

THE INCLOSURE OF UPTON ST. LEONARDS

"In the Parish of Upton St. Leonard's near Gloucester, an event has occurred of considerable moment, not only on account of its effect on the present and the future, but because a system of remote antiquity has locally ceased to exist. All connection with the land customs of early times has come to an end. The future is severed from the past. One of the last instances of the ancient system of land tenure, as shown in the 'Common Fields', is no more."

With these words, the Rev. Canon E.C. Scobell, Rector of Upton, began a lecture on the Upton Inclosure to the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club on 14 Nov. 1899 (1).

It is the purpose of this paper to examine as closely as possible the structure of the "open field system" as it had developed at the end of the nineteenth century and the social changes taking place.

We do not know who instigated the inclosure, but it was probably the larger landowners, irrespective of whether they had property in the common fields or in severalty. In 1886 John Dearman Birchall of Bowden Hall, who held some ten acres in the open fields, and Edward Hope Percival (2) of Kimsbury House were elected Feoffees, and it would not be surprising if they were impatient to advance the formation of consolidated holdings. From evidence given at the enquiry, the Executors of the Rev. Henry Elisset, and the Hon Robert Marsham Townsend, the two largest holders of the open land, both supported inclosure and an application for a provisional order was made. A report by the Board of Agriculture upon an "Application for a Provisional Order for the Inclosure of Upton St. Leonards Common Fields" was dated 8 April 1895 (3).

The report states that the land in question consisted of 534 acres, 520 arable and 14 pasture; it continues:

"It is in fourteen tracts in different parts of the parish. None of it is "common" in the usual acceptation of the word, but it is all common-field land, held in severalty by the various owners during part of the year until the crops are removed, and after harvest subject to be depastured in common by the stock of freeholders"

"...Each tract is made up of a number of unfenced strips, of which there are in all about 2000 of the average size of half an acre, belonging to more than 80 owners (4). The strips of each owner are generally most inconveniently scattered ... holdings very small, 3 acres or under, some as little as $\frac{1}{4}$ acre (5) Under the present system the cultivation of the land is necessarily both difficult and costly, and can scarcely be carried on with profit, while permanent improvement is out of the question. Some of the lands have been allowed to go out of cultivation."

"No part of the land being waste of a manor, or subject to rights of common at all times of the year" it was apparently not strictly necessary to make provision for field gardens or recreation ground. Apparently cricket was already played by permission in a field not included in the land in question, so it was proposed to make "reasonable provision of 15 acres in four different places ... for field gardens and six acres in a pasture field near the village ... as a recreation ground" (6).

It was pointed out that: "The setting out of these allotments will, of course, diminish the area to be allotted to the various owners, and on that account the proposal was not regarded favourably by some of the persons interested in the land". It was reported however that the Executors of the Rev. Henry Blisset submitted 6 acres of land not subject to inclosure to be included.

Two small commons, Sneedham's Green and Cut Hill, were not to be affected by the inclosure. It was recognised that they were too far from the village for recreational purposes, (7) "but will remain open subject to the same rights as heretofore".

A "second Report From the Select Committee on Commons", (price 1/6p)(8) 7 May 1895 ordered the setting up of a Committee of Twelve, consisting of Dr. Ambrose, Viscount Curson, Sir Arthur Hayter, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Jeffreys, Sir Thomas Robinson and Mr. Taylor, nominated by the House, and Mr. Arch (9), Mr. H.L. Lawson, Mr. Roche, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Wroughton added by the Committee of Selection.

The Fourth Report (10), which incidentally considered also the inclosure of Bexhill Down, Sussex, and Castor and Ailsworth Open Fields and Common, gives an account of the enquiry and the evidence submitted.

Sir Jacob Wilson, Director of the Land Division of the Board of Agriculture repeated the information already quoted from the provisional order. He was asked whether the proposed inclosure with compensatory allotments and recreation ground was unanimously approved. He replied:

"I will not use the words 'quite unanimous' but I think now very likely it is practically so".

Mr. John Robert Moore, Chief Clerk to the Board of Agriculture, was also called in. He stated that the application was approved "by a certain proportion of the owners". When asked whether there was approval by the commoners, he replied "... the commoners are the owners of the lands in the fields, they are not a separate body".

Mr. Moore explained further that they"have the right of tilling the arable land, and then of putting their cattle on to pasture ... each person who has a legal interest in these fields will get his allotment, which will be absolutely his own .. and then the cottagers will be able to apply to the parish council to hire allotments out of the 13 acres". When asked if this was "popular with all classes in the district" Mr. Moore replied "It appears to be so".

Mr. Arthur Russell, the Board of Agriculture officer who held the local inquiry, reported that he had held two meetings in one day. He had gone over the land with forty to fifty interested parties and a hundred people attended an evening meeting to hear an explanation of the decisions.

When asked how the figure of fifteen acres was arrived at for the allotments, it was explained that this should be enough for those cottagers engaged in agricultural pursuits. Mr. Russell stated that there were about three hundred cottages (11), one hundred and fifty "at the Gloucester end", that is Matson, and the other hundred and fifty at the village end. He continued "but nearly all the Gloucester cottages are £8 to £10 cottages and they are chiefly occupied by artizans and clerks who go into Gloucester to do their business. At the village end, about one hundred out of the one hundred and fifty cottagers are of the same character, and only about fifty of them really follow agricultural pursuits at all". He stated that all the small owners farm the land themselves; they did not sublet" - not the small ones".

Mr. C.H. Kenderdine, agent of the Hon. Robert Marsham Townsend, whose address is given in the Award Schedule as Frognal, Footacray, Kent, put the case for the large landowners. He stated that with regard to the land being cut up into small strips in the common fields, there was "a great amount of trespass done by the common fields being open and damage is done by the hauling off of the crops. There is no proper means of access to the strips, and the crops are sometimes hauled off through standing corn in order to get to the roadways, and altogether agriculture cannot be carried on at all and a great deal of land is going out of cultivation. In fact, one of the fields has entirely gone to waste because no one will cultivate it; that is Moorend Field" (12)

It was further claimed that damage was done carting manure, "not always in the finest weather" and even turning the ploughs damaged other people's strips. It was impossible to grow cabbages, peas and beans because of the cattle being turned out "at certain times". There was a great waste of time moving implements from plot to plot and often plots were very far from the homesteads (13) Cattle being turned out in the fields "means that the land must be laid down to corn. Of course corn growing for profit is an utterly impossible proceeding, especially in these common fields which are so liable to trespass". Every man at the meeting except one signed in favour of inclosure.

Mr. Kenderdine pointed out a further advantage of inclosure; namely "the building frontages would be opened up". There was, he asserted, "great feeling amongst small owners" .. who .. "have bought ... this land as freehold and are rather loth to acknowledge that there are any common rights ... if there happens to be a frontage they cannot build on it .. (they) ... have bought land as freehold and it has been described so in sale catalogues (and they) find they cannot do what they like with it."

Mr. Ponting (14), a small owner of two strips of three quarters of an acre each in two separate fields, agreed with the difficulties already mentioned and added that if onions or turnips

were grown they were "taken away". If inclosure came about his land would be worth £10 - £20 more and "I could build a house if I liked".

Another witness Mr. George Eshelby, "assistant overseer of this parish" stated that he had "known the land 50 years and more" and had at one time held thirty acres, some of it "2½ miles from the homestead". He had "also managed Lady Downe's allotment land for 27 or 28 years as steward". The allotments were, he claimed, difficult to let "even where the hard turnpike road comes to them".

The Provisional Order was confirmed on 6 July 1895 (15).

Amongst the papers in the Gloucester City Library is a handbill, not separately catalogued, as follows:

INCLOSURE OF OPEN FIELDS

UPTON ST. LEONARDS

A MEETING

Will be held as arranged

TUESDAY EVENING NEXT

September 10, at 7 o'clock

IN THE

READING ROOM

Mr. STURGE will attend

C.H. KENDERDINE

BRIDGEN & CO., WEST OF ENGLAND PRINTING WORKS, GLOUCESTER

Mr. Sturge, the Bristol Surveyor appointed to draw up the actual award, finally issued his findings on 8 October 1897, so that the meeting advertised would have taken place after July 1895, probably some time in 1897 when he could explain the award to those interested.

THE INCLOSURE AWARD

The Inclose Map (16, issued on 18 October, 1897) is certified as being based on the Ordnance Map of 1885 and was issued with a Schedule, which begins with the words:

"To all whom these Presents shall come I Robert Fowler Sturge of the City and County of Bristol Land Surveyor, Send Greeting"

The Schedule records the gift of six acres of land for the Recreation ground by the Trustees of the Blisset estate, and then gives details of footpaths and access roads. Two footpaths in Stanley Field were extinguished and one in Brimps Field was straightened. The "Private, Carriage and Occupation Roads" are marked on the map with letters; their widths are specified either 12, 15 or 20 ft, and precise details of the share of the cost and upkeep allocated to the owners of the new plots and occasionally to the Parish Council. (17).

Pages 10 to 36 of the Schedule give the details of the award under the following headings:

| Persons Interested Residence and Description | No. on Map (1) Part I Part II | Allotments Extent Fences to be made and maintained by owner | Lands in respect of which claims allowed and allotments made | | Tenure |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | No. on (2) Tithe Map | Description Extent | |
| (Example) | | a. r. p. | | | a. r. p. |
| William Bailey Matson Hill, Upton St. Leonards Gardiner | 43 | 0 2 14 | 1958 | Great Awe Field | 23 |
| | | | 1959 | | 1 8 |
| | | | 1700 | In Wheatridge Field | 1 2 20 |
| | | 2 14 1 2 15 | | | 1 31 |
| | | | | | Copyhold (3) |
| | | | | | Freehold |

- (1) The Award Map is divided into two parts.
- (2) Tithe Map of 1841. Glos Record Office P3476
- (3) Originally freeholders held their land by a fixed payment to the manor from an early date, while copyholders, although personally free, were bound by the custom of the manor. Originally copyholders were at the mercy of the lord of the manor who could demand higher rents, substitute new leases etc. By the nineteenth century there seems to be little difference between the two types of tenure.

The total area of the strips was 514 acres 0 roods 27 perches (18) The area of the land allotted was 491 acres 3 roods 28 perches. The difference of 22 acres 39 perches will be accounted for by the allotments, the fifteen acres referred to at the enquiry, and land for new access roads (19).

On page 37 we read:

"And I the said Robert Fowler Sturge do hereby order direct and appoint that good and sufficient Fences for inclosing the several Allotments hereinbefore described if not already set up and made shall be made within the space of Six Months from the Confirmation by the Board of Agriculture of my Award by the several persons owners for the time being of the said several Allotments on the sites hereinbefore in that behalf prescribed in which sites respectively a mark (sic) is drawn thus T on the said map".

This was signed by Robert Sturge 9 October 1897 and witnessed and confirmed by P.G. Craigie, Authorised by the President (Board of Agriculture).

There are four handwritten memoranda of Feb 1953, May and July 1964, and April 1967 of conveyances between the Parish Council and developers.

In examining the award, certain facts must be borne in mind:

- 1) That the total area of land in the parish was estimated at 2869 acres (20) of which the greater proportion, 1840 acres was pasture, whereas the open fields consisted of 534 acres, of which only 14 were pasture.
- 2) The enquiry gives the population of the village as 1400-1500: it also states that the "cottagers who follow agricultural pursuits" total 300, but that three-quarters of these are "artizans and clerks who go into Gloucester to do their business".
- 3) That some owners had land in severalty in addition to the strips they held in the open fields.

An analysis of the ninety land owners named in the Award Schedule reveals the following:

| <u>Residence</u> | <u>Number in Each Category</u> |
|--------------------|---|
| Upton & Matson | 39 of whom 24 held less than 3 acres each |
| Adjoining Parishes | 4 |
| Gloucester | 19 |
| Glos. County | 14 |
| Extra County | 7 |
| Charities or | |
| Adress not given | 7 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 90 |

The occupations of these holders, not always easy to categorise, are as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Professions and Trades (21) | 23 |
| Esquires and Gentlemen (22) | 19 |
| Farmers and Yeomen (23) | 12 |
| Spinsters and Widows | 12 |
| Employees (21) | 10 |
| Married Women (23) | 5 |
| Not specified | 5 |
| Charities and Churchwardens | 4 |
| | <u>90</u> |

The sizes of the allotments are:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Number under 1 acre | 29 |
| Number between 1 and 10 acres | 49 |
| " " 10 " 20 " | 9 |
| " " 20 " 30 " | 0 |
| " " 30 " 40 " | 1 |
| " " 40 " 50 " | 0 |
| " " 50 " 60 " | 0 |
| " " 60 " 70 " | 1 |
| " with over 70 " | 1 |
| | <u>90</u> |

It will be seen that 78 of the 90 people affected by the inclosure held less than 10 acres, but again it should be remembered that some of these may have held land elsewhere, or may have let their holding to someone else. It is instructive to look more closely at the names and occupations that appear on the schedule.

The biggest holding was probably farmed by a steward on behalf of the Rev. Henry Blisset. Thus the Court Rolls for 1883 read:

"Court Leet and Court Baron of the Rev. Henry Blisset and other Lords of the said Manor (24) ... Before Edward Theodore Gardner, Gentleman Steward there".

The steward of the next biggest landowner, the Hon. Robert Marsham Townsend was the Mr. Kenderdine who spoke on behalf of the larger landowners at the Enquiry. The other "esquires and gentlemen" who did not hold sufficient land to employ an agent, must have sublet directly to Upton tenants. Thus Benjamin Ackers of Huntley Manor had eleven acres, Charles Hale of Gloucester had three and Henry Small of Dursley had one. Others who lived in Upton may have cultivated the land themselves, although they are listed as gentlemen and not farmers, such as Thomas Houghton who had a quarter of an acre, and Edward Miles who had an acre.

The smallest plot was that of a widow, Mrs. Charlotte Smithers of Cheltenham who held a strip of 12 perch, less than a fourteenth of an acre, but the majority of small plots belonged to Upton people, some of them no doubt the "clerks and artisans" who worked in Gloucester. They also include:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|------|---|---------|---|---|----|
| G. Acreman of Matson, a coachman, who had 2 acres | 2 | rood | 9 | perches | | | |
| William Bailey of Matson Hill a gardener | " | " | 2 | " | 0 | " | 11 |
| Moses Chambers of Upton Hill a carpenter | " | " | | | 2 | " | 30 |
| Thomas Davis, nr. Gloucester an asylum attendant | " | " | | | 1 | " | 13 |
| George Eshelby (25) of Upton, schoolmaster | " | " | | | | | 27 |
| Edmund Morris of Upton, sadler | " | " | 1 | " | 3 | " | 15 |
| John Ponting (25) of Upton, retired police officer | " | " | | | 2 | " | 26 |
| Henry Poole of Upton, sexton to cemetary | " | " | | | 3 | " | 1 |
| George Rickards, Saintbridge, mechanic | " | " | | | 1 | " | 25 |
| Canon Scobell, Upton, rector | " | " | 1 | " | 0 | " | 4 |
| Henry Tidmarsh, Upton, woodman | " | " | 1 | " | 1 | " | 7 |

Others, not included in the twelve "farmers and yeomen" listed above, may have had other connections with agriculture. Benjamin Ballinger of Upton was a "milk dealer", Richard Miles of Sneedham was a haulier, while William Richard Miles, also of Sneedhams was a cattle dealer.

It will be remembered that at the Enquiry Mr. Ponting, the retired police officer, was in favour of inclosure because "I could build a house if I liked". There is some evidence that the future growth of Gloucester was foreseen and land was being bought as an investment. A Gloucester solicitor, whose great grandfather had land both in the common fields and elsewhere in Upton, is of the opinion that this was why the land was acquired. The land was sold in 1900 to William Nicholls, the well known Gloucester builder (26). Another solicitor also held a small plot, as did Jobes Franklin, described as a house agent, and Henry Knowles, auctioneer, all of Gloucester. Other owners of small plots may well have sublet them for cultivation, but may have purchased them with the intention of building either a house for themselves or to sell as building plots.

Upton was certainly no longer an agricultural village, and the common field system was very different from the "typical" examples of the history books. Mr. Kenderdine's statement at the enquiry that it was impossible to grow cabbages, pease and beans, because of the cattle being turned out at certain times, was deceptive. In his lecture to the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club Canon Scobell refers to common pasture over the fields on Lammas Day August 1st, "a custom which of late years had for practical purposes fallen into disuse, but one which was regularly observed by annually driving cattle over the fields, termed 'breaking the fields' so as to maintain the common rights". In fact the reports of the Court Leet (27) show that this "commoning" usually occurred in October or November, usually in one or two fields only, and lasting only a few days:

i.e. "October 25th 1883. Nuthill Field was broken and kept open that and the following day and William Archer and Mr. Issac Wiggale and Mr. Thomas Knight turned out cattle for that time".

~~October 23rd 1884. Rooksmoor to be broken "for that and the following day. Bottom Field next year."~~

~~Oct. 27th 1885. Bottom Field was broken and Church Field the year after.~~

It is evident that a small number of holders were inconvenienced for a short time. There was no question of a strict rotation of a limited number of crops from field to field as in medieval times. A photograph illustrating the report of Canon Scobell's lecture, shows a root crop growing alongside rough grass. Considering the large number of plots of under one acre - twenty nine, it is very probable that many of the owners must have used them as allotments in the modern sense of the term. The strips of each owner were not evenly distributed over two or three fields; two landowners had strips in ten fields and one in nine, but over fifty had strips in one field only.

A more cogent reason for inclosure was indeed touched on during the enquiry. Corn growing in England was no longer the profitable business it had been before the opening up of the American prairies and it was stated at the enquiry that "corn-growing for profit is an utterly impossible proceeding, especially in these common fields which are so liable to trespass" and that fences were regarded as encroachments. The most powerful economic incentive was the need to change from arable to dairy farming. Whereas in 1897 only 14 of the 534 acres were pasture in the common-fields, little arable farming now survives.

For those who wished to use their land, or a greater proportion of their land, as pastures it would be much more easy if they were to have fenced fields. Evidence had been given in the report that, even prior to inclosure, not all the allotments provided for the villagers by Lady Downe's Charity had been taken up and now there were to be ample allotments to be had from the parish council. (28). We may well believe the Board of Agriculture's officers when they reported that the owners affected were practically unanimous in favour of inclosure and only one man dissented at the public meeting. Unfortunately there is no record of the cost of fencing or hedging, and the smaller the plot, the greater the comparative expense. According to Gonner, even after 1801, when the General Act was passed:- "the parliamentary cost continued high while the administrative cost remained undiminished." (29)

In the Report on the Application for Inclosure it was stated: "The setting out of these allotments will of course, diminish the area to be allotted to the various owners" and we have seen that there was actually a difference of some twenty two acres in the area of land owned by the holders before and after the Award. In fact, of the ninety owners affected, 74 lost land, 3 received exactly the same amount as before and 13 gained in area. It is conceded that it would be very difficult to make the proportion of loss exactly the same in every case, and mostly the losses were small. It would have taken an inordinate amount of time to work out the percentage loss or gain in every one of the ninety awards, so a small sample of seven was taken. This was not a random sample, but intended to illustrate the range or differences.

| Name | Size of Unenclosed strips | Size of Allotment | % Gain or Loss |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Jabes Franklin | 2r 30 | 2r 28 | - 1.81% |
| Benjamin Ackers | 11a. 0r 25 | 10a.3r 28 | - 2.07% |
| William Organ | 18a. 3r 31 | 17a.3r 12 | - 5.09% |
| Hon. Robt. Townsend Ecclesiastic | 67a. 0r 15 | 63a.0r 23 | - 5.88% |
| Commissioners | 2r 36 | 2r 28 | - 6.89% |
| Rev. H. Blisset | 78a. 2r 28 | 79a.3r 23 | + 1.54% |
| J. Dearman Birchall | 10a. 2r 31 | 16a.0r 6 | +49.97% |

The first, second and sixth examples seem reasonable, but the seventh is inexplicable. It might be thought that there might have been a purchase at the time of the inclosure, but there is no corresponding sale of land, and moreover, in the case of Walter Wilkins there are two allotments - one under his name and a second recorded thus: "Ditto as purchased from Ed Weedon Wilkins who purchased from Wm. Sadler Hall". It might be thought that the bigger gains or losses might be in proportion to the fencing or hedging required for the new allotment, but a cursory examination shows that the Blisset and Townesend estates had greater lengths of fencing to provide than Mr. Birchall.

In his lecture Canon Scobell said:

"These strips, which thus appear to have existed generally in this and other uninclosed parishes were separated from each other not by hedges but by lengths of unploughed grass called "bulks" or "Meers"."

The very existence of balks has of course been questioned, and different opinions expressed for nearly a century. Seebohm had postulated balks in all common fields, but the Orwins (30) were of the opinion that balks mentioned in documents were "not boundaries, but common ways given access to strips" and Beresford (31) refers to a balk as "an unploughed lane at the edge of the arable fields". On the other hand Finberg writes (32) "Westcote, on the Oxfordshire border, still keeps a number of arable strips divided only by grass balks, the sole visible remnant of the communal husbandry which had supported so many generations of Gloucestershire peasants".

An amateur historian is probably the last person to enter into the controversy; but the author ventures to suggest that, just as the divisions between modern allotments vary considerably, so may those have varied between strip and strip, field and field, and village and village in the open fields. Some farmers may have ploughed their strips to the very edge and trodden out a path on the soil after each ploughing, others may have left an unploughed strip of turf at the end of their strips, despite its becoming a harbour for weeds and vermin.

The final question that arises in considering the history of Upton open fields is its fragmentation into fourteen separate places. It has, of course been long established that there was no universal two-field or three-field system in England. At its inclosure in 1819, Mardon in Herefordshire had "some 1000 acres .. These lay in forty six fields and patches ..." (33) Gray continues "The three field townships which were once existent in the county (Herefordshire), and which must have had fields that were more or less compact, had clearly survived in not more than four or five places" and again "open arable fields of this county had before the days of parliamentary enclosure so shrunken that they constituted not more than two and one-half per cent of its total area" (34). Gray also states: "Several Tudor and Jacobean surveys have established ... that departures from the three field system took place as early as the sixteenth century, especially in the counties of the western midlands ... and above all in the valley of the Severn".

From this it might seem surprising that Upton was not enclosed earlier, being situated partly in the Severn valley, but it is possible that, becoming increasingly a village of people working in Gloucester, there was not the incentive amongst the small strip holders to enlarge their holdings and inclose them.

It is not possible to explain how the fragmentation of the open fields came about, but it is possible to suggest a number of reasons. Study of the map reveals that some of the fields fall into groups. The largest of these, Little Awe field, Great Awefield and Wheatridge Field lie to the north west of the village, and these are connected by an old enclosure to the Bottom Field to the north. A smaller group consists of Stanley Field and Rooksmoor Field with an old enclosure between them on the southern side of the village. Church Field itself lies between the two groups and might originally have been attached to either. These fields all lie between the 45 and 55 metre contour lines. A third, Brimpsfield, lies on a gentle slope further to the south at about 135-150 metres: not far to the east, with a small old enclosure between, is Moorend Field, but, it will be remembered, this was the field that had fallen out of cultivation by the time of the enquiry. These fields may have originally formed the "three" or "four" fields of a traditional open field system, but we are left with four other fields; Panley Field, Nuthill Field, Seat Field and Crow's Nest scattered widely at some distance from the others and higher up on the escarpment - the appropriately named Crow's Nest being perched on the 200 metre line.

In the first place the scattered positions of these outlying fields are due to their geographical situation on higher, poorer soil facing north and being on steeper land more difficult to cultivate. It is, I think, probably that these were assarts won from the woodland, the ancient Buckholt, the remains of which still line the summit of the ridge. Etymology suggests that land was being won from the forest as far back as far: back as Saxon times. Pincott Farm (35) (Pynekott in 1220) may originally have been Pinna's Cottage. Farther to the west (36) are Kimsbury House, perhaps the settlement of Cynemaer. The name, Seat Field, may just possibly be derived from On saeti, "a high place" as in "Arthur's Seat" or from On saetr "mountain pasture". (37)

Other fields to the south of the village show traces of ridges, suggesting that they may have been inclosed at an early date, and Canon Scobel speaks of "traditions of inclosure by arrangement", presumably referring to more recent times. The considerable area of land lying between Brimps Field and Awe Field has in its centre Grove Court, one of the three Upton Manors, which eventually passed to the Blissets, who also held land in the open fields. According to Gonner "Gloucestershire 'court farms' are very entire and lie well round the homesteads" (38). It is therefore possible that the powerful Berkeleys, Lygons and their successors managed to inclose some land from the open fields to consolidate their estate.

To the west of Grove Court and the village, and near the slopes of Robin's Wood Hill is Upton Common at Sneedham's Green. According to A.H. Smith (39) Sneedham, or Snedham implies a meadow "possibly one isolated from the main settlement" which fits the situation of Upton's Sneedham's Green. It may well be that this land was originally manorial waste on which the villagers established common rights. The common is not large, but in its centre, with common all round it, is a farm and enclosed field: (the presence of two or three other cottages suggest that these may well have been built by squatters in the past).

Today there are few traces of Upton's comparatively recent open field system. The northern group of fields is being overwhelmed with new houses and is no longer in the Parish. The point where Upton Lane crosses the motorway is in the middle of what was the Bottom Field, and looking southward the observer can see faint traces of plough ridges and also an access lane decreed by Mr. Sturge in the award. Again if the reader looks for a track (40) on the left hand side of the Painswick road a little beyond Hotel Tara he can follow it across a large field, part of the original Brimps Field, and where the track makes a sharp right-angled turn and then in a short distance turns to the left, he is walking along a section which Mr. Sturge straightened, albeit in a zig-zag fashion. At the very bottom, where the track meets Watery Lane, he will have great difficulty because it is so overgrown. He will notice that this section is in a cutting five or six feet deep - probably because this was the track from the medieval village up to Brimpsfield. Looking across the valley in a southerly direction he will see the ridges of the Moorend Field which was reported to have fallen out of cultivation by the time of the Enquiry. In the centre of the village in Bondend Road outside a bungalow called Meerstones is one of the meerstones used to mark the field strips. (41).

It would be appropriate to conclude with the words of Canon Scobell (42):

"Although such changes have become necessary, it is with some regret that the link with the archaic past is severed, and the system adopted for centuries by the makers of England, abandoned.

This, however, is one of the processes at work by which

'The older order changeth, yielding place to new'.

R. Davis, E.M. & J.V. Ruffell.

References

1. Reported in the Proceedings of the Club, Vol XIII, Part III, (August 1900).
2. The actual award schedule of 1897 does not list the Percivals as holders of strips in the common fields.
3. Gloucester City Library, Gloucestershire Collection, 321.1.
4. In the Award Schedule, 90 owners are listed.
5. Mrs. Harriet Eshelby had the smallest strip 27 poles - about 1/6 acre.
6. The recreation ground is situated between the Pound and the King's Head: a title was given up for the construction of the M5 motorway which now skirts it.
7. Sneedham's Green is still an open common with sheep usually to be seen grazing there. Cud Hill is on the border of the parish near Painswick Beacon. A villager whose father had a strip in the Common Field tells me that villagers were allowed to quarry stone at Cud Hill on payment of a shilling.
8. Gloucester City Library, Gloucestershire Collection, RF 321.2.
9. Joseph Arch, the founder some years earlier, of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union was at this time a Member of Parliament and may be the Mr. Arch of the Committee, but, if so, I would have thought it more likely that he would have been nominated by the House.
10. Gloucester City Library, Gloucestershire Collection, 321.3.
11. It was stated at another point in the enquiry that the population of the village was about 1400-1500 people - an average of nearly five people per cottage.
12. This outlying field was on the sloping hillside under the Cotswold edge where the soil is lighter and receives less sunlight. It was also some way from the village.
13. According to the Tithe Map of 1841 William Green, the owner of the house now occupied by the authors, had 2 roods behind the house and one small strip about one mile away in the Bottom Field.
14. In the Award Schedule he is described as a "retired police officer".
15. (58 & 59 Vict.) Inclosure (Upton St. Leonards) (Ch. IXXVIII) Provisional Order Confirmation Act 1895. Gloucester City Library, Gloucestershire Collection RR321.1.
16. Gloucestershire Records Office, p. 347b. S/D1.
17. For example; a twelve foot wide road from the main road to Painswick across Awefield to Larkham Farm; the cost to be shared between the farmer and the Parish Council. This track has now been covered by the Gloucester Corporation Matson Housing Estate, but Larkham Farm is now the Redwell Restaurant.
18. This figure was arrived at by adding the individual areas given in the Award Schedule; the Application for the Provisional Order states 534 acres.
19. It has not been possible to trace any details of the principles on which Mr. Sturge worked, nor the cost of hedging etc., which fell on the landowners - historians state that in any inclosure this was probably a heavy expense for small proprietors.
20. Tithe Award of 1841. Glos. Record Office P347b SD 2*1 but this includes some land at Tredworth and Sudmeadow.
21. It is not possible to know whether a "carpenter", for example was an independent craftsman or an employee.

22. Includes the Rt. Hon. Henry Somerset, Marquis of Worcester and the Rt. Hon. Robert Marsham Townsend.
23. Rosa Davis is described as a "married woman", but her address was Rees Farm, Upton, and she held more than six acres of copyhold land.
24. There were originally three manors in Upton, one held in the time of Edward II by Sibella de la Grave, who had to find a man with bows and arrows for forty days. The manor was later held by the Berkeleys who sold it to Sir Arnold Ligon and eventually passed to the Blissets. Grove Court is a half timbered building nearly opposite the King's Head public house on the Painswick road.
25. Gave evidence at the Enquiry.
26. This land is actually being developed for building at the present time, 1978 - eighty years after the inclosure.
27. Glos. R.O., P347 FM 5.
28. Until the recent steep rise in the price of vegetables (1978) there have always been allotments lying fallow in Upton.
29. C.K. Gonner, Common Land And Enclosure (1966). The only villager I have been able to question about this, told me that his father's business was very adversely affected by the inclosure.
30. C.S. & C.S. Orwin, The Open Field (Third Ed. 1967).
31. Beresford, History on the Ground (1957)
32. H.P.R. Finberg; Gloucestershire. The History of the Landscape (1955)
33. H.L. Gray, The English Field System (1915)
34. Ibid.
35. It is still there today below the "landslip" on the Bath Road
36. Kimsbury Farm and Kimsbury House are to the east of the Gloucester Painswick road.
37. A.H. Smith, The Place Names of Gloucestershire Part II (1964)
38. E.C.K. Gonner, Common Land and Enclosure (1966)
39. A.H. Smith, The Place Names of Gloucestershire Part II (1964)
40. Footpath EVL 55
41. Two have recently been sent to the City Museum by the developers of the building estate on the former Awefield and one of the estate roads is named Meerstones.
42. From his lecture to the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club.

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