Beckett, Afton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>18.88</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1133</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>25.50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1148</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>33.90</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1356</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>23.60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1652</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-field Gloucestershire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.38</td>
<td>71.25</td>
<td>1283</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>33.84</td>
<td>53.44</td>
<td>1523</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>33.84</td>
<td>83.12</td>
<td>2369</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland convertible husbandry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30.38</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>50.63</td>
<td>2025</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>60.75</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>2430</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1. Grain yields per acre (in the 1780s) from different sources, which have been converted to weight measurements.

are the revised national figures suggested recently by Turner, Beckett and Afton, figures derived from Marshall’s reports on open-field Gloucestershire, and figures derived from


\textsuperscript{181} Marshall, \textit{The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties}, 2, pp. 375-6. In addition, a bushel weight of 70lb for pulses has been calculated by weighing a mixed sample of dried peas and beans.
Marshall's reports on convertible husbandry in the Midland counties.\(^\text{182}\) The latter figures are specifically relevant to the three parishes around Coleorton Moor. Initial comparison of the open-field, Gloucestershire figures with the revised national figures proposed by Turner, Beckett, and Afton, suggest the former to be remarkably high. This is of particular note in view of Marshall's well-known views on the obsolescence of open-field husbandry. One possible explanation is that Marshall's figures were drawn both from his own experience (perhaps as a superior practitioner) and verbal sampling. Farmers then, as today, were probably very reluctant to report their failures. However, this bias was probably similar in the case of both open-field and enclosed-land farmers. The superiority of the Midland convertible-husbandry yields is easier to explain. Each of the three cereal crops was grown only once in nine years – i.e. one third of the time. The open-field crops on the other hand, comprised cereals and beans for three years each – i.e. two thirds of the time. In addition, large quantities of forage were being recycled back onto the land in the case of convertible husbandry through farm-livestock operations.

An illustration of the probable significance of this recycling is provided in the models of open-field and convertible husbandry set out in tables 6.2 and 6.3 respectively. The factors for analysis were taken from Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, 'Bulletin No. 48', \textit{Rations for Livestock}.\(^\text{183}\) It is suggested that since ruminant livestock can be fed all of the crops to be taken into account, using ration analysis for ruminants has the merit of providing a standard basis for production-comparison purposes. A comparison of foods on the basis of human consumption would make the exercise considerably more complex. This

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\(^\text{183}\) R.E. Evans, \textit{Rations for Livestock} (1921, 1960 edn), pp. 94-118, being the ruminant section in 'Tables of Feedingstuffs'. On p. 95, note that the term 'typical' is preferred to the term 'average', with the proviso, in respect of digestible nutrients, that 'the fact that a set of values is quoted in no sense implies that these are absolute'. However, both the writer and many farmers and farm advisers have used these values with success for feeding livestock. The dry matter percentages, on the other hand, can be read with even more confidence for the simple reason that grain and hay crops will not store safely over long periods if they contain more than 16% moisture. I understand that the pamphlet has since been restated for metrification, and refined a little, but not significantly so.
would be particularly the case in view of the fact that slaughter ages, or even rearing and fattening times, for cattle in particular, are virtually impossible to determine for that time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open-field crop</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Dry matter</th>
<th>Dry matter</th>
<th>Total digestible nutrients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lb</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>lb</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1: wheat 50%</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1: barley 50%</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2: pulses</td>
<td>2369</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2037</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3: fallow</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pre-ploughing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine-years produce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12870</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2. A model of possibly typical open-field production per acre in the 1780s, expressed in terms of dry matter and digestible nutrient values to ruminant livestock.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convertible husbandry</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Dry matter</th>
<th>Dry matter</th>
<th>Total digestible nutrients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crop</td>
<td>Lb</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Lb</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clover hay: year 1</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1530</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye grass hay: yr 1</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2295</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clover for grazing: yrs 1-6</td>
<td>28050</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5330</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass for grazing: yrs 1-6</td>
<td>89522</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22381</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six year-ley summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31536</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7: oats</td>
<td>2430</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2114</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oat straw</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8: wheat</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat straw</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9: barley</td>
<td>2025</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1762</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley straw</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total dry matter and digestible nutrients</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3. A model of possibly typical production per acre, under convertible husbandry in the 1780s, expressed in terms of dry matter and digestible nutrient values to ruminant livestock.

The use of total digestible nutrients available to ruminant livestock, as a basis for comparing the two systems, may be open to the objection that nutrients in that form were not directly available for human consumption. On the other hand, directly or indirectly, most of produce analysed did ultimately contribute to the production of human food in one form or
another. It can also be argued that considerable quantities of farm produce (i.e. horse feed) were never intended for human consumption either directly or indirectly. End consumption is therefore less important than a standard basis for comparison. Total digestible nutrients for ruminant livestock and total dry matter do provide a standard measure to which nearly all farm-crop production can be subjected.

The two models were constructed for periods of nine years each. This provided a comparison of three cycles for open-field husbandry alongside one complete cycle for convertible husbandry. It will be seen that, in terms of both total dry matter and total digestible nutrients for ruminants, a considerable advantage probably lay with convertible husbandry. Expressed in terms of total dry matter, and digestible nutrients for ruminant livestock production, the difference between the two systems was very large. If one substitutes the more conservative figures of Turner, Beckett and Afton for Marshall’s, the difference in production of total dry matter and ruminant-digestible nutrients between the two system-models is still a large one in favour of convertible husbandry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Total dry matter</th>
<th>Total digestible nutrients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open-field husbandry</td>
<td>10325 lb</td>
<td>7247 lb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convertible husbandry</td>
<td>36826 lb</td>
<td>20740 lb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures for the open-fields do not take into account the manure transferred to them from other sources such as the night folding of sheep grazed by day on the commons and manure stores. However, I do not believe that this would have significantly narrowed the difference in dry matter re-cycled overall, especially in the case of medium- and larger-size producers. Stored manure from the farm would also have had to be spread on many of the designated hay fields. The smallest occupiers of the open fields, on the other hand, may well have transferred more manure collected from elsewhere, particularly if their opportunity cost for such a labour intensive activity was very low. This would not have put ‘turf’ in

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184 As noted previously, Burchardt found was the case for allotment tenants. However, by-occupational smallholders would only rarely have had a low opportunity cost for manure collection away from the holding.
the soil, but it could have reduced the difference in effect of dry matter production, and its recycling, between the two systems more significantly. It also brings one back to the suggestion, that the larger farmer benefited much more than the small cultivator from convertible husbandry. The really small farmer would often not have had the nine or ten fields required for a convertible husbandry rotation in an enclosed environment. The significance of pulse crops in the open-field rotation was also supportive of the attractions of retaining open fields for the really small farmer. Beans particularly appear to have been an important crop in the open fields, especially in terms of weights yielded. In the latter part of the eighteenth century the price of beans per bushel often exceeded that for barley locally.\textsuperscript{185} On occasions old-crop beans often approached the price of old-crop wheat – a much lower yielding crop.\textsuperscript{186} Although pulses had a ‘livestock-feed’ stigma attached to them, they would have been a useful standby for human food under near starvation conditions.\textsuperscript{187} They were probably also both more profitable and productively useful in ridge and furrow cultivation.\textsuperscript{188}

\textbf{Convertible husbandry and livestock.}

Sheep, particularly pasture sheep, were an important component of the convertible husbandry system in the enclosed townships. As the eighteenth century came to a close the New Leicester Breed, and various crosses of it, were steadily replacing the long-wool Old Leicester Breed in the old enclosed areas and the short-wool common-field sheep in the newly enclosed townships. Apart from the unsuitability of the pasture sheep for the open-
field fallow-to-commons grazing regime, the local farmers, for whom livestock production was increasingly important, would increasingly have wished to keep their improving livestock and hired sires separated from their neighbour’s stock. Marshall calculated that long-wool wethers increased in value over 16 to 18 months at the rate of about 3.7d per week in the 1780s.\footnote{Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, pp. 406-7.} Ewes with lambs were a little more profitable. He allowed that small farmers keeping short-wool ewes (for crossing?) might do even better under the same regime. However, he noted that the mountain-sheep breeds were too difficult to control in larger flocks. The increasing use of pasture sheep was probably an important factor favouring enclosure.

**Draft animals.**

One of the classical arguments against open-field operations, and used to favour enclosure, has been the waste of time involved in moving plough teams and labour from strip to strip.\footnote{E. P. Thompson, Customs in Common (1991, Harmondsworth, 1993 edn), p. 378.} Such movements had been less of an objection when ox-teams were fed on a diet of grass or hay and needed changing during the day in order not to lose their condition. However, by the late seventeenth century, Leicestershire plough teams mainly comprised heavy horses, in spite of a few farmers like Marshall continuing to favour oxen.\footnote{Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, pp. 99-100.} Feeding grain or chaff through a nosebag, a horse could work longer hours than an ox, and also work longer without water.\footnote{Oxen with nosebags would have been liable to respiration problems. Interestingly, in present day Botswana, donkeys have substantially replaced oxen as draft animals, including for pulling the plough.} It lived longer than the ox. This reduced its annual rate of depreciation, which largely made up for its poor cull value arising from the fact that the English did not eat horsemeat. Dispersed strips in the open fields had probably become more of an inconvenience as a result of working horses with nosebags. In some areas considerable
'engrossment' of strips within the open fields had occurred to reduce this inconvenience.\textsuperscript{193}

However, the strips in the open fields around Coleorton Moor continued to be substantially dispersed before Parliamentary enclosure.\textsuperscript{194}

Dairy farming.

By the 1780s milking cows for production of 'factors cheese' was a long established practice in north-west Leicestershire. It continued to be the main purpose of dairy farming for many years to come.\textsuperscript{195} The season for making cheese for commercial purposes was from May to October.\textsuperscript{196} Milk produced before, and after that season, was mainly used for domestic purposes, including 'family cheese'.\textsuperscript{197} The Derbyshire breed provided the favoured dairy cow.\textsuperscript{198} The stocking rate was between one and a half to two acres per cow for the season.\textsuperscript{199}

Fixed stocking of dairy cows required enclosed fields (but small dairy farmers had also found commons useful for ranging their young stock). Dairy cows were sometimes allowed to graze new leys with a high-clover content.\textsuperscript{200} The high-protein content in the clover would have stimulated greater milk production. Milk residues were used to rear pigs at a ratio of between four and five pigs per 20 cows.\textsuperscript{201}

Some changes were beginning to take place in dairy farming by the 1780s. One of the more important ones was the beginning of milk-substitute feeding to calves after they were two weeks old.\textsuperscript{202} The regime began with a mixture of skim milk and whole milk, fed from buckets, to be followed by skim milk, to which increasing quantities of ground oats were often added. After commercial cheese making began, whey was substituted for the

\textsuperscript{193} As at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, see Leics. CRO, 'Survey of Estates in Land belonging to Lord Theophilus Hastings', by William Gardiner, Land Surveyor, 1735.
\textsuperscript{194} Leics. CRO, DE1469/20 & 23.
\textsuperscript{195} Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, p. 317.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid., 1, p. 322.
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., 1, p. 322.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 1, p. 288.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 1, p. 294.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., 1, p. 318.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., 1, p. 327.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid., 1, p. 298.
skim milk. Such feeding clearly released substantial quantities of milk for additional commercial production. This would probably have been around an extra gallon per day, which could have raised production per cow for processing from around 340 gallons to nearly 500 gallons per lactation. Milk scalding for cream or butter production also became a local practice. Marshall described it to be ‘a new idea’. The practice apparently helped to remove the taint of some feeds from the taste.

Specialised cow keepers (presumably selling whole milk) were just beginning to appear near the larger towns in the 1780s. In a footnote Marshall noted that in the winter of 1785-6, when hay was excessively dear, most of the brewers’ grains produced at Burton-on-Trent was bought up by cow keepers. Brewers’ grains would have been another protein-rich milk stimulant. Whether the cow keepers noticed this and continued the practice Marshall does not say. By 1815 two cow keepers were in business at Markfield. Since Markfield was on the busy turnpike road between Leicester and Ashby-de-la Zouch, they presumably found customers among passing travellers, as well as among the industrial and agricultural workers of the village. In 1861, Drake’s Directory listed three specialist cow keepers at Tongue. Otherwise I have been unable to find specific records of specialist cow keepers in the area. They may have existed unrecorded. However, in 1841 there were two dairymen enumerated in Whitwick township. Their operations were probably similar to those of cow keepers. One of them was part of the monastic community of Saint Bernard’s Abbey. The other was in Whitwick village. He may have preferred to imitate the name ‘dairyman’ rather than call himself a cow keeper. As was noted previously, milk was an important component of the diets of the poor by the early nineteenth century. It is therefore likely that the miners, framework knitters and other tradesmen of the area did provide a ready market for liquid milk from local farmers.

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203 Ibid., 1, p. 316.
204 Leics. CRO, DE1469/20 & 23, being field surveys and valuations, Markfield, 1815 and 1828.
205 F.S. Drake, Directory of Leicestershire (Sheffield, 1861), p. 216.
206 NRO/PRO 830, HO 107.596.
Enclosure and ‘improvement’ in practice.

In the more recent sections above some technological changes have been noted, which may have had some influence in favour of enclosure. However, the thrust of them was not always necessarily supportive of enclosure. Pulse production in north-west Leicestershire, in particular, appears to have been set back by enclosure. Nor was either enclosure or convertible husbandry particularly helpful to smaller farmers whose production was substantially for their own household consumption. The latter were probably as well off with a combination of one or two enclosed fields, some open-field land, and access to common pastures. Again in its concern to eliminate common right Parliamentary enclosure was altogether too rigid.207 This was probably the case even for promoting commercial farming, let alone for the needs of some element of self-sufficiency for the poorer members of the parish.208

Enclosure appears rarely to have procured improvements in husbandry output as rapidly as its supporters had predicted.209 Open fields often required considerable time to be brought into a condition where convertible husbandry could reach its full potential. Some fields were unsuitable for it altogether, or only suitable after ancillary works, such as for drainage. More than 40 years after the enclosure of Breedon’s open fields, significant areas of the land there were considered to be in poor condition.210 Orders and recommendations were made for liming, summer fallowing, and land to be laid down to grass. Both ditching and underground drainage work had to be undertaken in the early years of the nineteenth century. In view of the Bradgate Estate’s dominating landholding at Breedon such works had almost certainly not been entirely dependent on Parliamentary enclosure taking place

207 Leics. CRO, DE41/1/112/1-3, Thringstone Enclosure Act , 1758, illustrates that one intention of the Act was to eliminate common right in ‘lamas closes’.
208 In the Val de Saire, where the writer now lives, the rural landscape has changed four times in a little over 100 years. It has changed from open arable, to enclosed pasture, to enclosed orchards, and back to an open-field morphology for vegetables, as the commercial market for local produce has changed.
210 Leics. CRO, DE41/1/197/1-6, Bradgate Estate papers.
there. However, it does appear that convertible husbandry provided the potential for considerably greater production of recyclable dry matter, particularly on those larger farms which adopted the system. This would have both improved soil structure and augmented soil-nutrient availability. From such an integrated method of mixed farming, a greater variety of arable- and livestock-farm produce could be made available for the commercial market. Wheat cultivations were reduced from three years to one year out of nine under convertible husbandry. On the other hand, there was potential for higher yields in the years when cereals were grown. Marshall’s reports were that these were indeed realised in many cases.211 These better yields would have attenuated the reduction in wheat production arising from the lower wheat acreage sown. Production of other cereals, notably oats and barley, may well have increased overall, as well as on a per acre basis, but at the expense of beans. If there was an overall reduction in cereal production, it arose from a switch to the all-grass farm, rather than a switch to convertible husbandry.212

Agriculture and the urban market.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century farm production had become considerably commercialised. The process was given added impulse by the Napoleonic wars, when farmers often enjoyed considerable prosperity.213 They also suffered from periodic shortages of labour.214 This period was also accompanied by a spurt in the process of Parliamentary enclosure, with legislation passed for Coleorton, Whitwick, Worthington, Thringstone’s commons and Charnwood Forest.215 After the war economic conditions worsened, accompanied by monetary tightening and a period of deflation.

211 Marshall, The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties, 1, pp. 188, 192, 194.
212 W. G. Hoskins, The Midland Peasant (1957, 1965 edn), p. 263, cites the Curate of Breedon as saying in 1801 that much less food was produced than ever before.
214 Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, 1, pp. 303, 306, but wages did not keep up with the price of provisions.
215 Leics. CRO, DE.311/50/6, 13D40/6, DE41/1/112/1-3, QS47/1/49, DE311/85/1-2.
The greater reach of commercialisation had owed a great deal to the development of the canal network. This allowed grain particularly to be carried much more cheaply to urban and other markets and allowed the process of regional specialisation in agriculture to be carried further.\textsuperscript{216} However, cattle were still moved in the traditional way – on foot by drovers. After the 1830s the new railway networks facilitated the transport of cattle and sheep.\textsuperscript{217} Fat cattle, as opposed to advanced stores, could then be transported directly to urban markets comparatively cheaply. During this early nineteenth-century period, however, it is well documented that the standard of living for both Southern agricultural and many rural industrial workers worsened.\textsuperscript{218} Price differentials between the areas of rural production and their urban markets narrowed through lower transport costs. This probably resulted in an evening of prices – lower in urban areas, but with a rise in rural areas. The rural areas had always been low-cost producers. But rural-money wages were sticky.\textsuperscript{219} Reflecting this situation in the south of England, Cobbett was to write of the farms around Cricklade in 1826:

\begin{quote}
I saw in one single farm-yard here more food than enough for four times the inhabitants of the parish; and this yard did not contain a tenth, perhaps, of the produce of the parish; but, while the poor creatures that raise the wheat and the barley and cheese and the mutton and the beef are living upon potatoes, an accursed Canal comes kindly through the parish to convey away the wheat and all the good food to the tax-eaters and their attendants in the Wen.\textsuperscript{220}
\end{quote}

Agriculture and imported inputs.

Marling, and particularly liming, dated back to at least the seventeenth century. These materials had some fertilizer qualities but were mainly soil conditioners. Such materials had usually been obtained by farms from local sources, such as Breedon and Cloud Hill quarries.

\textsuperscript{216} Williamson, The Transformation of Rural England, p. 169.
\textsuperscript{217} Turner, Beckett, and Afton, Farm Production in England, p. 229.
\textsuperscript{219} Pitt, General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester, 1, p. 306.
Some brewers' grains and oilcake was also used by farmers to provide off-farm, supplementary food to their livestock by the 1780s.\textsuperscript{221} However, it was not until the 1840s that this practice became more general.\textsuperscript{222} In doing so it started a trend, which changed sources for fertilizers from being mainly produced on-farm to being imported from often far-away sources – another result of the new transport facilities. Although oilcake was sometimes applied directly as fertilizer it was usually channelled through livestock. Guano, on the other hand, was imported in order to be directly applied to the land.\textsuperscript{223} The combination of imported oil cake and guano again changed the approach to restoring, or improving farm-soil fertility. The comparatively sophisticated build-up, or restoration of soil fertility through convertible husbandry was no longer as attractive as before. From the 1840s, convertible husbandry could be supplemented, or replaced by imported fertilizers.

**Extractive industry expansion.**

Following the failure of the Charnwood Forest Canal in the early nineteenth century, coal exploitation of the area around Coleorton Moor was undertaken only on a small scale for the next 20 to 25 years. However, a new 360 ft shaft was sunk at Pegg’s Green during this period.\textsuperscript{224} A small mine of similar depth was also opened alongside Long Lane Whitwick in 1824.\textsuperscript{225} William Stinson, the Whitwick owner of this last mine, had lived for a time in the north of England, and had followed the opening of the Stockton and Darlington railway with interest.\textsuperscript{226} Realising that a railway line with steam-powered locomotives might just be the answer to the local mining industry’s restricted-distribution problems, he made a preliminary survey of a possible route to Leicester in 1828. Armed with this survey, he convinced Stephenson to appraise the project in 1829. The railway carried the first coal, stockpiled by

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\textsuperscript{221} Marshall, *The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties*, 1, p. 300.

\textsuperscript{222} Turner, Beckett, and Afton, *Farm Production in England*, p. 89.

\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., pp. 86, 89.

\textsuperscript{224} Baker, *Coalville: The First 75 Years*, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{225} Owen, *The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield*, p. 193.

\textsuperscript{226} Ibid., p. 193.
Stinson at Long Lane, from Whitwick colliery to Leicester on 22 April 1833. \(^{227}\) At Leicester the Whitwick Colliery Company already had canal boats waiting for onward transportation to London. \(^{228}\) Very soon afterwards an extension of the railway line was built to Coleorton. \(^{229}\) Previously closed mines there, and at Swannington, were re-opened, and Stephenson opened his own new mine on the Snibston side of Long Lane. \(^{230}\) As a result of these developments the 16s a ton price in Leicester for Derbyshire coal was undercut by Coleorton Moor and Long Lane coal at 10s per ton. \(^{231}\) Even more importantly, the area around the moor, which had struggled throughout most of the eighteenth century with problems arising from the high cost of transport to Leicester, began to have access to the wider national market.

Other extractive-based industries in the area also benefited from this access to wider markets. This was particularly the case in respect of brick clay from various locations around the moor, and lime from the Cloud Hill quarry. \(^{232}\) For some reason the Breedon Hill limestone quarry did not join in this expansion, and remained a local-area supplier. \(^{233}\) Clay-fired bricks had been made in the area of the moor for many years previously. Apart from their use for houses, they had also been used in mining operations for lining shafts and water channels. Stinson appears to have been quick to take advantage of the railway for a wider distribution of bricks and formed the Whitwick Colliery Brick and Tile Company. \(^{234}\) This company was able to use up much of the clay excavated from the mine workings. However, substantial consumption of the bricks must have been used over the years in the construction of the new settlement of Coalville.

\(^{227}\) Ibid., p. 195.
\(^{228}\) Baker, Coalville: The First 75 Years, p. 49.
\(^{229}\) Ibid., pp. 31, 33.
\(^{230}\) Ibid., pp. 33.
\(^{231}\) Ibid., pp. 33.
\(^{232}\) Ibid., pp. 66-7, Owen, The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, p. 199.
\(^{233}\) W. White, History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the Counties of Leicester and Rutland (Sheffield, 1862), pp. 471-2.
\(^{234}\) Baker, Coalville: The First 75 Years, p. 66.
Conclusion.

To a great extent the growth of the mass market for rural production in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was the other side of the coin to the growing proletarianization of the workforce nationwide. Rural production was initially underpinned by the availability of cheap inputs. It can also be suggested that initially much of this rural production was for consumption by a growing urban workforce. The production of the latter was more directed to an expanding middle-class market. ‘The highly skilled artisans of Nottingham and Leicester’ were perceived as having ‘little in common with the relatively unskilled and unorganised village knitters...’

Although in its early days rural manufacturing was often a by-occupation, framework knitting was already considerably proletarianized by the 1760s, although not yet completely so. Chambers’ view that the good harvests and low price of provisions of the late 1730s and early 1740s encouraged a greater willingness on the part of framework knitters to rely more on that trade alone for a living is probably valid. The evidence presented in this and in previous chapters has suggested that the three parishes around Coleorton Moor were comparatively slow to complete the process of proletarianization. This slowness almost certainly illustrates the importance of both the moor and nearby Charnwood Forest in providing resources for some continuing elements of self-reliance.

For the subsistence-based household, the transitions from production for domestic use, occasional sales of such production in times of need, and progressive participation in putting-out, manufacturing operations developed over many years. Spinning was often put out, and had been particularly relevant to the livelihoods of poor widows for many years. Employment of the poor through putting-out operations was a major reason for the progressive proletarianization of manufacturing. The growth of later factory operations for yarn production merely helped consolidate what had already begun. While one might mourn

the debasement of many an independent producer through the proletarianization of
manufacturing, one had also to recognize the employment it provided for the poor. Some
might argue that they would otherwise have remained trapped forever in an under-class,
especially after enclosure. Others would argue also that for long periods of time, the
framework knitter was effectively in a sub-proletarian under-class, in that they were
regarded as unsuitable for alternative employment in other fields. In 1801 Monk was
informed 'they made but indifferent labourers' for agriculture.\textsuperscript{236} East Midland colliery
owners discouraged workers from combining mine employment with framework knitting.\textsuperscript{237}
This was borne out by the fact that in the enumerators' returns for the 1841 census of the
employer-owned houses in the embryo town of Coalville, there were no framework
knitters.\textsuperscript{238} However, many lived alongside miners in the older village of nearby Whitwick.
Again, after 1830 many framework knitters eagerly sought allotments.\textsuperscript{239} In both
Thringstone and Whitwick, particularly, framework knitters sought allotments after they had
lost access to the common wastes of Thringstone and Charnwood Forest.\textsuperscript{240}

It has been shown that several factors contributed to the proletarianization of
framework knitting: the bulking, or engrossment, of long-wool supplies by both producers
and merchants; the technical need for product synthesis by the specialized woolcombers with
their close-knit trade community; the release of labour and petty capital from agriculture; the
provision of petty investment in knitting frames and low-cost housing from outside the trade,
as well as by employers; and the concentration of supply and marketing through hosiers.
Truck and a tendency for framework knitters to be continually in debt to employers were
also to become major factors in an even greater, ongoing dependency. Above all framework
knitters rarely, if ever, held a strategic position from which they could influence the direction

\textsuperscript{236} Pitt, \textit{General View of Agriculture in the County of Leicester}, p. 324.
\textsuperscript{238} NRO/PRO 830, HO 107.596.
\textsuperscript{239} Burchardt, \textit{The Allotment Movement in England}, particularly p. 181.
\textsuperscript{240} Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, pp. 332-47.
of their trade. Rarely did they have direct access to responsive markets and their hosiers provided them with inadequate market penetration. They mainly prospered when governments were buying in quantity.

Putting-out was abused by a tendency for hosiers to have more specialist, wage-dependent mechanics on their books than was necessary for normal trade, let alone the times when it was depressed. As a result framework knitters still had to bear the fixed-cost risks of under-employment when trade was poor. These mainly arose from the ongoing obligations for their frame rents. From the point of view of operative welfare, putting-out was more suited to a by-occupational, land-based system. The first half of the eighteenth century had provided kinder relationships between framework knitters, woolcombers and hosiers.241

Traditional analysis of the framework knitting industry in Leicestershire has stressed a concentration of hosier capital, which overwhelmed the independence of self-employed, small-scale manufacturers. During this process land-based, by-occupational, framework knitters disappeared. An unsatisfactory feature of this analysis is that by 1845 it was determined that one cause of the poor state of the framework knitters of that time was that as under-employed specialists, they could not compete in overseas markets with the smallholding based, by-occupational framework knitters of Saxony.242 When specialized labour was under-employed specialization had no advantage.

Overall structural changes in framework knitting can be summarised as having been individually small, but having a major cumulative effect in the form of proletarianization. For other major occupations in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor, farming and mineral extraction, major structural change was more dramatically sudden. Parliamentary enclosure had mixed consequences. These were probably beneficial, in the main, to larger- and medium-size farmers, and convenient to some by-occupational smallholders. However,

241 Leics. CRO, Probate Records, Wills and Inventories, 1745, ‘Enoch Warner’, a retired woolcomber in Hinckley, left money in trust for his four daughters, with his ‘dear friends’, James Estling, a hosier, and William Hollyer, a framework knitter, as trustees and guardians.
Parliamentary enclosure provided less benefit to smaller farmers. It certainly undermined the degree of self-reliance provided by the commons to all poorer members of the community. On the other hand, it is appreciated that for non-farmers self-reliance from the commons was most valuable when opportunity costs were low in terms of the various craft and manufacturing opportunities. In the years when Coleorton Moor was mainly enclosed, between 1799 and 1811, the opportunity costs of exploiting its commons were probably higher. Goods for the mass market were generally in demand during the Napoleonic wars. In 1841 an old hosier of Leicester recalled that

The period... from 1800 to 1810...was the most flourishing period of the trade within my recollection. The demand for hosiery during the whole of these years was very great, it was impossible fully to execute all the orders received. In order to increase the quantity manufactured so as to enable the hosiers to execute orders on hand, they were obliged to bid against each other in order to get workmen, and in all cases to offer them higher wages than what they were obtaining at the time.  

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century the one major boon for the area was the building of the Swannington to Leicester railway. This at last turned the ambitions of the eighteenth-century mine entrepreneurs into realisable opportunities for their successors in terms of distribution. On the other hand, even this success had some downside. Owing to better transport facilities for distribution local produce was probably no longer as inexpensive for local consumers, relative to wages, as it had once been – a recurring theme implied from Cobbett’s tours in the south of England. And the last of the major north-west Leicestershire commons, Charnwood Forest, disappeared at about the same time.

Chapter 7

The Aftermath and Hangover of Structural Change

Introduction

It has been noted in the previous chapter that much of rural north-west Leicestershire’s commercial production was for the mass market of lower paid households.

Subsequently, the hated ‘cut-ups’ from the wide knitting frames provided urban competition in this market for the more traditional rural framework knitters. Evidence that ‘cut-ups’ were mainly produced in Leicester and the larger manufacturing centres was provided both by Felkin’s ‘statistics of the trade’, and the locations where ‘seamers’ were enumerated in the 1841 census. Cut-up production tended to be concentrated in many cases, possibly because of the hostility it often aroused. In addition to a large concentration in the town of Leicester, substantial production of cut-ups took place close to Hinckley, in Stoke Golding and Wolvey, and also in Rothley and Wigston Magna. In Loughborough and Shepshed cut-ups were produced on a more modest scale. In the 1841 Census the ‘seamers’, who stitched the cut-ups together, tended to be enumerated in those centres of production or close to them. Many rural framework-knitting villages had no cut-up production at all.

In this final chapter it is proposed to examine some of the ways in which the structural changes described previously impacted on the lives of people in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor. The examination in this chapter is mainly concerned with the first 50 years of the nineteenth century. One of the questions arising from

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1 W. Felkin, History of the Machine Wrought Hosiery and Lace Manufacture (1867, 1967 edn), ‘Statistics of the Trade’, pp. 8-11; Felkin listed 98 town and village locations with more than 7 knitting frames. Twenty-two locations had wide frames dedicated to cut-up and slight-fashoned production. Of these, locations with more than 20 wide frames, dedicated to cup-up and slightly fashioned items were 12 in number — by far the largest was Leicester. Stoke Golding, Rothley, Wolvey, and Wigston also had 100 or more, wide frames each. Shepshed had 32 wide frames. The Shepshed Local History Society, The Shepshed Census of 1841 (Shepshed, 1991), reported 61 seamers in Shepshed. Evidence of seamers in the three parishes around the moor was sought in NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/596, Census of Great Britain 1841, ‘enumerators’ returns’, for Shepshed, Thrungstone and Whitwick. There was only one seamer enumerated in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor - in Whitwick.
previous pages is whether the lowering of transport costs increased population mobility. To what extent, also, was a migration of population from the countryside to the towns encouraged either by the lowering of urban-provisioning costs, or by proletarianization of the rural workforce and a denial of access to the former commons through Parliamentary enclosure? Sharpe has suggested that a comparative lack of rural work opportunities for women, particularly on large farms, ‘can be linked with the female migration of women from rural areas to towns and cities which was such a marked feature of late seventeenth and eighteenth-century England’.2 This suggested that

As a result, this is a direct route by which the ‘agricultural revolution’ fed the ‘consumer revolution’. Women who moved to the towns formed a labour supply for the proliferating fashion industries and services of the urban milieu.3

Migration to the larger towns of Leicestershire appears to have occurred during comparatively later periods. John Prior’s map of the county town in 1777 (figure 7.1) suggests a small market town at that time.4 A map of Leicester made in 1828 (figure 7.2) shows the size of the town to have multiplied several times by that year.5 The township of Whitwick nearly tripled in size between 1801 and 1841.6 It all but doubled in size in the last 20 of those years, which included the developments at Long Lane. As will be seen later in this chapter, other townships around Coleorton Moor experienced reductions in their population during this period.

It is also proposed to explore the incidence of a possible survival of certain work cultures from previous periods around Coleorton Moor, particularly the culture of self-reliant unspecialised production. When Sturt, and later Mills, wrote about ‘the peasant system’ they were mainly writing about the nineteenth century. However, in some

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3 Ibid., p. 179.
Figure 7.1. John Prior’s map of Leicester in 1777.
Figure 7.2. ‘A Plan of Leicester, Shewing the Limits of the Borough, Boundaries of Parishes, and Extra Parochial Liberties’, in 1828.
cases, especially with regard to the impact of Parliamentary enclosure on such
townships as Thringstone, and more particularly, Breedon, the effects of structural
change on people’s lives will have begun earlier.

**Population mobility:**

**Geographical endogamous and exogamous marriage, 1760-1837.**

In a recent study of parishes in many parts of England, Snell found that endogamy rose
along with parish population as ‘some rural parishes leaned towards urban
characteristics’.\(^7\) Earlier Levine had come to a similar conclusion in Shepshed.\(^8\) But
Snell also suggested that ‘rural endogamy peaked in the most adverse period of rural
living standards: from about 1770 to 1840’.\(^9\)

Lord Hardwick’s Act of 1753 ‘for the Better Preventing of Clandestine
Marriages’ came into force on the 25 March 1754. Since the Act was concerned with
the parish of residence of intended spouses, and could include residence for a
comparatively short period before marriage, it is not a particularly precise tool for
monitoring migration and population mobility.\(^10\) Such residence may have arisen over a
long term, or from a comparatively short period of employment. As Snell went on to say,

> But marriage itself was also a custom-influenced and positioned event, and
> clearly there are grounds for caution in extrapolations from findings about
> geographical endogamy. These points are inescapable, notably in a society
> with so many servants, apprentices, and other mobile people, and they may
> vitiate some incautious studies of migration using marriage registers. Even so,
> limitations and caveats of similar kinds are inherent in all sources which
> partially document personal mobility in the past, and they should not prevent
> research into geographical endogamy using the enormous quantity of parish
> register evidence.\(^11\)

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10. Ibid., pp. 262-298, and particularly pp. 268-71.
11. Ibid., pp. 271-2.
In consideration of such caveats in respect of population mobility, this study will attempt to evaluate the evidence of geographic endogamy and exogamy in the parishes around Coleorton Moor.

The marriage registers.\textsuperscript{12}
The figures analysed below have been mainly collected from the marriage registers of Breedon and Whitwick parishes. Table 7.1 presents a decade-by-decade analysis of geographic endogamy, and exogamy derived from the parish registers of Whitwick and Breedon, according to the following classifications.

- Endogamy: both partners resident in the parish of marriage.
- Exogamy: one partner resident in the parish of marriage.
- Exogamous man.
- Exogamous woman.
- Both partners exogamous.

The period covered is 1760 to 1837. An attempt to analyse data before 1754 showed it to be of very variable quality, in terms of survivability and reliability. For Whitwick the records were often unreadable prior to 1743. The records between 1743 and 1754 also showed no evidence of exogamy at all. For Breedon a large number of years before 1754 also recorded no exogamy at all. However, in both cases the evidence recorded may well have been defective in this respect. Prior to Lord Hardwick’s Act of 1753 very little attempt was made to record the residence of Breedon and Whitwick marriage partners. After 1754 records appear to have been kept more diligently. In addition, a separate marriage register was kept for Worthington chapelry from 1759. This separate register may have been intended to make easier identification of the parish in which the various marriage partners from the various scattered settlements of Coleorton Moor had

\textsuperscript{12} Leics. CRO, DE 2478/9, ‘Breedon marriage registers’; DE 1760/11, ‘Whitwick marriage registers’; DE 2499/5 ‘Worthington marriage registers’.
been resident. Certainly, a comparison of numbers on the registers of Breedon mother church and Worthington chapelry, respectively, suggests that significant numbers of Worthington residents continued to be registered in the Breedon church register when they were married. In the later periods covered by the years 1820-37, whereas 20 women and 16 men resident in Worthington were recorded in the register of the Breedon mother church, no Breedon residents were recorded in the Worthington register. This was in spite of the fact that the combined population of Worthington and Newbold by 1801 (1096 persons) was already very close to the combined population of the rest of the parish. The populations of Breedon, Tongue, Wilson and Staunton Harold totalled 1102 persons. During the period from 1760 to 1837 a total of 1311 marriages was registered for Breedon. The number for Worthington was a mere 292. This also suggests that the register for the latter township had a somewhat limited, and perhaps specialist role. Furthermore, there is evidence that during the 1770s and 1780s especially, manufacturing residents were of concern to the vicar of Breedon. In his register of burials he often recorded the words ‘framework knitter’, ‘pauper’, or both descriptions, against the names of deceased persons in those categories.\textsuperscript{13} By the nineteenth century, however, framework knitters were insignificant in the parish’s townships other than Worthington.

\textbf{Exogamy trends and employment opportunities.}

In all decades except the period 1800-09, Worthington had as high, and usually higher proportions of geographical exogamy to endogamy than the other two marriage-register locations. Percentages averaged 19 for Whitwick, 22 for Breedon mother church, but 27 for Worthington. The relevance of the Worthington marriage register to the industrial settlements of Coleorton Moor is re-enforced by the fact that in the period 1820-37, \textsuperscript{13} Leics. CRO, DE 2478/9.
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exogamous man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760-69</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770-79</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780-89</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-99</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-09</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-29</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1 An analysis of geographic endogamy, and exogamy derived from the parish registers of Whitwick and Breedon, 1760-1837.
Table 7.1 continued. An analysis of geographic endogamy, and exogamy derived from the parish registers of Breedon and Whitwick.

per cent of Worthington’s exogamous marriage partners came from villages where mining or quarrying also occurred. When exogamous marriage partners from other framework-knitting parishes were added to those containing extractive industries, the percentage rose to 69. For the three decades, 1790-1819, the figures were 50 and 73 per cent, and for 1760-89, 35 and 75 per cent. These figures suggest a rising long-term trend in extractive-industry related exogamy, but a falling one in exogamy related to framework knitting. Such trends are not surprising. Road maintenance, building, liming on farms were all creating demand for quarried materials at various times during the period. But different quarry operations probably prospered at different times. In the 1830s the revival of coal mining, and the new mines at Long Lane, created a further demand for suitable labour willing to migrate. These situations may well have caused
some operatives to relocate their homes, which was reflected in marriage registers. In framework knitting, on the other hand, conditions certainly worsened from 1811, and had ridden something like an economic roller coaster between 1760 and 1800. The trends are not therefore out of keeping with Snell’s comment referred to above that ‘rural endogamy peaked in the most adverse period of rural living standards: from about 1770 to 1840’.

Overall, endogamy levels were high for the whole of the period 1760-1837. In both parishes population throughout the period was well above the level of 400 persons, to which figure Snell found endogamy ratios tended to rise. However, both mean and median percentages were 77 for Breedon parish and 81 for Whitwick parish during the whole period – a small but perhaps significant difference. Furthermore, endogamy went down to 72 per cent for Breedon parish (and Worthington chapelry) in the decade 1820-29. In Whitwick parish during that same decade endogamy maintained its average level of 81 per cent. In the following eight years endogamy in Breedon parish rose once more to reach a level of 80 per cent. In Whitwick it rose also but less dramatically from its already high level.

Breedon parish was more important for agricultural employment opportunities than Whitwick parish. In 1801, 435 persons had been dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods compared with 135 in Whitwick. In 1831 Breedon parish still provided employment for 225 agricultural labourers compared with 167 in Whitwick parish. Agriculture, along with the economy generally, was particularly depressed in the 1820s. This was the decade in which Cobbett wrote Rural Rides, describing the depressed rural economic conditions in the south of England. Such conditions were not normally associated with lower geographical marital endogamy. That of Breedon parish from

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15 Census of Great Britain, 1801, ‘Enumeration Abstract for the County of Leicester’. The numbers dependent on agriculture in the three townships of Whitwick in 1801 were so low, as to suggest that many people were classified by another by-occupation.
1820-29 may have been a small statistical aberration. On the other hand, the total number of marriages in Breedon parish in the 1820s was higher than in any other decade between 1760 and 1837. But the total number of exogamous bridegrooms was double that of Whitwick in that decade. Exogamous brides were less significantly high.

Distances involved in exogamous marriage.

Table 7.2 presents an analysis of the average distance from the church of marriage to the parish church of exogamous partners. Although the influence of both partners being exogamous was comparatively small after 1754, the figures below exclude such marriages. It will be noted that usually exogamous men married much farther from their village church than exogamous women. Generally, the average distance travelled for courtship appears to have risen slightly for Breedon parish over the period 1760-1829. For Whitwick it fell. However, the differences were only small. Apart from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of marriage</th>
<th>1760-79</th>
<th>1780-99</th>
<th>1800-19</th>
<th>1820-37</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breedon</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthington</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breedon Parish</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitwick Parish</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2. Average distance in miles to village church of exogamous partner’s parish.

the period 1800-19, exogamous bridegrooms registering their marriages at Worthington chapelry appear to have been resident farther away than those at either Breedon’s mother church or at Whitwick. It will be recalled that Worthington also had as high, or higher percentages of exogamy than the other two locations, except in the decade 1800-09. Its exogamy was also noted to have been associated with villages having extractive industries.
Generally, however, exogamous partners were not travelling farther than before to find spouses. Table 7.3 analyses the percentage of exogamous partners from parishes within 3.2 miles of the place of marriage. At both Whitwick and Breedon mother church the percentage of exogamous partners from within this comparatively close distance was increasing over the period. At Worthington it remained virtually the same. In effect the tendency was to greater geographical endogamy when the boundary defining it was expressed as a simple distance rather than the boundary of the parish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Breedon %</th>
<th>Worthington %</th>
<th>Whitwick %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1760-89</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1819</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-37</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3. Percentage of exogamous-marriage partners from townships within 3.2 miles of the place of marriage.

If all marriages are taken into account within 3.2 miles of the officiating church, rather than within parish or chapelry boundaries, the trend towards more local partnerships is shown to have become much more endogamous by the end of the period (see table 7.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Breedon %</th>
<th>Worthington %</th>
<th>Whitwick %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1760-89</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1819</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-37</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.4. Percentage of all marriage partners from townships within a 3.2-mile radius of the place of marriage.

Significant locations of exogamous partners.

The residence of exogamous partners by significance of location type – proximity to Coleorton Moor, a market-, or marketing-related town, or elsewhere – between 1760

17 Had a three-mile radius determined the distances from the parish churches of Breedon and Whitwick to those of other parishes, some important nearby settlements providing spouses from just outside that limit may have been omitted from the calculations. This would have suggested that marriage-partner origins were rather less local than was really the case. Settlements which may have been marginal for inclusion at a simple three-mile distance, included Belton, Diseworth, Istock, Osgathorpe, and Ticknall.
and 1837 is analysed in table 7.5. As would be expected from its location Worthington had the highest percentage of exogamous partners from the various townships around Coleorton Moor. A market location also seems to have been an important source of exogamous partners for Worthington in the period 1760 to 1789. However, this fell away towards the level of Breedon and Whitwick in the nineteenth century. This may have been a reflection of the Parliamentary enclosure of Coleorton Moor after 1807, and a consequent loss of grazing facilities for livestock, or other reasons not visiting market towns as frequently as before. Breedon had the lowest percentage of exogamous partners from the other parishes of Coleorton Moor, but the highest from a location elsewhere, and an average marketing orientation. Whitwick appears to have found few exogamous partners from marketing locations, and even fewer from elsewhere, other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period &amp; place of marriage.</th>
<th>Endogamy Residence in parish</th>
<th>Residence of exogamous partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worthington Chapelry</td>
<td>Another Coleorton moor parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760-1789</td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>Total %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breedon</td>
<td>385  77</td>
<td>4  1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthington</td>
<td>36  64</td>
<td>0  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breedon Parish</td>
<td>421  75</td>
<td>4  1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitwick</td>
<td>381  83</td>
<td>0  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1819</td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>Total %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breedon</td>
<td>345  77</td>
<td>10  2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthington</td>
<td>92  75</td>
<td>2  2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breedon Parish</td>
<td>437  76</td>
<td>12  2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitwick</td>
<td>462  82</td>
<td>0  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-37</td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>Total %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breedon</td>
<td>275  76</td>
<td>10  3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthington</td>
<td>79  69</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breedon Parish</td>
<td>354  75</td>
<td>10  2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitwick</td>
<td>351  82</td>
<td>38  8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.5. Residence-analysis of exogamous partners by significant location, 1760-1837.
than in the three parishes, by the period 1820-37. However, this appears to be in keeping with its position as a rapidly growing township with new industrial enterprises, but where many of its resident employees were not particularly prosperous.

The figures for ‘elsewhere’ in table 7.5 also require some comment. The distance to the residence of exogamous partners does not appear to have increased over the period 1760-1837 even for a very small number of such people able to take advantage of improved communications. For Whitwick in the period 1760-89, nine exogamous partners had their residence in other counties. However, seven of these were resident in adjoining counties, with three resident in Derbyshire. The average distance to the residential parish of these exogamous partners was 26.5 miles. In the 18-year period, 1820-37, 16 exogamous partners had their residence in other counties. Of these 13 were resident in adjoining counties, including eight in Derbyshire. The average distance to the residential parish of these exogamous partners was 23.5 miles – a small overall decline. For Breedon in the period 1760-89, 33 exogamous partners were resident in other counties. Of these all but two were resident in adjoining counties, and 23 were resident in adjoining Derbyshire with 14 in the nearby market town of Melbourne. If one excludes the residents of Melbourne – it being within a 3.2-mile radius of Breedon church – the average distance to the residential parish was only 14 miles. In the period 1820-37 there were only 14 exogamous partners from other counties. Ten of these were from adjoining Derbyshire – seven from Melbourne. The average distance to the parish of their residence (excluding partners from Melbourne) was 16 miles – a small average increase.

A further comment deserving mention is that while many marital unions appear to have taken place across Coleorton Moor, the higher altitude of Charnwood Forest
appears to have made it a barrier.\textsuperscript{18} For Whitwick 47 exogamous partners (17%), during the whole period 1760-1837, were resident in other villages adjoining Charnwood Forest, other than Thringstone. However 29 of these exogamous partners (10.5%) were resident in either Shepshed or Loughborough, whose hosiers employed most of Whitwick's framework knitters. They were therefore both marketing locations for Whitwick products. Of the remaining 18 exogamous partners (6.5%) resident in other Charnwood Forest villages, seven (2.5%) were from locations at distances no more than two miles from Whitwick. Only four per cent of Whitwick's exogamous partners, therefore, were resident in the other villages of Charnwood Forest at a greater distance than 3.2 miles from Whitwick, such as Markfield, Groby, Anstey, Woodhouse Eaves, and Woodhouse.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{Population trends and mobility 1801-41, based on census statistics.}

During the period 1801-31 all of the townships around Coleorton Moor experienced a growth in population, except Coleorton, which experienced a steady decline. This amounted to 21 per cent, owing to a contraction in its coalmining activities. Between 1831 and 1841 Coleorton experienced a further decline of 37 per cent. In this latter period, the Breedon, Tongue, and Wilson townships, together with Worthington and Thringstone, also experienced population declines. These varied from 7.5 per cent for Worthington, 4.5 per cent for Breedon and its two 'hamlets', and 3.5 per cent for Thringstone. Apart from Coleorton and Thringstone, mining townships grew in this latter decade – Whitwick by 45 per cent, Swannington by 33 per cent, and Staunton Harold by 18 per cent. Population figures taken from the Census figures of 1801, 1831,

\textsuperscript{18} Charnwood Forest was in fact either side of a watershed running through Beacon and Bardon Hills. Coleorton Moor was on the north side of the same watershed. There were, however, a number of exogamous partners from nearby villages across the watershed to the south of Whitwick parish.

\textsuperscript{19} The registers of those latter villages told a similar story.
and 1841 are shown in table 7.6. From these figures it appears that some migration was taking place over the 40-year period. There may well have been a drift of population from Breedon, Worthington, and Coleorton into the other townships, particularly into Whitwick. On the other hand, a closer look at the 1841 census enumerators' returns indicates that immigration into Whitwick especially was originating from a far wider area than the other townships around Coleorton Moor. Persons living in the various townships in 1841, who had been born outside of the county, were 11 in Coleorton (2% of its population), 28 in Worthington (2.5%), 21 in Staunton Harold (5.2%), 62 in Breedon, Wilson and Tongue (5.9%), 92 in Thringstone (8.2%), 63 in Swannington (8.6%), and 234 in Whitwick (10.4%). These ‘born out of county’ figures suggest that significantly more immigrants came from townships in Leicestershire, other than the local ones. Furthermore, these figures also suggest more overall population mobility, at least by 1841, than the earlier figures for geographical marital endogamy and exogamy have suggested previously.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Breedon &amp; hamlets</th>
<th>Worthington</th>
<th>Staunton Harold</th>
<th>Coleorton</th>
<th>Whitwick</th>
<th>Thringstone</th>
<th>Swannington</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>1096</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>1069</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>1103</td>
<td>1211</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>1552</td>
<td>1267</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>1121</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>2257</td>
<td>1221</td>
<td>731</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Household Size.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.6. Numbers of populations, households, and average household sizes in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor, taken from three Census returns – 1801, 1831, 1841.
If the populations of the various townships in 1841 are divided into various age groups further indications, and implications, of this mobility may be provided. Population was therefore allocated to the following age groups by percentage:

- Adults of 20 years and over,
- Youths of 15 to 19 years of age inclusive, and
- Children of 14 years of age and under.\(^{20}\)

The results are presented in table 7.7. Since service may have complicated the overall picture to some extent, servants as percentages of the population were added in a final column. Servants’ former homes may have been inside the township, or outside it.\(^{21}\)

Their numbers were represented in all three age groups as well as in the additional column. Part of the reason for Coleorton showing the highest percentage of servants is the disproportionate influence of those working in the hospital in Church Town. Servants living at Mount St. Bernard’s Monastery made a much smaller impact on Whitwick percentages.

The townships of Breedon and Worthington both showed very low percentages of youths in their populations compared with the other townships. The percentage of youths in Staunton Harold, on the other hand, was particularly high. Owing to Staunton Harold being an ‘estate township’ its local youths from approved households may have been encouraged to find their employment there. In turn the paternalistic character of an ‘estate township’ may have appeared to offer them greater prospects for employment security than the outside world. The comparatively low percentage of youths in the townships of Breedon and Worthington, on the other hand, seems to indicate that it was

\(^{20}\) It is appreciated that until 1944 it was quite usual for the young to start work at 14 years of age. In spite of this, the age group 15-19 inclusive was selected as the youth classification as it was a recognised age group in the 1841 Census. Enumeration requirements were that persons of 15 years of age or over should have their ages rounded down to the nearest five. This requirement was often not applied in this area. Ages in between were often recorded, albeit inconsistently.

\(^{21}\) Furthermore, while only small numbers of male servants in husbandry were counted for the area in the 1831 Census return, a greater number had been employed again by 1841, following the Poor Law Reform Act of 1834, which eradicated yearly service as a qualification for settlement.
Table 7.7. Percentages of different age groups, in 1841, for various townships around Coleorton Moor. Tongue and Wilson figures have been separated from those of Breedon. (The figures for servants were also represented in all three age-group categories).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Township</th>
<th>Adults %</th>
<th>Youths %</th>
<th>Children %</th>
<th>Servants %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breedon</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthington</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue &amp; Wilson</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitwick</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleorton</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swannington</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thringstone</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staunton Harold</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The youths that were in the forefront of out-migration from these townships. This could not just have been a reflection of their agricultural nature. Tongue and Wilson were even more agricultural. If youths were leaving from Tongue and Wilson, they appear to have been replaced substantially by servants in husbandry. In Breedon and Worthington youths who were out-migrating were clearly not being replaced by servants to the same extent. Newer agricultural applications on the former moor may have been part of the reason for this phenomenon, but only part. It has to be remembered that a large part of the Brand common in Breedon had been enclosed for nearly 80 years by 1841. The remainder of Coleorton Moor had been enclosed around 30 years before the 1841 census. On the other hand it has been noted in the previous chapter that technological improvements in agriculture were comparatively slow to occur in the area after Parliamentary enclosure. In table 7.8 the figures for four former commons were assessed, for which the enumerators’ returns of 1841 could be isolated. It will be noted that the youth percentages for Gelsmore and Brand commons were comparatively low, as they were for their townships of Worthington and Breedon respectively. It was shown in chapter 3 that occupations on the Brand had become almost entirely agriculture-related by 1841. Occupations on the other three former commons remained diverse. In addition, the percentages of youths on the moor at Coleorton, and on Rotten Row were higher. An additional possible explanation for the difference in youth
percentages between the two northern townships with low ones, and the other
townships, may therefore have been no more than in the distance necessary to walk to
work to the new mines, and associated employments to be found in Whitwick and
Swannington. The youths of the two northern townships may have found it more
convenient to take lodgings nearer their work opportunities, while those of the other
townships could manage quite well from their family homes. There may also, of course,
have been socially associated reasons for the difference. The young tend to be attracted
by what they perceive to be better opportunities for their social lives, as well as work
opportunities, into areas of more concentrated population. Such considerations may
have re-enforced desires to relocate for convenience from Breedon and Worthington.

Social pressures and socio-economic facilities.

It does not appear to have been household overcrowding, which reduced percentages of
youths in the townships of Breedon and Worthington, compared with other townships.
Neither township had particularly high numbers of occupants per household, except
perhaps on the former Brand common. Breedon township averaged 4.33 occupants per
household, Worthington 4.41. On Brand common the number was somewhat higher at
4.86. Average occupants per household were as high at Thringstone (4.86), and even
higher at Whitwick (5.13) and Staunton Harold (6.12). Of course, house size in terms of
floor area was important in this context, but many houses at Whitwick, and particularly
in its Coalville section, were reported to be very small. Badly aired, back-to-back
housing had been built in Coalville.\textsuperscript{22} One of these blocks was known as Barrack Row. Investigations made after the industrial and Chartist political unrest of 1842-44 revealed considerable differences between the living standards of the Whitwick Colliery miners, and their counterparts working for the Snibston mine.\textsuperscript{23} Many Whitwick Colliery families were reported to be living in squalid and dilapidated hovels. Many framework knitters in 1845 were also reported to be living in similarly squalid houses with poor drainage, and either no gardens or very small gardens.\textsuperscript{24} The families of the Snibston miners, on the other hand, were often housed in cottages with a garden and pigsty.\textsuperscript{25} Accommodation was therefore variable and not likely to be necessarily an attraction for incomers, additional to possible employment possibilities. On the other hand, some services could be provided more economically to areas of larger population. Gaslight was made available to Whitwick and Coalville in the 1850s, which led to an improvement in street safety.

If one examines other facilities there was considerable variation over the three parishes around the moor. Whitwick’s endowment with such facilities may have acted as an attraction to it, additional to its greater variety of employment possibilities. From a recreational point of view, social drinking facilities were a significant example. The highest density of beer houses, taverns, and victuallers, by the middle of the nineteenth century, was in the area of Thringstone and Whitwick.\textsuperscript{26} Thringstone had one such facility for every 100 persons, Coalville 1 to 127, and Whitwick 1 to 159. In Worthington the ratio was 1 to 241 persons. Breedon, Tongue and Wilson had a ratio of 1 to 177. Even Staunton Harold had a higher density of social drinking facilities with a

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{22} D. Baker, \textit{Coalville: The First 75 Years, 1833-1908} (Leicester, 1983), p. 45.
\textsuperscript{23} C. Owen, \textit{The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield, 1200-1900} (Ashbourne, 1984), p. 203. The unrest was not confined to Coalville. Mass meetings of protest were also held at Lount and Pegg’s Green.
\textsuperscript{26} E.S. Drake, \textit{Directory of Leicestershire} (Sheffield, 1861), pp, 215-6, 246-9, 256-8. The 1841 Enumerators’ returns suggest higher ratios, but these counted persons, including business partners, not establishments.
\end{flushleft}
ratio per person of 1 to 163. Coleorton (1:183) and Swannington (1:205) were less well provided for than Breedon. But, on the other hand, Swannington’s mining population particularly was quite well located to take advantage of the facilities at either Thringstone or Coalville.

The density of social drinking facilities may not provide a particularly informative statistic in relation to income, but it does provide an indication of a propensity to spend. General retail facilities provide another example of a possible attraction. Whitwick’s market was re-opened in 1838, after being dormant for several centuries. Markets have a social as well as a trading function. By the middle of the nineteenth century there were at least 23 retail outlets in Whitwick and Coalville, compared with 19 bakers, butchers, grocers and general traders at the 1841 Census. Thringstone had a further 11. Breedon, Wilson and Tongue had seven such shops between them. Worthington and Newbold had eight retail outlets between them. Truck shops, of course, complicated an assessment of the social value of retail facilities. Two of the Whitwick retailers included in the above figures were also bag hosiers. They both expected their framework knitters to buy provisions in their shops.

In the nineteenth century, religious observance was still a major part of the social lives of a large number of people. Facilities for religious observance were more evenly spread than those others described above. In addition to the parish churches at Breedon and Whitwick, the established church had opened a chapelry at St Georges, Swannington, in 1825. Breedon parish had a much older chapelry at Worthington. Another Anglican church was opened in Coalville in 1840. Near Thringstone there was also a Roman-Catholic chapel built in 1837 by A. L. Phillipps of Gracedieu. The

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27 Ibid., p. 247.
28 Ibid., p. 246-7.
29 Drakes figures for the 1850s for Breedon and Worthington in fact suggest a rise since the 1841 Census.
30 Ibid., p. 247.
31 Ibid., p. 246.
32 Ibid., p. 247.
area was well represented by dissent, with Wesleyans, General Baptists, and Primitive Methodists. There were seven Non-conformist chapels around the moor. Whitwick had three more, and Coalville one. Even Breedon, Wilson, and Tongue had a Wesleyan chapel each. On the other hand, neither Staunton Harold, nor Coleorton appear to have had Non-conformist chapels by the middle of the nineteenth century. Most of the chapels operated Sunday schools. At a more secular level of education, Coleorton’s school, which was an adjunct to the hospital, had been founded in 1705. Breedon’s ‘Free School’ was built in 1833. Both Whitwick and Thringstone had a ‘National School’ each by 1844. There was also another ‘National School’ in Coalville by the 1850s. The Baptists had also opened a day school in Coalville, and the Catholics had a day school on the border of Gracedieu. Apart from at Breedon and Coleorton, therefore, day-education facilities became more heavily concentrated in and around Whitwick and Coalville. This factor may have been among the attractions which were drawing people to the Coalville-Whitwick area. If so, intention was not always followed by implementation. Framework knitters, who were heavily concentrated in Thringstone and Whitwick, were notoriously reluctant to send their children to day schools. In the debased state of their trade by the 1840s, they depended heavily on the labour of their children, to keep down costs at home. Unable to afford Sunday-best clothing for their children they also described themselves as being too ashamed to send their children to Sunday school to learn to read. Compared to population sizes, school attendance was low in the 1840s. In the ‘national week-day and Sunday-School’ at Whitwick, there were 48 boys and 36 girls on the books. Framework-knitter children among them

33 Ibid., pp. 215-6, 246-9, 256-8.
34 Ibid., p. 257.
36 Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, pp. 344-5.
37 Drake, Directory of Leicestershire, p. 246.
39 Ibid., pp. 344-5.
numbered 15 boys and 12 girls. In South Thringstone infant and girl school, there were 35 boys and 40 girls. Of those, 15 boys and 14 girls were the children of framework knitters. It was reported that there was considerable irregularity of attendance at the national school.

**Child Labour.**

The employment of children on a full-time basis appears to have been of minor significance at the time of the 1841 Census. Of the 87 children enumerated with job descriptions in the three parishes, 28 were 14, 16 were 13, and 19 were 12 years of age.\(^4\) (Full-time employment of children at the age of 14 was still very common in the first 44 years of the twentieth century.) Furthermore, of the overall total, 30 were servants, probably living as members of the families where they were employed and housed, in many cases.\(^4\)

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, a former manager of the Whitwick Colliery Brick and Tile Company conducted a national campaign against the employment of children in brickyards, particularly as clay carriers.\(^4\) In 1841, only three children of 10, 12, and 12 respectively were enumerated as working in brickyards – one of two in Swannington as a clay carrier, and one in Thringstone.

Among the 24 children of less than 12 years of age, enumerated in the 1841 Census, seven worked in coalmines. The youngest was nine years of age. One of the seven children lived in Coleorton – the other six in Swannington. The youngest framework knitters enumerated were one seven-year old, and two ten-year olds in Whitwick. The youngest agricultural labourer was a ten-year old in Thringstone. The youngest servants were represented by a seven-year old in Whitwick, and one nine-year old in each of Whitwick, Swannington, and Worthington.

\(^{40}\) NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594, and HO 107/596, *Census of Great Britain 1841*, ‘enumerators’ returns’

\(^{41}\) NRO/PRO 830, HO 107/594, and HO 107/596.

\(^{42}\) Baker, *Coalville: The First 75 Years*, pp. 67-70.
In view of the remarks made in the context of schooling in the previous paragraph, an additional number of children to those enumerated in the 1841 census were almost certainly employed on a part-time basis. This was probably the case in many of the households of framework knitters, other manufacturers and tradesmen. Part-time employment of children may have seriously impeded the development of some or many of those children depending on their age, working conditions and the number of hours they worked. On the other hand, some comparatively young children had worked as servants for many generations. Limited part-time work by children was not necessarily an evil. For some households it may have been an economic necessity.

The value of allotments.

The extent of well being brought about by the establishment of allotments in the area in the 1840s should not be exaggerated. Allotment provision was certainly not an adequate response for loss of the former commons. For one thing allotments did not provide fuel for heating houses – an important feature of the former commons for poorer households.43

The number of allotments provided in the area of Whitwick and Thringstone was very small – around 28 in Whitwick by 1845, and probably even fewer in Thringstone.44 Proponents of the allotment movement pointed out their social value in reducing lawlessness, and particularly political unrest.45 On the other hand the provision of allotments was often tied to politically correct social behaviour on the part of tenants. The Whitwick framework knitter, John Hucknall, lost his allotment for no

44 Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, pp. 345, 347.
greater crime than exercising his right to vote against the church rate.\textsuperscript{46} This was at a
time when his earnings were too low to be able to afford to pay it. Hucknall was more
fortunate than many of his fellows in having a garden of near-minimum allotment size
attached to his house. On the other hand, when he lost his allotment, he could no longer
grow cereals or keep a pig. The ability to keep a pig in conjunction with an allotment,
or cottage garden, was probably the most important feature of allotment provision.
Feeding the pig provided a use of significant economic value in terms of household
subsistence for household and garden waste. It also converted such waste into manure
for the allotment, together with the straw from the small-scale cereal production, the
cultivation of which tenants alternated with potatoes.\textsuperscript{47} Before pig-club insurance
became general, from the 1860s, the untimely death of the household pig was a
disaster.\textsuperscript{48} To the small extent that it occurred, keeping a pig in association with an
allotment was a continued expression of self-reliant unspecialised production. But in the
context of the proletarianization of framework knitting and other occupations, such self-
reliance was probably more an expression of spirit – perhaps more illusion than reality.
It is doubtful whether even those who had allotments could survive for long, without
other work, as many unspecialised producers had been more able to do a century earlier,
in association with their exploitation of the commons.

On the other hand, it also has to be borne in mind, that the pressure of a growing
population would eventually have made the resources of the commons less available to
the various social groups that had used them. Livestock stinting had been a feature of
many commons, including Burney Wood in Breedon, long before their enclosure. In
the midlands and south of England commons may eventually have had to be replaced by
another system, even without Parliamentary enclosure. The manifest problems of

\textsuperscript{46} Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters, p.
334-5.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, pp. 334-5.
commons enclosure by Parliament was that the legislation was pushed through with lack of foresight, in spite of the latter-day submissions of people like Arthur Young.49

Framework knitting, and woolcombing, on the eve of hosiery factories.

From Leicester, c1850, the correspondent of the Morning Chronicle wrote that there can be no doubt of the miserably depressed state of the framework-knitter. They appear to labour without either energy, or hope or heartiness. Of the different branches of the trade, it appears to me that the Derby silk glove manufacturers are the best off and the most intelligent, and the Nottingham cotton hose makers the worst off, and the most unintelligent. Almost without exception, however, the houses of this class of labourers are squalid and neglected looking; and in point of personal appearance and decent comfort of attire, the framework knitters must take the very lowest rank in the social scale connected with the textile industry. Frame rents have been blamed for this—the middleman system has been blamed—and the irregular semi-domestic labour, as opposed to the industrial discipline of a factory, has been blamed...I have pointed out the peculiar industrial conditions under which framework knitters labour, and I have stated the low social status which, whether it springs from these conditions or not, at all events co-exists with them.50

The first steam-powered hosiery factory was started in Loughborough in 1844, and operated circular knitting machines known as ‘tricoteurs’.51 However, these machines could only knit circular fabric, which was not shaped in any way.52 The product was therefore used for cut-ups, thereby providing more competition in the lower income mass market. Quality articles were still made by the fashion branches of framework knitting, and even by hand knitters.53 In this respect, it is worthy of note that the fashion-silk-glove trade in Derby was the most thriving sector, according to the correspondent of the Morning Chronicle. In the 1850s and 1860s more versatile power driven hosiery machines were introduced culminating with Cotton’s successful patent in 1864.54

52 Palmer, Framework Knitting, p. 27.
53 Ginswick, Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, p. 189.
54 Palmer, Framework Knitting, p. 27.
However, the muscle-powered knitting frames continued to be used alongside the steam-powered factories for the most of the century. In the fashion branches of the trade, they even prospered for about 20 years after 1850. Even in the less fashionable branches, the old trade was slow to die out completely. As mentioned previously, in the 1850s especially, the factory manufacturers continued to find the domestic and workshop trades to be a useful production reserve with which to meet peak demand. Domestic production could also be stinted when demand lessened. Such a reserve enabled the factories to continue operating economically during years of both boom and slump.

In view of their earlier importance to the worsted branch of framework knitting, it is perhaps pertinent to mention the fate of the woolcombers. In the nineteenth century the bargaining power of woolcombers declined. This decline accelerated after 1830 when numbers of former handloom weavers transferred to hand combing. Nevertheless, before 1850 only two factories in Leicester were operating with steam-powered combing machines. In the main, combing was still carried on by hand in operatives' outhouses, or on the top floor of their houses. To illustrate their condition at that time, a selected summary of their replies to the correspondent of the Morning Chronicle merits quoting.

The new machine for combing, we fear, will make a great difference to us. We haven't half work in Leicester as it is already. If it wasn't for Yorkshire we couldn't make a living. The Leicester trade is generally brisk for only four or at most five months in a year. It begins about the end of August and if it runs on to Christmas then we call it a good trade, and think that we are well off. After Christmas time it is very common for the Leicester wool-combers to go to Yorkshire – to Bradford generally – in search of work, until the Leicester season comes round again... Those who can get work from Yorkshire may, perhaps, stay in Leicester all the year round. If the combers have the means they take their wives and families with them to Bradford; but it is not always that they can. The masters provide no proper shops for the combing. To this rule there is but one exception in Leicester. A great grievance which the

57 Hudson, The Genesis of Industrial Capital, p. 45.
58 Ginswick, Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 2, p. 195.
midland wool-combers have to complain of is that the manufacturers are the proprietors of the combs, and that they make the workmen pay regular rent for them, just as in the framework-knitting trade. The rent is generally 3d per week.59

Meanwhile in Bradford, many Irish immigrants were crowding into woolcombing during the late 1840s.60 Taught by Irishmen already established there, this influx of immigrants into the trade, and that of former handloom weavers, finally broke the power of the English woolcombers. Woolcombing had played an important role in the development of hosiery manufacturing, both on Coleorton Moor, and in Leicestershire generally. The new steam-powered combing machines were merely to become the final nail in the coffin of this once strategically placed trade.

59 Ibid., 2, p. 197.
60 Ibid., 1, pp. 179-80.
Overall Conclusions.

The nature of production in the three parishes around Coleorton Moor, between 1650 and 1850, underwent slow but inexorable change. The culture of unspecialised production was strong during the first 100 years of the period. It was underpinned by comparatively small farming operations, a number of smallholdings, and particularly by common access to the various basic resources offered by Coleorton Moor and Charnwood Forest. However, during this first 100 years variable amounts of household-production capacity were also allocated to commercial demand. Part of this demand was generated for use in the local regional economy by the variety of resource-exploitation opportunities the area presented – cereals, livestock products, woodland, coal, gravel, limestone, granite, and more seasonal products from the commons such as berries, and the lye-ash balls from ferns used to wash wool. Because of transport costs this local market region was rarely more than 15 to 18 miles in extent. Additional demand was created by the needs of a growing urban labour force farther away, and exploited by higglers, livestock drovers, cheese factors, and putting-out undertakers in the textile trade. These markets remained comparatively small until the latter half of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, in the absence of cheap bulk-transport facilities, inert products sold to such markets needed to be acquired locally at low cost in order to have a high value-to-weight ratio at the point of sale. Hard cheese and worsted stockings, although destined for an urban workforce with limited incomes, were both products which had had their bulk and weight substantially reduced when processed. They were therefore more economical to carry over long distances than less processed materials. Livestock could be moved comparatively cheaply on foot. Attempts to produce and sell coal in quantity to Leicester, from Coleorton Moor mines, met with limited success, and sometimes disastrous results, until the opening of the Swannington to Leicester railway in the 1830s.
It was not only the Coleorton Moor mines that were thwarted in their attempts to expand production by an absence of economic distribution facilities to destinations outside of the local area. The population and economy of an inland town, like Leicester without a navigable river, must have been considerably constrained in its ability to grow while it was dependent in the main on the area surrounding it for grain supplies. Furthermore, this constraint was made greater in the eighteenth century when considerable parts of the farming hinterland switched from cereal to livestock production, in order to be better able to take advantage of Birmingham and London markets. This eighteenth-century constraint on the growth of Leicester is demonstrated by a comparison of the 1777 map of the town (figure 7.1) and that of 1828 (figure 7.2) when grain and coal could be delivered from farther away by canal. To the extent that Leicester did grow in the eighteenth century, an upward pressure must have been exerted on its costs, particularly the cost of provisioning its workforce. This in turn would have caused it to concentrate on the higher-priced, better-quality hosiery it claimed to produce, while cheaper, lower quality products were put out to a lower cost-of-production countryside.61

Coleorton Moor, and its agriculturally variable surrounding countryside, provided one such lower cost environment. Initially, smallholders seeking to augment their cash incomes became by-occupational producers of a variety of textiles, as well as part-time workers in framework-knitting and other trades. By-occupational framework knitters were significant until around 1750. Indeed, they maintained a small presence, production-wise, into the nineteenth century. However, by-occupational setting-up costs were comparatively high even if they only rented a smallholding. By the late eighteenth century by-occupational smallholdings tended to be occupied by more prosperous tradesmen, using their land base partly to feed their horses and partly to

provide food for their own tables. Poorer families attracted to settle around the moor faced much lower opportunity costs in offering their labour to be employed by the putting-out trade. Their opportunity costs were by no means zero as yet. They still had the gathering economy of the commons to fall back on, at least seasonally.

Some comparatively larger farms in the area were formed as a result of Parliamentary enclosure. Although small farmers of between 10 and 20 acres tended to disappear, smallholders continued to exist at levels below 10 acres. Larger farms tended to be created either as a result of tithe awards, or from the enclosure of the commons. Obviously, both the disappearance of small farms from 10 to 20 acres, and the enclosure of the commons tended to affect the culture of unspecialised production adversely. By the standards of elsewhere, however, the larger farms around Coleorton Moor were little more than medium-sized – up to around 250 acres. The open fields of Coleorton, Worthington and Whitwick were not enclosed until the early nineteenth century. This was possibly one symptom of the area's conservatism in terms of comparatively late, and uneven, adoption of new agricultural techniques. But for the more commercially minded farmers convertible husbandry was clearly attractive. On Coleorton Moor the structure of the framework-knitting trade remained conservative as demonstrated by the survival of woolcomber-hosiers there into the nineteenth century.

Increasing proletarianization was a major feature of the last part of the eighteenth century, particularly in the larger village of Thringstone. As their numbers proliferated framework knitters steadily became more proletarianized, and completely so after enclosure of the last of the commons. For most knitters steam-powered mills channelled yarn provision through the merchant hosiers. (However, the woolcomber-hosiers on the moor managed to retain their own sources of wool, at least into the early nineteenth century). When framework knitters had to rent their knitting frames the
opportunity cost of not working them was also raised. Allotment provision in the area in
the 1840s provided relief only for a small number of families.

By the 1780s most specialised rural production, agricultural and industrial, was
clearly directed at the growing mass market comprised of the households of the urban
and rural workforce. But between c.1790 and c.1850 the relationship between town and
country also changed significantly. In succession and in combination, technological
change in agriculture and industry, the canalisation of the river Soar in the early 1790s,
and the opening of the Leicester-Swannington railway, to be followed by extensions,
steadily lowered the costs of provisioning the urban workers of the towns. The former
constraints on the growth of Leicester in particular were removed. Deeper mines
around Coleorton Moor could send their coal cheaply to both the county town and even
to London. Although they had mostly to wait until after 1850, services in the form of
drainage, gaslight and water could also be provided in towns more cheaply than in the
country villages, through economies of scale. But the rural workforce appears to have
been adversely affected by the changed relationship. Less skilled, cheap labour could
then be provisioned more economically in the towns than hitherto. In the early
nineteenth century serious urban competition in the form of low-quality ‘cutups’ from
the production of wide frames appeared. In the 1840s similar ‘cutup’ production was
undertaken on the steam-powered, circular ‘tricoteurs’. Countryside production in the
area no longer enjoyed cheaper provisioning, in comparison to its lower wage levels, in
either manufacturing or agriculture. The greater commercial draw of the towns almost
certainly raised farm-gate prices as those between town and country became more
equal. On the other hand, the coalmines around the moor were at last prospering. In
spite of the very variable accommodation and wages to be found in Whitwick and
Coalville, described above, Engels suggested in 1844 that the miners of Leicestershire
and Warwickshire 'work under exceptionally favourable conditions' compared with poor conditions found elsewhere.\(^{62}\)

Perceptions of the countryside were also changing by the middle of the nineteenth century. Even descriptions of the pig were being transformed from 'loathsome but necessary' to 'playful', 'cheerful', 'well-mannered', and 'clever' by the end of that century.\(^ {63}\) When William Marshall reported a beautiful countryside in the 1780s he was referring more to its agricultural capacity than its natural scenic beauty.\(^ {64}\) In the late seventeenth century one chatelaine of Bradgate had declared that 'the house was tolerable, that the country was a forest, and the inhabitants all brutes'.\(^ {65}\) By 1861 Drake's Directory reported, in reference to Bradgate Park, that 'this rural spot is often frequented by parties of pleasure from Leicester and other places'.\(^ {66}\) On that part of Charnwood Forest, which was in Whitwick, Drake's Directory commented that

> The scenery of the neighbourhood is remarkably stern and wild; irregular masses of rock being scattered about in groups at once romantic and picturesque; while the prospects which may be seen by looking down from the hills upon the country around, are varied and beautiful.\(^ {67}\)

In respect of Ashdown Forest in the 1880s, Short wrote that 'help for the landscape, if not for the cottage economy, had arrived in the shape of the emergent conservation lobby...\(^ {68}\) Neither new perceptions of the countryside nor the new economic relationships between town and countryside in north-west Leicestershire would by then have fostered manufacturing industry there. Indeed, 'estate village' landlords had long resisted its inception in their backyards. Changing perceptions of the countryside were to prepare the way for an increasing, albeit intermittent, occupation of rural cottages and villages by middle-class families in years to come. By the late twentieth century, the

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\(^{63}\) Malcomson and Mastoris, *The English Pig*, pp. 24-6, 29-44.

\(^{64}\) W. Marshall, *The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties*, 2 volumes (1789, 1793 edn), 1, p. 249.


\(^{66}\) Ibid., p. 215.

\(^{67}\) Ibid., p. 248.

Woolrooms of Gelsmore had been transformed into detached dwelling houses of a character far removed from that of their agro-industrial origins (plate 7.1).

Plate 7.1. A view of the Woolrooms on Gelsmore in the late twentieth century.
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